Rai Technology University

ENGINEERING MINDS

Intercultural Communication

Subject: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION   **Credits: 4**

SYLLABUS

Concept of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural Communication: Globalization; Informatization; and Cultural Change; Globalization; Informatization; and Intercultural Communication; Communicating in Culturally Diverse Workplace; Gateways to Effective Intercultural Communication; Brief History of Intercultural Communication; Culture: Introduction to Culture; Definition; Functions and Characteristics of Culture; Communication and Culture; Complexity of Cross Culture Studies; Cultural Hierarchy; Dimensions of Culture.

Sociology of Culture

Cultural Stereotypes; Culture Shock; Cultural Contexts of Ethnic Differences; High and Low Culture; Culture Influences on Communication; Folk and Popular Culture; Race; Colonialism and Culture.

Cultures and Communication

Intercultural Relationships; Communicating in Intercultural Relationships; Non-Verbal Communication; Language; Culture; Communication and Conflict; Intercultural Conflict.

Barriers to Intercultural Communication

Cross Cultural Gender: Masculinity – Feminity; Individualism-Collectivism; Ethnocentrism; Identity; Cultural Misunderstandings; Barriers in Communication; Trends in Intercultural Communication.

Suggested Readings:

1. Intercultural Communication: A Discourse Approach; Ronald Scollon, Suzanne B. K. Scollon, Wiley.
2. Intercultural Communication, L. E. Sarbaugh, Intercultural Communication, L. E. Sarbaugh, Transaction Publication.
3. Intercultural Communication: An introduction Fred Edmund Jandt, Sage Publications.
4. Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication: Selected Readings, Milton J. Bennett, A Nicholas Brealey Publishing Company.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Greetings, and welcome to intercultural communication class. This course is designed to offer students a survey of contemporary issues related to processes of intercultural communication. We will consider the important role of context (social, cultural, and historical) in intercultural interactions. We will examine the complex relationship between culture and communication from several conceptual perspectives, focusing primarily on three: social psychological, interpretive, and critical. From applying these approaches to the study of intercultural communication, we will also come to appreciate the complexity and tensions involved in intercultural interactions. This learning process should enhance self-reflection, flexibility, and sensitivity in intercultural communication.

Communication is a fact in the world of human beings, animals and plants, and is an ever- continuing process going on all the time. It is a process of mutual participation in a common structure of rhythmic patterns by all members of a culture.

The student gains an insight on listening behavior that forms an indispensable part of the communication process. Through class discussions, he/she will identify with what are the kind of barriers and misconceptions that impair listening. Interactive and participative dialogue will serve as an eye opener for the student to be able to appreciate the significance of leadership and comprehend the key concept of group communication.

Salient Features

You would be going through various topics, which would give you an insight of the basic concepts of communication principles.

Concept of Intercultural Communication

The world is on the brink of an age of borderlessness. Already we have seen this trend in such developments as the disappearance of borders in information exchange, such as on the Internet and in the economic activities of the European Community. The ease with which we travel and exchange information across borders these days was simply unthinkable just a few decades ago. Furthermore, a telecommunication society would serve to accelerate the arrival of the age of intercultural communication. In this kind of environment, the ability to communicate with others regardless of culture and language, and the confidence to not be overwhelmed by other cultural backgrounds is a much-required skill. Put simply, intercultural communicative ability is an asset. Japan and the Japanese must learn to treat all others with equality, neither looking down upon nor being apprehensive of people of other cultures. This chapter will make you understand the basis of intercultural communication and its relevance in today's era of globalization. Interculturality is a concept that captures the complex phenomenon of intercultural contact, including intercultural communication. The concept of intercultural communication combines the concepts of interculturality and communication. It also describes the problems and pitfalls of misunderstanding, and the skills and competences required for successfully understanding members of other cultures.

Culture

People **learn** culture. That, we suggest, is culture's <u>essential</u> feature. Many qualities of human life are transmitted genetically — an infant's desire for food, for example, is triggered by

physiological characteristics determined within the human genetic code. An adult's specific desire for milk and cereal in the morning, on the other hand, cannot be explained genetically; rather, it is a learned (cultural) response to morning hunger. Culture, as a body of learned behaviors common to a given human <u>society</u>, acts rather like a template (ie. it has predictable form and content), shaping behavior and consciousness within a human society from generation to generation. So culture resides in all learned behavior *and* in some shaping template or consciousness prior to behavior as well (that is, a "cultural template" can be in place prior to the birth of an individual person).

Sociology of Culture

The purpose of the Section on Sociology of Culture is to encourage development of this perspective through the organized interchange of ideas and research. The Section on Culture considers material products, ideas, and symbolic means and their relation to social behavior. Nationality, nation-ness, and nationalism are cultural artifacts whose creation toward the end of the 18th C was the spontaneous distillation of a complex "crossing" of discrete historical forces; but that, once created, they became "modular," capable of being transplanted to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a variety of political and ideological constellations.

Culture and Communication

Miscommunication is a major source of intercultural discomfort and conflict. Communication—verbal, written, and nonverbal—goes beyond what's said, written, or expressed. The process of communicating differs among cultures: It's *how* it's said (or written or expressed), *when* it's said, and *why* it's said. These things comprise one's communication style. Miscommunication can (and often does) result when an individual's style of communicating differs from that of another person. In today's workplace, you can bet that, at some point, you'll deal with a co-worker whose communication style differs from yours. Learning how to communicate among cultures is a necessary ability no matter what type of career field you enter.

The world today is characterized by an ever-growing number of contacts resulting in communication between people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This communication takes place because of contacts within the areas of business, military cooperation, science, education, mass media, entertainment, tourism but also because of immigration brought about by labor shortage or political conflicts.In all these contacts, there is communication, which needs to be as constructive as possible, without misunderstandings and breakdowns. It is our belief that research on the nature of linguistic and cultural similarities and differences here can play a positive and constructive role

Barriers to Intercultural Communication

Effective communication with people of different cultures is especially challenging. Cultures provide people with ways of thinking—ways of seeing, hearing, and interpreting the world. Thus the same words can mean different things to people from different cultures, even when they talk the "same" language. When the languages are different, and translation has to be used to communicate, the potential for misunderstandings increases.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

CONTENT

LESSON 1
WHY STUDY INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION?

Contents

Introduction, Globalization, Informatization, And Cultural Change, Globalization, Informatization, And Intercultural Communication, Communicating in culturally diverse workplace, Gateways to Effective Intercultural Communication.

Learning Objectives

- To define intercultural communication
- To know the significance of intercultural communication in today's world of globalization.
- To understand the basic gateways to effective intercultural communication.

A Food & Agricultural Organisation Worldwide Survey 'asked' the following question: **"Would you please give your 'most' honest opinion about the solution to food shortage in the rest of the world?"**

In 'Africa' people did not know what 'FOOD' meant.

In 'Western Europe' they did not know what 'SHORTAGE' meant.

In 'Eastern Europe' they did not know what 'OPINION' meant.

In the 'West Asia' they did not know what 'SOLUTION' meant.

In 'South America' they did not know what 'PLEASE' meant.

In 'Asia' they did not know what 'HONEST' meant.

And in the '**USA**' they did not know what 'THE REST OF THE WORLD' meant.

Introduction

Welcome to the Information Age! With the development of technology in a variety of different areas, we are able to communicate with more speed, more power and to more people than ever before. This power to communicate is dramatically reshaping how we understand boundaries between people and places. It is reducing a once vast and isolated world into "the Global Village". We live in an exciting time because we have, at our fingertips, unlimited potential to communicate with people around the world. We also live in a traumatic time because this new power creates enormous questions about our different identities, cultures and preferences in communication. This course is designed to prepare students to work and live within the Global Village and to develop competence in their ability to communicate with everyone they will come into contact with.

This lesson intends to accomplish its goals in light of the fact that nations, communities, and individuals are increasingly connected and interconnected by means of technology. Radio, television, satellite, cable and telephone communications now cover almost every corner of the globe. Furthermore, the use of audio, video, and hypertext add to the complexity of these communications. In other words, not only is the *quantity* of telecommunication growing, but also the technical *quality* of telecommunication is improving. This growing interconnection between people offers the potential for additional communication, exchange of information, and even intercultural interaction, by means of technology.

As emerging technology interconnects our globe in increasingly complex layers, the world seems to grow smaller. Yet, it is with this increased interconnectivity that our perceptions of the world as we presently know it grows and expands. Our social network begins to encompass individuals whom we have never physically met before, and possibly never will. It is these new relationships with distant individuals that may challenge us to expand our horizons beyond what we now know. As our social web grows, so does the possibility that distant events will have personal meaning to us as individuals. The socio-technical implications of this suggest that the web of social connectivity grows with every new user. With every new link, we become subtly more interconnected with distant individuals, and distant events. This increased interconnection implies the possibility of increased intercultural interactions by means of technology.

Many, such as Brislin & Yoshida (1994), Brislin (1993), Condon (1975), and Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey (1988) define intercultural communication as communication between people from different cultures. Samovar and Porter (1972) suggest, "whenever the parties to a communication act bring with them different experiential backgrounds that reflect a long-standing deposit of group experience, knowledge, and values, we have intercultural communication" (p. 1). Gudykunst and Kim (1992) classify intercultural communication as "a transactional, symbolic process involving the attribution of meaning between people from different cultures" (pp. 13-14). Therefore, intercultural communication, for the purpose of this study, is defined as the field of study, which explores the verbal and nonverbal interactions of individuals with diverse patterns of historically derived behavior.

The world today is characterized by an ever-growing number of contacts resulting in communication between people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This communication takes place because of contacts within the areas of business, military cooperation, science, education, mass media, entertainment, tourism but also because of immigration brought about by labor shortage or political conflicts.

In all these contacts, there is communication, which needs to be as constructive as possible, without misunderstandings and breakdowns. It is our belief that research on the nature of linguistic and cultural similarities and differences here can play a positive and constructive role.

Globalization, Informatization, and Cultural Change

The first broad area of questions to be addressed is that of the social and cultural implications of globalization and informatization, and the relevance to intercultural communication. These are areas that are typically not directly addressed by theories of intercultural communication, but rather more often come within the range of theorists of international communication, critical theory, or even post-colonial literary theory. However, given the force we have ascribed these trends in the contemporary world, it is critical that theorists of intercultural communication engage them, as it is the social and cultural context in which all intercultural communication arises. I will specifically discuss three critical areas that need to be addressed, our understanding of culture, the ways in which cultural change is precipitated by globalization and informatization, and their role in defining personal and communal identity.

Culture, of course, is an amorphous concept, even in the most rigorous theories of intercultural communication. Typically, it is defined as a symbolic system, which includes issues of perception, cognition, and understanding. Culture is not merely an abstract set of folk practices, nor a collection of touristy festivals. Rather, as Geertz (1973) defines it, it is a set of symbolic systems, that serve not only to define and identify the culture and social structures, but also to articulate the synthesis of two essential parts of human culture, ethos and world view. Geertz employs a very diffuse, totalistic conception of culture, that can not easily be perfunctorily articulated. Every specific act, every utterance, every thought must be understood within a much larger, much broader context.

There are certain inherent challenges that globalization, in particular, make upon our understanding of culture. One of these is a tendency to equate "culture" with "nation." Scholars and teachers speak of Russian culture, Chinese culture, or Japanese culture, for example, with little reference to the distinctions between very different groupings within a national boundary. The nation, as a political abstraction, is certainly very different from the culture, which as Geertz (1973) has described it, is primarily a system of symbols. Although scholars distinguish between co-cultures within North American boundaries, this concept is rarely applied to other nations. Within the boundaries of the Peoples' Republic of China, for example, there are approximately 80 different linguistic groupings, bound by geographical, political, and yes, even cultural distinctions. The language most often called Chinese, Mandarin, or putonghua, the official language based on the dialect of the northern region around Beijing, is the official spoken language, but to the vast majority of citizens of the nation, it is a second language. Each of the regions of China have vastly different ethos, and yet this is rarely considered in abstract pronouncements about "Chinese culture." In a globalized world, the political abstractions known as nations are becoming increasingly irrelevant, while the symbolic systems known as cultures are continually in flux. With greater access to cultural diversity from within nations, our conception of "culture" will take on narrower frames of reference.

Beyond the inherent instability of the nation alluded to earlier, does globalization force us to redefine cultural boundaries? Do globalization and informatization bring about culture convergence or divergence? Do the ties formed by economic and technological integration increase or diminish the impact of culture on communication? How does global interaction affect one's cultural identity? When Israelis read South African websites, or when Chinese read Japanese sites, which cultural background is most significant?

This question is not easy to answer because it entails certain other fundamental questions. For example, media forms themselves are not passive entities. Cultural forms, codes, and values determine issues of media content and media design, including aesthetic, technical, and logical criterion. One has only to compare the websites of the aforementioned North Korean Central News Agency with the much more visibly dynamic Western news sites, such as CNN, to see immediate differences in perceptions of what "news" is, how it is to be presented, and the cultural, economic, and political assumptions regarding its purposes.

A related area of discussion is that of the forces of globalization and informatization in cultural change. Many theorists argue that globalization is working in a fundamentally centripetal manner, forcing homogenization and consumerism along Western lines. Observers from both traditionalist and integrationist perspectives perceive a certain convergence across cultural and national boundaries. The rise of a new class of capitalists in recently developed nations is often praised as a verification of the universality of notions of rationality, liberalism, secularism and human rights (Robison and Goodman, 1996, p. 2). In other words, a new culture is forming that transcends traditional political and geographic boundaries, that can best be defined by profession, technological expertise, or social class.

Others decry the "coca-colonization" and "McDonaldization" of the globe, and argue that the rampant global rise of consumerism ultimately will destroy traditional cultures. In a recent Chinese news publication, for example, a Chinese scholar argues that the "blind worship" of foreign consumer goods, the tendency to disparage patriotic heros and uplift "traiterous literati," and the compromise of national dignity are all symptoms of the "dregs of colonial culture" (Li, 1999, p. 10). In other words, the globalization of China's economy, including consumer products, as well as the rise of cybercafes on Chinese streets, all indicate the evil nature of the changing circumstances.

As evidence for the claim of homogenization, analysts point to graphic indicators, such as the abundance of McDonald's restaurants around the world, such as this one in Oman. Such blatant symbols of multinational power are indicative of the homogenization of traditional societies. Integrationists, on the other hand, argue that unlike previous manifestations of colonial power, there is nothing coercive about offering hamburgers to willing consumers.

This has serious implications regarding the transformation of culture. Globalization and informatization provide a context that ultimately can be at odds with traditional cultural forms. To what extent, for example, can Islam, which is rooted in the history and the language of the Arabs, survive postmodern globalization? Islam has certainly taken root in culturally diverse locales, such as Central Asia and Southeast Asia, but the globalized future presents a different set of challenges. As a world view, Islam might very well provide a welcome bed of stability in a world of change (Ahmed, 1992). As a cultural practice, however, globalization has introduced tensions into Islamic societies, such as allowing youth access to vastly different world views, creating a tension within traditional Muslim societies. For example, in the 1990's a survey indicated that Michael Jackson was more popular in Indonesia than Mohammed, and merely reporting on the survey landed an unfortunate journalist in jail (Hitching, 1996).

It is not just Muslim societies that must deal with the unknown future, however, but all societies in which tradition has played a major role in providing guidance to social life; in short, all societies. Some might well experience a backlash as illustrated by the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, while others find themselves in vastly changed social circumstances. In 1997, representatives of the South Korean government, undoubtedly one of the nations that had most benefited from global economic and technological change, argued before the United Nations that globalization represented a threat to cultural diversity that must be guarded against (United Nations Press Release, 1997).
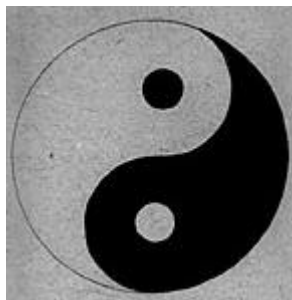
If informatization and globalization have the capacity to transform culture (the yang), then they also strengthen them (the yin). There is evidence that indicates that the emerging globalized information society, rather than weakening cultural and national identity, actually strengthens traditional cultural forms. Although the web is in English, for example, the rise of technology and the globalization of commerce allows for innovation and creativity in the enhancement of non-mainstream perspectives. For example, these forces have enabled the

rise of a new genre of music, Vietnamese pop music, that would not arise in a world bounded by more traditional economic structures. The overseas Vietnamese population, from geographically diverse locations such as Southern California, France, and Canada, would not likely support the rise of concert tours, recordings, and the other trappings of the entertainment industry without the linkages that can occur in a more globalized world, which allows an economy of scale necessary to make Vietnamese pop music profitable. Zhang and Hao argue that in the "age of cyberspace, the role of ethnic media in fortifying the cultural traits of ethnic immigrants is expected to be further strengthened. As a result, ethnic groups are more likely to be assimilated into the mainstream culture without losing their own cultural roots and ethnic identity."

In this sense, then, the forces of globalization and informatization have a centrifugal effect, allowing the rise of new local traditions and cultural forms. It also increases the ability of outsiders to learn more about significant cultural, religious or historical traditions without the filtering mechanisms of more traditional media. Whereas most local bookstores, for example, carry but a handful of histories of non-Western societies, web access allows one to explore the histories, politics, economics and societies of the most inaccessible regions.

Perhaps the most succinct way of addressing these questions is to distinguish levels of integration and polarization. At the economic and technological levels, there is certainly integration. Local industries can no longer afford to not be vulnerable to international competition, and must position themselves within a global context. The anti-WTO protests in Seattle were inherently about the conflict between global trade realities in conflict with local regulation in areas such as genetically modified foods. Moreover, anyone with access to the technology can gain information about and from any part of the globe. At the level of individual identity, however, informatization and globalization allows a myriad of possibilities for the individual to make radically different choices than previously possible; in other words, these twin forces allow, and even encourage, polarization.

This leads us to the third critical issue for scholars of intercultural communication, which relates to how individuals define their local and communal identity. At the personal level, one's individual ethos can be ever more narrowly defined, providing the potential for a further polarization (or 'tribalization,' to use Barber's term) of personal identity. There are at least three aspects to this argument. First, rather than seeing oneself as essentially a citizen of a nation or a local community, people are more free to define themselves along narrower conceptions of identity and commitment, either ethnic, religious, or ideological affiliation. In this sense, the more global we become, the more provincial our attitudes can become. We are no longer forced into a certain homogeneity of lifestyle, belief, or social knowledge, but we are also no longer forced to work through issues with our neighbors.

Second, by gaining access to vast amounts of information, one is no longer dependent upon the village for knowledge and/or affirmation. For example, communication technologies allow

citizens of nations in which religious conversion is illegal access to inconceivable amounts information about other global faiths, radically revamping what has historically been one of the most significant intercultural communication encounters, religious missions, and making a true independence of thought possible. Christian mission organizations, such as Campus Crusade for Christ, are already beginning to build extensive web sites with clearly evangelistic intent. Conversely, Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, and various other faiths all appear on the web, lending themselves not only to easy propagation, but also to reinvention. This has both liberating as well as debilitating aspects, because if one can more easily define herself outside of the boundaries of the local community, she can no longer rely as fully upon the local community for support. Ultimately, whether a cyber-neighbor is as reliable as a physical neighbor is but mere speculation.

Moreover, communication by electronic channels is ultimately affected by the media itself, producing potentially irrevocable distortion. Jacques Ellul argued decades ago, for example, that the technologies of modern life are ultimately destructive when applied to certain kinds of messages, such as religion (1965). In his discussion of communication technologies, which Ellul argues are a form of the totalizing system of propaganda, he argues that "Christianity disseminated by such means is not Christianity" (p. 230). Further, he argues that when the church uses the means of ideological indoctrination to propagate the faith, it might reach the masses, influence collective opinions, and "even leads many people accept what seems to be Christianity. But in doing that the church becomes a false church" (p. 230). So although the information systems that permeate the modern world allow for a greater dissemination of information, there remains the danger of the dehumanization of that information, and the social context that makes the information relevant.

And finally, the fact that globalization and informatization allow, even encourage, one to adopt new perspectives and identities, allows one to make superficial commitments to a new identity. Students who have access to marginal (and marginalized) belief systems by access to the web, for example, might come to see themselves as adherents, with little or understanding of the larger history and body of beliefs that constitutes the larger community of believers. This superficial identification with "the other" can disrupt social unity at a great cost, and yet not provide any compensatory alliances or social unions. It is one thing to convert to a new faith when in the midst of an encouraging body of support, it is another altogether when one is, in all critical aspects, removed from any sources of social support.

In summary, the cultural and social changes accompanied by globalization and informatization have clear relevance to theorists in intercultural communication in at least three key ways. The conception of culture, the ways in which cultural change is precipitated by these trends, and the role of these forces in defining personal identity and social unity are all important issues of discussion for communication scholars, as they provide the foundational assumptions for our interpretation of the processes of intercultural communication.

Globalization, Informatization, and Intercultural Communication

It should be evident by now that the trends of globalization and informatization have important implications at the foundational level for intercultural communication theory, namely, our very understanding of culture, society, and communication. I will now turn attention to some critical questions concerning the impact and role of globalization and informatization on intercultural communication practice and behavior. I will introduce only three issues, certainly not an exhaustive list, but enough to demonstrate the necessity of further research in this area. Specifically, I will raise the issues of the impact of culture on computer-mediated communication and other communication issues, the effectiveness of communication technologies to actually fulfill some of the political and social promises made for them, and the role of intercultural communication skills for professional success.

Intercultural communication has traditionally been discussed in primarily interpersonal behavior, although not exclusively so. Informatization, however, forces us to consider the ways in which culture influences the successful transmission of messages in radically different channels than traditionally conceived. The influence of culture on communication behavior is central to our field of study, and by any account, telecommunications, cyberspace, and other emerging media forms are becoming increasingly popular modes of communication. Although there is an emerging literature on technology as a communication form and computer-mediated communication (Jackson, 1997), even prompting an on-line journal, as of this writing there has been little, if any, substantive analysis of the impact of the new media form across cultural boundaries. Does a Japanese youth, for example, respond to CNN.com the same way that a Pakistani would? Since there are inherent cultural issues associated with any form of communication, what complicating factors are raised by the advent of communication technologies?

This issue could significantly affect how intercultural communication is taught. Some of the key concepts associated with intercultural communication, such as the distinction between high and low context cultures, are problematic when applied to new communication contexts. Since high context cultures are those where there is a greater social knowledge, and communication is typically less explicit, can persons from a high context background rely on the same subtle nonverbal cues and situational variables when using the internet or email, for example? How is high context culture messaging transformed when there is an absence of nonverbal cues, environmental and situational variables, and at best imprecise manifestations of status and hierarchy? Does this force high-context communication to become low context? Is communication across cultures made easier across technological channels, since the ever troublesome nonverbal cues that complicate much interpersonal intercultural communication lose their importance? What new nonverbal cues arise in electronic communication? What constitutes communication competence in the new context? The number of issues associated with this line of inquiry is endless, and could radically alter how we think about, and teach, intercultural communication skills and theory.

A second significant issue associated with the convergence of global values, technology, and communication is the ability of technologies to truly fulfill the promises made for it, both in the encouragement of intercultural interaction as well as its effectiveness in the development of new political, social, or cultural movements. Certainly, the potential for further interaction with people from diverse cultural backgrounds increases with the availability of technology, but do people typically seek out diversity when interacting with technologies, or do they interact primarily with people much like themselves? UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, for example, argued that

"we in the United Nations are convinced that communications technology has a great democratizing power waiting to be harnessed to our global struggle for peace and development. The quantity and quality of available information is changing dramatically every day, in every country, in every corner of the world. Citizens are gaining greater access to information, too. And the spread of information is making accountability and transparency facts of life for any government" (United Nations, 1998).

Although these expectations reveal a potential for communication that can bring together a critical mass for political or social change, it is not clear that it is sufficient to do so. During 1989's Tiananmen demonstrations, for example, Chinese students and scholars residing in North America and Europe made use of all available means of communication to support the pro-democracy movement, including fax machines and email, and many of the networks developed during that period continue to this day in web presence, such as the Support Democracy in China page or Amnesty International's web site. The effectiveness of web presence as a persuasion device, moreover, has not been established. Does the presence of Tibetan Buddhism on the web, for example, encourage the growth of the religion? To what extent is the religion re-invented when introduced by means of technology?

A final area of inquiry related to these issues is the manner in which intercultural communication skills enable greater effectiveness in personal and professional life, in a globalized and technologized social context. One of the characteristics emerging from globalization and informatization is the rising dominance of a new "knowledge class," which is defined as a class that is supported solely by its participation in the new information industries, with little reliance upon traditional manufacturing or production industries, including agriculture. Peter Drucker argues that "the acquisition and distribution of formal knowledge may come to occupy the place in the politics of the knowledge society which the acquisition and distribution of property and income have occupied in our politics over the two or three centuries that we have come to call the Age of Capitalism."

By extension, it is communication skills, both in sending and receiving, that determines how well an individual, an organization, an industry, or a nation, does in acquiring and applying knowledge, thus broadening the chances for success. Certainly, the ability to effectively negotiate the inherent cultural issues in communication becomes more of a competitive edge in a global world. It is likely that this new knowledge class will see a convergence of certain skills, attitudes, and world views, unbounded by traditional national or cultural boundaries. Stock brokers in Japan are likely to have more in common with their counterparts in Germany and the US than they are with their own grandparents.

However, "knowledge" is an inherently relativistic concept (Breen, 1997). As Drucker (1994) argues, "the knowledge of the knowledge society, precisely because it is knowledge only when applied in action, derives its rank and standing from the situation. In other words, what is knowledge in one situation, such as fluency in Korean for the American executive posted to Seoul, is only information, and not very relevant information at that, when the same executive a few years later has to think through his company's market strategy for Korea." Drucker's argument is that the distinction between information and knowledge becomes all the more pressing, even as the shifting contours of the global world are likely to turn once vital knowledge into mere information. Participants in the global system are likely to find themselves ever and always pursuing new knowledge, and never arrive at a place where they know everything they need for success in most situations.

Main goal in this chapter has been to provide some initial probes into the role of the trends of informatization and globalization in intercultural communication. Of course, some of the issues that seem important today will no doubt fade into insignificance in the near future, while as yet-unheard-of issues will arise to take their place. Nevertheless, given the transforming effects of globalization and informatization in the social and cultural worlds, it is imperative for scholars of intercultural communication to begin to understand how these forces will affect not only the foundational theoretical assumptions of our scholarship, but also the significant impact of these trends on the actual practice of intercultural communication.

I would like to conclude with a brief comment about the role that scholars of intercultural communication could play in developing a theoretical framework which might serve to facilitate future understanding of these issues. Scholars and theorists of intercultural communication, perhaps more than any other discipline, are in a privileged position, as traditional disciplinary frameworks are insufficient to deal with the new realities. The twin forces of globalization and informatization can perhaps be best explained from within a framework provided by intercultural communication theorists, as from its earliest days the discipline has been concerned with the development of global consciousness, the overcoming of the conceptual and behavioral defaults provided by culture, and how communication changes individuals. It is thus likely that intercultural communication scholars can best provide a critical schema for understanding "culture" in the new world. Communication theorists have long understood that culture is inherently a symbolic system, and that it is thus a close scrutiny of the nature of symbols, their transformation, and their impact that best prepares one to understand the ways in which these forces shape and alter our symbolic understandings of our lives. Moreover, it is from within this framework that we are perhaps best suited to document and analyze the salient

issues of communication consumption in a cross-cultural, cross-national, wired world.

Communicating in the Culturally Diverse Workplace

The face of the workplace is changing: More women, more ethnic minorities, and more immigrants are entering the work force. As a result, the workplace is increasingly multicultural. Now, think about what you've read about today's job market: Employers look for job candidates who have good communication and interpersonal skills and are team players. Those skills are increasingly important as the American work force expands to include a wide variety of cultures.

Culture is a set of learned attitudes, behaviors, and the other things that comprise a way of life. Although you'll share your organization's culture with your co-workers, it's unlikely that you'll share your personal culture with all your co-workers. You'll find many "ways of life" represented in the workplace. Depending on your experience with and exposure to different cultures, your "comfort zone" with different groups can expand or contract.

The challenge to today's employer is to ensure that its work force's diversity is a source of strength, not one of conflict. Recognize, however, that it is not the sole responsibility of the employer to see that goal achieved; all employees, including you, share in that responsibility.

Communication Styles

Miscommunication is a major source of intercultural discomfort and conflict. Communication—verbal, written, and nonverbal—goes beyond what's said, written, or expressed. The process of communicating differs among cultures: It's *how* it's said (or written or expressed), *when* it's said, and *why* it's said. These things comprise one's communication style. Miscommunication can (and often does) result when an individual's style of communicating differs from that of another person. In today's workplace, you can bet that, at some point, you'll deal with a co-worker whose communication style differs from yours. Learning how to communicate among cultures is a necessary ability no matter what type of career field you enter.

What's your communication style? Do you communicate in a linear manner, moving in a straight line to your point? Or, are you more apt to use a spiral style in your communications, circling around your subject in tighter and tighter loops until you get to your point? Neither style is right or wrong, but the "spiral communicator" may perceive the "linear communicator" as abrupt or rude. The linear communicator might think the spiral communicator is deceptive or indecisive. In each case, there's been a misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

Some other areas where there commonly are differences in style include:

- **Courtesy:** Greeting styles differ among cultures, for example, as do ways of discussing problems or conflicts.
- **Phasing:** One example of differences in phasing is when one deems it an "appropriate time" for a discussion. Lead-ins to business talk are another example of where differences exist.

- **Objectivity:** Argument styles are an example of objectivity differences. In some cultures, arguing in an impersonal manner is the accepted "norm"; in others, the argument style is emotional. Specificity: Is your thinking focused on the immediate, or are you focused on the long term? That's one example of specificity differences.
- **Assertiveness:** There are varying levels of assertiveness that are deemed acceptable. For example, one culture's assertiveness level might lean toward reticence while another tends toward more forwardness in communication.
- **Candor:** There are also different levels of candor. For example, some cultures value "telling it like it is" while others value preserving harmony.
- **Simplicity:** Do you present information in simple language, or are your sentences more complex?
- **Accent:** Accents vary greatly—even within the same language! Don't allow someone's accent to be an excuse for making assumptions about that person.

Keep in mind that when you're unfamiliar with another culture, or when you don't recognize that there's no "one way" of doing things, it's easy to jump to the wrong conclusions or create a conflict through misunderstanding.

By recognizing that there are different styles, you'll take a big step toward effective communication.

Gateways to Effective Intercultural Communication

Effective intercultural communication requires more than simply recognizing differences; it requires you to respect and know how to deal with those differences. Intercultural communication often is not easy (just take a look at the evening news! It's a showcase of miscommunication between countries and their cultures.), but there are "gateways" to effective intercultural communication.

These gateways are:

- Written, verbal, and nonverbal communication skills;
- Respect for differences;
- Tolerance for ambiguity;
- Flexibility;
- Suspension of assumptions and judgments;
- Willingness to see other person's point of view;
- ·Time and practice.

These gateways can help you strengthen your ability to understand and to be understood. In the end, however, it's up to *you*—the gateways are effective only if you're willing to go through them.

The development of telecommunications and the acceleration of the intercultural communication age

The ultimate age of telecommunications

Telecommunication technology has advanced at a scarcely believable pace. Eventually it will lead to the situation where a person in, for instance, Japan, can communicate with people from all over the world through a computer or television

without having to travel all the way to that person's physical location - the ultimate in telecommunication. Devices that are able to exchange large volumes of moving and still pictures, sounds, characters, and other signals at high speeds, allowing visual and oral communication in real time between multiple connection points, are sure to bring massive change to people's lives. Because people will be able to see and hear the other parties to their exchange, without having to worry about the costs and time taken up by travelling, no longer will people need to waste their valuable time physically travelling to gather at a particular location for minor meetings and other such extraneous communication. Indeed, this is an age in which, as far as communication is concerned, it does not matter if your business partner is in the next room, or on the other side of the world. In a telecommunication society, cross-border communication and information exchange will be carried out on a scale which, based on our experiences thus far, is unimaginable.

People and information crossing borders freely

The world is on the brink of an age of borderlessness. Already we have seen this trend in such developments as the disappearance of borders in information exchange, such as on the Internet and in the economic activities of the European Community. The ease with which we travel and exchange information across borders these days was simply unthinkable just a few decades ago. Furthermore, a telecommunication society would serve to accelerate the arrival of the age of intercultural communication. In this kind of environment, the ability to communicate with others regardless of culture and language, and the confidence to not be overwhelmed by other cultural backgrounds is a much required skill. Put simply, intercultural communicative ability is an asset. Japan and the Japanese must learn to treat all others with equality, neither looking down upon nor being apprehensive of people of other cultures.

The arrival of the language divide

The digital divide has been a major topic of discourse for some time now. However, a more serious problem for Japanese people is the "language divide." This refers to the difference in employment, information, and income opportunities according to one's linguistic (English in particular) ability. Indeed, the fact that income differs exponentially according to linguistic ability has already become a point of discussion in many Asian nations. Previously, only particular departments of certain companies were involved in international activities. However these days, no company can avoid the need to speak other languages, regardless of the scale of the company, the industry it is involved in, or the position of the employee. It may even be said that linguistic ability is not just the concern of the

individual employee; it now requires serious consideration as a part of the infrastructure at the company and, indeed, national level.

Notes

LESSON 2
BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Contents

A Paradigmatic Approach, The Intercultural Oasis, A Historiographic Approach, History of Intercultural Communication: As a Human Activity, Intercultural Communication: As a Field of Study, "Definitional Problems".

Learning Objectives:

- To understand different approaches of intercultural communication.
- To understand intercultural communication as a field of specialization.

Brief History of Intercultural Communication

After first acknowledging the lack of documented history of the field of intercultural communication, in this paper we use Kuhn's (1972) theory of scientific development as a guide to systematically understand the past developments of the field of intercultural communication and better judge its future developments. Kuhn's notions of scientific development were found to explain well the development of the field. Intercultural communication study began with the establishment of a conceptual framework by Hall and others at the Foreign Service Institute in the early 1950s. The events of the 1960s provided a rich practical research environment in which to test (through training) the ideas previously developed in intercultural communication study. Starting in the 1970s specialized intercultural communication courses, societies and journals were established, signaling the field's reception of a first paradigm. In the late 1970s intercultural communication scholars sought greater understanding of what intercultural communication is and what the field should include in its study. The field quickly matured by the early 1980s as scholars such as Gudykunst (1983, 1988) and others began organizing and developing intercultural communication theories in order to push the field forward. In the 1990s theory construction and testing continues. When intercultural communication study will reach the mature science stage as predicted by Kuhn is unknown.

A Paradigmatic Approach

Recently scholars have written histories on different aspects of communication study. Rowland (1988), Robinson (1988) and Rogers (1994) addressed the history of mass communication, while Cohen (1995) has addressed the history of rhetorical communication. Rogers (1994) in A History of Communication Study noted that "communication [is] often taught without much discussion of its roots. One result of this ahistorical nature of many communication courses today is that most students of communication do not know where their field comes from"(p. xiii). Just as communication is often taught without much reference to its roots, so is intercultural communication taught with little reference to its history. Just as Rogers' History helped fill the void in communication study, so

too, it is hoped that the history that follows helps fill the void in intercultural communication study.

It is unfortunate that intercultural communication study lacks a documented history. As Leeds-Hurwitz (1990) noted, "The young field still has little history written about it"(p.262). Many intercultural communication texts and overview articles begin with a brief statement of the historical origins of intercultural communication; usually no more than a paragraph or two. (e.g. Jandt, 1995; Weaver, 1994). Leeds-Hurwitz's (1990) article on the history of the U.S. Foreign Service Institute and Edward Hall is one of the few exceptions that analyzes the history of the field at any depth. Kohls' (1983) brief attempt charted the history of intercultural communication study by listing several milestones such as significant publications, establishment of institutions, and other important events. Whereas Leeds-Hurwitz' attempt was intentionally narrow and had depth, Kohls' attempt was broad, but lacked detail and was not highly systematic. The history that follows brings together the approaches of Leeds-Hurwitz and Kohls. What follows is a systematic, broad, somewhat detailed history of intercultural communication.

It must be noted at the outset that intercultural communication study is being defined here as the area of study that attempts to understand the effects of culture on communication. This study, thus, does not address the history of intercultural adaptation study, per se. Although there is some conceptual overlap, for the purposes of this paper intercultural adaption study is seen as separate from intercultural communication study. Intercultural adaptation has its historical roots in the work of Oberg (1960) and is more a study of psychological adjustment than communication. With this aside, however, it is interesting to note that both tracks have their beginnings in anthropology literature and both began at about the same time. For intercultural communication it was with Hall (1959) and his The Silent Language and for intercultural adaptation it was with Oberg (1960) and his article entitled "Cultural Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environments."

The history that follows comes from a synthesis of materials found in past overviews of the field (such as those found in the past annuals of the Communication Yearbook), brief histories offered in introductory intercultural communication texts, reviews of prominent texts and the prefaces of prominent texts. A text's preface or forward often reveals important historical background on how the text came to be and they also often place the text in the overall development of the field. It must also be noted that the history that follows is U.S./Western biased, mostly because it was the United States sources that were readily available for historical analysis. At some later time a historical analysis of the non-Western roots of intercultural communication is called for, but for now we tackle the task at hand.

The Intercultural Oasis

Schramm (1982) described the founding of the general field of communication by using an oasis metaphor. Schramm's metaphor described how some scholars like Harold Lasswell, Kurt Lewin, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Carl Hovland came from various fields of study to visit the oasis of communication study. Once they made significant contributions to the field of communication, these nomadic scholars left the oasis and went on to other areas of study. Schramm is considered the founder of general communication study because he came to the "oasis in the desert," but unlike the nomadic scholars, he stayed and built up a new area of study (Rogers, 1994).

Hammer (1989) borrows Schramm's (1982) metaphor of general communication study to describe intercultural communication study. Hammer finds that the establishment of the field of intercultural communication also had a nomadic nature. Following World War II, scholars from such disciplines as anthropology, psychology, communication, sociology and international relations left their established disciplines and "travelled to a part of the human landscape that was then relatively uncharted: the intersection of 'culture' and 'human interaction'" (Hammer, 1989, p. 10). Some nomads visited briefly the intercultural communication oasis (e.g., Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Gregory Bateson) at earlier times (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990). Like Schramm for the general field of communication, Edward Hall can be considered the founder of intercultural communication since he stayed and built up a town around this intersection of "culture" and "human interaction," an area of study he called intercultural communication. Condon (1995) agrees and adds to the analogy:

You can say that Hall stayed and built up his town — and it would also be fair to say that others were attracted to a layout of a town that Hall sketched out. [Hall's] role seems ... more of a 'developer' suggesting the general plans, avenues, etc., with a few land markers that attracted others.

In this chapter we will extend Schramm and Hammer's visual metaphor. An extension of their metaphor can help us better visualize the history of intercultural communication. "The disadvantage of [people] not knowing the past is that they do not know the present. History is a hill or high point of vantage, from which alone [people] see the town in which they live or the age in which they are living" (Chesterton, 1933). In this paper we will figuratively go to the hill high above the 'town' that has grown up around the intersection of "culture" and "human interaction" and look back.

Kuhn's Map: A Historiographic Approach

At the top of this hill we will need a map to help understand the history stretched out before us. If intercultural communication is viewed as a social science, then Thomas Kuhn's (1970) notion of scientific development in The Structure of Scientific Revolution may serve well as a map or a historiographic approach. Kuhn (1970) maps out his theory of how sciences develop first from pre-paradigmatic research into a "normal science" and then onto a series of paradigm shifts (scientific revolutions). It is the latter concept of scientific revolutions and paradigm shifts for which most authors cite Kuhn. In this present historiography, however, we focus on the development of intercultural communication, as a social science, from its pre-paradigmatic period into the establishment of its first paradigm, if it can be said to have one. By using the Kunhian development of science as a guide we can better understand the past developments of intercultural communication and better judge its future developments.

For Kuhn, a fully developed scientific speciality has a *paradigm* that is shared by all members of that speciality. A paradigm is like a culture for a group of scientists. Kuhn uses the term paradigm to mean the "entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given [scientific] community" (Kuhn, 1970, p.175). Members of a fully developed speciality have reached consensus on what scientific questions are important to ask and what theories and methodologies are to be used in their research. Kuhn calls the science carried out at this stage of development "normal science".

Dearing and Rogers (1996) divided Kuhn's development of scientific specialities into five stages: (1) pre-paradigmatic work, (2) beginnings of paradigm appearance, (3) full paradigm acceptance; invisible colleges form; "normal science," (4) anomalies appear in paradigm; decline of scholarly interest, and (5) exhaustion of paradigm; shift to new paradigm. Once a paradigm is exhausted, the process loops back to the beginning to start the process again. Famous physical science revolutions have passed through these stages. Examples include the shift from Ptolemy's earth-centered universe to Copernicus' sun-centered universe, and the paradigmatic shift from Newton's understandings of motion and time to Einstein's relativity theory.

To understand the development of intercultural communication study from its pre-paradigmatic period to its possible establishment of a paradigm, it becomes necessary to focus on the first three stages as identified by Dearing and Rogers (1996) and add more detail to their first three stages. Whereas most physical sciences have gone through the five stages at least once, most social sciences, as noted by Kuhn, are only beginning to develop their first paradigm. Social sciences (intercultural communication study included) have only gone through stages 1, stage 2 and possibly stage 3.

Kirk (1992), with her focus more on the development of social sciences, divides Kuhn's discussion of the time between pre-paradigmatic research and normal science into four stages. According to Kirk's interpretation of Kuhn the road to normal science must past through the following check points: (1) establishment of conceptual framework, (2) paradigm-acceptance, (3) theory construction, and (4) founding of a mature, normal science. Kirk's first stage, establishment of conceptual framework, is characterized by problem articulation, statements of how certain "parts of the universe" behave, fact gathering, and the organization of ideas. Kuhn's paradigm-acceptance stage is a period in which there are tests of hypotheses within the applications originally specified. In addition, although not recognized by Kirk (1992), as Kuhn (1970) noted "the formulation of specialized journals, the foundation of specialists' societies, and the claim for a special place in the curriculum have usually been associated with a

group's first reception of a single paradigm"(p. 19). The paradigm-acceptance stage is also a period characterized by a search for greater clarity and accuracy of concepts. In the last two stages that a scientific speciality passes through are the development and modification of theory and then on to a mature science in which there are laws and universal constants.

History of Intercultural Communication: As a Human Activity

Before we address the history proper of intercultural communication as a field of study, it may be helpful to show how intercultural communication (as a human activity) lead up to the establishment of a conceptual framework for the field of intercultural communication. Intercultural communication as a human activity, to no surprise, is not new. On a small scale, intercultural communication undoubtedly occurred long ago when culturally diverse people first interacted. Within the past few centuries, however, the number of interactions between culturally diverse people has greatly increased due to the increase in world population and the advances in technology (Frederick, 1993; Mowlana, 1986; Samovar & Porter, 1994). The world population and technological advances have grown at an exponential rate. Undoubtedly all related aspects, such as the number of personal interactions, have also gown at an exponential rate (Stevenson, 1994). About a century and a half ago advances in transportation technologies (ships, transcontinental railroad, automobiles and airplanes) and telecommunication technologies (newspapers, telegraphs, telephones and televisions) began bringing ever increasing waves of intercultural contact.

It was not until after World War II, however, that an understanding of intercultural interactions become important to government officials and scholars in the United States. Since its beginning the United States had been relatively geographically isolated and it was not highly involved in international "entanglements" (Jandt, 1995, p.3). World War II changed that, however. World War II moved the U.S. "toward global awareness and interaction"(Dodd, 1995, p.24). At the end of World War II the United States was the largest economy still left intact and thus began to offer assistance to rebuild Europe of part of the Marshall Plan. With the success of the Marshall Plan, U.S. leaders began to offer the U.S.'s economic and scientific expertise to aid non-Western developing countries. "Unfortunately, many of their attempts at communication across these cultural boundaries were superficial and sometimes dominated by economic theories of development that cast some doubt upon cross-cultural theories of social change" (Dodd, 1995, p.25; see also Sitaram & Cogdell, 1976). One of the major reasons for the ineffective development projects and ineffective diplomatic relations was found to be the misunderstanding of communication and culture. People in the U.S. had become "cultural illiterates" (Jandt, p.4).

One direct result of this lack of cultural information and the recognition for the need of such, was the work implemented at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) from 1946 to 1956. One of the main purposes of FSI was to train Foreign Service diplomats and other staff members. Anthropologist, linguists, and other scholars such as George Trager, Ray Birdwhistell and

Edward Hall joined the FSI training staff to help diplomats interaction more effectively in intercultural situations. "[I]ntercultural communication [study] grew out of the need to apply abstract anthropological concepts to the practical world of foreign service diplomats [at FSI]..."(Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990, p.262).

Intercultural Communication: As a Field of Study

Long ago, religious leaders such as Christ and Buddha, philosophers such as Aristotle and Socrates and playwrights such as Sophocles and Shakespeare "mentioned the importance of speaking 'the other man's' {sic.] language and adapting our communicative techniques to the audience background" (Sitaram & Cogdell, 1976, p.6). Systematic study of what exactly happens in intercultural interactions, however, did not begin until Edward Hall began his work at FSI in the 1950s.

Stage 1: Establishment of Conceptual Framework

The first stage of intercultural communication study began in the 1950s mainly with the work of Edward Hall. Hall's earlier interactions with the Hopi and Navajo Indians and especially his work at FSI brought to his attention the problematic nature of intercultural communication. The intercultural problem was clearly articulated at FSI. The U.S. diplomats were often ineffective in their intercultural interactions with people from other cultures. It was the job of Hall and others at FSI to solve the problem.

To accomplish such a task Hall had to gather facts and establish an understanding of how intercultural communication works. Based on years of observations and personal interactions with the Hopi and Navajo Indians and other various cultures, Hall offered several key concepts that attempted to explain the problematic nature of intercultural communication. Hall's observations and conceptualizations were organized in his seminal book, The Silent Language (1959). The publication this book "marked the birth of intercultural communication since it synthesized what are now considered fundamental issues in understanding culture and communication" (Dodd, 1995, p.24). Similarly Pusch and Hoopes (1979) stated that The Silent Language "gave us the first comprehensive analysis of the relationship between communication and culture" (p. 10).

Hammer (1995) identified "four essential contributions" that Hall made to the field of intercultural communication study: (1) the shift from single culture focus to a bi-cultural comparison, (2) brought macro-level concepts of culture to a micro-level, (3) linked culture to the communication process, and (4) brought to our attention the role culture plays in influencing human behavior. In addition to these important contributions Hall added to the field such concepts as monochronic and polychronic time and high and low context, concepts which are commonly used in research today. Hall's conceptualization of the process of intercultural communication and his contributions to the field laid the foundation upon which later research was to be based.

Stage 2: Paradigm-Acceptance

The paradigm-acceptance stage of intercultural communication study can be divided into two sub-stages, the first taking place

in the 1960s and the second taking place in the 1970s. Hammer (1995) labels the 1960s the "Application Decade" in the development of intercultural communication study. According to the Kirk's interpretation of Kuhn, in the paradigm-acceptance stage tests of hypotheses are carried out within the application originally specified.

Testing/Training

The understandings of intercultural communication that were developed by Hall and others in the late 1950s were by the 1960s not only being applied to the training of FSI diplomats, but to also business people, immigrants, missionaries, international students and Peace Corps volunteers. The Peace Corps, which was founded in 1961, began sending thousands of young Americans around the world and they needed to be trained in intercultural communication among other areas. In addition to international intercultural interactions, the civil rights and women's rights movements and other similar movements of the 1960s brought to the attention of many the rich cultural diversity within the U.S. boarders. It was reasoned at the time that some of the same ideas developed for understanding peoples from other countries could be used to deal with the inter-ethnic and inter-racial issues within the U.S. The events of the 1960s provided a rich practical research environment in which to test (through training) the ideas previously developed in intercultural communication study. Funding for these training workshops and other activities in the 1960s "furthered the development of the field" (Pusch & Hoopes, 1979, p.11).

Specialization

By the 1970s the "intercultural reality of the world societies ... elevated intercultural communication to a topic of significant academic merit"(Kim and Gudykunst, 198_, p.146)

Specialized courses, specialized societies and specialized journals were established in the 1970s. The first university-level course in intercultural communication was taught at the University of Pittsburgh in 1966 (Pusch & Hoopes, 1979). In 1969 the International Communication program was founded at the American University (Hammer, 1995). Through out the 1970s the number of intercultural communication courses began to greatly increase such that by 1980, 200 undergraduate, more than 50 Master's level and over 20 Ph.D.-level courses in intercultural communication were being offered (Hammer, 1995).

Along with the growth in intercultural communication courses, there grew an obvious need for intercultural communication texts. Samovar and Porter published an edited book of readings entitled appropriately Intercultural Communication: A Reader in 1972, but it was not until 1975 an "unedited" unified text, An Introduction to Intercultural Communication, by Condon and Yousef was published. Other texts quickly followed: Ruhly, Orientations to Intercultural Communication (1976); Sitaram and Cogdell, Foundations of Intercultural Communication (1976); Dodd, Perspectives on Cross-Cultural Communication (1977); and Prosser, Cultural Dialogue (1977).

Specialized societies were also springing up in the early 1970s. In 1970 the International Communication Association established an Intercultural Division. The Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR) was founded in 1974. Following the lead of the International Communication Association, the Speech Communication Association, in 1975, also established an Intercultural Division.

By the second half of the 1970s, specialized journals and publication also began. The International and Intercultural Communication Annuals, originally edited by Casmir (1974, 1975, 1976) were started. A quarterly journal specializing in intercultural communication and adaptation, the International Journal of Intercultural Relations, began in 1977.

Dodd (1995) places the "birth" of intercultural communication in the 1950s with the publication of The Silent Language. Asante and Gudykunst (1989) take a different perspective on the metaphor. According to Asante and Gudykunst (1989), "If the conception of the field of intercultural communication took place in the 1950s, its birth was in the 1970s."(p.7) Asante and Gudykunst aptly place the "birth" of intercultural communication in the 1970s. Asante and Gudykust's interpretation of the growth-metaphor better fits the stages used here, and thus it is the interpretation used here. The establishments of specialized courses, societies and journals through out the seventies indicated that the field of intercultural communication had quickly "moved from its formative stage of carefree infancy to a somewhat mature stage of adulthood" (Saral, 1979, p.396). The field was conceived in the 1950s, went through a period of gestation in the 1960s, birth in the early 1970s and quick maturation by the early 1980s.

"Definitional Problems"

A common part of any maturation process is an identity crisis. In the late 1970s the field of intercultural communication went through such an identity crisis. The field during the late 1970s struggled with a "definitional problem" (Nwanko, 1979, p.325). Scholars in the field sought greater clarity and accuracy of their concepts, especially addressing the question "What is intercultural communication?" Saral (1977) explored several definitions of intercultural communication, noting that all definitions include the concepts of communication and culture. Saral then explored the individual definitions of communication and culture. Saral concluded that "the nature and scope of intercultural communication ...can be interpreted in a variety of ways, depending upon which definition of the concepts of 'culture' and 'communication' one selects" (Saral, p.390). Such a conclusion did not help the identity crisis.

Prosser (1978) further defined the field by identifying issues and concepts that he felt critical to include in intercultural communication. Prosser suggested a focus on several key variables and their interaction. Prosser suggested studying four communicative components: communication messages, communication participants, linguistic and nonverbal codes, and channels or media, and four cultural components: cultural evolutionism, cultural functionalism, cultural history and cultural ecology. Saral (1979) followed Prossers' trend and identified issues that he thought important to be included in the study of the field. He stressed the importance of understanding the intercultural aspects of education, the Western-bias nature of intercultural communication research, and he introduced the concept of ethics to the field.

Smith (1982) and Rohrlich (1988) continued the field's identity crisis into the 1980s by asking such questions as "Why should we study intercultuaral communication?"(Smith, p.253) and "Why do we study intercultural communication?" (Rohrlich, p.123). Smith and Rohrlich differed in their approaches to intercultural communication and thus differed in their answers to the questions. Smith believed the field was heading in the wrong direction with its focus on the interpersonal level and nonverbal communication differences. Smith referred to this approach as "rather effete and airy-fairy"(p.254). Smith stressed the importance of looking at problems on the international level such as poverty, war and the imbalance in international information flow. Rohrlich (1988) in his response to Smith acknowledged the importance of Smith's international issues, but defended also the importance of interpersonal intercultural issues, noting that "intercultural communication will never be a *sufficient* condition for solving the world's ills, but it is undoubtedly a *necessary* one, even if 'only' interpersonal" (p. 125, Rohrlich's italics).

Stage 3: Theory Construction

As Nwanko (1979) noted "These definitional problems ... done little to help theory building in intercultural communication" (p.325). But, as Kuhn's model of scientific development seems to imply, dealing with "definitional problems" (i.e. identity crises) seems to be a necessary stage on the road to normal science. Once past these roadblocks scientific specialites focus next on theory development. Nwanko noted (1979) that "Several line of intercultural communication research [seemed] to be coming together ... as a result of theoretical and practical considerations that have helped shorten the adolescense of intercultural in the second half of the 1970s" (p.325).

By the early 1980s intercultural communication theory development took centerstage as such intercultural communication scholars as William Gudykunst and Y. Y. Kim developed and organized intercultural communication-oriented theories in order to push the field forward. In 1976 Edward Stewart stated It is premature and may be irrelavent for intercultural communication to construct formal theories, test hypotheses and verify postulates following the traditional canons of the sciences. Crystallization of terms now would probably dampen development. Furthermore, loose theoretical structure can be expected in areas of the social sciences which do not abide solely, if at all, by models, principles and terms derived from the study of the physical sciences (p. 265).

Gudykunst, Kim and others had by the 1980s found that Stewart's statement was no longer valid. After about a decade had past in the development of intercultural communication study, the construction and testing of formal theories seemed no longer "premature and ... irrelevant."

In 1983 Gudykunst edited the first text on intercultural communication theory, Intercultural Communication Theories. This volume of the International and Intercultural Communication Annual stressed the need for theory development and offered several theory to be used in research. A later volume of the International and Intercultural Communication Annual, Theories in Intercultural Communication, continued the theory theme (Gudykunst & Kim, 1988). In 1989 the Handbook of

International and Intercultural Communication, edited by Asante and Gudykunst also had as its central theme on theory develoment.

One chapter of the Handbook (1989) by Gudykunst and Nishida presented an overview of major theoretical perspectives used in intercultural communication research. Gudykunst and Nishida (1989) found that there is no single overarching theoretical paradigm guiding intercultural communication study, suggesting that, at least by Kuhn's standards, the field has not yet reached full maturity.

Burrell and Morgan's (1979) use of the term *paradigm* differs from Kuhn's use of the term. Burrell and Morgan use the term in a broader sense to mean the "metatheoritical assumptions regarding the nature of science and society" (Gudykunst and Nishda, 1989, p.18). Gudykunst and Nishida (1989) find that intercultural communication theories and paradigmatic approaches can be divided into the two contradicting sets of assumptions that Burrell and Morgan find (the subjectivist's approach and the objectivist's approach).

Rohrlich (1988) also recognized the lack of theoretical consensus and the lack of a single paradigm guiding the development of intercultural communication study. "If intercultural communication has any paradigm in the sense social scientists have adopted Thomas Kuhn's influential work ..., it is clearly a rather fragmented one ..."(Rohrlich, p.192). Rohrlich sees intercultural communication research fragmented into two "sub-paradigms," one stressing the personal psychological level and awareness training, and the other stressing the interpersonal process model and cultural consulting. Bradford Hall's (1992) division of intercultural communication study into traditional (neopositivic), coordinated management of meaning, and ethnographic of communication approaches also exemplifies the fragmented nature of intercultural communication study.

Stage 4: Founding of a Mature "Normal" Science

As the analysis of the previous stage shows intercultural communication study has not moved into the fourth stage of a mature science. Given the nature of social sciences, it is unlikely that intercultural communication study will reach the fourth stage of a mature science with its laws and universal constants in any time soon. A remark on the development of intercultural communication study in 1988 by Casmir still holds true today and probably for some time into the future:

At the present time, as is true of communication studies in general, intercultural communication is more involved in describing and defining specific instances than in the development of any general theory. Of course, those methodologies that had been borrowed from prior communication studies, the social sciences, and, in turn, from the physical sciences have not resulted in the discovery of anything comparable to **lawlike** responses in human actions (p.280, emphasis added).

Summary and Next Steps

A summary of the above history is presented as a timeline in Table 1. Intercultural communication study began with the establishment of a conceptual framework by Hall and others at the Foreign Service Institute in the early 1950s. The conceptual framework was organized and presented, in part, in The Silent

Language in 1959. The events of the 1960s provided a rich practical research environment in which to test (through training) the ideas previously developed in intercultural communication study. Starting in the 1970s specialized intercultural communication courses, societies and journals were established, signaling the field's reception of a first paradigm. In the late 1970s intercultural communication scholars sought greater understanding of what intercultural communication is and what the field should include in its study. The field quickly matured by the early 1980s as scholars such as Gudykunst began organizing and developing intercultural communication theories in order to push the field forward. In the 1990s theory construction and testing continues. When intercultural communication study will reach the mature science stage, is unknown.

By using the Kuhnian development of science as a guide we have been able to understand the past developments of intercultural communication and better judge its future developments. Further, study of the history of intercultural communication study is need, however. The field has a forty year history and much detail is left to be organized and presented. The paradigmatic approach to the history of intercultural communication study is one of many approaches that could be taken to understand the development of the field. An historian of the field could also take the bibliographic approach taken by Rogers (1994) in his History.

A field historian could also analyze the influence of different scholars on each other through out the 40-year period by studying citations. By following a citation approach historians can trace the influence of important books and articles on scholars in the field. The influence of the seminal work The Silent Language could be traced, for example. Such questions as "Is The Silent Language still influential?" could be asked and answered.

Other next steps for a historian of the field would include interviews of other historians and the study of non-Western roots of intercultural communication study. Interviews with Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, Robert Kohls, Mitchell Hammer regarding their histories of intercultural communication study and the further consolidation their histories would advance the understanding of the field's history. As noted earlier the history presented above is U.S./Western biased, mostly because it was the United States sources that were readily available for historical analysis. At some later time a historical analysis of the non-Western roots of intercultural communication is called for.

In any future efforts to understand the history of the field, historians must be cautioned about the chaos and complexity of organizing a field's history into a coherent whole. As Rogers et. al. (1993) warned "Because intellectual histories are so complex (and complicated even more by the diverse interpretations of later scholars), they are simultaneously fascinating and very difficult to understand using social scientific methods" Similarly, Herman Hesse (1943/1994), a German novelist, also warned that "To study history means submitting to chaos and nevertheless retaining faith in order and meaning. It is a very serious task, young man, and possibly a tragic one."

Table 1

The Stages in the History of Intercultural Communication Study

Stages in Kuhn's (1970) Development of a Science from pre-paradagmatic research to normal science	Main Events in the Development of Intercultural Communication Study
1. Establishment of a Conceptual Framework	1950s: The "conception" of Intercultural Communication study
* problem articulation; statements of how part of universe works; fact-gathering; organization of ideas	* 1951-1956: Hall's work at FSI
	* 1959 Publication of The Silent Language
2. Paradigm-Acceptance	1960s: "The Application Decade"
* testing of hypotheses within applications originally specified	* training of diplomats, business people, and Peace Corp volunteers.
	1970s: "The birth of intercultural communication"
	* establishment of specialized IC courses, SIETAR, and IJIR.
* formulations of specialized courses, societies and journals	* late 1970s: "Definitional Problems"
* search for greater clarity	
3. Theory Construction	1980s: Gudykunst and others' work on theory development
4. Founding of a Mature "Normal" Science	????: This stage has not yet occurred for intercultural communication.

Notes

LESSON 3
INTRODUCTION TO CULTURE

Contents

Introduction, What is culture? Different Definitions of Culture, Functions of culture, Characteristics of culture.

Learning Objectives:

- To define culture.
- To know the significance of Culture in our life.
- To understand the basic characteristics of culture.

Introduction:

For communication to work, people must have something in common. If communicators know and respect one another, communication is relatively easy. They can predict one another's moods and meanings, they know what topics to avoid, and they can sometimes even complete one another's thoughts. Uncertainty and stress are at a minimum; communication is spontaneous, open, and comfortable.

Communicating with strangers is more difficult. If the strangers come from our own culture, we can at least base our messages on shared attitudes, beliefs, and life experiences; but if the strangers are from another culture, we may be at a loss. In such a case, uncertainty is maximized. The actual forms, and even the functions, *of* communication may be strange to us.

In cross-cultural settings even simple interactions can become complex. Imagine for a moment that you're working in Morocco. A colleague has invited you to his family home for dinner, but is a little vague about when dinner will be served, and you have to ask several times before fixing the time. That evening, when you enter your host's home, his wife is nowhere to be seen, and when you ask when she'll be joining you, the host looks flustered and says that she's busy in the kitchen. When his little boy enters, you remark on how cute and clever the child is, but rather than being pleased, your Moroccan colleague looks upset. Before dinner is served, you politely ask to go to the washroom to wash up. During the meal you do your best to hold up your end of the conversation, but it's hard going. Finally, after tea and sweet, you thank the host and politely leave. You have a feeling the dinner party wasn't a success, but you don't really know what went wrong.

As it turns out, according to Craig Storti, almost everything you did in this social situation was inappropriate. In Morocco an invitation to dinner is actually an invitation to come and spend time. At some point food will be served, but what's important is being together. Therefore, discussing the specific time you should come to dinner is like asking your host how long he wants you around, and it also implies that your major concern is to be fed. Your questions about his wife and your compliments to his son were similarly inappropriate. It is not customary for a Moroccan wife to eat with guests or even to be introduced, and praising a child is considered unlucky because it may alert evil spirits to the child's presence. Washing up in the washroom was also impolite. If you'd waited, your host would

have arranged for water to be brought in to you in an expensive decorative basin that would have shown his good taste as well as his concern for your comfort. Finally, it was rude to carry on a conversation during dinner. Talking interferes with the enjoyment of the meal and can be interpreted as a slight against the food.

An isolated incident such as this is not terribly serious, but people who spend time in other cultures may encounter many such small misunderstandings, which over time can take their toll. If cultural differences can get in the way of a simple meal between friends, you can imagine how they might seriously affect complicated business or diplomatic relations. Because cross-cultural contexts add an additional layer of complexity to normal interactions, some grounding in intercultural communication is essential for anyone who travels abroad or interacts with strangers in this country.

Although cultural differences can sometimes cause misunderstandings, intercultural communication need not be doomed to failure. As Harry Hoijer has remarked, "No culture is wholly isolated, self-contained, and unique. There are important resemblances between all known cultures . . . Intercultural communication, however wide the differences between cultures may be, is not impossible. It is simply more or less difficult . . ." Intercultural communication is possible because people are not "helplessly suspended in their cultures." developing an openness to new ideas and a willingness to listen and to observe, we can surmount the difficulties inherent in intercultural interaction. This chapter discusses ways in which people from different cultures can learn to communicate more effectively.

What is Culture?

Culture *n* [ME, fr. MF, fr. L *cultura,* fr. *cultus,* pp.] (15c) **1:** CULTIVATION, TILLAGE **2:** the act of developing the intellectual and moral faculties esp. by education **3:** expert care and training **4 a:** enlightenment and excellence of taste acquired by intellectual and aesthetic training **b:** acquaintance with and taste in fine arts, humanities and broad aspects of science as distinguished from vocational and technical skills **5 a:** the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations **b:** the customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group **6:** cultivation of living material in prepared nutrient media; *also:* a product of such cultivation

Culture, of course, is a very broad term, used in various ways, so often that it has comes to mean anything and everything to some people. We will try to employ a concept of culture that is not too broad, but retains the rich layers of meaning that the term has acquired over time.

The word "culture" is from the Latin "*cultura*," which is from the verb *colere*, meaning "to till" (as in soil or land). The word shares etymology with such modern English words as agriculture, cultivate, and colony.

To till and cultivate the soil is both to do it violence and to stimulate its growth. It is a process that irrevocably alters the soil's present form in order to make it achieve a certain potential. In a certain sense this is a process of actualizing a potential that already exists within the soil. Cultivation channels the growth in a particular direction with a certain kind of value directing this growth — e.g. to produce food from dirt and seeds.

Culture in the human sense also involves both a violence and a growth. (Hermann Goerring's infamous quote comes to mind here — "Whenever I hear the word 'culture,' I reach for my gun." It is sometimes facetiously said that American liberals have a version of the same sentence — "Whenever I hear the word 'gun,' I reach for my culture.")

Note that, like communication, culture is an active and organic process rather than a final product (e.g. "race"). This is a problem in intercultural communication studies because culture is sometimes equated with an unchanging quality or category like race or ethnicity without focusing on the ways in which culture is always growing, changing, and developing. Culture is *dynamic*. From this perspective, a question like "what culture are you?" is meaningless.

One of the dictionary definitions of culture is "the cultivation of intellectual/moral faculties" - a process of "civilizing." Culture shares the same root as the word *colony*. The process of colonization (a violent process of uprooting societies and forcing them to adopt new modes of being in the world) was always portrayed by the colonizers as something being done for the good of its victims. Civilizing them, raising their moral or intellectual capacity to the level of the colonizer.

Note that social and political (as well as economic and military) relations are made to seem *natural and inevitable* with the concept of culture. Culture is a *human* process, and the results of cultural processes are also the result of human decisions (conscious or not), which are always avoidable.

Culture, then, can also be seen as a process of **naturalization**: Social relations that have been established by historical accident come to *seem* natural and unchangeable over time. One example of this process of naturalization is the way in which Western culture has been globalized and universalized so that all other cultures appear as "backwards" or "primitive." Ruth Benedict argues: "Western civilization, because of fortuitous historical circumstances, has spread itself more widely than any other local group that has so far been known. It has standardized itself over most of the globe, and we have been led, therefore, to accept a belief in the uniformity of human behavior that under other circumstances would not have arisen.... The psychological consequences of the spread of white culture has been all out of proportion to the materialistic. This worldwide cultural diffusion has protected us as man has never been protected from having to take seriously the civilizations of other peoples; it has given to our culture a massive universality that we have long ceased to account for historically, and which we read off

rather as necessary and inevitable." ("The Science of Custom," 1934).

Finally, culture must be understood as a *communicative* process. It inevitably involves the use of symbols to shape social reality. Edward T. Hall, the "father" of intercultural communication studies, points this out in what is known as "Hall's identity": "Culture is communication and communication is culture."

Culture is the philosophy of life, the values, norms and rules, and actual behavior - as well as the material and immaterial products from these - which are taken over by man from the past generations, and which man wants to bring forward to the next generation - eventually in a different form - and which in one way or another separate individuals belonging to the culture from individuals belonging to other cultures

Different Definitions of Culture

1. Anthropological definition

   Clifford Geertz: "an historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge and attitudes toward life."

2. Psychological definition

   Geert Hofstede: "a programming of the mind" - a set of patterns of thinking that you learn early on and carry with you in your head. Note computer analogy.

3. Ethnographic definition

   Gerry Philipsen: "a socially constructed and historically transmitted pattern of symbols, meanings, premises, and rules."

4. British Cultural Studies definition

   Stuart Hall points to culture as a *contested zone* — a *site of struggle* and conflict, always variable and changing. Raymond Williams discusses culture as "a whole way of life of a people."

5. Intercultural Communication Studies definition

   This one comes from Guo-Ming Chen and William J. Starosta: "a negotiated set of shared symbolic systems that guide individuals' behaviors and incline them to function as a group."

   negotiated: brings in the cultural studies notion of culture as a zone of contestation. Symbols are not self-evident; they can only make meaning within particular contexts, and those meanings are negotiated or struggled over.

   shared symbolic systems: the symbolic process depends on intersubjective agreement. A decision is made to participate in the process of meaning making.

   guide behavior: culture is persuasive. It doesn't literally program us, but it does significantly influence our behavior.

   function as a group: people form cultural groups - note the dynamic of identity and difference at work when this occurs; to form one group and identify with some is always to exclude others and differentiate oneself from them.

Functions of Culture

1. to provide the *context* for 3 aspects of human society: the linguistic, the physical, and the psychological.

2. culture provides the stability and structure necessary for a group to maintain a group identity.

Characteristics of Culture

1. **Culture is holistic**: a complex whole that is not the sum of its parts. You might, for example, analyze a particular cultural belief or a kinship system as a specific cultural formation, but all of the aspects of culture are interrelated. Culture affects language, religion, basic worldview, education, social, organization, technology, politics, and law, and all of these factors affect one another.

Age grading	Ethics	Language
Athletics	Etiquette	Law
Bodily adornment	Family	Magic
Calendar	Folklore	Marriage
Cleanliness	Funeral Rites	Numbers
Cooking	Gestures	Customs/ Rituals
Cosmology	Greetings	Restrictions
Courtship	Hairstyles	Surgery
Dancing	Hygiene	Tool making
Education	Kinship	Music

Table above gives an idea of the variety of interconnected activities that are found in virtually every culture. These activities are common to all people who live together in social groups and are thus examples of cultural universals, yet the enhancement of these activities varies dramatically form culture to culture. In every culture, for example people adorn their bodies, eat, educate their children, recognize family groupings, keep track of time, and so on.

2. **Culture is _learned_**. It is not inborn or biological. We actively learn culture throughout our lives. The first point about cultures is that they are learned. Americans act like other Americans not because we are innately predisposed to do so, but because we learn to do so. Much of our early training is an attempt to make us fit cultural patterns. If we do not learn the lessons of our cultures, we pay-"through a loss of comfort, status, peace of mind, safety, or some other value. . ." We may even be imprisoned or labeled insane for acting in ways that would be perfectly acceptable in other cultures.

We are so well programmed that we seldom stop to think that culture is learned. Our cultural norms appear to be natural and right, and we can't imagine acting differently. Yet had we been brought up in Korea by Korean parents an entirely different set of norms would appear natural. We would be culturally Korean. We would speak Korean, follow Korean norms and customs, and see the world in typically Asian ways. Although this point seems obvious, it is one we often forget. When we see someone from another culture act in ways we consider strange, our first impulse is to attribute the action to personality. For example, we label someone "pushy" who speaks more loudly and forcefully than we do; we seldom stop to realize that had we been brought up in that person's culture, we would probably express ourselves just as loudly and forcefully.

3. **Culture is shared**- Another important characteristic of culture is that it is shared. Cultures are group understandings rather than individual ones, and belonging to a culture means acting according to group norms. For most people, fitting into a cultural group is very important. Being like others provides security, perhaps because we equate being alike with being right and being different with being wrong. Regardless of the reason, we learn very early to separate the world into "us" and "them," and we work very hard to make sure that others recognize which of the two we are. Little boys are mortified if they are mistaken for little girls; they will spend a good part of the rest of their lives living up to the masculine ideal. The wealthy do not wish to be thought poor; thus, they act in ways that signal their status. Mistakes that mix "us" with "them" undermine our sense of self.

Because cultures are shared, we are not entirely free to act as we wish. Indeed, we spend a good deal of time proving who we are and living up to the expectations of others. This process of living out cultural rules is largely invisible and seldom problematic if we stay within a single culture. A white, middleclass, American male who associates only with others like himself seldom stops to think about the effects of national, racial, class, or gender rules on his beliefs and behaviors. Only when he steps outside his circle of friends, his neighborhood, or his country and experiences other cultures is he likely to see the extent to which culture affects him.

People who frequently move between cultures are often more sensitive to the fact that culture is shared. Lawrence Wieder and Steven Pratt give an interesting example of the importance of shared cultural identity and the difficulties it presents for minority group members. In an article entitled "On Being a Recognizable Indian Among Indians," Wieder and Pratt discuss ways in which Native Americans of the Osage people let one another know that they are "real Indians" rather than "White Indians." Wieder and Pratt's research not only illustrates the universal need to demonstrate cultural identity but also shows how central communication style is to that demonstration.

According to Wieder and Pratt, one of the primary differences between the communication styles of European Americans and Native Americans is the value the latter place on being silent. "When real Indians who are strangers to one another pass each other in a public place, wait in line, occupy adjoining seats, and so forth, they take it that it is proper to remain silent and to not initiate conversation."IO Once Native Americans do engage in conversation with one another, they take on substantial obligations, among them the necessity of interacting whenever their paths cross. For students and businesspeople, this obligation may be problematic, for it takes precedence over attending class or keeping appointments.

Talking like a "real Indian" also means being modest and not showing oneself to be more knowledgeable than other Native Americans. Being asked by a European-American teacher to volunteer information in a group discussion where other Native Americans are present puts a well-informed Native-American student in a difficult bind. To avoid appearing arrogant, he or she may simply refuse to participate.

The desire to avoid seeming immodest occurs in public speaking situations as well, where speaking is reserved for tribal elders. Only certain individuals are entitled to speak, and they often speak for someone else rather than for themselves. It is customary to begin a speech with a disclaimer such as "I really don't feel that I am qualified to express [the wishes of the people I am speaking for] but I'm going to do the best I can, so please bear with me." Compare this custom to the rule taught by most European-American communication teachers that a speaker should build his or her credibility at the beginning of speech and you will see how communication styles across cultures can conflict.

4. **Culture is *dynamic***. It is constantly changing over time, not fixed or static. As economic conditions change, as new technologies are developed, and as cultural contact increases, old ways of doing things change, people must learn new things and behaviors. This important fact is one reason why memorizing list of do's and don'ts is just not the right way to prepare for intercultural contact. A better way to prepare for intercultural communication is to become sensitive to the kinds of differences that occur between cultures and to develop the ability to learn by observation.

What is acceptable behavior and what is not, and what is right and what is wrong. Our culture also teaches us how to interpret the world. From our culture we learn such things as how close to stand to strangers, when to speak and when to be silent, how to greet friends and strangers, and how to display anger appropriately. Because each culture has a unique way of ap-proaching these situations, we find great diversity in cultural behaviors throughout the world.

Learning about cultural diversity provides students with knowledge and skills for more effective communication in intercultural situations. Samovar and Porter (1999) suggest that the first step in being a good intercultural communicator is to know your own culture and to know yourself-in other words, to reflect thoughtfully on how you perceive things and how you act on those perceptions. Second, the more we know about the different cultural beliefs, values, and attitudes of our global neighbors, the better prepared we will be to recognize and to understand the differences in their cultural behaviors. The knowledge of cultural differences and self-knowledge of how we usually respond to those differences can make us aware of hidden prejudices and stereotypes which are barriers to toler-ance, understanding, and good communication.

The cultural behaviors of people from the same country can be referred to collectively as cultural patterns, which are clusters of interrelated cultural orientations. The common cultural patterns that apply to the entire country represent the dominant culture in a heterogeneous society. It is important to remember that even within a homogeneous society, the dominant cultural pattern does not necessarily apply to everyone living in that society. Our perception of the world does not develop only because of our culture; many other factors contribute to the development of our individual views. When we refer to a dominant cultural pattern we are referring to the patterns that foreigners are most likely to encounter. We also need to remember that culture is dynamic and as the needs and values of individuals change, the cultural patterns will also change.

One example of such a change is the status of women in United States culture. After World War II, women began to work outside the home and started to share the previously male role of family provider. At the same time, family roles shifted to accommodate the working wife and mother, and men had to assume more responsibility for maintaining the home, like helping to cook, clean, and care for children.

Value dimensions are a group of interrelated values that have a significant impact on all cultures. Hofstede (1980) has devel-oped a taxonomy (a classification system) that identifies value dimensions, that are influenced and modified by culture like individualism-collectivism and power distance. In individualistic cultures, each individual is the most important part of the social structure, and each individual is valued for his/her unique persona. People are concerned with their own personal goals and may not possess great loyalty to groups.

In collective cultures, on the other hand, individuals are very loyal to all the groups they are part of, including the work place, the family, and the community. Within collectivism, people are concerned with the group's ideas and goals, and act in ways that fulfill the group's purposes rather than the individual's. Samovar et. al., (1997) note that while individualism and collectivism can be treated as separate dominant cultural patterns, and that it is helpful to do so, all people and cultures have both individual and collective dispositions.

According to Hofstede's classification system, a second value dimension that varies with different cultures is power distance. Some cultures have high-power distances and others have low-power distances. High-power-distance cultures believe that authority is essential in social structure, and strict social classes and hierarchy exist in these countries. In low-power cultures people believe in equality and the people with power may interact with the people without power on an equal level.

Kluckhohn (1961) offers a third value dimension, a culture's orientation to time. In our world, we have cultures that are either past-oriented, present-oriented, or future-oriented. Each of these different attitudes describes the degree to which the culture values the past, the present, or the future. Cultures place emphasis on the events that have happened or will happen during the period that they view as important.

LESSON 4
COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

Contents

Introduction, What is culture? Indian culture, Japanese culture, German culture, French culture, Different Concepts Of Time, Space and Memory.

Learning Objectives:

- To define culture.
- To have a brief understanding of different cultures.
- To understand the different concepts of time space and memory.

Communication and Culture

Edward T. Hall defines culture as:

...man's medium; there is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture. This means personality, how people express themselves (including shows of emotion), the way they think, how they move, how problems are solved, how their cities are planned and laid out, how transportation systems function and are organized, as well as how economic and government systems are put together and function. It is the least studied aspects of culture that influence behaviour in the deepest and most subtle ways (Hall, 1976, p. 14).

When we discuss communication and culture, we should be aware of the total spectrum of communication including language, non-verbal communication, customs, perceived values, and concepts of time and space. Do all tourists identify with Canadian traditions and values? Likely not. But the more interesting question is: Why not? The answer lies in the simple fact that most tourists come from different cultures: some vastly different like those from Japan and China, others less different, such as tourists from Eastern Canada or the United States. Even if tourists share the same language, they may have much different customs and values.

What happens when people from different cultures interact face-to-face? One way to appreciate the impact of cultural differences is to look in the mirror. When Americans and Canadians travel to other countries, they look for Cokes, steaks and hamburgers and the same amenities in hotels and other accommodations that they are used to at home. While the host country may offer an authentically different culture, which is one of the reasons people travel, North Americans tourists are notorious for wanting the comforts of home wherever they may be. In many third world countries, North Americans seek out joint venture hotels to enjoy North American food and lodging and to be served by people who speak English. Strangely, what we expect for ourselves in travel is not deemed to be reasonable when we're the hosts dealing with tourists from other countries.

For example,

Consider something like a sneeze being inauspicious while starting on a journey or something new (god help the guy with a bad cold or allergy!).

Many omens relate to animals, birds and reptiles.

The most auspicious omen is to see an elephant when one is on a journey, for it represents Ganesha, the god of good luck and the remover of obstacles.

The cawing of a crow in one's house foretells the coming of guests (only, one really has to strain one's ears to hear cawing crows and chirping sparrows over the general cacophony of city life).

There is also a strong belief in the power of dreams, as divine warnings. Dreaming of gods, demons, auspicious animals or any other auspicious thing is good. Whereas, dreaming of gold or iron, falling stars or earthquakes is bad.

Seeing a cat or a cow's face early in the morning brings ill luck (pity the guy who has to milk one in the morning!).

But there were some which had a purpose to them. For example, wearing shoes in the kitchen was supposed to induce the wrath of gods. This belief originated when kitchens were traditional, with mud stoves in a corner and families sat on the floor and ate off plates or leaves placed on the ground and hence required the kitchen to be absolutely clean.

The Indian:

In India foreign delegates are welcomed in very traditional manner.

Namaskar or Namaste is the most popular form of greeting in India. It is a general salutation that is used to welcome some-body and also for bidding farewell. While doing namaskar, both the palms are placed together and raised below the face to greet a person.

It is believed that both the hands symbolise one mind, or the self meeting the self. While the right hand represents higher nature, the left hand denotes worldly or lower nature.

Tilak

Tilak is a ritual mark on the forehead. It can be put in many forms as a sign of blessing , greeting or auspiciousness. The tilak is usually made out of a red vermilion paste *(kumkum)* which is a mixture of turmeric, alum, iodine, camphor, etc. It can also be of a sandalwood paste *(chandan)* blended with musk.

The tilak is applied on the spot between the brows which is considered the seat of latent wisdom and mental concentration, and is very important for worship. This is the spot on which yogis meditate to become one with Lord Brahma. It also indicates the point at which the spiritual eye opens. All thoughts and actions are said to be governed by this spot. Putting of the coloured mark symbolizes the quest for the 'opening ' of the third eye. All rites and ceremonies of the Hindus begin with a tilak topped with a few grains of rice placed on this spot with the index finger or the thumb. The same custom is followed while welcoming or bidding farewell to guests or relations.

Garlanding

Flower garlands are generally offered as a mark of respect and honor. They are offered to welcome the visitors or in honor to the Gods and Goddesses. The garlands are generally made with white jasmine and orange marigold flowers. They are weaved in thread tied in the end with a help of a knot.

The Japanese:

One of the functions of culture is to provide a highly selective screen between man and the outside world. In its many forms, culture therefore designates what we pay attention to and what we ignore (Hall:1976:74). For example, Hall tells about an American businessman who registered in a Japanese hotel, telling them he intended to stay for one month. After 10 days, without notice, he is moved to another room. He discovers this by accident and is surprised to find that all his personal items have been placed around the room in almost the identical position to that in which he had put them his first room. Not wishing to make a fuss, he says nothing.

To his surprise, he is moved two more times, each time without notification. Eventually, when he returned to the hotel instead of just asking for the key to his room, he would ask whether he was in the same room. During the last week, he was moved again, but this time into another hotel (Hall:1976:50)!

Two variables associated with culture are involved here. One is that in Western societies, moves are associated with status - the lowest ranking individual is the one moved. Second is the significance of space. Being quite territorial, Westerners want to make sure that a move does not involve moving to a smaller space (Hall:1976:52-54). Looking at this same situation from a

Japanese cultural perspective, when a person enters a hotel he/ she becomes part of a family. As a member of the family, the hotel feels they can quietly move you if the need arises. Taking such liberties with your accommodation signals that you belong, that you are a member of the family. However, the Japanese are also familiar with the reaction such moves have on Westerners. They are sensitive to the fact that other cultures react loudly to being moved and having their personal items touched with out their permission. Many hotels who cater to Westerners abide by the rules of the visitor's culture and would not think of moving the person (Hall:1976:56). The familiarity displayed in the example above is more likely to occur in a hotel located well away from normal tourist territory.

All over the world, suitable environments have been created for tourists that shield them from the reality of the life of the people.

Tourists seldom stick around for long, and they are happier if insulated from the full impact of the foreign culture (Hall:1976:49).

However, in the case quoted above, the forced move to the second hotel turned out to be a blessing. The American businessman found the district around the new hotel much more interesting and authentic than that around the first hotel. As Hall notes, each culture has its own language of space which is as unique as the spoken language Hall:1976:52-3).

In a Japanese hotel, all visitors are given the same kind of bath robe. This is not just the results of an opportunistic management using the guests to advertise the hotel. Rather it symbolizes that once you had registered in the hotel, you were no longer an outsider. You belonged. You became a member of a large, mobile family. As a family member, you are afforded an environment which is relaxed and informal (Hall:1976:56). But remember, no matter how informal or relaxed you may feel, meal-time is not appropriate for discussions of business (Hall: 1987:108).

It is important for the Japanese to be able to place people in a social system. In fact, it is impossible to interact with someone else if this placing has not occurred, hence the requirement that you state who you are on your calling card: first, the organization you work for, second, your position in that organization, then, your degrees, honours you have received, followed by the family name, the given name and address (Hall:1976:58).

In Japan there are two sides to everyone - the warm, close friendly involved side, that does not stand on ceremony, and the public, official, status conscious, ceremonial side, which is what most foreigners see. Most Japanese feel quite uncomfortable about the ceremonial side of life. Their principal drive is to move from the stand on ceremony side toward the intimate, friendly side. Think about the practice of men and women sleeping side by side crowded together on the floor in a single room, and the camaraderie of communal bathing. Japanese cultural communication seems full of paradoxes (Hall:1976:59). When they communicate, particularly about important things, it is often called indirection by foreigners (Hall:1976:56).

Gifts are especially important to Japanese and specifically gifts from abroad. They particularly appreciate liquor, candy, food, or handicrafts from foreign countries. Never refuse a gift, it is the ultimate insult. Japanese etiquette books describe in detail the kind of gift that is expected from people at different levels in the social and economic hierarchy, including the amount that you should spend on gifts for people in different categories (Hall:1987:109).

These observations about the Japanese are symbolic of the wide range of differences which affect communication between cultures. However, there are just as many differences with other cultures.

The Germans:

Germany is not a melting pot society and Germans are not mobile. Many stay in their geographic region and even the same house for generations. The scale of everything is smaller in Germany than in the Western countries. They love the outdoors, open spaces and treasure forests. Hiking is a popular sport (Hall:1990:38).

To the German space is sacred. Homes are protected by a variety of barriers, fences, walls, hedges solid doors, shutters and screening to prevent visual or auditory intrusion (Hall:1990:38).

Germans seldom invite anyone who is not a close friend to their home. To be invited is considered an honour. When you arrive bring a small bouquet for the hostess (not red roses which convey romantic attachment). Flowers should be unwrapped before being presented (Hall:1990:39).

Positions in things is also important - for example, the right side represents a place of respect (Hall:1990:42). So, in seating arrangements or just walking from one place to another, the senior person or the group leader should be placed on the right.

The German sense of privacy is very strong. Learn what is considered personal and do not ask questions that may be offensive. Americans feel that Germans do not interact with neighbours and perceive German behaviour as unfriendly. German friends of many years continue to address each other by their last names: "Herr Schmidt" not "Walter". Germans are careful not to touch accidentally or to encourage signs of intimacy. On the other hand, they do maintain direct eye contact in conversations to show they are paying attention. However, the German who speaks most softly and to whom others defer is the one to pay attention to, not the one who makes the most noise. Order is a dominant theme in German culture. There is order in all things, including space—they are very sensitive to spatial intrusions. One exception to orderliness is behaviour in lines for service, in stores, at ticket counters, or in boarding planes, especially where there is no seat assignment. Germans do not form queues but instead crowd and push and can be very rough. They do not yield when someone says "Excuse me". Their determination to be served overrides their usual need to avoid physical contact. However, these are exceptions. Generally, Germans expect organization and order in all things— everything should be carefully planned, researched thoroughly and carried out in an orderly manner (Hall:1990:39-42).

They have a strong drive for conformity and object strenuously when people fail to obey signs and directions. Westerners feel that things are meant to be used; and if they serve no useful purpose, we dispose of them. The German attitude is that things have great intrinsic value. We feel remiss if we buy books and don't read them. But a German will feel that it is important to own a book even if one can't read it immediately. Sales of hard-cover books exceed sales of paperback books in Germany (Hall:1990:46).

Associated with their demand for high-quality, long-lasting goods is the German abhorrence of waste. Waste is a sin, such as heating, cooling and lighting buildings when it is not necessary (Hall:1990:46). Germans are value-conscious and always insist on getting their money's worth. Don't ever try to sell them goods that are less than high quality. They appreciate, in fact demand, fine workmanship, design and high-quality material.

A television ad that is effective in the U.S. will have to be translated into print media to reach Germans. Germans are print-oriented, which explains in part why there is so little advertising on German TV (Hall:1990:30). Also, Germans are always looking for what is "true" and to them numbers are a way of signalling that a product is exactly as it has been represented. Germans demand facts, facts and more facts.

The French:

It is not uncommon for Americans to experience difficulty getting the French - even those whom they know and have done business with- to reply to inquiries, even urgent ones. This can be exasperating. The reasons are many, but most have to do with the importance of immediate human contacts to the French. A solution that succeeds when other methods fail is to use a surrogate to relay messages, rather than relying on a letter or a phone call. Why? Because letters and phone calls are not personal enough. If you send a properly placed emissary, one whom the individual you are trying to reach likes and trusts and considers important, you add the necessary personal touch to your message and will thereby release the right response.

The French also stress the importance of observing the many rituals of form. If you don't use the right form, the message conveyed is that you are ignorant or ill-mannered or don't care. In any event, the response that is provoked is almost certain to be negative. Remember that the French deplore casualness and informality. Paying attention to the details and being correct in everything you do is the only tactic that releases the right response from the French (Hall:1990:30).

Context:

Another important aspect of communication is the level of context in which the message is passed. Linguists and anthropologists use the terms 'high' and 'low' context to indicate how much information is required for successful communication. High-context communication is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little of the message is actually in words (Hall:1976:79). Couples often can communicate with a look, or a nod of the head at most. Low-context

communication is just the opposite: most of the information is verbalized. Twins who have grown up together can and do communicate more economically (high context) than can opposing lawyers in a courtroom during a trial (low-context) (Hall:1976:79).

In the Far East, high-context communication is much more common than in North America. This can lead to serious misunderstanding. A businessman was invited to lunch with a Japanese friend atop one of Tokyo's new skyscrapers with all of the city spread out below them. The Japanese host chose the occasion to give an overview of some of the sticky points in US- Japanese relations. In his own way, indirect but very clear, he said there were certain things that the Americans had missed in Japanese culture (Hall:1976:141).

For the

Japanese to show anger is tantamount to admitting loss of control (and face), unless, of course, things have gone too far. No warning signs are given and Westerners as well as Europeans will unconsciously push and push - looking for structure, pattern, and limits. Because they are unfamiliar with the system, they will go too far. With the Japanese culture, one must make haste slowly and engage the most skilful, subtle interpreter of the culture you can find (Hall:1976:142).

The greater the cultural distance, the more difficult the interface. An example of easy-to-interface communication would be Germany and Switzerland. The cultural distance in this case is not great since both cultures are low context as well as monochronic, a concept discussed in the following section (Hall:1990:27). A difficult-to-interface communication would be France and the United States. If you're communicating with a German, remember they are low-context and will need lots of information and details. If you're communicating with someone from France, they are high-context and won't require as much information (Hall:1990:28).

Context is the information that surrounds an event; it is inextricably bound up with the meaning of that event. The elements that combine to produce a given meaning — events and context — are in different proportions depending on the culture. The cultures of the worlds can be compared on a scale from high to low context (Hall:1990:27).

Japanese, Arabs and Mediterranean peoples, who have extensive information networks among family, friends, colleagues and clients and who are involved in close personal relations are high-context. As a result, for most normal transactions in family life they do not require, nor do they expect, much in-depth background information. This is because they keep themselves informed about everything having to do with the people who are important in their lives.

Low-context people include Americans, Germans, Swiss, Scandinavians and other northern Europeans. They compartmentalize their personal relationships, their work, and many aspects of day-to-day life. Consequently, each time they interact with others they need detailed background information. The French are much higher on the context scale than either the Germans or the Americans. This difference can affect virtually every situation and every relationship in which the members of these two opposite traditions find themselves.

"Contexting" performs multiple functions. For example, any shift in the level of context is a communication. The shift can be up the scale, indicating a warming of the relationship, or down the scale communicating coolness or displeasure—signalling something has gone wrong with a relationship. High context people are apt to become impatient and irritated when low- context people insist on giving them information they don't need (Hall:1990:10).

Conversely, low-context people are at a loss when high- context people do not provide enough information. One of the great communication challenges in life is to find the appropriate level of contexting needed in each situation. Too much information leads people to feel they are being talked down to; too little information can mystify them or make them feel left out. Ordinarily, people make these adjustments automatically in their own country, but in other countries their messages frequently miss the target (Hall:1990:9).

Americans, to some extent, and Germans, to a greater extent, rely heavily on auditory screening, particularly when they want to concentrate. High-context people reject auditory screening and thrive on being open to interruptions and in tune with what goes on around them. French and Italian cities periodically bombard you with noise.

Different Concepts of Time:

Another important factor in cross-cultural communication is the concept of time. For example, in Germany if you arrive late by even a few minutes, no one will be impressed by your sales presentation, no matter how good it is. Indeed, they may not even wait around to hear it (Hall:1990:28).

We can divide people into two rough categories with respect to time: monochronic and polychronic people. Monochronic people tend to do one thing at a time, concentrate on the job at hand, take time commitments seriously and are concerned not to disturb others. They also tend to be rule followers, show great respect for private property, seldom borrow or lend and emphasize promptness. In addition, they are low-context in terms of the category discussed earlier. Polychronic people are almost opposites in all of the above. They are high-context types, who do many things at once, are highly distractible and subject to interruptions. While they consider time commitments objectives to be metif possible, they are more concerned with relationships, especially family and friends (Hall:1990:15).

As mentioned above, promptness is taken for granted in Germany. In fact, it's almost an obsession. If there is a chance you'll be late for an appointment, phone ahead. The Germans want to know where people are at all times; not knowing violates their sense of order (Hall:1990:36).

It is always important to know which segment of the time frame is emphasized. Eastern peoples tend to be past-oriented. Others, such as those in the urban United States, are oriented to the present and short-term future. Still others, such as Latin Americans, are both past and present oriented. In Germany, where historical background is very important, every

talk, book, or article begins with background information giving an historical perspective. This irritates many foreigners who keep wondering "why don't they get on with it? After all, I am educated. Don't the Germans know that?"

The Japanese and the French are also steeped in history, but because they are high-context cultures, historical facts are alluded to obliquely. At present, there is no satisfactory explanation for why and how differences of this sort came about (Hall:1990:17).

The key to understanding Japanese time is to know that the Japanese have two modes: a monochronic mode for foreigners and technology and a polychronic mode for virtually everything else. The Japanese switch from an open system for those in their inner circle to a more closed and tightly scheduled system for outsiders. To an outsider everything in Japan is rigidly scheduled. They organize a visitor's time and present him with a full schedule upon arrival. However, as one comes to know the Japanese, one discovers another aspect of their time system— flexibility (Hall:1990:114).

Historical past is important to Japanese and they take it for granted that the visitor will be familiar with the main points of Japanese history. When dealing with the Japanese one must keep in mind that many important things are frequently left unsaid. When the Japanese meet with foreigners, the most important thing on their agenda is to get to know them. They are quite expert at determining what tactics are effective with foreigners and will try various strategies to see what works. They also ask many probing questions, testing your knowledge and your sincerity and conviction. Japanese admire people who are serious about their work, well informed, sincere and honest. They want to have some understanding of and feeling for the people involved. Do not be impatient. If you deny the Japanese this opportunity to become acquainted, you will not succeed in matters. Do not mistake hospitality for friendship (Hall:1987:114).

Space:

In humans, territoriality is highly developed and strongly influenced by culture. It is particularly well developed in the Germans and the Americans. Americans tend to establish places that they label "mine" - a cook's feeling about a kitchen or a child's view of her or her bedroom. In Germany, this same feeling of territoriality is commonly extended to all possessions, including the automobile. If a German's car is touched, it is as though the individuals himself has been touched. Space also communicates power. In German and Americans the top floor is more important than others, while for the French middle floors are more important (Hall:1990:11).

Personal Space: This is another form of territory. Each person has around him an invisible bubble of space which expands and contracts depending on a number of things: the relationship to the people nearby, the person's emotional state, cultural background, and the activity being performed. Few people are allowed to penetrate this bit of mobile territory and then only for short periods of time. Changes in the bubble brought about by cramped quarters or crowding cause people to feel uncomfortable or aggressive. In northern Europe, the bubbles are quite large and people keep their distance. In southern

France, Italy, Greece, and Spain, the bubbles get smaller and smaller so that the distance that is perceived as intimate in the north overlaps normal conversational distance in the south. This means that Mediterranean Europeans "get too close" to the Germans, the Scandinavians, the English and those Americans of Northern European ancestry. In northern Europe, one does not touch others. Even the brushing of the overcoat sleeve used to elicit an apology (Hall:1990:11).

Memory:

In addition to the talents that people are born with, culture has always exerted a dominant influence on memory and thinking. In Iran, for example, schools emphasize verbal memory. Iranian educators do not care how students store and retrieve information just as long as they remember. In earning their living in later life, they must continue to be able to recall blocks of material even at relatively low organizational levels in government.

The verbal memory system, like many cultural systems, is integrated into the rest of the culture and is felt in all areas of life (Hall:1976:160).

Conclusion:

Insensitivity to customs of "guests" in Western countries will not only result in misinformed decisions, but may also precipitate resentment. When we experience a form of cultural shock (something outside our normal experience), we have to remember a simple maxim: "What they are doing makes sense to them."

Notes

LESSON 5
THE COMPLEXITY OF CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES

Contents
Introduction, the relativity and co-incidence of culture, cultural hierarchy, dimensions of culture.

Learning Objectives:
- To study the complexities of cross culture communication.
- To understand cultural hierarchy.

The Complexity of Cross-Cultural Studies
The complexity of cross-cultural studies, as well as cultural studies, are especially related to the following observations or "facts":

1. the relativity of each culture - the cultural hierarchy (e.g., Danish-Scandinavian-European)
2. the co-incidence of the cultures - the cultural categories
3. the changeability of each culture - the cultural dynamic
4. the ethical problems related to cross-cultural studies - what can we

We need theoretical and analytical models for cultural and cross-cultural studies formulated as frame models, or as a kind of skeleton, where each researcher or cultural actor can relate to one other with his own data, observations, and experiences when trying to create an understanding of a particular cross-cultural situation, according to his or her needs, as well as to the four factors mentioned above. My presentation of such an analytical frame will begin with the discussion of the first two of the four factors in the complexity of cross-cultural studies, the relativity of the cultures and the co-incidence of the cultures.

Then I will present an analytical frame for how one might study and understand a culture as an abstract unit at a given point in time - a static model consisting of two cultural dimensions,

(a) the Horizontal cultural dimension, and
(b) the Vertical cultural dimension.

Then I will turn to the third of the four factors, the changeability of each culture. In doing so I will turn the static model of culture into a dynamic model of culture by introducing the third cultural dimension into the model,

(c) the Dynamic cultural dimension.

Finally I will place these three "cultural dimensions" and the complexity factors together into an analytical frame for cross-cultural studies.

The fourth of the four factors, the ethical problems related to cross-cultural studies, will be left out of this paper due to space limitations.

The relativity and co-incidence of culture
The definition of what is to be considered a culture is very relative, as the individual considers himself a part, or a member, of different cultures in different situations. He can also be considered by others as a member of a different culture, depending of the situation and the character of their intercultural relations.

This situation is due to two different but interrelated aspects of the complexity of crosscultural relations,

1) the relativity of the cultures, and
2) the co-incidence of the cultures.

When speaking of the relativity of cultures, we might refer to "national culture" or "macro culture" (like the Geert Hofstede-concept of "Culture" when talking about Danish, Swedish, and other cultures). Both the individuals themselves and others might consider them to be representatives of different layers of culture within the category of macro culture, e.g., my personal situation as a Dane, as a Scandinavian, or just as a European, or even as a "northern Jydlander".

This can be illustrated in the following way:

Culture hierarchy
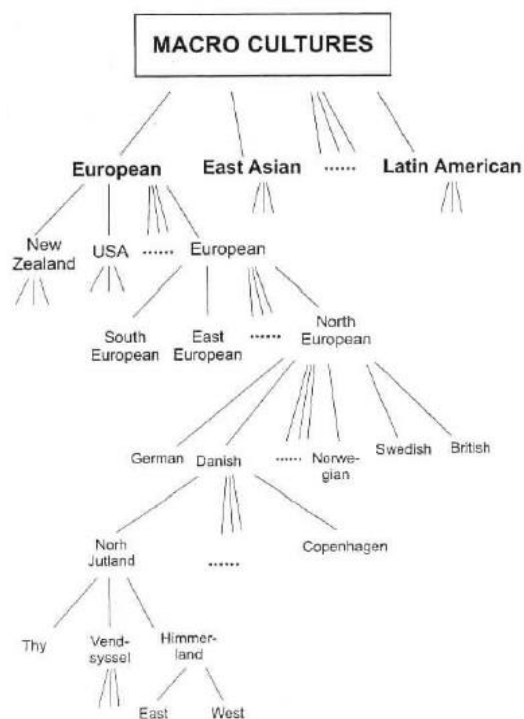
In this way we can talk about a cultural hierarchy within a specific category of culture consisting of different layers of culture (Kuada and Gullestrup, 1998).

By category of culture I mean:
A set of interrelated units of culture which, at a general (or higher) level of aggregation, can be meaningfully described, analyzed, and understood as one distinct cultural unit which can then be broken down into its component units (cultural dimensions) for more detailed analysis for specific purposes.

And by layers of culture I understand:
A number of units of culture within a given cultural category, which together can be meaningfully described as a distinct cultural unit at a higher level of aggregation. This unit forms, together with other units at the same level of aggregation, another cultural unit at a still higher level of aggregation within the same cultural category.

In this way - theoretically as well as empirically - we have to count a hierarchy of different layers within a certain category of culture. And we never know whether the people involved in a cross-cultural relationship consider one another to be at the same layer in the hierarchy. The complexity of cross-cultural relations is also caused by the fact that people are not only to be considered as members, or part, of one category of culture, but of many different cultural categories at the same time. This can be referred to as the co-incidence of cultures.

This means that even though we want to analyze differences in macro/national cultures - like Hofstede's studies - we also have to recognize the fact that people simultaneously reflect other cultural categories than the macro/national culture, each of them with their own hierarchy of cultural layers.

When considering culture - as well as cross-cultural relations and management - in this way, one might expect that individuals, or groups of individuals, have to be understood according to a number of potential cultures in a number of different hierarchies within different categories of culture. Of the many different possible cultures, the one which could be expected to be the most important for understanding the people involved in the cross-cultural relations will, of course, depend on the actual situation and might change rather rapidly.

However, the intercultural actor, or manager, will have to predict which of the actual cultural categories and layers in the relevant hierarchy he considers to be the potentially relevant culture - or cultures - and which cultures he might try to understand according to this assessment.

Each of these potential and/or relevant cultures then has to be analyzed as an empirical unit in accordance with the analytical, theoretical cultural frame model or other models.

As mentioned before, a particular culture might be described and understood at a given time by means of two cultural dimensions, the horizontal and the vertical.

The Horizontal Cultural Dimension
Common to all living creatures is the fact that their survival as individuals, or as a species, depends on the relationship between their own fundamental biological needs (e.g., the need for food, the need for protection against the climate, and the need for a possibility to bring up new generations) and the opportunities offered to them by the natural and social environment surrounding them.

If more than one human being is present at the same time in nature, man will try to fulfill his or her fundamental needs in a kind of joint action, which may be characterized by social cooperation and solidarity or by some kind of oppression and exploitation. Even though the natural conditions are the same, the actual ways of fulfilling the fundamental needs and in which the joint action is organized may, thus, vary considerably over time and space and from one group of people to another - or from one culture to another. So one might be able to observe differences and variations in the way in which the individual cultures try to fulfill their fundamental human needs.

At the same time, however, it will also be possible to observe a certain pattern in the tasks or functions that make up the central parts, or the central cultural segments, in this human joint action. In this connection it is meaningful to operate with eight such cultural segments which are all manifested in any culture, but which may individually and in relation to each other manifest themselves in very different ways.

Human behavior and its material output are important elements within the level of immediately observable symbols. However, this behavior is only rarely coincidental. It is rather based on more or less fixed patterns within the structures that are difficult to observe. The individuals within the culture
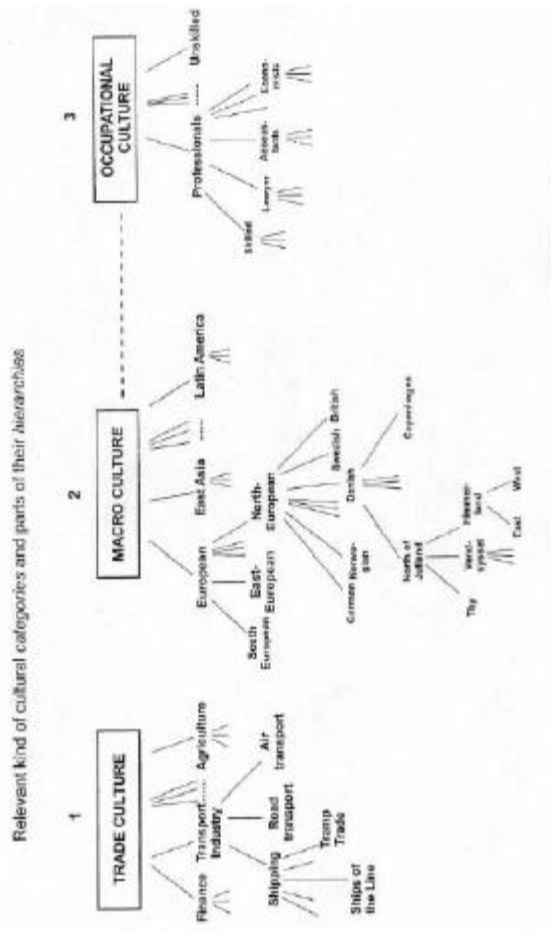
behave in a particular way towards other individuals according to the age and status within society of these individuals, just as they follow particular rules and laws to a certain extent, if for no other reason than to avoid sanctions from others. In this way certain connections and systems are created which somehow form a skeleton for the culture observed. These patterns and norms whose structures and contents vary from one culture to another are very central to the understanding of a given culture. Even if they cannot be seen or heard, the knowledge of their existence and their contents may be inferred from an empirical analysis, and together with the other two cultural levels mentioned above they make up the manifest part of the culture.

Partially legitimating values are those values which only comprise part of the culture, such as general values concerning competition and trade. But the generally accepted highest values then become valid for the entire culture. An example could be the individual's rights in relation to the rights of the community . The fundamental philosophy of life says something about man's view on other human beings; about man's relation to nature; about man's attitude towards life and death, and about his relation to the past, present, and future. The three last mentioned levels make up the core culture.

By means of the horizontal and the vertical cultural dimensions - or rather by trying to describe and understand the individual segments and levels of the two cultural dimensions - the actor or manager will be able to obtain a static snapshot of a given culture at a given time. Which information and data should be included in such an analysis, and which segments and levels might be relevant, will depend both on the object of the cultural analysis and on the resources that are available as mentioned above.

Thus, the static cultural model introduced here is an abstract cultural model which, as already mentioned, must be made more definite in connection with a concrete analysis and empirical analysis. As examples of such studies, these models have formed the basis of two comparative analyses, one of management theories developed in the West and management cultures in Ghana and Kenya (Kuada, 1995), and one of Danish playground technology and French, German and Dutch children's culture (Gram, 1999).

The Static Cultural Model
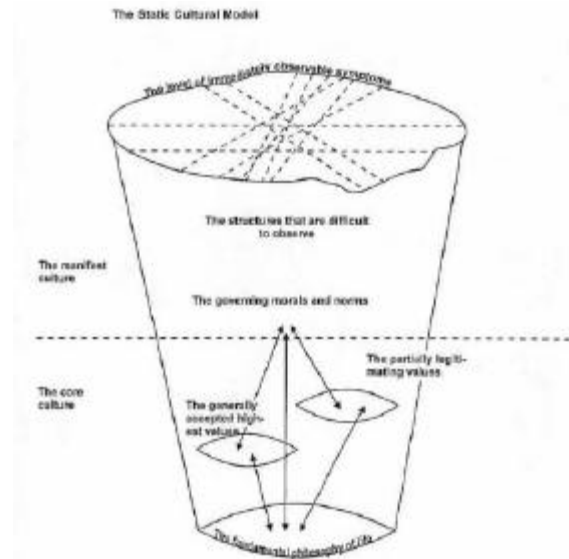
The dynamics of culture or the changeability of culture

A culture is not static. Quite the contrary, actually. It is constantly subjected to pressure for change from both external and internal factors - what I will refer to as initiating factors of change. The reason why they are called "initiating" factors is that they may well press for changes in the culture, but they do not determine in the same way whether or not a change will actually take place in the culture observed. Whether a change does occur, and the direction such a change would take, will be determined by another set of factors, the determining factors of change.

Among the external initiating factors of change in a culture are changes in both natural conditions and conditions in other cultures. The mere fact that nature constantly changes with or without the interference of man means that the joint action of men, whose explicit object is to make it possible for a group of people to exist under certain given natural conditions, is also subjected to a pressure for change. Thus, any culture is in a kind of double relationship towards nature. On the one hand nature forms the framework to which the culture - i.e., the total complex of cultural segments and levels developed by a group of people over time - will have to adapt; on the other hand, this culture at the same time, for better or worse, is involved in changing that very nature. Research, technological development, and trade and industry also play decisive roles in this double relationship, and the same applies to their relationship with other cultures from which new input within the three areas may have a change-initiating effect on the culture observed.

The internal initiating factors of change are, as the term signifies, initiating factors which have developed within the culture observed. All kinds of internal research, technological development, and trade and industry are internal, initiating factors of change.

Determining factors of change affect whether an action for change will actually lead to a change in the culture observed. Decisive factors in this understanding will be the degree of

integration - this applies to the existing values - and the degree of homogeneity of the culture in question, but the existing power structure within the culture also plays a part. The degree of integration is an expression of the degree of conformity among the different values within the culture, whereas the degree of homogeneity is an expression of the width and depth of the total knowledge and insight of the culture observed.

In a strongly integrated culture, almost everybody agrees on certain values - such as the values of "technological development at all cost", the "prioritization of economic gain" over resource gain, and the "individual's right to consume and the freedom of the individual in general". Reciprocally, the value could concern the "individual's responsibility towards or dependence on the group or the whole", whether this whole is based on a strong religion, a strong family, or on fixed organizational relations. Usually, modern industrial cultures are very integrated around liberalistic freedom values, economic values and individualistic freedom values.

Notes

LESSON 6
HOW CULTURES DIFFER?

Contents

Cultural stereotypes, culture shock, Cultural contexts of ethnic differences, ethnic diffrences and language games, Ethnicity in institutional politics, Articles.

Learning Objectives:

- To study the complexities of cross culture communication.
- To understand what is culture shock.
- To understand the concept of culture and ethnicity.

How Cultures Differ?

These days it is easy to believe one fully understands a foreign culture even without having directly experienced it. Images in the popular media and information gleaned from books or from encounters with a few natives can provide the illusion of real knowledge. Living in a culture, having to come to terms with its conventions and customs, is a different matter entirely. Every culture has distinct characteristics that make it different from every other culture. Some differences are quite evident (e.g., language, religion, political organization, etc.). Others can be so subtle that learning to deal with them is a complex process. A first-time visitor may remain uncomfortable and off balance for quite some time.

According to L. Robert Kohls, Director of Training and Development for the International Communication Agency and author of *Survival Kit for Overseas Living,* culture is, "an integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society. Culture refers to the total way of life of particular groups of people. It includes everything that a group of people thinks, says, does, and makes—its systems of attitudes and feelings. Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation." (Kohls, 1984, p. 17) Living in a foreign environment for an extended period of time will allow you to confront and develop a better understanding of the differences in various cultural systems.

Cultural Stereotypes

Numerous studies have been done to identify specific characteristics that distinguish one culture from another. Unfortunately, attempts to categorize cultural characteristics may often end up in cultural stereotypes that are unfair and misleading. Most Germans, Japanese, Italians, etc., have stereotyped perceptions of "the American," just as most Americans have stereotyped images of "Germans," "Japanese," "Italians," etc. In short, misperceptions exist on all sides.

In adjusting to your study abroad environment, you will have to deal not only with *real* cultural differences, but also with *perceived* cultural differences. Keep in mind that people of other cultures are just as adept at stereotyping Americans as we are at stereotyping them—and the results are not always complimentary. The following are a few examples of the qualities (some positive, some negative) that others frequently associate with the "typical" American:

• outgoing and friendly	▪ extravagant and wasteful
• informal	▪ sure they have all the answers
• loud, rude, boastful	▪ disrespectful of authority
• immature	▪ racially prejudiced
• hard working	▪ ignorant of other countries
• wealthy	▪ always in a hurry
• generous	▪ promiscuous

While a stereotype might possess a grain of truth, it is obvious, when we consider individual differences, that not every American fits the above description. You should remember this when you pass judgments on your hosts. Remember to maintain a healthy skepticism about all preconceptions.

Culture Shock

It is quite possible that your initial reaction to life abroad will be euphoria, sparked by a sense of novelty and adventure. It is also quite possible that the euphoria will give way to a less pleasant emotion, as you try to make your way through an unfamiliar culture. You may realize that your old habits do not fit your new circumstances and that you are unable to follow your usual routines. Minor problems may unexpectedly seem like major crises, and you may become depressed. You may feel anxious because the signs and symbols of social intercourse that you are used to are lacking. All these symptoms point to "culture shock," a kind of psychological disorientation.

There is no well-established way of dealing with culture shock, although recognizing its existence and accepting your vulnerability to it is an important first step. It helps to prepare for the possibility that you will experience culture shock to some degree. Remember that it is a common phenomenon and suffering from it does not in any way imply any psychological or emotional shortcoming.

There are ways, however, to minimize the impact of culture shock. Learn as much as possible about the host country, try to look for the logical reasons things are done or perceived differently, meet local people and find friends with whom you can discuss your reactions and feelings, read and speak the local language, and try to learn as much as possible about local viewpoints and customs. (Kohls, 1984, 69-70.) Just as an athlete cannot get in shape without going through the uncomfortable conditioning stage, so you cannot fully appreciate cultural differences without first going through the uncomfortable stages of psychological adjustment. You should emerge from the experience with the ability to function in two cultures with confidence.

Fitting In

Social customs differ greatly from one country to another. It is therefore impossible to give guidelines that are universally applicable. Generally speaking, you should act naturally, always

remaining friendly, courteous, and dignified. Keep in mind that you are a guest in someone else's country. You should therefore behave pretty much as if you were a guest in someone else's home. If your missteps are well-intentioned, you are likely to be given the benefit of the doubt as a foreigner who is doing his/her best to fit in.

Politeness: In many countries, social encounters are governed by a code of conduct that requires a greater degree of formality than we are used to in the U.S. Be prepared to offer a formal greeting to whomever you meet in your day-to-day activities. For example, should you approach a clerk in the local market in Strasbourg, always be courteous enough to begin your conversation with, "Bonjour, Madame (Monsieur, Mademoiselle)" before you launch into your inquiries about the product. Become familiar with the appropriate expressions of gratitude in response to your hosts' hospitality.

Humor: While each country has its own particular brand of wit and humor, very few of cultures appreciate the kind of "kidding" to which Americans are accustomed. Kidding comments, even when well-intentioned, can be interpreted as unfriendly.

Speaking the language: Most people will be extremely flattered by your efforts to communicate in their native language. Do not be intimidated or inhibited even if your command of the language is limited. A couple of words of caution might be in order: do your best to avoid slang expressions, the sense of which may be difficult for a foreigner to master. Be aware of the differences between the "familiar" and the "polite" forms of address, and be sure to use them properly.

Physical contact: When establishing social relationships, "play it by ear" in determining the level of familiarity that you should adopt at the various stages of your relationship. Physical contact, for example, may not be appreciated or understood by someone unfamiliar with the American idea of camaraderie; a cheerful pat on the back or a warm hug may be quite embarrassing and uncomfortable in certain cultures.

All cultures have different notions about social space, for instance how far away to stand or sit when conversing, how to shake hands or wave farewell. Restraint is advisable until you learn how the locals do it and what they expect of you.

Too personal questions: Let your hosts point the way when engaging in "small talk." While Americans often find it easy to talk about themselves, in some countries your hosts may view this as being as impolite.

Drinking and drunkenness: Be extremely sensitive of others' attitudes and feelings when it comes to drinking. You will probably find that your hosts enjoy social drinking as much as any American, but they might not look upon drunkenness as either amusing or indeed tolerable.

Price bargaining: Bargaining over prices is sometimes not only appropriate but even expected. At other times, it is inappropriate. If you misread the circumstances, you may find that you have insulted the merchant and also reinforced a negative stereotype of Americans. You can always test the waters by politely indicating that you like the product very much but that the price is a bit more than you had anticipated spending. If the merchant wishes to bargain further, this will give him the opening he needs to lower his offer; if bargaining is not part of his business practice, you can simply (and politely) terminate the conversation

Talking politics: Expect people abroad to be very articulate and well informed when it comes to matters of politics and international relations. Do not be at all surprised if your new friends and acquaintances engage you in political debate. There is certainly no reason for you to modify your convictions, but you should be discreet and rational in your defense of those convictions. Here again you may very well find yourself butting heads with another of those unfortunate stereotypes, the arrogant American who thinks everyone must fall in line with United States policies.

Photograph etiquette: You may want to record your experiences on film, which means you may include some of the local inhabitants in your photographs. Remember, however, that the people you "shoot" are human beings and not objects of curiosity. Be tactful and discreet; it is always courteous and wise to ask permission before taking someone's picture.

The Cultural Contexts of Ethnic Differences

Thomas Hylland Eriksen

[The endnotes are missing in this version.]

The Issues

The objective of this article is to contribute to the development of analytical devices for dealing comparatively with cultural differences made relevant in systems of interaction. First, the strengths and limitations of a leading social anthropological perspective on ethnicity are considered. Thereafter, certain aspects of ethnicity in two so-called multi-ethnic societies, Trinidad and Mauritius, are described and contextualized analytically. Finally, a general classification of inter-ethnic contexts is suggested. The criterion suggested to distinguish contexts in this respect is the varying cultural significance of ethnicity. The proposed classification is not necessarily incompatible with certain other attempts to compare ethnic phenomena.

Although my point of departure is a concept of ethnicity which is relational and processual, that is what I call a formalist view, I nevertheless insist that an understanding of the scope of cultural differences must supplement an appreciation of the formal features of ethnicity - whether they are to be localized to the level of the social formation or to the level of interaction. In order to achieve this, I shall draw on Wittgenstein's (1983 [1953]) concept of language-games.

An implication of the analysis of ethnicity, briefly discussed at the end of the article, is that a sensible concept of culture must depict culture both as an aspect of concrete, ongoing interaction and as the meaning-context for the very same interaction.

Conceptualizing Ethnicity: A Critical Review

One of our most widespread errors as social theorists, and a difficult one to eradicate, is the reification of concepts. As regards concepts relating to ethnicity, the temptation to do so is highly understandable. Notably, any conceptual reification of "ethnic groups" as social (and sociological) entities possessing certain fixed cultural and organizational characteristics is positively encouraged by folk taxonomies and popular assumptions almost anywhere in the world. Academic reactions against such reifications began, with respect to research on ethnicity, in Leach's study of Kachin politics (1954), and in the studies of urbanization in the Copperbelt in the 1950s (among others, Mitchell 1956; Epstein 1958; Mayer 1971 [1961]). An explicit and very influential statement was Barth's (1969:10-11) criticism of earlier writers' identification of ethnicity as a property of "cultural groups", their axiomatic view of culture as a fixed, monolithic entity, and their subsequent cultural determinism. Implicitly, Barth also rejected the concern of some cultural anthropologists with "national character" as simplistic, tautological and misleading. Focusing on types of social relations and processes between and within ethnic groups, Barth (1969), Eidheim (1971) and others developed a set of formal concepts for dealing with interpersonal ethnicity without initially reifying either a concept of ethnic group or a concept of culture. Their approach, although sometimes poorly understood, has greatly influenced contemporary studies of ethnicity. Through the work of Barth, Eidheim and others, the focus of ethnic studies shifted from group characteristics to properties of social process. From then on, formal concepts were available enabling students of ethnicity to discard unsatisfactory strategies of empiricist "butterfly collecting", to replace substance with form, statics with dynamics, property with relationship and structure with process.

The formalist approach, conceptualizing ethnicity as a type of social process in which notions of cultural difference are communicated, enables us to view ethnicity comparatively, and to account for ethnic phenomena without recourse to crude conceptions of "cultures" and "peoples". It has moreover proven more flexible, and capable of higher theoretical sophistication when dealing with complex contexts, than a related approach in which ethnicity is reduced to a kind of stratification system, or in which ethnic process is virtually by definition reduced to group competition over scarce resources (Despres 1975; Cohen 1974b). Such reduction prevents full understanding of the discriminating characteristics of social systems where the communication of cultural differences is essential to the reproduction of the system.

For all its merits, the formalist approach associated with Barth (1969) has two important limitations preventing a satisfactory comparative understanding of ethnicity.

First - and this is nowadays a common criticism (O'Brien 1986; Wolf 1982; Worsley 1984; Fardon 1987) - it is in principle ahistorical. Its very useful, highly abstract comparative concepts such as ethnic boundary (Barth 1969), dichotomization/complementarization (Eidheim 1971), symbolic form and function (Cohen 1974a), and so on, indispensable in accounting for ethnicity on the interpersonal level, divert analytic attention from the wider social and historical context and thus implicitly disregard processes taking place beyond the grasp of the individual agent. For one should never neglect, or even "bracket", the fact that ethnicity is always a property of a particular social formation in addition to being an aspect of interaction. Variations on this level of social reality, moreover, cannot be accounted for comprehensively through studies of interaction, no matter how detailed they may be. For instance, ethnicity involving a modern national state is qualitatively different from ethnicity activated in a neighbourhood because a state and an individual are different kinds of agents. In addition, the context of interaction is constituted prior to the interaction itself and must therefore form part of the explanation of interpersonal processes. This implies that we ought to investigate the historical and social circumstances in which a particular ethnic configuration has developed, and a subsequent localization in time, place and social scale of the ethnic phenomenon in question must follow. A concept of power distinguishing between individual and structural power is essential here. Moreover, these findings are bound to influence our analysis, and should not be bracketed, even - or perhaps particularly - if the ultimate goal is a reduction of social process to a formal comparative model of ethnicity. On the other hand, historically bounded studies of ethnicity and related phenomena (e.g. Anderson 1983; Smith 1986) usually fail to account for the reproduction of identity on the level of interaction, and have limited comparative scope.

Secondly, and partly by implication, it can be misleading to consider ethnicity simply as an "empty vessel" or a system of arbitrary signs, or a form of deep grammar. Certainly, the "critical focus of investigation" ought to be "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff it encloses" (Barth 1969:15, italics in the original) - that is, ethnicity is a property of relationship, not "the sound of one hand clapping", to paraphrase Bateson. It is further doubtless correct that ethnic distinctions can persist despite insignificant differential "distribution of objective [cultural] traits" (Eidheim 1969:39), and that the symbolic articulation of cultural difference can frequently be seen to change in form and content, historically and situationally. Nevertheless, the cultural specificities or differences invoked in every justification of ethnic differentiation or dichotomization may (or may not) have a profound bearing on the experiential nature of ethnic relations themselves. This implies that the medium is not necessarily the message, and that the differences themselves, which represent a level of signification conventionally glossed over by the formalists, should be investigated, and not only the form of their articulation. In other words, if there are contextual imperatives for the production of ethnic signs - and it would be foolish to suggest otherwise, then the contexts in question must be understood along with the acts of inter-ethnic communication.

The cultural differences referred to in ethnic interaction, then, cannot always be reduced to its form without a loss of analytic comprehension. Since culture is such a difficult term to handle analytically, and since one of the main insights from formalist studies of ethnicity is that culture cannot be treated as a fixed and bounded system of signs, it is tempting to reduce or

disregard this level of social reality in description and analysis. The most common (tacit) reduction of culture has consisted in showing how ethnic signifiers may change due to changes in context, thereby indicating that the signifiers themselves are really arbitrary, and that the fundamental aspect of ethnicity is the very act of communicating and maintaining cultural difference. This is the position advocated by Leach (1954), who emphatically states:

"Culture provides the form, the 'dress' of the social situation. As far as I am concerned, the cultural situation is a given factor, it is a product and an accident of history. I do not know why Kachin women go hatless with bobbed hair before they are married, but assume a turban afterwards, any more than I know why English women put on a ring on a particular finger to denote the same change in social status; all I am interested in is that in this Kachin context the assumption of a turban by a woman does have this symbolic significance. It is a statement about the status of the woman." (Leach 1954:16)

This type of argument has been very illuminating, but it is unsatisfactory in the end because the cultural context of an act of communicating distinctiveness may, as correctly assumed (and experienced) by non-anthropologists, make a systematic difference in inter-ethnic encounters. At a certain point in the analysis of ethnicity, where recognized cultural differences shape or prevent meaningful interaction, or where power asymmetry distorts discourse, it becomes impossible to neglect substantial features of social, cultural, historical contexts. Although the formal relationship between say, the Canadian state and Mohawk Amerindians may be similar to that between say, the Botswana state and Basarwa (San) people, the social and cultural significance of the respective relationships differ because of important differences in the cultural contexts referred to in the ongoing invocation of differences. This implies that formal modelling of ethnicity may miss the point not only because it leaves out aspects of ethnicity which are important to the agents, but also because it disregards the potentially varying importance of cultural differences in the articulation of ethnicity.

Handelman's (1977) typology of ethnic incorporation, ranking ethnic groups or categories from the socially very loose to the socially very strongly incorporated, has similarly limited explanatory power. It is misleading insofar as it treats ethnic categories or groups as analytical entities. This will not do: it is necessary to account for the production and reproduction of ethnicity in a less abstract, less static way in order to understand its concrete manifestations. Any detailed analysis of ethnicity must therefore take into account the varying cultural significance of ethnicity, not only cross-culturally, but also intra-culturally and perhaps most importantly, intra-personally. Different inter-ethnic contexts within a society, which may or may not involve the same sets of persons, have variable significance in relevant ways. Ethnicity, as a source of cultural meaning and as a principle for social differentiation, is highly distributive within any society or set of social contexts involving the same personnel. Its varying importance, or varying semantic density, can only be appreciated through a comparison of contexts, which takes account of differences in the meaning which are implied by the

acts of communicating cultural distinctiveness which we call ethnicity.

It is my contention, therefore, that the cultural contexts of ethnic differences should not be ignored in description and analysis. This perspective carries a further, and obvious, ethical implication: it entails taking the representations of ordinary "lay" agents seriously. For the people whom we designate as members of ethnic groups tend to disagree with anthropological accounts dealing with themselves. An example of such disagreement is the ongoing conflict between Saami (Lappish) students and non-Saami staff at the anthropology department of the university of Tromsø, Northern Norway. Many of the students would prefer that their struggle for cultural identity and social autonomy were not dubbed by anthropologists as manipulation with symbols, "mechanisms of boundary-maintenance" or "processes of metaphorization and metonymization" which can ultimately be reduced to political strategy (cf. Grønhaug 1975; Thuen 1982). Native views cannot replace analysis, but they should not be reduced to universal form either. In sum, if ethnic signs are seen as metonymic-metaphoric signifiers for ethnic difference, then we should pay some attention to the signified - which can be studied on two levels. On the one hand, ethnic signs signify the communication of cultural difference, which has been studied thoroughly by social anthropologists - either as competitive strategies, or as a technique for the maintenance of a cultural identity or a way of life, or both. On the other hand, ethnic signs refer to systematic distinctiveness which is in part being reproduced outside of the acts of communicating distinctiveness.

This level of signification has normally been bracketed by formalists, with whose general approach I agree. Their comparative analytical models are clearly superior to earlier theorizing about ethnicity; they are simple and comparative, they account for empirical processes, and they have great explanatory power regarding the reproduction of social and cultural discreteness. I shall merely propose to supplement this set of concepts with concepts enabling us to compare the forms of distinctions reproduced, and to distinguish between contexts where the kind of cultural difference at work varies qualitatively. This can be done without reifying a concept of "culture", provided that the units for analysis are not groups or individuals but contexts of interaction.

The discussion concerns fundamental issues in social anthropology, and I am not able to pursue them much further here. Nevertheless, let me summarize the discussion so far: Modern social anthropological studies of ethnicity have tended to overstate their case in contrasting the virtues of their formal, processual model for analysis with the vagueness and reifying tendencies of substantivist approaches. Their sometimes unacknowledged semiotic bias (notably, the view of ethnic symbols as arbitrary signs) prevents them from elucidating the varying impact of significant cultural difference and the content of meaning in interaction (cf. Wilden 1980:352n). For the sake of comparative models of interaction, they have largely disregarded the study of ethnicity (or ethnicities) as specific sets of features in the contemporary world (cf. Giddens 1987:165 for a similar point with regard to the study of

organizations).The formalist direction in ethnic studies therefore needs to be supplemented by a consideration of two theoretical points: First, ethnicity is a property of a social formation and an aspect of interaction; both systemic levels must be understood simultaneously. Secondly, ethnic differences entail cultural differences which have variable impact cross-culturally, intra-culturally and intra-personally, on the nature of social relations.

A treatment of the relationship between the systemic level of interaction and the systemic level of social formation, necessary in the final analysis when the validity of ethnicity as a comparative concept is to be assessed (cf. Fardon 1987), falls outside of the scope of this article. The ethnographic examples and contexts to be discussed below illustrate the second theoretical point; namely, that the cultural differences which are confirmed in the communication of ethnic differences, vary between contexts which may otherwise be comparable, and that this variation should be understood in accounts of ethnic processes.

Ethnic Differences and Language-games

The problem of accounting for "actual" cultural differences in ethnicity is a subtle and difficult one. The communication of cultural difference can be observed and described, but the cultural differences referred to in these acts are themselves elusive. They cannot be measured. Since culture is not a fixed property of persons or groups, the differences cannot be identified as "cultural traits" of the agents either. I have nevertheless argued the need to distinguish between kinds of cultural difference invoked in ethnic contexts, where the distinctions are confirmed and reproduced. Such differences, I suggest, can be identified through a careful interpretation of these contexts. I propose to use the Wittgensteinian concept of language-games to distinguish, in a formal way, between inter-ethnic contexts where the degree of shared meaning is variable. In his initial discussions of language-games in the Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein defines a simple language-game as "a primitive language" (Wittgenstein 1983 [1953], I: §7, cf. §2). With this he refers to an intersubjective field delineated to a particular context, which is reproduced by the individuals interacting. To engage in social interaction thus amounts to playing a language-game, that is the conventional application of certain concepts or the enaction of certain rules which define a particular version of the world as relevant. The rules of a language-game, when they are eventually internalized, thereby constitute a cognitive matrix of varying complexity, through which one perceives and interprets events taking place in the world. If the agents interact according to different such sets of concepts or rules in a given situation, this means that they propose to play different language-games; in other words, their respective delineations of the relevant meaning-structures of the world differ in this regard. They have acquired different knowledge about the world, and they reject each others' proposed rules (cf. Wittgenstein 1983, I: §47).

Some inter-ethnic encounters can be interpreted as contexts where such differences are expressed, and they can therefore not be reduced to competition over scarce values, since a competitive relationship necessarily entails prior agreement over what is to count as a value. The concept of language-games, as it will be used here, indicates the local, contextual character of culture seen as the production and reproduction of shared meaning. As I shall show, such a concept also makes it possible to distinguish between forms of cultural differences as expressed in ethnicity, without lapsing into essentialism or statements about the ontological properties of "cultures". This I will now demonstrate through an examination of different contexts in two societies where ethnicity is important and of varying significance as regards degrees of shared meaning in interaction.

Trinidad and Mauritius

The area of Trinidad is about twice that of Mauritius, but they sustain populations of comparable size (slightly over 1 million). Both are tropical islands and former British colonies where the French influence has been (and in the case of Mauritius, still is) substantial. Both experienced plantation slavery on a large scale until the 1830s, and subsequently received substantial numbers of Indian immigrants under the colonial indentureship scheme. The demographic compositions of the islands have important similarities: the main ethnic categories, as depicted in national statistics and in folk taxonomies, are blacks, Indians, Chinese, Europeans and culturally ambiguous categories of phenotypically "mixed" people. Indians, most of them Hindus and Muslims, are the most numerous in Mauritius; whereas blacks, who are as a rule Christian, are about as numerous as Indians in Trinidad. There are several ethnic subdivisions which may be relevant; for example, the distinction between Hindus and Muslims can in both societies be important, and there are ethnic categories which may be relevant in Mauritius but not in Trinidad (for instance, the category of Tamils) and vice versa. In popular representations and in public discourse, the most important distinction is nevertheless that between Indians and blacks. There are, of course, also non-ethnic social classifications which can be relevant; two such distinctions, important in both societies, are those obtaining between "the middle class" and "the working class" (local terms), and between rural and urban people.

Trinidad, an oil-rich island, is wealthier than Mauritius, and is to a greater extent than the latter integrated into wider systems of exchange. Both societies are parliamentary democracies, and both are changing rapidly, economically and institutionally. Ethnicity plays an important part in daily interaction in both societies.

Ethnicity in Institutional Politics

In both the island-states, most political parties from the post-war period have been organized along ethnic lines, and have derived their support from an ethnic base. However, ethnicity is rarely made an explicit issue in public, political contexts. Unlike class and gender, for example, ethnic distinctions are not officially acknowledged as fundamental in the organization of the societies, where prevailing ideologies and official discourse are, for all their mutual differences, vaguely nationalist. Whenever arguments based on ethnicity are invoked by a politician, other politicians publicly react in a hostile way. Likewise, it is normally considered rude to accuse politicians of following ethnic strategies; there are subtle and cunning techniques available to this end, not least because of the indexical character of ethnicity. Ethnicity is nevertheless frequently a master variable

in Trinidadian and Mauritian non-politicians' accounts of politics. Two remarkably parallel examples will serve to illustrate this.

In Mauritius, a development scheme for sugarcane smallplanters was launched in the mid-eighties, cutting taxes and providing loans for smallplanters. In Trinidad, a similar scheme for would-be small businessmen began in 1989. Both of these governmental programmes were criticized along similar lines by members of politically nondominant ethnic categories. In Mauritius, non-Indians noted that most of the smallplanters were Indian, and that there were indeed many poor blacks for whom nothing was done. In Trinidad, non-blacks claimed that only blacks would benefit from the incentive programme, both because it was believed that most small entrepreneurs were black, and - more importantly - because blacks were thought to enjoy better connections with the authorities. Although such arguments never appeared un-masked in the media (except in letters to the editors), they enjoyed wide support.

In both cases, ethnicity created a division in public opinion; the ethnic boundaries, dormant in many social contexts, were activated. The wealthy, the poor and the destitute would rally together under one set of arguments or the other. The common view was that Mauritian Indians would, almost by definition, support the smallplanter incentive while blacks would oppose it; similarly, it was widely held that Trinidadian blacks would either be indifferent to or support the small business scheme whereas Indians would either be indifferent to or oppose it on the grounds that it would strengthen the presumed dominant position of blacks in Trinidadian society. The point here is not whether "all" or "most" blacks or Indians really acted in a certain way or held certain views; there is certainly variation in these regards, but we should note the fact that ethnic distinctions in this way became relevant in public discourse on a political matter. And the language of public discourse does not always take account of the empirical variations behind the stereotypes.

Moving to a higher systemic level, it has been documented extensively that institutional politics is largely organized along ethnic lines in both Trinidad and Mauritius (cf. Ryan 1972 for Trinidad; Simmons 1983 for Mauritius); this pertains both to voting and to the internal organization of parties and political organizations. As I have argued elsewhere (Eriksen 1988), it is impossible for a politically oriented individual to disregard the ethnic dimension in politics in Mauritius (this holds true for Trinidad also, although in a slightly different way), even if one might prefer to do so. In both societies, moreover, a standard reply to questions about ethnicity is that ethnic conflicts are "created by the politicians". This is wrong. Ethnicity not only plays an important part in non-political social fields in both societies, it is more fundamental outside the realm of institu-tional politics. This will be demonstrated below.

Several important contexts of political ethnicity in contemporary Trinidad and Mauritius, regarded as the ethnically based attempt to win political power, can profitably be interpreted as an integral part of the political systems. The same sets of rules are subscribed to by all involved in routine politics, and there is a wide consensus over values and modes of discourse. In other words, cultural differences are in themselves unimportant in these contexts; their importance lies in the creation of options for politicians and parties to draw upon such differences in their quest for popularity and power. The formal congruence of ethnicity among politicians of different ethnic membership is complete: the political culture, or language-game, is homoge-neous as it is being confirmed in ongoing, institutionalized political life; there is no relevant cultural difference informing the pattern and meaning-content of institutionalized interaction between politicians. The rules which guide this form of interaction are under normal circumstances cross-ethnically uniform both among politicians and among voters, and the cultural differences influencing ethnic relations must therefore lie outside the realm of institutional politics.

In these multi-ethnic political contexts, then, ethnicity is constituted by a system of arbitrary signs in the sense that political process might have had identical formal properties in the absence of ethnic classification; substantive issues might have been different, parties and voting patterns would have been different and so on, but the set of rules constituting the political system would have been the same, all other things being equal. In other words, agents taking part in institutional politics in Trinidad and Mauritius are obliged to follow the rules of a shared language-game, and insofar as ethnicity is relevant in these contexts of politics, cultural difference is communicated through a shared cultural idiom; a shared language-game.

This should not be taken to imply that politics as such presup-poses a shared language-game, neither in the societies in question nor elsewhere. The examples merely illustrate a type of contexts. Indeed, a hundred years ago, the incommensurability in political culture between Indo-Trinidadians and the colonial government was evident. Weller (1968) thus writes about the wave of wife-murders in the Indo-Trinidadian community during the late nineteenth century. In a court case cited by Weller (p. 65 ff.) the defendant says, "I have killed my wife. What is that of your business? I didn't kill anybody else's wife." Clearly, the defendant represents juridical principles incommensurable with those of the polity. There is here disagreement over the rules which constitute the judicial system as a field of interac-tion. The respective language-games are incommensurable; they refer to different versions of relevant social reality.

Language-games in the Labour Market
On the societal level, both Trinidad and Mauritius have traditionally sustained ethnically correlated divisions of labour. In both societies, agricultural labour has for over a century been culturally and statistically associated with Indians, the civil service and industrial labour with blacks, management with whites and coloureds, and commerce with whites and Chinese (in Trinidad: Chinese, Syrians and Portuguese). With a few exceptions, the correspondences between folk assumptions and the actual division of labour have been fairly close; the labour markets of both Trinidad and Mauritius have, nevertheless, changed radically in this respect since World War II. In both societies, the blacks were in colonial days perceived as being culturally closer to the European rulers than the Indians, and were therefore preferred in the colonial civil service.

In accounting for the presumed cultural proximity between blacks and Europeans in colonial times, one can point to shared language (French or English, as the case may be) and religion (varieties of Christianity), family organization (the nuclear family as ideal) and by extension, an assumed shared, modern perspective on the individual (encompassing, among other things, an assumed sympathy for the virtues of bureaucratic organization). Indians were in both societies depicted, by the colonial elites and others dominating public discourse, as illiterate pagans and particularistic, "clannish" (Trinidadian expression) schemers whose first priority was always the extended family. They were also treated for generations with indifference; they have not traditionally been part of the "Hegelian" system of opposites constituting the Black-Brown-White socio-cultural system in these colonies (cf. Fanon 1952), which created a mutual feeling of familiarity among those included. Although the division of labour has changed, the stereotypes remain strong.

The point to be made here is that the stereotypes referred to normative aspects of perceptions of cultural differences and can therefore not be reduced to arbitrary signs subjected to free manipulation. It is doubtless true that the perceived cultural closeness of blacks and Europeans provided for easier cooperation in the workplace, and that most blacks in both societies were in colonial times more "modern" than most Indians: they were better educated, and they spoke English and/or French. In other words, from the perspective of an employer, there might conceivably have been sound reasons for recruiting blacks rather than Indians for a variety of jobs. One might of course criticize the employers in question for not wishing to shed their stereotypes and consider aspects of individuals instead of stereotypic ethnic categories; however, there were perceived cultural discontinuities between the categories "blacks" and "Indians" which were relevant in the labour market. Language-games routinely reproduced by Bhojpuri-speaking Indian immigrants, and attributed to them as ethnically distinguishing "cultural features", were seen as being incompatible with the demands of the labour market. Skills relevant in one language-game, for instance in a rural village, were dismissed as irrelevant in another, dominant language-game. The cultural differences referred to are, incidentally, comparable to cultural differences currently being reproduced as ethnic (and class) boundaries in European cities, where immigrants and their children are regarded, by prospective employers and by public servants, as culturally inept or handicapped because some of their language-games are defined as incompatible with certain requirements of national society.

The informal policy, in certain state agencies, of debarring Indians from high public positions, practised in Mauritius until the late 1960s and still practised in Trinidad, might typically be interpreted and explained by social anthropologists as a way of retaining political power and control in society; it might be spoken of as a set of policies destined to retain ethnic hegemony. Such an account, tautologically true, is inadequate for two reasons. First, had the quest for power and control been the only reason for not hiring Indians, the latter would also have been discouraged from business ventures and other independent economic activity. This has certainly not happened in any

of the societies; it was possible for Indians to purchase land freely and to set up shops already in the final decades of the nineteenth century. An examination of colonial records from the period (cf. Brereton 1979 for Trinidad; Allen 1983 for Mauritius) indicates that the economic ascendancy of Indians was not regarded as a threat by the elites - on the contrary, their presumed frugality and ethos of hard work were praised officially.

The second reason why an economistic analysis of the labour market is invalid, as already suggested, is that perceptions of cultural differences play a part in the organization of the labour market, so that their articulation cannot be reduced to political strategy. A few examples from the contemporary situation further illustrate the differences between kinds of cultural differences invoked in ethnicity.

A well educated and culturally self-conscious Indo-Trinidadian of my acquaintance resigned his job as a TV journalist. His reason for doing so was "that one was not allowed to be an Indian on TV". When asked why, then, there were after all quite a few Indians regularly on the screen, he replied that they were not "real Indians". He added, "For them [the broadcasting corporation] it's fine that you're Indian as long as it doesn't show." What did this mean? "For instance, you should never wear Indian clothes - you should always appear in shirt and tie, never in shirtjac. And if you make programmes, you should always remember that Trinidad is a black country. If you want to make a programme about something Indian, it's fine as long as you present it as something remote and exotic. To be an Indian in the media, you have to be a hundred per cent creolized." We might at this point arrive at the premature conclusion that my friend left his job because of disagreement over programming policy, and that his discontent was rooted in cultural difference - that he represented a language-game incompatible with that of the board. However, we need to go one step further. First, the cultural differences invoked are of a "weak" type: they do not include disagreement over the organization of media - the Indian might, in principle, just as well have been a black marxist (i.e., the distinguishing signs are arbitrary). Secondly, the Indians who remain TV journalists have not necessarily relinquished their ethnic identity; they have only suspended it in the job context. There is no incommensurability between my friend's stance, the stance of other Indian journalists, and that of the board of the broadcasting corporation; all they disagree about is the proper place for the communication of Indian-ness in Trinidadian society. They have a common language-game for communicating cultural difference, although their respective cultural contexts may constitute incommensurable language-games in other respects.

An expression of a stronger kind of cultural difference, also from the context of wagework, is evident in the attitudes of some black urban Mauritian women towards domestic work. One young woman explained the differences thus: "If you work for white people, they treat you reasonably. If you work for Indians, they might not pay you, they might make passes at you, they shout at you and treat you like a dog. Me, I'd never work for an Indian." This statement contains a great deal of negative stereotyping. It is supported by other women in her

situation, and indirectly by wealthy Indians, who may make statements to the effect that "those black women are lazy, they never do their job properly and they always try to sneak out of the house before they're through." The disagreement can be traced to differences in perceptions of domestic organization. A housemaid in a Hindu family is in a position structurally similar to that of a doolahin, a daughter-in-law. The doolahin and the black maid are not family members, and it is therefore permissible to treat them as outsiders. Black women, on the contrary, are taught to expect that their mothers-in-law (and by extension, other outsiders) will treat them with respect, like adopted daughters. The lack of intimacy and the condescending treatment encountered in the Hindu family is therefore interpreted as a violation of their rights. The Hindu employer, on the other hand, regards the informality of his black maid as impertinent and as a sign of sloppiness. What he wants is a maid, not an adopted daughter. To the extent that there is disagreement over the rules constituting the relationship, the respective language-games are incommensurable.

Language-games, Ethnicity and Class

A yet different kind of conflict was related to me by a coloured middle-class Trinidadian who had been working in a development agency lending capital to cooperatives. His background, and the language-game of his organization, were "middle-class" and bureaucratic, emphasizing the virtues of investment and planning. The relevant language-game of his borrowers was that of black urban working-class Trinidad. His conclusion: "Most of the loans were never paid back. I was so shocked at the irresponsibility of those people! They would stake everything they owned, plus a considerable loan from us, and then they just didn't care if they went bust! After a few weeks, they might get fed up, they might not bother to work a lot, and would be unable to pay their loan. This happened all the time. I'm not saying that they're dishonest, I'm just saying that they're very, very irresponsible." My friend's experiences, while apparently lending some credibility to his stereotypic views of working-class blacks, may be interpreted as expressing a conflict between language-games. The agents involved in interaction had different expectations and disagreed concerning which values were to be defined as relevant. Their respective codifications of the cultural context which can be called the labour market, differed relevantly.

The example raises a problem with which I have not yet dealt properly, namely the relationship between different sets of criteria for social differentiation. The "ethnic" aspect of this situation is obvious; my informant calls attention to presumed aspects of black working-class culture. The situation also has a "class" aspect of which the participants are conscious. There are, of course, further contexts where incommensurable language-games are confronted and where the ethnic dimension does not provide a convenient label for its description. In the particular example referred to, the relationship between the ethnic dimension and the class dimension in the production of relevant differences is important. In the present discussion, this is nevertheless a minor point since the concept of ethnicity is not regarded as universally or ontologically significant, nor necessarily prior to other principles of social classification. It is

easy to think of contexts in many societies, including the Trinidadian and the Mauritian ones, where the social classifications made relevant in the production of distinctions between individuals are not defined as ethnic by the agents. It is because ethnicity is empirically pervasive in these societies that it demands our attention. The presence of non-ethnic principles for social classification nevertheless indicates that the concept of language-games could profitably be used in analyses of cultural differences which are not codified as ethnic by the agents.

Why is Ethnicity so Important?

Like activities in politics and in the productive sector, family life and certain leisure activities in the two societies are routinely understood and codified in an ethnic idiom. However, the contexts of ethnicity encountered here may differ markedly from those reproduced in fields which are to a greater degree regulated by sets of formal rules. In routine politics, a shared language-game contains rules for competition over shared, scarce values; in the context of wagework, a similar competition is important although, as I have shown, not always sufficiently important to prevent the articulation of incommensurable language-games. It is nevertheless usually in informal contexts of interaction that ethnic differences can be regarded as expressions of incommensurable language-games.

Cultural differences between blacks and Indians are in both societies strongly articulated in matters relating to sexuality. The sexual ideologies of black men in Trinidad and Mauritius encourage promiscuity; to brag publicly of one's numerous achievements in this regard is an affirmation of black identity. In the ideology of Indian-ness, on the contrary, great value is placed on sexual purity in women, and the sacred character of matrimony is emphasized. In an Indian language-game, the supposed sexual prowess of black men is coupled with the widespread notion that women are unable to resist sexual advances. In this way, black men seem to represent a threat against the domestic supremacy of Indian men - and stories about faithless Indian women eloping with black men are so widespread in both societies as to be proverbial. When, in Mauritius, I asked black men about their views on extramarital sex, they might reply, giggling, that "it's not like in Europe" - meaning that it was a daily occurence. Indo-Mauritians, on the other hand, would usually be reluctant to talk about sex at all. Aids figures from Trinidad, incidentally, tend to confirm the folk assumption that blacks there on an average have a larger number of sexual partners than Indians: there is a striking overrepresentation of blacks in the official figures.

This kind of cultural difference is very important, even if practices do not necessarily conform with folk representations. The distinction suggests that varying representations of self and relevant others indicate, and reproduce, a relevant cultural difference as regards the most intimate of human relationships. Variations in the conceptualization of sexuality are in both societies indexically linked with ethnic labels. It is therefore widely assumed that inter-ethnic interaction in this area can lead to conflicts in the most personal of social fields. Despite generally cordial relations between people of different ethnic identity, intermarriage is rare in both societies.

The important point here is that what anthropologists regard as political ethnicity ("competition over scarce resources") cannot be fully understood unless an understanding of private ethnicity (immediate struggles) is first established. It is in the intimate contexts of family, close friendship and the like that the basic cultural contexts making up individual identity are reproduced. Only if one fully understands the reproduction of discrete, socially discriminating language-games at this level can one hope to understand why ethnicity can be fashioned into such a powerful political force within the unitary language-game of institutional politics. It is in such contexts that the language-games on which all communication of cultural difference feeds, are reproduced. Such contexts are also crucial in the transcendence of ethnic disctinctions; it is significant, thus, that popular national sentiment transcending ethnic boundaries in either society is perhaps never stronger than in contexts of international sports.

The formal systemic frameworks, in this case those of politics and labour, are thus fed with cultural distinctions on which they have a mitigating effect insofar as they represent shared desirable values, but which they neither autonomously create nor reproduce. Both Trinidad and Mauritius have recently (in 1986-7 and 1982-3 respectively) experienced concerted attempts to transcend the ethnic dimension in politics through the formation of broad nationalist coalitions. Following their rapid breakup (in Mauritius, the government lasted nine months, in Trinidad seven), the politicians and the electorate immediately fell back on an ethnic perception of politics, and its subsequent organization was related to such a perception - although not all the new alignments followed strictly ethnic lines. For instance, in Trinidad, the foreign minister Basdeo Panday was removed by the black-dominated government and replaced by another Hindu, Sahadeo Basdeo, who was nevertheless considered a less "rootsy" Hindu than the former. Ethnicity in this case proved empirically more fundamental than other principles of classification (in this case, nationalism). Ethnicity is in many contexts the single most important criterion for collective social distinctions in daily life; ethnic distinctions are rooted in perceptions of differences between lifestyles, and the others are held to represent lifestyles and values which are regarded as undesirable. As mentioned, cultural differences are sometimes activated in non-ethnic situations, such as rural/urban, middle-class/working-class and male/female contexts. However, in these societies, one is never simply "male" or "middle-class": one is Indian male or Coloured middle-class. The ethnic dimension nearly always enters into the definition of a situation; it is an underlying premiss for all social classification. To the extent that agents routinely ascribe their own experiences of cultural incompatibility to ethnic differences, ethnicity also remains dominant as a principle for cultural differentiation. This, among other things, entails the maintenance of incommensurable language-games conceptually identified with ethnic differences.

Models of Ethnicity and Culture

What is it that we compare or ought to compare when we deal with different contexts of ethnicity? We should first bear in mind that discrete social phenomena are in themselves not comparable in any interesting respect. They may, however, seem to possess a family resemblance encouraging abstract conceptualization for the sake of comparison or generalization. Sceptical of some such conceptualizations, Fardon (1987) advocates severe constraints on the scope for comparison of ethnic phenomena. Less cautious or more ambitious theorists might claim that we compare, for example, mechanisms for boundary maintenance (and transcendence), structural properties of processes of incorporation, processes of symbolization in political competition, or minority strategies - all of which are considered phenomena with uniform and identifiable, formal properties. Major concerns have been problems of social and systemic integration in so-called plural societies, and to a lesser extent problems relating to the distribution of power in national states containing minorities. These concerns have dictated the development of concepts; granted that social reality itself is multi-faceted, our concepts about it depend on the questions asked.

A different approach borders on psychology in that it focuses on postulated "individual needs" for an ordered social world and the prevention of cultural entropy; in other words, the "mechanisms of boundary maintenance" are moved from the collective to the individual level, and the main dimension for comparison would be the manifest techniques for solving "perennial problems" (see e.g. Cohen 1974a; Nash 1989). Both types of approach, which are not mutually exclusive, take the cultural differences on which ethnicity is based for granted, and study them only as signifiers in inter-ethnic interaction. Since the relevance of cultural differences communicated through ethnicity varies systematically in important ways, I have suggested that we distinguish inter-ethnic contexts on such a basis, without committing the error of identifying cultural differences with properties of individuals or groups. In its simplest form, such a model might distinguish between contexts characterized by (i) one language-game, (ii) overlapping language-games, and (iii) incommensurable language-games.

The notion of a shared language-game implies agreement over constituting and strategic rules of interaction, and of course it goes beyond mere verbal language (Wittgenstein 1983 [1953], I: §7; cf. Bloor 1983: 137-159). The agents understand each other when they are playing the same language-game. My examples of ethnicity as activated in routine institutional politics is an example of this. When language-games are partly overlapping, there is agreement as to the form and content of only some relevant aspects of the interaction. The example of the Mauritian housekeeper in an Indian home illustrates this: the terms of employment were agreed upon, but not the rank of a black woman in an Indian home. When, finally, language-games are incommensurable, interaction is difficult and its regulating rules will normally be defined by the most powerful agent. Misunderstandings and highly different definitions of the situation will be common. A territorial dispute involving a national state and an aboriginal population would be a typical example of this. In the material presented in this paper, the example about the moneylending agency and the "irresponsible borrowers" illustrates the same point on a more local scale - while also reminding us that there are relevant cultural differences in any society which do not necessarily have to be described as ethnic.

The classification is intended for the comparison of specific contexts, not complete systems. Agents who misunderstand each other when they discuss religion may well get along well when they talk about football; whatever certain linguistic philosophers might claim to the contrary, language-games are rarely (never?) entirely discrete, and they are not static. Language-games expand and contract through interaction, but certain perceptions of differences beyond the "difference of being different" can remain despite intense interaction. Ethnic categories can therefore sometimes constitute what Gellner (1983:64) has called entropy-resistant classifications. Empirically, they have hitherto been entropy-resistant in important respects in both Trinidad and Mauritius, since intermarriage is exceptional. This may of course change.

Important dimensions of ethnicity which have been left out of my crude typology are formal properties of process as well as structural and individual power, aspects of social integration and historical specificities. Fardon's important criticism of ambitious comparisons of ethnic phenomena (Fardon 1987), has thus not been dealt with fully. The typology proposed (which can be elaborated in several ways) is an attempt to operationalize the cultural contexts of ethnicity which, I have argued, have varying and sometimes crucial importance in the social organization of ethnicity.

Ethnicity and the Concept of Culture

The aim of this article has been to explore some new possibilities for research on ethnicity - and, by extension, research on culture. I have argued that ethnicity, as correctly suggested by the formalists, can be reasonably regarded as the collective enaction of socially differentiating signs. These signs, however, are not arbitrary because, unlike linguistic signs, they are intrinsically linked with experienced, practical worlds containing specific, relevant meanings which on the one hand contribute to shaping interaction, and which on the other hand limit the number of options in the production of ethnic signs. I have argued that variation on this level of signification, where incentives and constraints on action are reproduced, should be investigated in comparative analyses of ethnicity. For only when all participants are involved in the same language-game, are the ethnic signs truly arbitrary.

Only formal models of ethnicity are capable of producing comparative analyses. These very models are constructed from social facts which are themselves incomparable, and which differ in important ways. For instance, processes of dichotomization can be identified both in interpersonal Saami-Norwegian relationships and in Zulu-Afrikaner relationships, but there are important differences between the contexts of the encounters, shaping the interaction and the content and form of articulation of stereotypes. Clearly, we cannot neglect these substantial differences. I have suggested, therefore, a form of theoretical triangulation whereby we apply different sets of formal abstractions to the same material; one might label it, slightly pretentiously, a multidimensional model of ethnicity. Models for the comparative study of boundary-maintenance and ethnic incorporation should definitely be retained as analytical devices. I have argued that we also need a set of abstractions for dealing with variations in the degree of shared meaning in a given

context. For it is impossible to understand say, different problems of different Fourth World populations, and conflicts between European host populations and Third World labour migrants, without taking seriously the differing cultural contexts (and semantic density) of manifestly communicated ethnic differences. To conceptualize shared meaning as shared language-games, I have argued, can turn such cultural differences into a matter of analysis, not just one of description or policymaking.

I believe this kind of argument, for which I claim little originality, to have profound significance for anthropological research and theorizing about culture. Let me, therefore, outline a few implications by way of conclusion. First, textual models of culture have limited value insofar as culture is an aspect of diverse social practices lacking the unity of a text as well as its structure and its form of internal logic. However, to deconstruct culture into the varying meaning-aspects of concrete social relationships apparently deprives us of the possibility of grasping culture as an interrelated system of signifiers - and this presents us with a problem. On the one hand, culture is neither a property of a person nor an integrated symbolic system; this is never more evident than in multi-ethnic societies where several competing, although overlapping language-games may present themselves as potentially relevant. But on the other hand, culture is a thing, une chose sociale, insofar as it provides necessary cues for all meaningful action. The predicament entailed by our deconstruction of a much misused term can only be resolved if social relationships are understood contextually yet not reduced to their contexts. We must, in other words, arrive at an understanding of culture which makes it impossible to talk of, for example, Norwegian culture, or Mauritian culture, or for that matter of Indo-Trinidadian culture, while at the same time not reducing culture to idiosyncratic individual actions. I have suggested that culture be conceptualized as a language-game; a learnt and internalized context of shared meaning bounded spatially, temporally and situationally, yet related to other such games through rules of translation and conversion, or through shared or continuous practices, personnel or other carriers of information. Within such a framework, it is possible to account for the communication of cultural difference on every level right down to the dyadic encounter without either reifying "cultural groups" as analytical entities or reducing the relevant differences to arbitrary signs; that is, without reducing agency to structure, meaning to politics, and creativity to normative behaviour. This use of the language-game concept thus makes it possible to delineate the extent of shared meaning in relevant contexts in a society, without presupposing either the existence of "an integrated culture" or that of independent individuals developing their mutual understanding from scratch. For the rules of language-games are learnt, although they are frequently modified by the agents.

Culture is, like social structure, dual: it provides a necessary frame within which action can be meaningful, and it depends entirely on intentional action for its reproduction. Conversely, culture is activated in all human relationships, while simultaneously a condition for the very same relationships to be meaningful. Intentional agency is therefore a necessary component in cultural change. It remains only to add that ethnicity is

similarly constituted - and that its significance in any situation cannot be taken for granted.

Celebrating the New Year

The old year goes out - the new comes in. The days around New Year's Eve are a time for many to think back to the past year and to think ahead what comes next year, and it is also the time to revive some ancient traditions and superstitions that promise to bring good luck in the New Year.

In many cultures fire (or fireworks) are an important part of the New Year's celebrations. "In the Iran, people are lighting bonfires to signal to the angels (Forouhars) that they are ready to receive them", says Seyed. "Some people believe that jumping over the bonfires will 'clean' them from the past - and bring good luck in the new year". Often spectacular display of fire - and loud sounds - are supposed to drive out the bad spirits, who are said to be afraid of these loud sounds. In other cultures, the flames and fire are symbols of bringing light into the darkness. "The fire puts behind the darkness, and you go with a light into the New Year"' explains Ian, from Scotland. "Others also think that the light symbolised a sacred flame that will guide you in the new year". In Scotland New Year fires, torch light processions and fireball swinging are important aspects of Hogomanay, the Scottish New Years celebrations.

But there is more to New Year than simply fire and flames: Many cultures have traditional symbols and rituals that promise fortune and prosperity for the New Year. In Spain, twelve "Uvas de la Suerte" - or the Grapes of Luck - are eaten while the clock is chiming in the New Year.

In Scotland the ancient tradition of "First Footing" is still very much alive. It is believed, that when a "tall, dark stranger" comes to your door at midnight, and brings you cake, coins or coal, then the next year is going to be prosperous. "Today this is usually done with friends, who come around to your house and bring little gifts - and in return they are provided with a meal", explains Ian.

Just as many church bells ring in the New Year in many Western countries, Buddhist and Shinto temples traditionally 'ring in' the New Year: With exactly 108 chimes - each symbolising one of the 108 evils that are believed to exist on Earth.

The Hindu New Year, Deepavali, (also known as Diwali) is another celebration of the victory of light over darkness - with lamps being lit in windows, ritual cleaning and colourful rice displays in front of houses and doors.

The legendary Chinese New Year, lasting a full 15 days, is also traditionally loaded with different customs, rituals and superstitions. Traditionally the colour red is an important "lucky" colour in Chinese, and if one sees something red first thing after the new year has begun, then this is a sign of fortune and luck. Also, many Chinese use red clothing as a symbol of fortune during this time. "Red is regarded to bring luck all year round - it is a vibrant and friendly colour. But of course it is especially important during the New Year's celebrations. Therefore we wrap small gifts, symbolic coins and so forth in red paper and give them to our friends and family members", explains Catherine Wong.

A popular Chinese superstition is to open the windows and doors of the house around midnight - so that the old year can leave the house - and the new year can come in.

The Jewish New Year , Rosh Hashanah, is celebrated with the daily sounding of the 'shofar', a trumpet like instrument. Traditional food includes apples dipped in honey. " They are symbols of a sweet new year", says Tracey from New York. "We also dip bread in honey - all symbolising the same thing". In fact the New Year celebrations last a full 10 days, and conclude with Yom Kippur, ten days after Rosh Hashanah. The first 10 days of the New Year, known as Days of Awe, are devoted as a time of reflection upon the last year, and planning for the year ahead.

Although the "New Year" is not the same everywhere - as different religions use different calendars, the change of the year is important almost everywhere. And in most cultures the days around the change of the year are celebrated following many old customs and traditions.

Christmas Traditions around the World

Christmas traditions around the (Christian) world are all but the same. Go on a trip and see how Christmas is celebrated in different countries....

Christmas is one of the highlights of the Christian calendar - and celebrated by Christians all around the world. But whereas the Anglo-Saxon countries celebrate Christmas on the 25. of December, many continental European countries celebrate Christmas on the 24th (such as Germany and Poland), with two Christmas holidays following. In Orthodox countries, Christmas is usually celebrated on the 6th of January (for example in Russia).

But even before Christmas officially starts, children in Germany and the Netherlands (to name just a few), get their shoes and stockings ready: As Sinterklaas or St. Nikolaus comes during the night from the 5th to the 6th of December to fill them with chocolates and other sweets.

One thing that most countries have in common is an elaborate Christmas dinner, and as varied as the countries are the typical dishes that are served.

For example, no British Christmas would be complete without a traditional Christmas Pudding, a rich pudding made from nuts, raisins and bread, frequently served with thick cream or brandy butter.

In Germany, the traditional Christmas dinner is a goose - the so called "Weihnachtsgans". And not to forget the typical Stollen-christmas bread, a sweet bread filled with almonds, raisins and often marzipan. Germany also celebrates Christmas a day earlier than most of its neighbours: The presents are put under the Christmas tree by the "christchild" on the 24th.

In Spain, the traditional Christmas celebrations start in the noche buena (or Christmas Eve) with a traditional family dinner. Although the dinner often varies in content - the traditional Christmas sweets do not: Polvorones - sandy sweet almond biscuits and Turron, bars of chocolate, almonds and many other flavours are being served traditionally during the Christmas period. On the 28th of December is the day of the "Innocent Saints" - a kind of April's Fools Day over the Christmas period. And finally on the 6th of January the waiting for the presents is over: The three kings bring the Christmas presents.

In the Netherlands all children look forward to the 5th of December - that is when Sinterklaas arrives on his slate from Spain, together with his assistant "Black Peter". On the evening before, the children put out their shoes, filled with a carrot or hay for Sinterklaas' horse, and await the morning. Sinterklaas then fills the shoes of all the children with sweets, especially chocolate letters, and gifts. Christmas itself is far less exciting than in other countries, although it is becoming more and more celebrated like in many other countries.

In Italy it is tradition not to eat any meat on the day before Christmas. Normally the families gather on Christmas Eve, and have a big meal without meat, but various dishes made from different varieties of fish, depending on the region and the tradition in the family.

In Japan, Christmas takes a completely different meaning. Not being a Christian country, Christmas has no religious meaning, but it is still celebrated - however mostly by couples and young families, who use the day to have a special dinner for two, including a special "Christmas Cake" and exchanging small gifts. There are - paradoxically - Christmas trees and illuminations in Japan, too. And just in case that one is single - on Christmas day there are many parties celebrating Christmas all around the big cities in Japan.

When cultures differ: A Glimpse into the Experiences of an Immigrant Canadian Family

Briarpatch Magazine, March, 2004 by M. Naushaba Habib

My family immigrated to Canada in 1973 and our links are to India and Pakistan. We left both of these countries because of discrimination. In India, Muslims faced discrimination from a predominately Hindu population, and Indian Muslims who moved to Pakistan faced discrimination as immigrants.

Our first stop on the way to Canada was the United States. My husband had come for medical training and I was pregnant with my first child.

The primary barrier we faced was ignorance and continues to be ignorance. Most of the people around us did not know anything about our faith, or if they thought they did it was often a mistaken understanding. We avoided activities which were contrary to our cultural or religious upbringing.

Accommodation

When we first arrived, access to food was a problem. We eat Halaal food, animals slaughtered in a special religious way. Pork, pork products and alcohol are forbidden for Muslims. Because

of the lack of food suitable for our eating, we remained vegetarian for a while. Subsequently, we arranged to slaughter cow, lamb and chicken on farms. Now Halaal food is available in many grocery stores. Hotels arrange for our kind of food when we invite people for marriages and other events.

When we started to receive invitation from our local friends and neighbours we did not know how to tell them about our food requirements. We thought we would be imposing on them. Therefore, we would go and eat whatever was suitable for us to eat. One day a family invited us for a meal and served only foods containing pork. Therefore, we could not eat. When the hosts found out, they were very embarrassed and we felt guilty for not telling them. Because of this experience we have decided to let our hosts know and we request that they not bother with any special preparation. In spite of this request, people go out of their way to make sure that there is some food for us. Thus, it was a process of learning to be frank and cordial.

When we arrived here we were welcomed by the larger society and participated in social and community gatherings, but we did not have a place to offer congregational worship. Churches were generous to offer their places without hesitation when approached. Now there are Mosques in every city, from small houses to palatial buildings.

When we first arrived here, and until lately, children were allowed to leave classes for our holidays but were marked absent. The children are no longer marked absent, and schools are even providing a place and allowing the children to pray at the required times. Employers now allow their Muslim employees to go to offer prayer; the Muslim employees compensate by working for the total hours they are expected to work. Workers generally have to use their annual holidays to celebrate our religious holidays, except in Ontario. We are appreciative of these accommodations.

Racism

My children faced racial discrimination in schools. Our home and car were vandalized and I faced taunts over my head scarf; I was walking one time in the downtown area and a youth poked my head from behind and ran away. Another time I was walking in the park in my neighborhood and a boy called me "Hebrew lady" and tried to hide. I went to him and told him, "I am a Muslim lady." It was gratifying that a white woman came to me and told me, looking at my traditional dress, "You look different and nice. Do not change yourself." It was encouraging for me to be reminded that there are kind people! I also have a fond memory of our first landlady when we lived in the USA. Jackie was a registered nurse and was like a mother to us. She even took time off work to attend to me during my pregnancy, and to my child when he became very sick.

Muslim Community

Over time my family became involved with the Muslim community. I was, and am, President of the Regina Chapter of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women and my husband was President of the Islamic Association for many years. We established Muslims for Peace and Justice after the 9/11 incident in order to address misunderstandings about Islam and Muslims, and to deal with the ensuing rise in discrimina-

tion. My children were active with the Muslim youth and were also involved in the society at large.

I started an Islamic school in my home to teach religion to the children and did so for a number of years. The school started with nine children of different age groups. By the time we acquired our own centre or Mosque, the number of children had grown to 30. The Mosque now provides religious study.

Some of the Muslim families felt the need for a full time Muslim school and Regina Huda School was started in 1999 with 20 students. Two years later it became an associate school with the Public School Board. Saskatchewan School Board curriculum is followed and taught by five certified non-Muslim teachers. Three Muslim teachers teach Islam and Arabic. The school has 85 children from pre-kindergarten to Grade 8. These families are originally from 15 different countries. The school maintains a very high standard and has excellent facilities. There is a plan to eventually include high school.

We are active in university programs for Islamic discussion, folk festivals, work related functions, and in interfaith and intercultural activities. My children, now grown up, were involved with us, and continue to be active in the Muslim community and in society at large.

Prior to 9-11, I believed that Muslims were gaining greater acceptance by the mainstream society. After 9-11, I became apprehensive for the future of my family and my country, Canada. While I see the rise of all kinds of bigotry, at the same time I am reassured to see many of my sister and brother Canadians outside my faith group standing up for us.

Ignorance is the biggest disease of the human being. I believe that the best way to overcome something is to face the problem head on and deal with it. We have to develop understanding and respect for one another to live and progress as individuals, as society and as a nation. We are created by God as one.

As God says in the Holy Quraa'n: "O mankind, We have created you from a single male and female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other. The most honorable in the sight of God are surely the Righteous."

M. Naushaba Habib is an immigrant citizen of Canada with a Master "s degree in Political Science. She is a homemaker, medical office manager, community volunteer worker and a founding member and the President of Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Regina Chapter.

Cultural Differences can Complicate Worker-Management Relations

By Ana Cecilia Membreño

The Honduran maquila industry has grown steadily in the last five years. Many of the foreign investors who have built plants in Honduran industrial parks come from other highly-saturated maquila countries, mostly in Asia.

Korea, like other Asian tigers, based its economic growth largely on the maquila. Now that companies are looking for new labor markets, Honduras has become an attractive choice.

But In Ki Min, office manager at Sunny Industries in ZIP Choloma, and plant director M.S. Ock say the cultural differences can be hard to handle at first.

"One difference I see is the high percentage of single mothers who work here. The family institution is less solid than in Korea," says Ock, who has been working in Honduras for six years. "I believe families make communities and communities make a country. If the family is destroyed, the country cannot develop."

Min says he misses the changes of the season. There are four very distinct seasons in Korea, a big change from Honduras' continuously warm tropical weather. "I miss the snow," says the native of Pusan, South Korea's second largest city.

Sunny Industries has been operating out of ZIP Choloma since 1988. Producing 5,000 shirts a day, the company supplies U.S. brand names like the Gap, William Bay and Suprema.

With little knowledge of the Spanish language, Min and Ock say its a daily struggle to motivate their workers to keep production steady.

"Sometimes when it's ten minutes before the workers have to leave they stop doing their jobs," says Ock. "Sometimes they just arrive late. In Korea people work until the last minute."

Nevertheless, many investors say they chose Honduras because its labor force is easily trainable, abundant and low-cost. Salaries in Honduras are cheaper than in Korea, therefore the end product is cheaper.

Ock, who left his family back in Korea, says he likes the fresh air he breathes in San Pedro Sula. "There is too much industrial pollution in Korea," he says.

Both men agreed that food is no problem in Honduras. "We find all of the ingredients we need and then Ock cooks for us," jokes Min.

The ways in which cultures differ in terms of their

Context (Whether high or low)

Orientation (whether individual or collective)

Masculinity- Feminity

Identity

Notes

LESSON 7
HIGH AND LOW CULTURE; POPULAR CULTURE

Contents

Introduction; what is low culture? What is high culture? High and low context, Ways that High and Low Context Differ, Entering High and Low Context Situations, How Culture Influences Communication.

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the concepts of high and low culture.
- To understand the ways in which high and low cultures differ.
- To understand how culture influences communication.

Introduction

High- and Low cultures were first addressed by E.T. Hall (1981). The terms "high" and "low" have nothing to do with the status of any culture but are good shorthand for a number of characteristics. **High-context cultures** are those in which the meaning of someone's words and actions is derived or contextualized from the environment in which the words are spoken. People from high-context cultures often send more information implicitly, have a wider topical or subject matter "network," and thus tend to be informed on many subjects. **High-context** cultures place greater importance on intuition and reflection and tend to emphasize ambience, decorum, the relative status of the participants in communication, and the manner in which a message is delivered. Low-context cultures are those in which communication is less dependent on history or narratives or stories. People tend to focus on specific subjects of their own interests. **Low-context cultures** tend to want to emphasize the content of a communication rather than the way in which something is communicated, an attitude that might be expressed in the phrase "cut to the chase." **Low-context** cultures depend less on the context of a situation and tend to be analytical and action-orientated.

Conflict theorists, unlike their consensus counterparts, tend to argue that all modern societies consist of the appearance of a common culture, shared by everyone in society, which masks the reality of competing cultural forms. Marxist Conflict theorists in particular have argued that every society consists of social classes defined in terms of whether they own or do not own the means of economic production in society (in simple terms, society ultimately consists of two great classes:

- The **bourgeoisie** (or upper and middle classes) who own and control the means of producing economic survival (they own factories, businesses and the like) and
- The **proletariat** (or working class) who survive by working for the bourgeoisie.

In this sense, each of these two classes have very different interests and experiences in society. The bourgeoisie, for example, are the wealthiest (minority) in society whose interests lie in hanging-on to their privileged position. The proletariat,

consisting of the least wealthy majority, have according to Marxists the common interest of taking away the wealth of the bourgeoisie. As can be imagined, the relationship between these two great classes is built upon a fundamental conflict of interest.

For Marxists, therefore, the bourgeoisie have two main problems in terms of their relations with other social classes:

- How to maintain their privileged position from one generation to the next.
- How to stop other classes taking away their wealth and privilege.

One solution is to develop and enhance cultural artefacts (that is, the material things and non-material ideas that constitute a particular culture) relevant to the bourgeoisie for two main reasons:

a. Firstly, to give the members of this class a sense of having things in common (a common culture and hence class identity) and

b. Secondly, to try to impose the cultural ideas useful to this class on the rest of society. If this happens it makes it appear that everyone in society has much the same interests, making it less likely that the working class will see themselves as fundamentally different and opposed to the ruling class.

In this respect, many Marxist sociologists have tried to show how cultural artefacts can be used by a dominant economic class (the ruling class) to enhance their social status over other classes in society, This, therefore, is where a distinction between high culture and low culture can be an important one.

The status (or social standing) of a ruling class is enhanced through claims that their culture is superior to the culture of the rest of society ("the masses").

By its ability to spread its concept of superior (high) and inferior (low) cultural forms (through ownership and / or control of cultural institutions such as religion, education and the mass media), a ruling class is able to impose cultural ideas on the rest of society that reflect its interests.

High culture, therefore, refers to what are (supposedly) the greatest artistic and literary achievements of a society. Clearly, what counts as "the greatest" is going to ultimately be a matter of values - judgements about what should or should not count as high culture.

However, according to Marxists, the people who are in the most influential positions in society are able to impose their definitions of "great" - and these definitions invariably reflect the kinds of activities and ideas that are most relevant and useful to a ruling class. Cultural forms such as opera, classical music, the literary works of Shakespeare and so forth all fall under the heading of high culture.

Low culture, on the other hand, refers to a wide variety of cultural themes that are characterised by their production and consumption by "the masses". At various times, low cultural forms have included the cinema, certain forms of theatre, comics, television (especially soap operas, game shows and the like).

A simple example illustrates the difference between high and low culture:

A painting of a nude woman hanging on the wall of a gallery is "art" (part of high culture), whereas a picture of a naked woman published in a mass circulation newspaper is certainly not "art" (and may, under certain conditions, be labelled as pornography) but the very opposite of art, namely low culture.

The justification for the distinction is found not in the cultural form itself (a picture of a naked man or women is much the same whatever medium it is presented in) but in the theoretical elaboration of that form.

Thus, when a painting is hung in an art gallery what is being admired is the skill and composition, the cultural references and representations. When a picture appears in a newspaper, these are absent and all that is left is a titillation factor.

High and Low Context

The general terms "high context" and "low context" (popular-ized by Edward Hall) are used to describe broad-brush cultural differences between societies.

High context refers to societies or groups where people have close connections over a long period of time. Many aspects of cultural behavior are not made explicit because most members know what to do and what to think from years of interaction with each other. Your family is probably an example of a high context environment.

Low context refers to societies where people tend to have many connections but of shorter duration or for some specific reason. In these societies, cultural behavior and beliefs may need to be spelled out explicitly so that those coming into the cultural environment know how to behave.

High Context

- Less verbally explicit communication, less written/formal information
- More internalized understandings of what is communicated
- Multiple cross-cutting ties and intersections with others
- Long term relationships
- Strong boundaries- who is accepted as belonging vs who is considered an "outsider"
- Knowledge is situational, relational.
- Decisions and activities focus around personal face-to-face relationships, often around a central person who has authority.

Examples:
Small religious congregations, a party with friends, family gatherings, expensive gourmet restaurants and neighborhood restaurants with a regular clientele, undergraduate on-campus

friendships, regular pick-up games, hosting a friend in your home overnight.

Low Context
- Rule oriented, people play by external rules
- More knowledge is codified, public, external, and accessible.
- Sequencing, separation—of time, of space, of activities, of relationships
- More interpersonal connections of shorter duration
- Knowledge is more often transferable
- Task-centered. Decisions and activities focus around what needs to be done, division of responsibilities.

Examples:
Large US airports, a chain supermarket, a cafeteria, a convenience store, sports where rules are clearly laid out, a motel.

While these terms are sometimes useful in describing some aspects of a culture, one can never say a culture is "high" or "low" because societies all contain both modes. "High" and "low" are therefore less relevant as a description of a whole people, and more useful to describe and understand particular situations and environments.

Ways that High and Low Context Differ

1. The Structure of Relationships

   o High:

   Dense, intersecting networks and longterm relationships, strong boundaries, relationship more important than task

   o Low:

   Loose, wide networks, shorter term, compartmentalized relationships, task more important than relationship

2. Main Type of Cultural Knowledge

   o High:

   More knowledge is below the waterline—implicit, patterns that are not fully conscious, hard to explain even if you are a member of that culture

   o Low:

   More knowledge is above the waterline—explicit, consciously organized

Entering High and Low Context Situations

High contexts can be difficult to enter if you are an outsider (because you don't carry the context information internally, and because you can't instantly create close relationships).

Low contexts are relatively easy to enter if you are an outsider (because the environment contains much of the information you need to participate, and because can you form relationships fairly soon, and because the important thing is accomplishing a task rather than feeling your way into a relationship).

Remember that every culture and every situation has its high and low aspects. Often one situation will contain an inner high context core and an outer low context ring for those who are less involved.

For instance, a PTA is usually a low context situation: any parent can join, the dates of the meetings, who is president, what will be discussed, etc. are all explicitly available information, and it is usually fairly clear how to participate in the meetings.

However, if this is a small town, perhaps the people who run the PTA all know each other very well and have many overlapping interests. They may "agree" on what should be discussed or what should happen without ever really talking about it, they have unconscious, unexpressed values that influence their decisions. Other parents from outside may not understand how decisions are actually being made. So the PTA is still low context, but it has a high context subgroup that is in turn part of a high context small town society.

Note:

When you enter a high context situation, it doesn't immediately become a low context culture just because you came in the door! It is still a high context culture and you are just (alas), ignorant. Also, even low context cultures can be difficult to learn: religious dietary laws, medical training, written language all take years to understand. The point is that that information has been made conscious, systematic, and available to those who have the resources to learn it.

The distinction between high and low culture stems from Victorian poet Matthew Arnold's definition of culture as "the best that has been thought and said in the world." Clearly this view of culture is hierarchical, implying distinctions of quality between the "best" and the rest. From this hierarchical view of culture comes the overly simplistic binary opposition between "high culture" and "low culture."

Because "high culture" has been defined in the elite European mold, the term generally refers to such cultural activities. Examples include ballet, opera, etc. The cultural value of such works is seen as "transcendent and timeless," as they can supposedly be appreciated by anyone anywhere anytime in history. While scholars today generally regard such a view as naive and parochial, we nonetheless continue to use the term "high culture" to refer to such cultural activities.

"Low culture," then, usually refers to non-elite cultural activities. Examples include television, popular music, breakdancing, and comic books. It is only recently that scholars have admitted the potential scholarly worth of studying "low culture." In general, such activities were not considered to be timeless or transcendental.

The latter half of this century has seen this distinction begin to break down, as scholars begun to recognize the value of "low culture" in enhancing our understanding of human societies. Some would argue that because more people participate in "low culture" activities than "high culture" activities, the former offer a more rigorous understanding of the society than the often rarified activities of high culture.

This recent scholarly push in the direction of "low culture" has brought us a third term, "popular culture," to identify cultural activities as worthy of scholarly analysis. The recognition that a text such as Madonna or Batman might give us a better clue to what American society is about has led to the emergence of popular cultural studies as a discipline. We will discuss popular culture - as well as a fourth notion, "mass culture" - later in the semester.

Relation Between Culture and Communication

Recall Hall's identity - "Communication is culture and culture is communication." This both overstates and understates the relation between culture and communication. It is important to understand the concepts as inextricably intertwined, but they are of course not exactly the same. Martin & Nakayama look at both how culture influences communication and how, reciprocally, communication influences culture.

How Culture Influences Communication

Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck attempted to categorize cultures in terms of their value orientations. Values are the "most deeply felt, zero-order beliefs shared by a cultural group." Most identifiable cultures hold some set of values in common. Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck broke down value orientations into a series of questions:

1. What is human nature?

2. What is the relationship between humans and nature?

3. What is the relationship between humans?

4. What is the preferred personality?

5. What is the orientation toward time?

How Communication Influences Culture

One example of research into how communication shapes culture is Tamar Katriel's work on "griping" in Israeli culture. Katriel broke down the ritual of griping in terms of its *instrumentality, scene, participants, key, and act sequence* (see p. 72).

The *performative* view of communication's influence on culture holds that culture is a performed activity, a role. Again recall Park's observation that the term "person" comes from a Latin word meaning the mask of an actor. According to the performative view, we are all actors playing a role in a cultural context. Gerry Phillipsen, for example, studied how men enact their gender roles through communicative activity. Marjorie Garber has done some interesting work on transvestitism and transexuality that similarly identifies gender roles as *roles* — the performance of a communicatively constituted identity.

Culture as Resistance

Martin & Nakayama briefly introduce the topic of culture as resistance to dominant society. We will cover this topic much more later on, but the basic idea is that people often use cultural (and *sub*cultural) activities to challenge the dominant cultural norms. Examples might include rave and hip-hop culture, or the on-the-job subversion of "temp slaves."

Communication and Context

"Context" includes all of the factors that shape and influence the ways in which we understand any communicative event. Typically such factors as physical and social setting as well as economic and historical factors influence the context of communication. Context is multilayered rather than fixed or static.

Communication and Power

Communication can rarely if ever be said to be something taking place between pure "equals," even though most of our models of understanding communication makes this assumption. Recent communication scholarship understands that social hierarchies are always present, however subtle, in communication interactions. Mark Orbe puts it this way: "In every society a social hierarchy exists that privileges some groups over others. Those groups that function at the top of the social hierarchy determine to a great extent the communication system of the entire society."

Loden & Rosener divide this power differential into two dimensions — the primary, or more permanent, dimension (e.g. gender, race, age, sexual orientation), and the secondary, or more changeable, dimension (e.g. educational background, socioeconomic status, marital status).

Power is also institutional, meaning that human institutions embody and sustain power relations. This is true of cultural institutions such as marriage, legal-political institutions such as the LAPD, and physical institutions such as a prison or hospital. A certain institutional role (e.g. teacher, cop, president) can offer the occupant institutional power of that role.

Power is dynamic. This means that, as Michel Foucault argued, power circulates. It is not simply held by one person and used against another; it is fluid, flowing through individuals in various contexts and relationships. Importantly, people who are the subjects of power often find ways to resist this power. Nevertheless, this does not mean it is easy to resist. Martin & Nakayama's example of the "beauty myth" is an excellent reminder of the fact that even as power circulates, it still privileges some over others.

Notes

LESSON 8
FOLK AND POPULAR CULTURE

Contents

What is folk culture? What is popular culture? Characteristics of folk culture, Characteristics of popular culture, Consuming popular culture, resisiting popular culture, representing cultural group,

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the concepts of folk and popular culture.
- To study the characteristics and importance of folk and popular context.

Folk and Popular Culture

While there is some important overlap between **folk** and **popular** culture, it remains useful to maintain a distinction between them. Martin & Nakayama use the terms as both contrary and complementary

Characteristics of Folk Culture

Folk culture is not meant to be packaged or sold commercially. If it is sold commercially, that is not its primary purpose. Folk culture is not the national culture of a nation-state, although one could speak of folk cultures in national terms (e.g. "Lithuanian Folk Culture"). Folk culture "has reminded the nation of social worlds beneath its surface." (Bronner, 1986, in Martin & Nakayama, 233). Its primary characteristic is that it arises from the organic life of a community, and it is not intended for a mass audience beyond that community. It includes the traditions, customs, music, art, dress, dance, literature, and stories passed on within a community.

While folk culture is distinct from popular culture, it is worth noting that popular culture often appropriates aspects of folk culture. Jamaican folk traditions may be commodified in mass marketed music, Hawaiian folk culture may be represented in travel brochures, etc.

Characteristics of Popular Culture

There are many definitions of popular culture. Barry Brummett defines popular culture as "those systems or artifacts that most people share and that most people know about." (234) To be more precise requires some focus both on the origin and the purpose of popular culture — for Martin & Nakayama popular culture comes from "the people," but it is consumed under conditions of commerce. Popular culture is thus a commodity that bears "the interests of the people." As John Fiske points out: "To be made into popular culture, a commodity must also bear the interests of the people. Popular culture is not con-sumption; it is culture - the active process of generating and circulating meanings and pleasures within a social system: culture, however industrialized, can never be adequately described in terms of the buying and selling of commodities." .

Four significant characteristics of popular culture:

1. It is produced by culture industries

   "Culture industries" are corporations which produce culture as a product for mass consumption (and, needless to say, corporate profit). Such industries include the companies producing movies, television shows, music, etc. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer popularized this term with their essay "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" in the 1940s, in which they attacked American mass culture as uniformly destructive.

2. It is different from folk culture

   Most importantly, folk culture arises without a drive for financial profit (or at least without profit as its **primary** drive). Some folk traditions - e.g. native American powwows - may produce some financial profit, but profit is not their primary *raison d'etre.*)

3. It is everywhere

   Popular culture is pervasive. It is on TV, billboards, the Internet, your kitchen, etc.

4. It fills a social function

   Popular culture is a medium through which social anxieties are worked out (e.g. "Invasion of the Body Snatchers") or through which other social issues can be dealt with or addressed. Popular culture is a forum for role modeling as well as for addressing many issues of social concern.

Consuming Popular Culture

cultural texts: there are a lot of texts, or pieces of discourse, produced by the culture industries. These texts exist in many diverse forms and content; people seek out the cultural texts that speak most clearly to them. The culture industries produce **reader profiles** of magazine readers and other consumers in order to more directly market their products to certain groups. While the Internet has made the creation of such profiles very easy, it has also raised a number of important privacy concerns with respect to the use of such information. Martin & Nakayama offer case studies of how magazines create these profiles, but warn us not to conflate target markets with real cultural identities.

Resisting Popular Culture

Sometimes people actively resist popular cultural texts. Their reasons may be aesthetic, political, economic, or social. Some-times the impetus for resistance to popular cultural texts comes from a clash of cultural values or cultural identities. Resistance to the Bill Cosby Show, for example, often came from people who felt that the cultural values and economic class position portrayed on the show was not consistent with that of much of African America. While this fact in itself is unremarkable (after all, how many are upset that The Simpsons doesn't

represent most of white America?), the fact that the Cosby Show was often held up by NBC as a shining example of television's increasing diversity (this was the early 1990s, a time when - like today - there were fewer black faces on television than there were in the 1970s). Martin & Nakayama use Madonna as another example; resistance to Madonna's work often reflects a clash of values.

Representing Cultural Groups

Popular culture also functions as a lens through which other groups are represented. One drawback to the appropriation of folk culture in popular culture is the influence of stereotypes. Cultural groups are often distorted in the lens of popular culture. Popular culture is a resource that many use for information about other cultures. Martin & Nakayama discuss how migrants use popular culture to understand American mainstream culture. Racial stereotypes in particular are pervasive in U.S. popular culture. They appear to affect all social and racial groups, constraining their viewpoints and behaviors towards other groups.

Cultural Imperialism

U.S. culture is exported around the world at an increasingly rapid rate. This began in the 1920s as part of an explicit strategy of social engineering around the world — The U.S. government felt that putting U.S. movies in foreign theaters would help increase the sale of U.S. products around the world. They were right beyond their wildest dreams. While most scholars today acknowledge the dangers of cultural imperialism, it still has its defenders. John Tomlinson suggests five ways of thinking about cultural imperialism:

1. as cultural domination
2. as media imperialism
3. as nationalist discourse
4. as a critique of global capitalism
5. as a critique of modernity

The Idea of India

India may be loved or hated, may be an object of devotion or derision. But there is hardly anyone Indian who is indifferent or lukewarm about this country. "You can take Indians out of India, but you can't take India out of Indians" - so goes a popular saying. Most people of Indian origin settled in foreign countries stay obsessed with India, no matter how far they move away. This engagement takes many forms - some express it through anger and outrage at the raging corruption, inefficiency and lack of will to set things right. Some others make a profession of critiquing its many real and imagined ills. Still others turn rabid apologists. Most quietly sustain their faith in "The Wonder that was India".

Dil Hai Hindustani

Not just a nation, India represents a distinct civilisation and universe of values. It defies definition, containing an incredible diversity of peoples, religions, belief systems, languages, social structures, topographies, weather conditions and knowledge systems. India is not very easy to know and understand. Yet Indians are very direct and open, they wear their hearts on their sleeves. You can recognise 'Indianness' by tuning into people's

hearts rather than by their external trappings. Raj Kapoor expressed it very aptly in the famous song from the film Shree 420, challenging the "Be Indian, Buy Indian" variety of nationalism promoted by the government in the 1950's:

Mera Joota hai Japani,

Yeh patloon Englishtani,

Sar par lal topi Russi

Phir bhi dil hai Hindustani.

(My shoes are Japanese, these pants are English; on my head I wear a red Russian cap and yet my heart remains Indian.)

Four decades later, Alisha Chinai echoed the same sentiment in her tantalising popular song Made in India. In the music video to the song, Alisha wears a skin-tight western outfit with a plunging neckline and bare shoulders. She looks like a nightclub dancer from a Hollywood film but she croons soulfully for a *"Made in India" heart:*

Dekhi hai saari duniya,

Japan se lekar Russia,

Australia se lekar America.

Dekha hai pyar ka sapna,

Dil chahe jo ho apna,

Mil jayega ek sathiya, ek deshiya.

Made in India, made in India,

Dil chahiye bas made in India.

The message is clear - you may dress and dance like Madonna or Michael Jackson, you may wear jeans or mini-skirts, you may look like a vamp or a call girl - all those are just externals. What really matters is that your heart stays Indian. Any time our NRIs get deeply nostalgic or sentimental, they proclaim their deep attachment to their Indian roots not by showing you their investment portfolios or listing the number of times they visit India every year, but by proclaiming that if they could tear open their chests like Hanuman did for Ram and Sita, people would find the map of India inscribed within.

> The 'Real India' can only be understood by tuning into the hearts of its people, rather than by their external trappings.

India indeed defies comprehension, especially for those who try to understand it through books, research studies and as an intellectual exercise. The 'Real India' can only be understood by connecting to the emotions of its people (as did Mahatma Gandhi), by understanding what touches their hearts, what makes them perform miraculous feats or what makes them indulge in the most brutal violations of human rights; what makes Indians accept corruption as a way of life and what makes them rise against it in rage and indignation. The 'Real India' can only be known by coming to understand what triggers off large-heartedness and tolerance for others, no matter how different their values and appearances, and what evokes vicious and mean responses. Under what circumstances do Indian men worship and revere women as Saraswatis, Lakshmis and Durgas incarnate, and what makes some of them turn so woman-hating that they kill their own daughters as unwanted burdens and torture their daughters-in-law to death?

Despite large doses of low-level vulgarity and mushy melo-drama, Bollywood films are perhaps the best contemporary guide to understanding what moves the Indian heart, what values Indians of today endorse as quintessentially their own.

Forced to a Reappraisal

Those among MANUSHI's readers who are familiar with the unflatteringly critical film reviews I wrote in the magazine's early issues are likely to be surprised by such a radical change in my evaluation of the role played by Bollywood films. I wish to clarify at the outset that this is a re-evaluation that has been forced on me. Whenever my own views seem contrary to popular opinion, as someone who believes in respecting people's choices, I believe it is my duty to try and understand things from their perspective and to be willing to modify my own views accordingly, especially if popular opinion does not seem to be harmful to others. Treating other people's choices with disdain when they do not conform to one's own values and tastes invariably strengthens authoritarian tendencies. This is why I have revised many of my positions on important social and political issues and it is what has compelled me to review my attitude to Bollywood films.

I began taking Bollywood films seriously and looking at them in a new way only after I experienced their popularity abroad and saw how this industry had positioned itself as India's most powerful cultural ambassador; that too without any official encouragement or patronage. Bollywood films are exported to more than a hundred countries, which is extraordinary given that these films have hardly been allowed to avail themselves of any legitimate funding. Denied industry status, Bollywood could not raise finances legally, leaving even the best of its directors to rely on black money and finance from the under-world. Our unimaginative and bureaucratic censor boards have a history of needless harassment and creating hurdles in clearing films for screening. Until recently, India's closed-door economy necessitated the export of films through illegal channels. Dubai became the centre of distribution for Indian films, cementing Bollywood's ties with the underworld even further. Ironically, it is this underworld-dominated industry that has chosen to churn out sentimental morality tales as entertainers and has assumed the mantle of inculcating what are commonly believed to be Indian sanskars.

The New Moral Custodians

Yet, it is this moral mantle that is key to understanding Bollywood's appeal for its audiences, despite the low-brow melodrama and predictability of its stories. An important reason for this enduring resonance is that the two great epics of India, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which are also the two foundational texts of the Indic civilisation, have provided a very widely acceptable base for the artistic development of Indian commercial cinema. They are often critiqued, their values challenged, even parodied - but the stories within stories of these great epics remain the foundational discourse of Bombay cinema. They function as meta-texts of Indian tradition and dharmic values. The worldview they propagate and the values they uphold have proved remarkably resilient despite pressures for change.

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As Dhirubhai Sheth aptly puts it: "Bollywood films have come to play the same role as pauranic kathas (tales) and the bhakti movement did in the medieval period when Vedic knowledge went into decline and the original sources of the civilisational moral code began drying up. At such a time the pauranic kathas took on the task of preaching morality and giving people a spiritual anchor through narrative accounts of mythical heroes and heroines whose lives demonstrated through personal example the desired social and moral code."

This is the same epoch in which Tulsidas rewrote the Valmiki Ramayana as the Ramcharit Manas in the bhakti idiom, and presented the mythic hero Ram as the Maryada Purushottam (the best of men, the upholder of the moral code) as opposed to the very humanly flawed Ram of Valmiki's Ramayana. This is the period when India faced repeated invasions and the polytheistic Indic civilisation faced ideological, theological and social onslaughts from monotheistic Islam. This historic clash was very creatively ameliorated through powerful socio-religious movements - the bhakti movement within the Hindu fold and Sufism within Islam - which built bridges of communication between the two contrary worldviews. The shrines of Sufi pirs became common centres of worship for Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims.

The affirmation of a distinct moral code, just as the pauranic kathas once did, was a task that befell Indian cinema, given its birth at a time when India faced a major ideological onslaught from the imperialist West. Indian cinema was in its infancy when the Mahatma Gandhi-led national movement was at its peak; unsurprisingly, most of our Bollywood directors and screenplay writers were deeply influenced by the Gandhian worldview. Many of them consciously and deliberately made their films a vehicle for carrying messages of social reform. Film upon film, then and since, has dealt obsessively with several key components of Gandhi's social concerns, including (to name just a few): the oppression of women in family and society (Dil Ek Mandir, Astha, Mrityudand, Nikaah); caste-based inequali-ties (Sujata, Acchut Kanya, Haasil); the sad plight of farmers (Do Bigha Zameen, Mother India, Ganga Jamuna); communal prejudice (Dharmaputra, Chhalia, Zakhm, Krantiveer) and the divide between the rich and the poor (Pyaasa, Lawaaris, Namak Haram, Jaagte Raho, Ameer-Gharib).

India through Other Eyes

Among Bollywood's most important cultural contributions are the emotional bridges it has built with India for people of diverse races, nationalities and languages and the manner in which it has made them feel deeply connected with the Indian worldview and way of life, albeit often in rather caricatured form. Much of what I am going to say is gathered from informal interviews and chats with people in diverse countries who go to see our films with devotion and enthusiasm. I would like to emphasise that these responses are based mostly on Bollywood hits which became a rage internationally as well. (This is not to overlook the fact that Bollywood also makes

many crude, vulgar and violent melodramas. However, it is significant that most of these are commercial flops.)

When one travels to Europe, North America or Australia, India (for those few who are at all interested in its existence) is synonymous with poverty, disease, wife murders, dowry torture, burning of widows, killing of baby girls, communal riots, caste atrocities and pervasive human rights abuses. This is because the basic sources of information about India in these countries are their newspapers, TV channels and select intellectuals from India who act as native informants, "interpreting" to the white world our many social evils and problems.

Western media have made India's dowry murders and satis far more wondrous, exotic and famous than the Taj Mahal, the Konarak Temple, the Qutab Minar, the ghats of Varanasi and other such renowned symbols of India's heritage. Not surprisingly, before India produced the great information technology success stories, it evoked mainly derision and contempt among most Europeans, Americans or Australians.

Connecting across Cultures

However, whenever one travels to any of the non-European countries - from the Middle East to the Far East, from the backwaters of Africa to the troubled shores of Russia - people know India mainly through Bollywood masalas. These are not primarily made for the benefit of the outside world. Bollywood films are about Indians sharing with other Indians their hopes, fears and romantic aspirations, their critique of their own society, their anger against what they perceive as unjust and unacceptable, the kind of transformations and social reforms they aspire to see take place, their notions of the good life and of fair-play. Bollywood has synthesised the emotional life of NRIs living in distant and diverse cultures and has made them feel "Indian" by making them feel connected to their cultural values. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from California to Kuala Lumpur, from Trinidad to Tokyo and from Dubai to Dublin, these films are the heartbeat of the Hindustani dil, both of the resident and the non-resident variety. Indians of all ages have overcome linguistic barriers and made Hindi film songs the vehicle for expressing their most heartfelt sentiments.

Astonishing Outreach

The Bombay film industry produces around 900 films a year - more popular entertainment than any other film centre in the world. And yet, unlike Hollywood, Bollywood did not start off with global aspirations. Hollywood spends a good deal of money and energy capturing world markets. Bollywood could never afford that kind of international publicity, yet its films have travelled far and wide on little more than word-of-mouth. Ours is the only film industry in the world which has offered American films any real competition. Hollywood's share in many other film markets is up at 60 to 90 per cent, but it has failed to make a dent on the enormous Indian market where it averages a mere 5 per cent. Inter-nationally as well, the entire non-European world has found a much greater emotional appeal and fascination in Bollywood masalas than in American films. Their popularity is particularly astonishing, given their overwhelmingly Hindu/Indic worldview. TV networks in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and many other Afro-Asian countries provide a staple

diet of Indian cinema, often half-a-dozen films in a day. On the theatre circuits, audiences come to see the same films again and again and in many of these countries, one hears people of all ages singing the songs of Kuchh Kuchh Hota Hai or Kal Ho Na Ho, even if they do not know a word of Hindi. In many countries of Africa and the Middle East and in small towns, even villages, of Indonesia and Malaysia, I have seen children break into Hindi film songs to greet one as a visitor from India, to communicate a sense of bonding, despite language and other barriers. Amitabh Bachhan, Madhuri Dixit, Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol and Aamir Khan are far more popular than any Hollywood star has ever been or could ever hope to be in non-western countries. They are not just cult figures; among film aficionados they are also perceived as role models and moral exemplars on the strength of the oversimplified but warm-hearted values they propagate as characters in various runaway hits. Films like Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge, Hum Aapke Hain Kaun, Mission Kashmir, Amar Akbar Anthony and Zanjeer don't just tell entertaining stories. They are treated as moral fables which propagate a consistent set of what are seen as "quintessential" Indian values - despite all the dhishum dhishum scenes and the sexy latka jhatka dance numbers.

Bollywood has conquered the hearts and minds of people even in those countries whose governments have long been hostile to India. When the Pakistan government recently banned the telecast of Bombay films to Pakistani homes, Pakistan's cable operators went on strike and forced their government to withdraw the ban. This, at a time when the Indian and Pakistani governments were locked in serious conflict over the issue of cross-border terrorism and had severed even normal diplomatic ties. Even at the height of Indo-Pak hostilities, Bollywood films were still being smuggled into Pakistan and were playing in the homes of army generals as well as government ministers. Bombay film songs can be heard booming loudly out of the jeeps of police officers as well as from ordinary buses, taxis and auto-rickshaws. At the time of the Lahore Bus Yatra, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was reported to have been received by a group of young Pakistanis with the following chant: "Madhuri de do, Kashmir le lo." (Take Kashmir, but give us Madhuri.)

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In Afghanistan, after the fall of the Taliban, one of the first acts of celebration noticed was the sight of people queuing up outside cinema halls to see Bombay films. In almost all the Islamic countries, including those whose ruling regimes have imposed very oppressive forms of religious fundamentalism that mandate keeping women veiled and in seclusion, people are addicted to Bollywood films where skimpily dressed heroines dance in parks, in nightclubs and in the streets. The depiction of the free lifestyles of women in Hollywood evokes sharp, fearful responses in many conservative Muslim countries but Bollywood films are embraced warmly.

Traditional yet Modern

Bombay films have become the staple emotional diet of people in many societies that are getting "westernised" and

"modernised" without being comfortable about it. They are popular because they don't just play on those anxieties. They always attempt to resolve these conflicts and present a world where a happy balance is possible and even desirable - provided certain "eternal" core values are kept intact, values that allow for maintaining a healthy, creative relationship with tradition while adopting modernity in appropriate doses. The success of Bollywood lies in its offering what appears like a viable alternative to a narcissistic variety of individualism that often seems to come with westernisation. People in non-western cultures feel threatened by this kind of individualism because it undermines traditional institutions, especially the institution of the family.

Bollywood frowns upon mindless modernity even as it vigorously endorses an appropriate dose of it if we are not to end up as misfits in today's world. Likewise, respect for tradition is applauded while slavish adherence to it is disapproved of and even ridiculed. This echoes Mahatma Gandhi's advice: "To swim in the waters of tradition is healthy but to sink in them is suicide." Bollywood tries to show how to swim in the waters of both tradition and modernity.

Let me describe how Bollywood performs this role by recounting a small but revealing incident. About two years ago, I was sitting at a neighbour's house with an entire joint family, including an 80 year-old grandmother and a couple of grand-aunts, all watching some film award function. For one of the awards, Karishma Kapoor was invited to act as the ceremonial host. Her job was to announce the winner of a particular award and call upon an ageing Sunil Dutt to do the honours. She appeared on the stage in a sexy skin-tight mini-dress with a revealing neckline. When Sunil Dutt, in visibly poor health, came up on the stage, she not only rushed to assist him, but bent down to touch his feet. The entire family, from grandmother to grandchildren, spontaneously burst into appreciative remarks such as, "See how Indian she remains despite all the westernisation and stardom." Thereafter, the mother in this family gave her own little speech to her children on the importance of respecting elders and remaining humble, no matter how successful one becomes. It was revealing to me that even the old grandmother showed no disapproval of Karishma's seductive and revealing outfit. That one gesture of spontaneous respect for an elder (given that Karishma was not on stage acting the role of a Hindi film bahu, but was being herself) endeared her so much to everyone in the room that it did not matter whether she wore a bikini or a burqa.

Bridging the Age Divide

While Bollywood has been obsessively propagandising the value of stable and harmonious families as a hallmark of Indian culture, it has been as steadfast in dealing with inter-generational conflicts in values and aspirations. Our filmmakers are obsessed with resolving such conflicts in a way that leads to greater understanding and harmony in the larger family rather than a breakdown or nuclearisation of it. Young people are encouraged to revolt against parental tyranny but not to disown responsibility for the care and respect due their parents and other elders.

Bollywood frowns upon mindless modernity even as it vigorously endorses an appropriate dose of it if we are not to end up as misfits in today's world. Likewise, respect for tradition is applauded while slavish adherence to it is disapproved of and even ridiculed.

A large majority of Bollywood films since the 1940s depict the hero and heroine asserting their right to choose their marital partner while their parents resist this choice on grounds of economic and social status, caste or religion. However, this clash is, by and large, never allowed to lead to a permanent rift or estrangement. Even while rebelling against the authoritarian mindset of their parents, children are expected to win parents over to their point of view with patience and love.

Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge provides the most well worked-out role model of a healthy inter-generational equation. The NRI patriarch of the family is outraged at discovering that his daughter has fallen in love with a young and boisterous NRI, played by Shah Rukh Khan. He forcibly takes her to his native village in Punjab so that he can marry her off to a real desi Indian who, in his view, can only be found back home. The rest of the film is a charming, fun-filled story of how Shah Rukh Khan works hard to earn the love and respect of his authoritarian father-in-law. He does domestic chores and wins over the hearts of each member of the family with love, cheerful service and good humour. He is so effective that Kajol's mother offers to help them elope because she fears her husband's wrath and believes he can never be made to change his mind. But Shah Rukh Khan refuses to elope, for that would mean humiliating his beloved's family and causing a permanent hurt to a father-figure, which would rule out a mutually respectful and trusting relationship between them for the rest of their lives.

Sure enough, these Gandhian methods of winning over the ostensibly hard-hearted and tyrannical man through love and uncomplaining suffering result in a happy and voluntary change of heart. However, he achieves this result only by undergoing a whole series of self-imposed trials to demonstrate that he may have been raised in England and, from the outside, may look and behave like a boisterous London teenager, but in his heart he is far more Indian and far more committed to family values than the Punjab born-and-raised groom selected by Amrish Puri for his daughter. The Punjabi groom is finally rejected because he proves that he is actually a "non-Indian resident" (a term commonly used to refer to some one who lives in India without behaving like an Indian), has adopted a very decadent life style and was merely interested in using his NRI bride as a means to get a British visa and a passport to a licentious lifestyle.

By contrast, our Indian-hearted hero, though living in Europe, is so steeped in "Indian values" that he does not stoop to pre-marital sex with his beloved, even when she is in an inebriated condition and they accidentally end up in the same bed. He knows that a sexual encounter against her wishes would make her lose trust in him and get her into deep trouble with her parents. He also has a very special and close bond with his father who gives him full support and becomes an active partner in the young lover's attempt to endear himself to his beloved's family. The film clearly holds up this father-son relationship as ideal between parents and children. Similarly, Kajol's relation-

ship with her mother is projected as a positive one where a daughter can take her mother into complete confidence and a mother can be willing to risk the family's social humiliation and her husband's wrath rather than force her daughter to marry a man she does not love. The film gives a clear message that a good parent is one who is sensitive to his/her child's emotional needs and that an authoritarian parent, no matter how good-hearted and well-meaning, is in need of reform.

Bollywood has conveyed this message with untiring zeal and consistency: a happy and stable family is the bedrock of our civilisation, a family cannot be stable if it is a site of oppression and injustice. While our films have been obsessive in teaching young people the value of sacrifice, commitment to family well-being and respect for elders, they have been no less steadfast in telling parents and other elders that they have to earn the respect of young people by understanding their aspirations and the demands of changing times. Hum Aapke Hain Kaun projects precisely such a happy balance between parents and children. Film after film reminds audiences that to command slavish obedience from children is to destroy family well-being.

Breaking Role Restrictions

Bollywood depicts Indian families in all permutations and combinations. There are those in which some women are the domineering matriarchs (for example, Deena Pathak in Khubsurat) and those where women have little or no say and are brutally oppressed (as with Raveena Tandon's character in Daman). We see wronged daughters-in-law as well as those who become tyrants for the whole family; there are domineering mothers-in-law who ruin the lives of their daughters-in-law, and also those who protect their bahus even against their own sons' tyranny or caprice, as in Biwi No.1.

> It is Bollywood that gets the world to see that Indian culture allows for a whole diversity of roles and personae for a woman: a much larger range than is available in the writings of social historians and journalists.

What we have here is a whole range of Mother Indias - women who are strong and resilient in the face of the greatest adversity while retaining the nurturing qualities and compassion associated with Parvati; Sita-like mother-goddesses who can, at a minute's notice, also turn into real Durgas. These multifaceted roops, or incarnations, of femininity, derived from mythology, history and legend and given contemporary coinage through our films, have enthralled audiences in many parts of the world, including those that have come to impose very oppressive and restrictive norms of behaviour on women. In each of these varied incarnations a woman is reverence-worthy. It is Bollywood that gets the world to see that Indian culture allows for a whole diversity of roles and personae for a woman: a much larger range than is available in the writings of social historians and journalists. A woman can choose to be a steadfast spouse like Sita, or a besotted lover like Radha, who throws all social restraints to the winds, or a fearless, awe-inspiring Durga. She could be a Rani Roopmati or a Rani Jhansi. She could be a Mirabai or an Indira Gandhi. It is through our films that the message is communicated that an Indian woman's role in life is not to suffer indignities and tolerate injustice, that it is in her to rise like Durga and destroy evil, that such a Durga-like woman is not despised for her

strength but revered, even by men. Even if she chooses to be a devoted and long-suffering wife, Bollywood is often at pains to point out that this is not because suffering is a woman's fate, but because she wishes to be the instrument of reform of unreasonable and tyrannical members of her family. We see Sita-like wives assume Chandi roop and stand up against wrong doers, even if that involves challenging their own husbands - as does Madhuri Dikshit in Mrityudand in a memorable confrontation with her husband, when she deals him the stunning verbal blow: "Aap pati hain, parmeshwar banne ki koshish mat kijiye!" (You are a husband, please don't try to play God)

Undoing Stock Perceptions

Bollywood keeps transmitting this message with perseverance: a woman need not be frozen into a stereotype. The ease with which Indian film heroines switch from jeans to miniskirts to traditional saris, ghagra cholis, tennis shorts and on to bikinis, all as part of normal, daily routine, is an indication of the role diversity allowed to them. The same woman who is crooning away in a jhatka thumka number in a nightclub one hour will be shown singing a melodious bhajan with her family in the next, only perhaps to move on to becoming an efficient manager of her family business a few scenes later. It is through Bollywood films that people are told that Indian women are able to assert their rights without leading to a breakdown of families; that every woman desirous of the recognition of her selfhood does not have to walk out of her home in order to win freedom; that a woman can win everyone over to her point of view rather than be despised for her assertiveness. In the few cases where a woman feels that her well-being lies in walking out of her home like Ibsen's Nora, Bollywood invariably puts a firm stamp of approval on her choice, rather than condemn her (for instance, Astitva and Arth).

In most academic tracts and studies, Indian men are projected as cruel patriarchs who are insensitive to the needs of women and subject them to all kinds of oppression and misery. In recent decades Indian men have gained international notoriety for committing atrocities on women and for denying women their basic human rights. Bollywood goes beyond this simplistic stereotype and shows the soft and sentimental side of the Indian male as well. It sends a clear message to the world: in India even men are expected to value family ties and happiness more than wealth and careers.

In the worldview reiterated in our films time and time again, you cannot be a good human being without being a devoted son, a doting brother, a caring husband and a good father who puts the happiness and interests of his children above his own. The Bollywood hero may be a great doctor or a feared dacoit, a gangster or an upright police officer, a Gandhian social reformer or a feudal aristocrat - but he is qualified as a hero by his family values, particularly with regard to his female relatives. Our filmi hero may be a don on the streets, but at home he becomes a gooey-gooey, sentimental son who will defy heaven and earth to fulfill his mother's wishes. The status of a mother is higher than that of God; you may defy God, but you do not act against the wishes of your mother. Even if a mother slaps her grown-up son in righteous rage, a good son never holds a grudge, leave alone retaliates against or abuses his mother.

The same woman who is crooning away in a jhatka thumka number in a nightclub one hour will be shown singing a melodious bhajan with her family in the next, only perhaps to move on to becoming an efficient manager of her family business a few scenes later.

This unquestioning reverence extends even to a stepmother, who may, like Kaikeyi, suddenly turn vicious. In Hum Saath Saath Hain, for instance, the stepmother is goaded into breaking the close bonding of the three brothers in favour of her own biological son, so that her eldest stepson is not made the head of the family's business empire. But the three sons remain steadfast in their mutual devotion, just like Ram, Lakshman and Bharat of the Ramayana. More importantly, the eldest son, in the footsteps of the hero of the Ramayana, willingly undergoes all kinds of privations and adversities in the interest of family well-being and unity. Never for a minute does he hold a grudge against his stepmother for her injustice towards him. Finally, like Valmiki's Ram, he too, through love, generosity and patient suffering, is able to make his stepmother realise her mistake and accept the superiority of a well-bonded joint family over an individualistic nuclear family.

The hero also has to be a devoted and fond brother who will shed blood and sweat to put together the required money for the marriage of his sister, who will pamper her like a little princess if she is younger and be a Hanuman-like devotee if she is older. The unique emphasis given to the brother-sister bond, as symbolised by raksha bandhan, is celebrated in numerous Bombay films. In the worldview of Bollywood, a man who respects and cherishes this bond can never be evil even if he makes a living in criminal activities.

An Affectionate Pluralism

For newspaper-reading intellect-uals across the world, India is often closely associated with recurring communal riots and ethnic strife between Hindus and Muslims, Christians and Sikhs. However, in the minds of ordinary people in societies, usually non-European, where the idea of India has been shaped by Bollywood hits, India is seen as a place where an incredibly large spectrum of diverse religious, linguistic and ethnic castes and communities coexist, bonded by a deep affection and making a respectful space for each other's unique cultural and religious identities. Film after film has obsessively emphasised the quintessential oneness of people of diverse faiths - be they Hindus, Muslims, Christians or Sikhs - and has shown them as cherishing their close ties as neighbours, friends, colleagues and fellow citizens.

The positive and often romantic portrayal of non-Hindu religious minorities in Indian films is another major reason for their international popularity. Bollywood has shown the world how people of different faiths join joyfully in each other's festivals, lay down their lives protecting each other and share in each other's joys, griefs and family secrets. The theme song of the film Dhool ka Phool made in the late 1950s: Na tu Hindu banega na Musalman banega, insaan ki aulad hai, insaan banega (You should grow up to be neither Hindu nor Musalman, you are the child of a human being and should remain a human being), echoes the sentiment of bhakt Kabir. This sentiment has been repeated in film after film, strengthening the message that all are sons and daughters of Mother India and are

therefore inseparable, no matter how hard the politicians try to break their unity and sense of oneness.

The Sikhs are invariably depicted as generous, large-hearted, jovial, sincere friends, neighbours and colleagues - always ready to help. They are portrayed as men of raw courage and willing-ness to take great risks for their friends and neighbours. Indian Christians are presented as God-fearing, simple people. If they are Goan, they are also shown as fun loving. Christian priests are invariably depicted as kind-hearted providers of charity, help and shelter to those in need. Churches are always shown as places that provide spiritual and emotional succour to anyone in distress. Hindi films are replete with scenes of Hindus walking into a church at a time of crisis to seek Mother Mary's blessings. Similarly, true believers in Islam, the mazhabi Muslims, are invariably depicted as pious human beings whose faith teaches them to treat all human beings as equals and who are steadfast in their loyalties and commitments, including their loyalty to the land of their birth.

Portraits of Patriotism

A repeated popular device for portraying Muslims as no less, if not in fact more, patriotic than Hindus, is to depict them in roles of great responsibility, taking on anti-national elements and defending village, ethnic or national solidarity. For example, a film made to honour the martyrs of the Kargil war - Ma Tujhe Salaam - opens with a young Muslim army officer being put in charge of the most sensitive border post along the Indo-Pak border. In the very first scene, his village-based mother sends him a letter saying, "Always remember you have two mothers - me and Bharat Ma (Mother India). Your duty to Bharat Ma comes before your duty to me." In the same film, a reformed terrorist, hand-in-hand with a Hindu army officer, defends Kashmir from invaders from across the border when he realises that foreign jehadis want to destroy mosques and promote internal strife among the people of Kashmir. To convey the idea that religion does not divide them he proclaims: "Our mazhab may be different, but our mulk is the same."

In Mission Kashmir, the man in-charge of anti-insurgency oper-ations in Kashmir is a Muslim Inspector-General of Police, married to a Hindu woman. Their relationship is portrayed as an idyllic romance. The wife keeps her Hindu identity intact; she goes to the temple and retains her Hindu name. However she also adopts a Muslim orphan whose parents were inadvertently killed by her own husband. When her adopted son becomes a terrorist to avenge the death of his parents, she does not stop loving him. She is killed by a bomb meant for her husband and planted by her adopted son, underscoring the theme that terrorism is not the right path for redressing political wrongs, that the politics of hate destroys not just the targets of hate but also those who act out of hate. The boy finally joins hands with his adoptive father to save his homeland Kashmir when he realises that his terrorist colleagues were planning to blow up an important mosque in order to foment communal trouble.

Driving Home a Message

Compare those portrayals to the demonised stereotypical ones of Muslims in Hollywood masalas which deal with such themes and one cannot help but be impressed by the instinctive

wisdom shown by Bollywood directors, script-writers and producers in not using a powerful medium like cinema to generate feelings of hatred and phobic mistrust. It is also proof that the average citizen of India endorses this view. Otherwise Bollywood could not afford to sink crores of rupees in such films.

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Bollywood has shown enormous wisdom in driving home the message that Pakistan may be playing evil games and may have to be dealt with as an enemy, but Muslims, as Muslims, are not to be blamed or scapegoated for the political mischief of the government of Pakistan. Bombay, Mission Kashmir, Sarhad and a host of such films dealing with cross-border terrorism take pains to distinguish between ordinary Muslims and ideological jehadis who are shown as misguided youth rather than as demons. When Indian Muslims (or Sikhs) take to political violence, they are almost always shown as reluctant terrorists who are pushed into the arms of external jehadis (who remain anonymous as the forces of evil), after witnessing human rights violations and abuse of power by security forces, resulting in the torture or death of close family members or friends (as happens in Maachis, Mission Kashmir, Roja and Sarhad). And since they too have an "Indian heart", it does not take long for them to be reformed and return to the fold of Indian nationalism. Thus, even Muslim terrorists are not denied their humanity, if they are Indian.

This gives the average Muslim outside India an image of a country where Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians not only cherish their friendship, social and civilisational bonds but also demonstrate their ability to work out very sophisticated norms of co-living. In how many other countries do you see people of different religious faiths worship at common shrines? Which other cinema of the world would very matter-of-factly show a Hindu girl child kneel before the Quran with due respect and appropriate rituals and pray for a boon to Allah, as happens in Kuchh Kuchh Hota Hai. Allah even gracefully answers the call of this kafir child. Which other non-Islamic country would project an underworld Muslim don, as in Ghulam-E-Mustafa, as an essentially good-hearted and god-fearing person, trapped in the world of crime due to force of circumstance? The cinematic device used for establishing the genuine piety of this underworld don is to show him in the introductory shot in solitary prayer in an ancient mosque.

Not surprisingly, Muslims (even of those societies where religious fundamentalism of a very intolerant variety is pushed down people's throats by very authoritarian regimes) rejoice in the India that Bollywood brings to them. They rejoice in the liberal Islam that took roots in the Indic civilisation. The portrayal of Muslims does not offend their sensibilities and self-view. India appears as a land of freedom, of love and romance, of mutual respect and tolerance, of celebration of diversity, a land of song and dance.

If an average Indonesian, Malaysian, Saudi or Kuwaiti is asked to list two or three prominent things associated with India, she or he is unlikely to name the demolition of the Babri Masjid,

Hindu-Muslim riots or the Gujarat carnage. Her/his idea of India is informed by Bombay films depicting the quintessential oneness of Amar Akbar Anthony - their unbreakable friendship and love. They are shown a world where Rehman chacha is an invariably loved and respected elder of whichever mohalla he is living in, even when it is mainly inhabited by Hindus and Sikhs. They see India as a land where people of different religions join in celebrating each other's festivals. They see Hindu actresses Aishwarya Rai and Preity Zinta playing hot love-scenes opposite the Muslim super stars of Bollywood - Shah Rukh and Aamir Khan - without evoking any hysterical negative responses.

Of Deities and Devotees

Bollywood as the most effective cultural ambassador of India has also kept people reminded that in the Indic worldview there is no sharp dividing line between the human and the divine. God is not a distant entity who sits somewhere above in Heaven, giving orders and commandments, expecting unconditional obedience, doling out rewards for obedience and punishments for those who dare work out their own code of ethics. In the Indic civilisation, gods and goddesses assume their human avatars and descend to earth. They come and live in the world of ordinary men and women - sharing their joys, sorrows, trials and tribulations. And, in their human incarnations, the very same yardstick is used to judge them that human beings apply to each other. If Krishna, as the avatar of Vishnu, plays naughty pranks as a child, his mother has the right to give him a good thrashing. If, as an adolescent, he harasses young gopis and village women, they too take him to task in their own ways. Bhagwan Ram is worshipped as the Maryada Purushottam - the best among men - for observing his dharmic duties as a son, a brother, a king and a friend. But when this avatar of Vishnu treats his devoted wife Sita unjustly, ordinary people have the right to criticise his unfair actions and the freedom to script their own versions of the Ramayana which depict him acting more honourably than he did in the original Ramayana created by sage Valmiki.

In other words, it is Bollywood, more than any other cultural source, which has resisted the attempts of some of our inferiority-complex ridden netas to make our gods and goddesses above criticism and reinterpretation, outdoing Christian and Muslim fundamentalists in making Hindu gods jealous and intolerant. Bollywood keeps reminding people that even the gods are not to be credited with perfection. They too have flaws and they too make mistakes. It is for devotees to demand and ensure improved behaviour every time gods make errors of judgement or act too whimsically. In film after film, we are shown a devotee who chastises a favoured deity for allowing evil people an upper hand in life or permitting injustice to thrive. And the isht dev or devi is expected to respond to the chastisement and come to the aid of the devotee in times of need. This aid might come through the agency of a human, an animal or even a reptile. Dogs, horses, birds and even snakes are depicted in our films as active players coming to the aid of human beings who, like Draupadi, appeal for divine intervention. Such an interplay should not be dismissed as mere gimmicks. It carries the important message that Indic gods are

not distant creatures. They are willing to be at the beck and call of devotees who reach out for their deities as they would for close relatives in times of stress. This happens not only in popular mythologicals like Jai Bhawani or Shiv Puran, but in countless other films with more secular themes, where the personal deity constantly comes to the aid of the supplicant devotee and defeats the evil designs of all those who seek to harass him/her.

This constant interplay of the human and the divine takes many forms. On the one hand it shows gods and goddesses can display very human failings. In Jai Santoshi Ma, for example, Lakshmi and Parvati are shown as being jealous of Santoshi Ma, a new upstart goddess. They harass her devotees till they both realise their mistake and make peace with Santoshi Ma, making space for her in the pantheon of goddesses.

Films also depict ordinary mortals playing and having fun with divinities. Scenes of the raaslila, of Krishna playing Holi with gopis, or those depicting Radha and Krishna in love or the Shiva-Parvati romance (with Parvati enjoying the right to veto and change any number of decisions of the all-powerful Shiva) are a source of immense fascination for people brought up to view God as a distant figure to be feared and obeyed unconditionally. Bollywood has no hesitation in showing people who make fun of gods, crack jokes about them or even treat them as a nuisance, as in the film Swarag Narak. The hero, played by Sanjeev Kumar, is very proud of the fact that he is a self-made man - a typical rags-to-riches story. The film portrays a very charming relationship between him and Lord Krishna, who keeps appearing to mock him for his arrogance in thinking that he alone shapes his destiny and that of his family. Sanjeev Kumar, as the hero, treats Krishna as an unwelcome pest and keeps shooing him off through most of the film until the life choices his children make brings across to him the hard realisation that Krishna's message about the need for humility should have been heeded. (His pampered daughter, for instance, chooses to marry her horse-riding instructor while Sanjeev Kumar nursed the ambition to marry her to a wealthy high-status man.) Even in this film, the purpose is not to show the victory of the divine will over the human, but the need for humility and graceful acceptance of how each person's destiny unfolds for him/her, rather than believe that you can play god with either your own fate or your children's.

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Many people in several Islamic countries told me they were fascinated by the freedom with which Hindus poke fun at their gods, quarrel with their favourite deities and provoke the gods to prove their worth to their devotees by actually coming to the aid of good over evil. In societies where power-wielders project Allah as someone remote, to be feared and held in total awe, where Islam or the Quran cannot be criticised openly from public platforms, let alone through films, the ease with which Hindu gods and goddesses are openly depicted allowing liberties to their devotees appears very attractive.

To sum up

Bollywood is much more complex and a far greater agent for positive social change than is commonly acknowledged by those who claim to represent the high culture of India. Reviews of Hindi cinema in avant-guard intellectual journals like the Economic and Political Weekly accuse our filmmakers of spreading religious obscurantism, Hindu fundamentalism, anti-women attitudes, animosity towards minorities. They are attacked as conservative defenders of an anachronistic status quo. I myself belonged to this category in some measure, as several of my early film reviews testify.

The new Brahmins of India are embarrassed by the worldview of Bollywood as well as aggressive in their disapproval of its value system. Is it not a case of a repeat of the hostility of the Brahminical orthodoxy towards the popular upsurge of bhakti in the medieval period - with just this one difference: the new Brahmins of today are not rooted in Sanskrit learning. They are the products of elite English medium schools and colleges. Consequently, their manners and tastes resemble those of their intellectual tutors in the West.

Notes

LESSON 9
RACE, COLONIALISM, AND CULTURE

Contents
"Race" and Racism, Racism: Individual vs. Institutional,
Internal colonialism, The New Abolitionism,

Learning Objectives:
- To understand the concepts of race and racism.
- To understand concepts of colonialism.
- To understand the correlation of culture and racism and colonialism.

"Race" and Racism
From the 1940s through the 1960s Ashley Montagu and other researchers refuted the biological theory of race. They showed how the concept of "race" as a biological given was unsupported by biology and genetics, and instead attempted to formulate a *historical* notion of race. Montagu and others successfully demolished the myth of race as a genetic or biological category. While this myth has been recently revived with the highly politicized debate over "the Bell Curve thesis," supporters of the bell curve thesis have still never shown that race is biological. (In fact, the Bell Curve research has been refuted not only on scientific grounds but also on sociopolitical grounds; it seems to advance a thinly veiled right-wing agenda. Genetic researchers such as Glyde Whitney - who claims to have discovered biological evidence that blacks are inferior - deny that they are white supremacists, but exhibit a curious immunity to information when presented with the history of research into the biological foundations of race). Contemporary geneticists argue that while race itself has no biological basis, the variations in human skin color and physical characteristics that we call "racial differences" are the result of variations in DNA that occurred when people evolved in isolated geographical regions over time.

"Race" is probably best understood as what Marcel Mauss called a "**total social fact**." In his influential study The Gift, Mauss describes the "total social fact" as a multidimensional phenomenon that is at once economic, juridical, moral, mythological, and aesthetically. Such facts are social — their basis is not in organic or biological reality but in social reality. Nevertheless, the "total social fact" is pervasive in a society, treated as a reality that influences every aspect of daily existence. The status of the concept of "race" suggests that the issue has less to do with skin color and much more to do with the **social meaning** of skin color.

It is clear that the meaning of race in American society is economic, juridical, moral, mythological, and aesthetic all at the same time. At an economic level, race defines and delimits power relations and class relations. Some would argue that race functions as a "**modality** of class struggle" — in other words, race functions as a vehicle or lens through which class warfare is waged. Slavery was the most obvious and blatant example of class warfare being waged through the modality of race;

contemporary institutionalized racism functions in a similar (though much less obvious) manner.

Of course, race functions not solely (and perhaps not even primarily) as a vehicle for class struggle. As a total social fact, race also functions juridically (witness the alarming disparity in treatment of white and nonwhite offenders by the U.S. criminal justice system). Race also functions morally, mythologically, and aesthetic. The image of the black rapist and supercriminal is a powerful mythology in the American psyche despite voluminous concrete evidence that most crime and violence is intraracial rather than interracial. The "Pocahontas myth" remains a powerful symbol of native American femininity just as the caricature of the "international Jew" popularized by Henry Ford still looms large in antisemitic discourse.

Racial discourse in the United States is invariably dominated by a distorted and polarized lens of "white" and "black." This is because of the thoroughgoing significance of slavery and anti-black racism to U.S. history. The slave trade was not just an abhorrent institution supported by otherwise well-meaning men who should have known better. Slavery was vital to the economy as well as a fundamental aspect of American social life. Its lasting material, institutional, and psychological consequences are difficult to underestimate. Thus, while it is a mistake to view race relations solely through the "black/white" lens, that lens remains an extremely useful tool for understanding race in the U.S.

Racism: Individual vs. Institutional
Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton define "racism" as "the predication of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining control over that group." This definition privileges a focus on **institutional** racism over a focus on individual racism.

individual racism	social (institutional) racism
individual pathology	institutional pathology
feeling of cultural superiority over others	institutions and social structures guided by a (usually invisible) ideology of cultural superiority of one race over others
individual crimes by members of one race against members of another	crimes of all members of one race against all members of another
e.g. people burning black churches or beating up immigrants	e.g. mass criminalization of blacks in inner cities; a pervasive discourse which frequently underlines the implicit message that blacks are amoral animals; this discourse is backed up by increased policing of black neighborhoods and random sweeps for drug violators ("Operation Ghetto Storm").
solution: individual attitude change	solution: sweeping social/institutional change

Note that these forms of racism work in tandem, and any real solutions to racism must address both forms. We must be wary, however, of collapsing the two forms of racism because it often leads to pathologizing individual racists while letting institutional racism remain invisible. Then when institutional racism is made visible, it often creates anxiety, especially in whites who feel personally attacked. Rather than addressing institutional racism, most whites in the U.S. learn to experience

attacks on racist institutions as personal attacks while ignoring the evidence of institutionalized racism.

Internal Colonialism

Carmichael and Hamilton argue that institutionalized racism in the U.S. is best understood as internal colonialism. "[B]lack people in this country form a colony, and it is not in the interest of the colonial power to liberate them. Black people are legal citizens of the United States with, for the most part, the same *legal* right as other citizens. Yet they stand as colonial subjects in relation to the white society. Thus institutional racism has another name: colonialism," (5).

Carmichael and Hamilton use the metaphor of colonialism to understand racism in the U.S., admitting that the one key difference between internal colonialism and traditional colonialism is that the relation of a true colonial power to its colonies is one of exploitation of raw materials, while in the U.S. the relation of white to black is one of exploitation of labor power.

The colonial relation functions at three levels:

1. **political**: American pluralism gives way to white unity whenever white power is threatened by the interests of people of color. Also note the established system of white privilege and the political certainty that the vested interests in that privilege will be protected by the dominant social institutions. Note also the invisibility of white privilege - whites grow so accustomed to it that they generally do not view it as a privilege. Even when some white privilege is begrudgingly acknowledged, they often invoke what Robert Jensen calls "the ultimate white privilege: the privilege to acknowledge an you have unearned privilege but ignore what it means." Robin M. Williams, Jr. noted that "vested political, economic and social privileges and rights tend to be rationalized and defended by persons who hold such prerogatives.... Whenever a number of persons within a society have enjoyed for a considerable period of time certain opportunities for getting wealth, for exercising power and authority, and for successfully claiming prestige and social deference, there is a strong tendency for these people to feel that these benefits are theirs 'by right'." (See p. 8) Carmichael also discusses the system of "indirect rule" - the white power structure helps certain elites in communities of color so that those elites must respond to the interests of the power structure rather than to the interests of their own communities. Examples of today's "captive leaders" might be said to include Supreme Court Justice "Long John" Clarence Thomas or Los Angeles Police Department Chief "Little Pussy" Bernard Parks (hey, I don't make up these nicknames!).

2. **economic**: Occasionally the economic basis of the colonial relationship is frankly admitted by colonialists; Carmichael and Hamilton cite the French Colonial Secretary of State (1923) admitting that colonization "was not an act of civilization, nor was it a desire to civilize. It was an act of force motivated by interests." (17). As Carmichael and Hamilton put it, "the missionaries came for our goods, not for our good."

3. **social**: Institutional racism is especially devastating socially and psychologically. Its human effects include a destruction of character, will, and a perversion of mental state. Self-respect is lost when a person learns to see him/herself through an ideological lens that considers him/her inferior. This is called **alienation**. Carmichael and Hamilton discuss the "**assimilado**" in Portuguese colonies as the "way out" held out to the colonized as a hope of overcoming their inferior situation - to become like the colonizer. Of course, this is always a false hope, because the colonized can never be recognized as equal in the lens of the colonizer. In the U.S. such assimilation "means to disassociate oneself from the black race, its culture, community and heritage, and become immersed (dispersed is another term) in the white world.... the black person ceases to identify himself with black people yet is obviously unable to assimilate with whites." (30). Such people become "marginal."

Ultimately, the internal colonial metaphor for understanding race relations in the U.S. is not perfect, but it does highlight some significant aspects of black/white relations (it is less useful, but still somewhat useful, in understanding relations between whites and other nonwhites besides African Americans). Carmichael and Hamilton find that racist assumptions and ideologies are so pervasive in American institutions that "they infuse the entire functioning of the national subconscious." (31) They cite Killian and Grigg (32): "[F]or a lasting solution [to the race problem], the meaning of 'American' must lose its implicit racial modifier, 'white'."

The New Abolitionism

The editors of a remarkable journal called Race Traitor offer a controversial but creative approach to the race problems described here: the solution to racism, for these "race traitors," is to "abolish the white race." They suggest that race is purely a social construction used to justify violent and unequal power relations. "The white race consists of those who partake of the privileges of the white skin in this society," they write, and they suggest that the only real solution to many of America's social problems is to abolish the race. Of course, they don't advocate killing white people or forcing them to wear shoe polish; rather, they see the white race as a restricted club, and encourage the club's members to revolt. What they call for specifically is for white people to put their non-racial interests (esp. their class interests) before their interest in the restricted club. According to them, the white race depends upon a myth of universal support by whites to survive. If they can encourage enough whites to "defect" and place their class interests above their interest in maintaining white privilege, such "race traitors" would dissolve the meaning and power of the "white race."

Before the civil war, white abolitionists spoke out against slavery as an institution. These whites were branded "race traitors" by their opponents, and were seen as selling out the interests of the white race. According to the editors of *Race Traitor,* that is exactly what they were up to - confronting and rejecting the socioeconomic investment in white privilege that was embodied by the slave trade. Modern race traitors - the "new abolitionists" - argue that the white race itself as a unifying social construct must be undermined. "Treason to whiteness is loyalty to

humanity" - they argue that the destructive racism and injustice perpetuated in the name of "the white race" can be dissolved through "race treason."

While the "race traitor" approach is criticized both for being too cynical and too naive, it helps focus our attention on white privilege and institutional racism as phenomena that all whites participate in whether they like it or not. Their participation in the system is not the result of racist attitudes alone - the editors point out their faith that "the majority of so-called whites in this country are neither deeply nor consciously committed to white supremacy; like most human beings in most times and places, they would do the right thing if it were convenient." Their call to whites to expose complicity in white supremacy through acts of "racial treason" offers a uniquely powerful intellectual approach to institutional racism.

Indian Cultural Values and the Promotion of Human Rights

India is a pluralistic and multi-cultural society where many faiths and belief systems regulate the life of individuals. India is not a Hindu society even though Hinduism is the religion of the vast majority of the people. In this part of the globe many religious traditions, both indigenous and foreign, have been established over the years. We have Buddhism, Sikhism, Bhakti cult, Sufi tradition as well as Islam and Christianity. Many religious gurus, law-givers, social reformers and statesmen have come to guide and influence the life and culture of Indians. The *Mahabharata, the Ramayana*, the *Bhagvat Gita* as well as the Quran, the Bible, the Guru Bani, etc., have molded the thinking pattern and consciousness of Indians. So also the Hindu caste system and the joint family pattern have a decisive influence on the follow- ers of other religions.

Cultural Values and Human Rights

The struggle for human rights essentially reflects the concerns and requirements of modern human being whereas the cultural values operated in a traditional context where many of the agencies which at present account for the violation of human rights norms were not known. Since human rights is basically a problem between authority and the individual it is essential to examine the Indian understanding of the origin of authority.

a. Duty-First Approach

Broadly speaking Indian culture never saw the individual and society as antagonistic to each other. The Hindu vision was that of an orderly society, with each individual doing his assigned job. The individual and society were viewed as two complementary and incomplete entities tied to a relationship of mutual obligations, a commitment which was essential to ensure the well-being of all. Those who acted as the guardians of society and worked out the delicate nuances and detailed network of the social order were neither concerned about, nor even conscious of, the concept of human rights. They were more commercial about the moral dimension of a human being's activities than the legal aspect. Much emphasis was placed on the understanding of society from a moral perspective. Of course this understanding was highly elitist reflecting the brahminical vision of a perfect society. However, this is not

to deny the existence of a legal framework and law books to regulate social relationship at various levels. Those were of different nature and have nothing to do with the present concept of Rule of Law which is the main vehicle to ensure the equality of all — a fundamental objective of the human rights movement.

As regards the origin of the government (authority), the Hindu tradition believed in a supernatural source. According to it, human beings in a state of defenselessness and social disorder appealed to the gods. The gods appointed a king in their own image and on their behalf whose task was to protect the people and maintain law and order. In return, the king would claim a share of one sixth of the produce. The caste-based social order also emerged from this divine source.

In terms of well-codified norms and level of the people's consciousness, the notion of human rights did not exist. But in terms of implications, i.e., ensuring a person's protected position, one can say that people enjoyed their rights. Thus in the Indian culture rights flowed from duties. The performance of one's boundless duties in accordance with *dharma* (duties) ensured the rights of another. Non-adherence to the neatly defined and minutely worked out duty code would lead to a state of anarchy in society which would destroy the individual himself.

Another dimension of this duty-first value system of Indian culture is that since the emphasis on rights leads to conflicts and claims of one's own due, the architects of society and its law-makers, probably sought to avoid a scenario wherein each one would be fighting for his rights. Such a situation would have resulted in an anarchy defeating the very purpose of arranging a stable social order.

b. *Nishkama Karma*

Another dictum of the Gita which has taken deep roots in the Indian mind is *Karmanye badhika rastu ma falesu kadachan*. That is, one must go on performing one's duties without being worried about the rewards or the results. One finds most of the Indian parents consoling their children by citing this Gita bani in the event of the latter's failure in any endeavour despite hard work and sincere efforts. The habit of conformism ruled out any scope for challenge which is the main vehicle to ensure one's rights. Further, the concept of an individual was also not there. The individual as an individual had no identity as he essentially belonged to his family group, caste or sub-caste, etc. Each individual is called upon to perform his duty without being concerned about the reward for or consequences of such an action — *nishkama karma*.

c. *Ahimsa* and human rights

Ahimsa can be identified as another key Indian cultural value which ensures rights by implication and interpretation. Since the concept of *ahimsa* emerged out of a very healthy Buddhist tradition, it is essential to understand the Buddhist theory on the origin of government or authority. The Buddhist theory did not

believe in any divinity. As opposed to the Hindu tradition, it was rooted in a republican mold. It talked about a "golden age which gradually decayed through the institution of private property and other social evils". As a result, the people assembled and elected one from among themselves to rule over and ensure an orderly society. This has various implications. The ruler is a chosen representative of the people and not a monarch appointed by God with absolute powers. Thus the emphasis is on the sovereignty of the people which naturally leads to a stress on the rights of the individual in society. Even though the idea of the sovereignty of the people remained central to the Buddhist political philosophy, it could never be developed into a theory of the rights of the people (Romila Thapar 1985). May be it was not necessary then. Nevertheless *ahimsa*, which gives every life a right to live, is a reflection of the belief in the sovereignty of the people.

In a broader sense, *ahimsa* means much more than non-violence. It means not hurting anyone or any life both physically and psychologically. Basically it is a negative concept from which flows a positive value, i.e., protection. *Ahimsa* aims at ensuring and providing a protected existence to every one free from mental and physical violence and it is here that the basic postulation of *ahimsa* coincides with the main concern of the present human rights movement worldwide.

Points of Convergence and Conflict

India's cultural canvas is large and mosaic and its heritage runs into several centuries. It is myopic to think that such a complex and varied culture would bequeath only positive values. It is true that certain values in Indian culture are contradictory to, and violative of, many articles in the UDHR. Yet there are many others which are similar to and supportive of many of the articles contained in the Declaration. Hence the relationship between Indian cultural values and the UDHR is both conflict-ing and complementary at the same time.

a. Hinduism

The Hindu tradition does not believe in the concept of equality. The practice and prevalence of inequality has both the divine sanction and the sanction of the Law Books or the Dharma Shastras. There is no equality before the law or equal protection of law is not there since society has been arranged through a rigid system of social hierarchy based on caste. In the context of human rights, the Hindu caste system which enjoys a pan-Indian presence assumes an added importance. It plays an important role in the stratification of Indian society. By its very nature, the caste system goes against respect for an individual's dignity (Article 01), right to recognition as a person (Article 06), right to freedom of opinion and expression (Article 19). Further it has a racial origin since a person's caste is determined from birth itself and on the basis of colour. For instance, an important verse in the *Mahabharata* explains the linkage between caste and colour. Bhrigi explains the nature of castes to *Bharadvaja* as follows: "*Brahmins* are fair, *Kshatryas* are reddish, *Vaishyas* are yellowish and the *Shudras* are black (Mainstream, Sept. 21, 1996). This racial division violates Article 02 of the UDHR.

The Hindu tradition has been following a peculiar approach as regards religious freedom. While all other above mentioned rights were denied to the individual explicitly, the right to religious freedom was granted implicitly. Hinduism does not believe in monotheism. It is often described as a way of life allowing enough flexibility in the forms of worship and gods, the fundamental goal of Hindus being salvation (*moksha*) or liberation from the cycle of existence.

b. Buddhism

The basic tenets of Buddhism are non-violence (*ahimsa*), non-hatred (tolerance), service, compassion, friendliness to all and personal morality. Buddha rejected the unequal caste structure. Arising out of its stern and unwavering ethical code, Buddhism emphasized the unqualified supremacy of moral law over politics. Law should be for the welfare of all humankind and not merely for the welfare of a powerful elite. Further, as said earlier, the Buddhist theory emphasized the quasi-contractual nature of the beginnings of government and on the sovereignty of the people which is more or less similar to Article 21 of UDHR. Such a republican background naturally contained an individualistic tradition within it with a strong support for the kind of social and moral attitudes implicit in human rights. Even though it had to contend with the trappings of a caste society, the rights of the individual were given due stress.

Apart from a strong emphasis on the broad concept of equality of all human beings, many provisions in the Buddhist tradition are akin to some of the rights found in the UDHR. For instance, the Buddhist tradition regarding education was in striking contrast with that of the Hindu tradition. The Buddhist monasteries were open to persons of any caste. Still more important was the fact that the syllabus had a wider range and contained disciplines of practical interest unlike the Hindu syllabus which was mainly aimed at training the brahmins in the elite language of *Sanskrit*. As a result, the introduction and spread of secular education for all became one of the most significant contributions of Buddhism. Various organized universities were established under the direct impact of Buddhism.

c. Bhakti Movement

In medieval India there were many folk religions/sects subscribing to the heterodox opinion which challenged brahminical orthodoxy. Most of these movements operated at the regional/local levels, though the influence of their teachings did spread to various other parts of India. The most prominent and well known among them is the Bhakti movement. Bhakti, the path of devotion, implies a belief in the supreme person not in supreme abstraction. Hence it is a very simple and straight forward philosophy or belief. The propounders of Bhakti emphasized the devotion to a personal God as a means of attaining salvation (*moksha*) as opposed to the pathways of action (*karma*) or knowledge (*gyan*).

The common feature of all these preachers, from the perspective of human rights, is that all of them challenged the unequal caste system and racial division and segregation. They spoke and wrote in Hindi and not in Sanskrit which was the special preserve and prerogative of the upper castes. They gave the utmost importance to human equality and freedom, communal harmony (especially Kabir) and universal tolerance. Further, they struck at the very roots of Brahminical orthodoxy by rejecting superstition and ritualism.

d. Sufi Tradition

Sufism came to India in the medieval times. The first Sufi teacher, Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, came to India in 1193. The early Sufis took their ideas from the *Qur'an* and the traditions of the Prophet. But they gave a mystic representation to the verses of *Qur'an* and the teachings of the Prophet.

Like the Bhakti saint-poets, the sufis too rejected the artificial division of society into various strata based on caste and other considerations. Muhiyudin Ibn Arabi, the great Sufi Saint, founded the doctrine of *Wahdat al-wujud*, oneness of being. This doctrine carried many far-reaching implications. It considered all human beings, and in fact, all created beings, as manifestations of God. Ibn Arabi used to say: "My heart is a mosque, a Church, a synagogue and a temple".

The Sufis also practiced full equality between the sexes. Among the women saints, the universally revered Rabi'a al-Adawiyya was a Sufi par excellence. It is said that the Sufis value women as much as they do men because they believe in nothing less than the unity of God. "In this unity", Fariduddin Attar asks: "What remains of the existence of "I" or "thou"? So how can "man" or "woman" continue to be?" (Asghar Ali Engineer, Times of India, February 5, 1997).

e. Baul Movement

The Baul movement, which traces its origin to the fall of Buddhism and Vaishnavism, is mainly confined to Bengal. The Baul philosophy emphasizes the simple human being's search for God. Literally Baul means *Vayu* or wind. The followers are called so because they are like free birds moving anywhere and in any direction they like, without being tied to any religious tradition. They reject the caste division. Neither do they worship any particular deity nor do they believe in going to a temple or mosque. They sing, "what need have we of other temples when our body is the temple where our spirit has its abode?" They believe in an absolute normal worldly life.

Viewed in its totality, the Baul philosophy also comes close to the broad ideas of the UDHR — equality and freedom. Its rejection of the caste-based stratification presupposes its rejection of the principle of discrimination on the basis of one's social origin, caste, colour or creed. Its non-adherence to any particular religion respects one's right to religious freedom. One can extend this logic a little further to discover a secular dimension of the Baul ethos. By

leaving religion to the absolute free choice of an individual it seeks to keep it as a private matter indeed.

f. Sikhism

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak who was a brilliant product of the Bhakti movement in northern India. Kabir's teachings had a deep impact on Nanak as also the Islamic and Sufi ideas. Like Kabir, Nanak found a common link between Hinduism and Islam. The term "*Sikh*" has been derived from the Sanskrit word "*Sishya*", meaning disciple. Sikhism is also a religion of the common person. It is known for its simplicity. Nanak conceived of God as formless Nirakara and rejected idol worship and superstitious beliefs. Nanak wanted to found a new religion which could combine the teachings of Hinduism and Islam.

From the perspective of human rights, what is important is the fact that Nanak spoke of, and believed in, the equality of all human beings and rejected discrimination or distinction on any ground — religion, social standing, colour or even sex. He was the harbinger of Hindu-Muslim unity. He initiated the tradition of community kitchen or Guru ka langar to highlight the egalitarian philosophy of Sikhism.

g. Islam

Islam is not of Indian origin. It was first brought to India by the Arab traders on the west coast, but later it spread to other areas with the conquest of the north west. The Muslim conquest of India and the advent of Islam had a deep impact on the religions and culture of India. So much so that despite being of foreign origin, Islam has become the second most important religion today.

Islam believed in the most important of all the rights of each human being — the right to equality, irrespective of caste, creed, colour, race or descent. The Prophet himself made an important declaration regarding the equality of humankind, more than thirteen hundred years ago. While delivering his "Farewell Sermon" to a large gathering at Mecca in 632 AD, i.e. a few months before his death, he said:

"O mankind, the Arab is not superior to non-Arab, nor vice-versa; the white has no superiority over the black nor vice-versa; and the rich has no superiority over the poor. All of you are Adam's descendants and Adam was made of earth."

Islam also respected an individual's right to religious freedom (Article 18).

At the day-to-day existential level, the provision of Ramzan fast provides a good example of ensuring the protection of many rights, though by implication, contained in the UDHR. The Ramzan fast, which the *Qur'an* makes mandatory for all devout Muslims, is basically a "lesson in self-restraint". It awakens "the sense of humanity in all humans". It teaches the individual to master the art of self-discipline and cultivate greater human virtues like compassion, serenity, mercy, equanimity. In a word, it provides a course of training that would enable a devout Muslim to "lead a righteous life".

h. Christianity

Christianity is believed to have arrived in India during the first century after the birth of Christ. There is a tradition which believes that Thomas, one of Christ's Apostles, reached India in 52 AD. Like Islam, the advent of Christianity also had a deep influence on the Indian social life due to its emphasis on and belief in the equality of all human beings, tolerance, love, and brotherhood. It even teaches: "*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despise you and persecute you* ."

Such laudable prescriptions provide no room for the infringement of an individual's right to life, right to profession, right to follow a particular religious faith, right to be treated equally before law without any discrimination, right to marry and found family, as also other rights. It also cannot tolerate slavery (Article 4) and cruel or inhuman punishment to anyone (Article 5).

i. Reform Movements

With the advent of western liberal ideas in the nineteenth century, there followed a spate of reformist movements in India aimed at renovating and rationalizing the unequal Indian social order. Of particular importance, from the UDHR perspective, are the Brahmo Samaj movement of Raja Rammohan Roy, the Hindu spiritual movement of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his illustrious disciple, Swami Vivekananda, the Prarthana Samaj of Mahadev Govinda Ranade and the Arya Samaj of Swami Dayanan Saraswati.

The basic approach of all these movements was the attack on religious orthodoxy and emphasis on progressive values. They began to advocate radical social reforms which challenged the prevailing social practices. Rammohan Roy denounced the evil practice of "*Sati* " (Article 16). Keshabchandra Sen, his follower, advocated more radical social changes. He denounced child marriage and polygamy, and championed the emancipation of women and advocated widow remarriage. These ideas correspond to Articles 16, 3, 4, 5 and 25 of the UDHR.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a great champion of religious freedom or the right to freedom of thought, conscience and belief (Article 18). To drive home this point, he even practiced other forms of religious belief such as Islam and Christianity. Swami Vivekananda sought to interpret the Hindu spiritual concepts in the light of modern rationality and progressivism.

Status of the Dalits

It is the most unfortunate and inhuman tradition of Indian culture that due to the predominance of the Hindu caste system, the *dalits* (who are officially known as the Scheduled Castes or whom Gandhi used to call *Harijans*) always operated outside the societal framework, leading a life of social segregation. The caste structure, as has already been said, consisted of four castes and the *dalits* were not part of it. From the very birth, they were being assigned to all sorts of menial jobs starting from scavenging to working as labourers in the lands of the dominant landlords. This practice of confining the *dalits* to a particular profession, place of settlement and a degraded

social status amounted to a violation of human rights. At the same time, their exploitation by the dominant land owning castes had the approval and sanction of the socio-cultural context in which they operated. Secondly, there was no awareness among the *dalits* about their rights as human beings, on par with the other sections of society.

During the freedom struggle, the *dalits* came to realize their dignity, wealth and importance though not necessarily their rights. Gandhi was deeply aware of, and very sensitive to, the question of untouchability and the suffering of the *dalits*. He sought to increase their social status by identifying himself with them and addressing them as the children of God or Harijans. He almost carried a crusade against untouchability and the amelioration of the living conditions of the *dalits*.

B.R. Ambedkar, a dalit by birth and the main architect of the Indian Constitution, took up the cause of the *dalits* during the freedom struggle itself. But there was a fundamental difference between Gandhi and Ambedkar in their approach to solving the problem.

After independence, the leaders made several provisions in the Indian Constitution to remove this evil from Indian society and to ensure the all-round upliftment of the *dalits*. Article 17 abolishes the practice of untouchability in any form. This is a fundamental right which means that if a dalit finds himself handicapped in any sense, due to the enforcement of untouchability, he can directly seek legal remedy from the Supreme Court. In addition, Parliament has been enacting several laws from time to time, chief among them being the special provisions for the Scheduled Castes. Despite all these legislative measures and constitutional provisions which guarantee a dalit all the rights mentioned in the UDHR, much remains to be done at the grassroots level where the *dalits* still face discrimination, atrocities and harassment in various forms.

Conclusion

The duty-first value system is an important positive aspect of Indian culture which needs to be highlighted. This implies that in this modern age of representative government and Rule of Law, the government and its agencies should perform their duties well and faithfully so that the citizens can enjoy their rights. The example of the duties of the King in the ancient period should be cited to highlight the responsibilities of the institutions and individuals which have been entrusted with the task of governing. Another aspect of the earlier monarchical phase and the caste system was that the non-performance of dharma was accompanied by *danda* (punishment). In today's context it is the courts which act as watchdog and compel the other agencies — the executive and the legislature — to do their duties.

The heterodox tradition which challenged the Hindu vision of social order has always highlighted the equality of human beings and other values such as compassion, non-violence, tolerance, human dignity, etc. The young Indians must be reminded over and over again about what Rabindernath Tagore said: "The Sakas, the Huns, the Pathans and the Mughals all have merged into one body."

In today's India, which remains divided over religious and communal differences, a fundamental duty of the human rights

movement (this should include both the non-governmental and governmental agencies) is to enter into a dialogue with various faith and sectarian movements. A continuous interaction and exchange of ideas between the two would go a long way in dispelling many of the misgivings which ultimately result in violent and abnormal human behaviors. No religion talks about intolerance and violence. The main emphasis of all religions is on the broader and brighter sides of human life like tolerance, co-existence, brotherhood and fellow feeling, etc. These values need to be collectively highlighted and inculcated.

At the negative level, attention should be on three areas: the place and position of women as conceived in India's culture; the caste ideology and untouchability; and the evils of poverty, ignorance and illiteracy.

A culture of human rights cannot flourish in an unilateral way. One cannot have just rights and no duties and responsibilities towards society. Similarly one should not be expected to go on shouldering only the responsibilities of the burdens of society.

Notes

LESSON 10
INTERCULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS

Contents

Intercultural relationships, benefits and challenges of intercultural relationships, Stages and Cultural Differences in Relational Development, Orientation interactions, and Communicating in intercultural relationships.

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the concepts intercultural relationships.
- To study the benefits and challenges of communicating in intercultural relationships.

Introduction

This chapter examines interpersonal relationships that cross cultural boundaries. How do we develop and sustain relationships with other individuals who do not share the same cultural ties as we do? Intercultural relationships can be difficult at all levels. The adage that "love conquers all," whether used between lovers or good friends, may express an important relational ideal, but in practice love rarely obviates the need for intercultural understanding.

In a shrinking world, businesses operate across borders, whether they are borders between neighborhoods or borders between countries. All of these bordered areas, large and small, represent differing cultures. Whether at home or abroad, chances are, your business deals with people of varying cultures on a daily basis. In today's expansive work environment, employees, co-workers, customers, vendors, and business partners can all have a different cultural background from yours. The most obvious cultural differences you encounter are language and dress. But there are a multitude of subtler ways in which people from different cultures vary in their behavior. If you don't understand the ways in which they might differ, you're risking your business communication and relationships being misunderstood. When operating interculturally, mistakes are easily made when you take appearances and meaning for granted.

Benefits of Intercultural Relationships

Why have intercultural relationships at all? Certainly some cultures and religions (e.g. Jewish; Hindu; African-American) produce a lot of social pressure which militates against intercultural relationships, but many individuals nonetheless find love and friendship across cultural boundaries. For individuals with mixed cultural backgrounds (such as your professor), nearly all relationships can be considered intercultural. In general, most people have intercultural relationships at **some** level of intimacy, even though they may choose to marry or date only within their own cultures. Intercultural relationships offer participants an interesting balance of similarities and differences. The benefits include enhancing knowledge about the world through knowledge about other cultures, breaking down stereotypes, and acquiring new skills. Intercultural partners may leary each other's language, history, and cultural traditions. Even simple things such as cooking and playing games can be enriched through interaction with people from another culture.

Challenges of Intercultural Relationships

Of course, intercultural relationships are not always simple. (To put things in perspective, of course, even intracultural relationships have challenges). In the early stages of a relationship, the dissimilarities may outweigh the commonalities between partners. When one partner learns something new about the other's culture, some alienation may occur. Your professor recalls the first time he experienced this odd cultural tradition may of you are familiar with called "Christmas" — of course I had heard of it, and knew it was a good time of the year for consumer spending and days off of school, but I had never been with an intimate through this period of time with their family. It was an eye-opener to see that for some families Christmas meant a lot more than shopping; and it was a bit scary as well. The challenge when there are significant cultural differences is to discover and build on similarities, while letting the differences enrich the experience.

Negative stereotypes can affect intercultural relationships. Certainly when one partner is used to looking at people of the other partner's race, ethnicity, religion, or sexuality as somehow flawed or lacking, this negative stereotype can be difficult to overcome. In the U.S., for example, many whites are used to perceiving Americans of African descent as dangerous and threatening - this can be a huge barrier to intercultural understanding between whites and blacks, and goes a long way to explain much of the self-segregation that occurs between whites and blacks, as well as the intense social pressure on both sides to avoid intimate interracial relationships.

Anxiety accompanies intercultural relationships. Anxiety is probably stronger in intercultural relationships than in intracultural relationships. There are worries about possible negative consequences that exist, whether these anxieties are real or imagined. Negative expectations, stereotypes, or previous experiences can have a significant effect on the level of anxiety.

We are often challenged to explain ourselves to the other in an intercultural relationship. Sometimes pressure comes from the cultural community - as when a father asks his white daughter why she is bringing a nonwhite man home for dinner. Majority communities can present special challenges because they have less to gain from cross-cultural relationships. White Americans, for example, can easily live without the knowledge that a relationship with a Mexican-American might offer, but the Mexican-American can learn vital survival skills in the U.S. by having relationships with white Americans.

Pogrebin argues that "Mutual respect, tolerance for the faux pas and the occasional closed door, open discussion and patient mutual education, all this gives crossing friendships — when they work at all — a special kind of depth."

Stages and Cultural Differences in Relational Development

Initial Attraction

There seem to be four primary principles of initial relational attraction:

- **proximity**: People form relationships with people they are in close proximity with. This is the "proximity principle." We tend to be attracted to people who are close to us in a variety of ways, including cultural background. Social structures can push some into proximity with us; however, we can often encounter people of different cultural backgrounds through various circumstances. The song "If you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with" illustrates the importance of proximity in an ironic way. Javidi and Javidi point out that the proximity principle varies from culture to culture.

- **physical attraction**: In the US, physical attraction may be the biggest aspect at the beginning of a relationship. Obviously standards for physical attraction are culturally based. These standards are historical and cultural, as Chan explains what she calls the "Caucasian male's irrefutable preference for Asian women."

- **similarity**: According to the "similarity principle," we are attracted to people we perceive to be similar to ourselves. We tend to like people who confirm our own beliefs about the world (this is the principle of **cognitive consistency**). In some cases people are motivated by deep spiritual or moral convictions to seek out people of like mind - pro-choice women tend to be less likely to date partners who are pro-life for example. Such similarities also make partners more predictable. Sometimes the discovery of a similar trait is more important than whether people are actually similar. Sometimes when people think they're similar they can have high expectations of future interactions.

- **complementarity**: the complementarity principle suggests that the differences that form the basis of attraction may contribute to balance in a relationship. The complementarity principle has nothing to do with how often partners compliment each other. Sometimes differences are more attractive than similarities, because partners want or need the challenges the differences present.

Orientation Interactions

There are different cultural rules for how to address strangers; this can present a challenge in intercultural relationships. Kissing a Muslim woman hello at a dinner party, for example, may be a big no-no. Barnlund found many differences in Japanese and US students' relational development. These differences may be due to different cultural patterns; e.g. preferences for high-context or low-context communication.

Exploratory Phase

The term *friend* may have different meanings for different cultural groups. In the US the term has a broad meaning. But in many other parts of the world, a "friend" is what we in the US would call a "close friend." This can lead to misunderstandings early on in a relationship.

Stability Phase

- friendships: As relationships develop more intimacy in this phase, friends are likely to share more personal and private information. Lewin suggests we disclose 3 types of information: the "outer boundary" (superficial information), the "middle circle" (more personal info such as life history and family background); and the "inner core" (very personal and private information, some of which we may never share). These areas may correspond with the relational phases (orientation, exploratory, and stability). Lewin found the most cross-cultural variation in the outer area.

- Romantic Relationships: Cross-cultural studies suggest that people with extreme individualistic orientations were likely to experience less love, caring, trust, and physical attraction with partners in romantic relationships, while these problems were less common in collective societies.

- Gay Relationships: While many would argue, Chesbro suggests that in the majority of cultures outside the US, homosexuality is not considered problematic behavior. Foucault's suggestion that sexuality is historical and that the modern conception of the homosexual is a recent invention confirms this finding. Gay and straight relationships differ over the role of same-sex friendships, cross-sex friendships, and the relative importance of friendships. Openly bisexual individuals may have even more challenges in intimate relationships.

Relationships across Differences

Intercultural Relationship Dialectics

A dialectical way of thinking may help us avoid stereotyping relational differences. We should look at the following dialectics:

- differences-similarities
- cultural-individual
- privilege-disadvantage
- personal-contextual
- static-dynamic
- history/past-present/future

Communicating in Intercultural Relationships

Sudweeks argues that several themes emerge that can enhance intercultural communication in relationships: competence, similarity, involvement, and turning points. Language is certainly important to examine in intercultural communication; even when both partners share language, there may be some differences in words, dialects, or speaking patterns. Obviously, time has to be made for the relationship; intimacy and shared friendship networks are important; and turning points such as self-disclosure can be very important.

Intercultural Dating and Marriage

Lampe's study found that people in intimate relationships gave similar reasons for dating across cultures or within their own cultures - physical and sexual attractions. Reasons for not dating, however, varied. Reasons for not dating within the

group included lack of attraction, whereas reasons for not dating outside of the group included no opportunity and/or "never thought about it." Other studies suggest that negative familial and social pressure influenced the decision not to date outside one's own ethnic group. Some ethnic groups (in the US esp. Jewish and African-American) fear absorption or assimilation through intercultural marriages.

Permanent Relationships

Intercultural marriage in the US and Canada tends to be more common among women than men, among older than younger, and among more educated individuals. The major concerns tend to include familial/social pressure, and issues around raising children (both in terms of how to raise them and in terms of how others see them). Romantic love is influenced by cultural stereotypes and histories (even though that goes against what all of our fairy tales tell us). Romano found 17 challenges in international relationships; some were exacerbated by the intercultural differences. Romano also found four styles for working out power imbalances:

- submission style (most common but rarely lasts)
- compromise style (each partner gives up something)
- obliteration style (difficult to obliterate cultural background)
- consensus style (most desirable; based on agreement & negotiation)

Contexts of Intercultural Relationships

It is important to consider context in any intercultural relationship. History does play a role as little as we may like that. There is a dialectical tension between social/historical/economic context on the one hand and on the romantic or other desires and motives of the partners involved.

When Cultural Values Clash with Universal Rights: Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?

By Susan Moller Okin

A catchy title that asks a question can be a problem if it leads people to think that the author's inclination is to give a simple answer. Indeed, it seems a hopeless quest to try to answer the question, "Is multiculturalism bad for women?" in an easy way.

So if I'm not going to give a simple answer, what am I trying to do? Above all, I want to point out that there is a real tension between the aim of feminists to promote the equality of women and the aim of multiculturalists to promote the preservation of disadvantaged or endangered cultural groups. I want to look at those instances when the project of trying to advance women's international human rights runs into problems with cultural claims.

Over the past 20 years, there has been increasing recognition that the earlier, post-World War II conceptions of human rights need to be quite distinctly and radically rethought in order to fully include women's human rights. One of the major accomplishments of the international women's human rights movement was the International Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995. At this conference, after much dispute, the final program of action stated the following: "While the significance

of national and religious particularities in various historical, cultural, and religious systems must be kept in mind, it is the duty of states regardless of their political, economic, and cultural systems to protect and promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms." In its coverage the next day, *The New York Times* said that this affirmation-that women's rights should supercede national traditions-was arguably the most far-reaching stance on human rights ever taken at a United Nations gathering.

On the other side, some feminists consider it highly objectionable—a kind of intellectual colonialism—for anyone outside of a particular cultural or religious community even to raise the issue of whether certain rights of women are violated within that community's tradition. They think of it as intrusive because it's impossible to understand another culture from the outside.

In my view, this is not a morally justified approach. At least, I would suggest, it is incumbent on anyone claiming groups' or peoples' rights to ensure that the women of the cultural or religious group concerned are consulted. The group should not just be represented by the elders or the men.

Let's go back to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. This document states that women and men have equal rights. It's remarkable that the declaration should have said this at the time it was written because none of the states that signed and ratified it had equal rights for women. There were lots of things that were legally different and unequal for men and women in this country and England. French women couldn't even vote; in Switzerland, they could vote at some levels but not others.

If you read the declaration carefully, it is pretty clear that it's one of those documents that were originally written about men to which somebody added women. A lot of the rights it refers to clearly have to do with male-headed households. For example, there's a clause about the family that says the privacy of the family is to be protected and persons have a right to preserve the honor and integrity of the family. These are words that come up often in the context of women's sexuality, such as a daughter's sexual behavior or even rape, which can be seen as affronts to the family's honor, for which the girl can be punished, sometimes even killed. They have a lot to do with patriarchal cultures, where men are seen as the guardians of family honor.

Also, all the rights asserted in the declaration are held to be rights against states. For example, you have a right to physical integrity and not to be tortured by your government. But many times when women are physically violated or attacked it is not by the state; it is by men in their own environments-often husbands or boyfriends or fathers. So, the problem for women is not so much the state but other persons, yet the document is focused on the state as a violator of rights.

Thirty-one years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was issued, it was becoming obvious that many countries, if not all, had policies and laws that clearly discriminated against women. So a convention was put together, which is commonly known as the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women).

Whatever you think of the practical effectiveness of such documents, you can learn quite a lot by looking at countries' reactions to them. A lot of countries, including our own, have not ratified the CEDAW. Even among the signatories, a lot of countries have made reservations, more than to any other international human rights document. They say, "We can't abide by this particular part of the document." Most of them base their objections on cultural and/or religious grounds. Of those that have signed or ratified the convention, a number-including India, Bangladesh, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, and Israel-have expressed certain reservations. In particular, they object to Article 16 of the convention, which explicitly says that men and women are to have the same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution.

Most of the countries that express this reservation state more or less explicitly that it's because their state marriage and divorce laws are in accord with religious law. In many cases, although not all, it's the Islamic *Shariah*. Basically, the *Shariah* says that husbands and wives have complementary rather than the same responsibilities, roles, and rights. As a result, they say they can't abide by this clause.

In this context, it's worth noting that cultural or religious exemptions from international documents are by no means the order of the day. When one looks the cultural reasons for exemptions from international treaties -as Joe Paul, a lawyer at Hastings Law School, recently did-one finds that such justifications stand notably more chance of being accepted when they're about the unequal treatment of women than when they deal with other issues. For example, there are no such reservations by countries signing the earlier 1965 Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Also, culturally based claims for exemptions or exceptions from treaties or conventions about other issues such as whaling or cutting down the rainforests have considerably less chance of gaining international acceptance than when the exemption is based on unequal practices regarding women. In short, culture does not generally trump in cases like racial discrimination or whaling, but it does trump and is accepted as trumping when issues of women's equality are concerned.

As some scholars have noted, women's equality and the claims to rights of cultures and religions have been on a collision course ever since the 1948 Declaration because that document states both so boldly. The tension between the two was further increased when the rights of people of culturally distinct groups were promulgated in the U.N. Covenant on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights in 1966.

I hope it goes without saying that those like myself who are concerned with this issue don't think that cultural and religious freedoms are unimportant; far from it. In many cases, they are of crucial importance to the members of cultural or religious groups who would suffer under oppressive conditions, be discriminated against, or even treated with violence if they did not have this explicit protection of their separate and distinct religious or cultural practices. That some people, whether they make up a whole single nation or a minority within a nation state, need certain rights and protections in order to preserve

their language, beliefs, and customs is by now a well established argument.

At the same time, there's a real conflict between these protections and the well being and quality of life for hundreds of millions of the world's women. Martha Nussbam has written eloquently about what she calls the liberal dilemma of respect for religious freedom and commitment to other human rights including women's rights to equal treatment and respect.

To see how this conflict operates in practice, let's take the case of group rights in India, the world's second most populous state and its largest liberal democracy, and also the case of Israel. In both of these states, marriage and divorce are controlled by various religious groups or communities. For various reasons, some of them having to do with the colonial past and some of them having to do with religions per se, religious groups have come to have a particular stake in regulating the relations between spouses and within families.

As a result, in India, millions of Muslim women can be divorced unilaterally by their husbands at any time. But they themselves have no right to leave their marriage except for considerable cause-such as their husbands' desertion of or failure to support them-and even then they need the permission of a religious court judge. These Muslim women are not entitled to any continuing support from their husbands if their marriage is dissolved. No matter how long the marriage lasted and regardless of the extent to which the division of labor was practiced within the marriage, a divorced woman can be left economically destitute after a few months and a certain amount of money that the husband has to pay her temporarily.

There was an infamous case in the late 20th century in India, which involved a woman who had raised five children and who was unilaterally divorced and left without any income after a 40-year marriage to a successful lawyer. At 73, she was supposed, according to the laws of divorce, to rely on her birth family or on charity for the rest of her life.

The Indian Supreme Court, to which this case was appealed, decided in favor of the woman, ordering the husband to pay, but not in accordance with divorce law. He was required to support her because there's a law in India against leaving somebody to become a vagrant.

When the court issued its decision, there was a huge outcry in the Muslim community because they didn't think that the Hindu majority should have anything to do with enforcing their laws of marriage and divorce. They were particularly irate that the Supreme Court had dared to try and interpret Muslim law. There was such an outcry that the government of India in 1986 passed a law that has an odd name: "The Muslim Women's Protection of Rights on Divorce Bill." A more accurate title might be "The Protection of Muslim Husbands' Rights on Divorce Bill." What the law did was overturn the Supreme Court judgment and state that Indian Muslim women would have no recourse to support after divorce. Religious law had triumphed over women's equality.

In the case of Israel, Orthodox Jewish law regulates marriage and divorce between all Jews, religious or secular. The only way for a Jewish Israeli to avoid the inequalities of Orthodox

divorce law is to get married outside of Israel. Orthodox divorce law is based on a single passage from Deuteronomy, which reads,

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house; she leaves his house and becomes the wife of another man; then the second man rejects her, writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies, who took her to be his wife, then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled.

Initially, this taking and sending away of wives in Judaism was polygamous, as marriage still is in Islam, of course. About a thousand years ago, a progressive Talmudic scholar, Rabbi Gershon, reinterpreted the text, no longer permitting Jews to have multiple wives. He also said that a Jewish husband could not divorce his wife unilaterally; that is to say, without her consent.

However, one substantial inequality in the Halakhic law remains: Unless the husband agrees to give his wife a bill of divorce, called a *get*, she is not released from the marriage. She cannot remarry, and any children she has are regarded as bastards, which means they are not allowed to marry within Judaism. In other words, a man can control his wife's life in terms of what she can and cannot do reproductively and in terms of her relationships. The woman in this situation, who is known as an *agunah* or "chained woman," is often stuck interminably in a marriage that is over. Frequently, she or her family is subjected to extortion in order to receive the *get*. At the same time, the man can continue with his life much less impeded. For example, he can father legitimate Jewish children, and he can, in some cases, get the permission of a Jewish court to marry again.

A defender of religious group rights in India or Israel might say something like this: "Yes, women are disadvantaged in terms of the laws of marriage and divorce in the various religious groups, but controlling personal or family law is of special importance to these groups because of the huge part it plays in the protection of their culture and religion. It's an important part of their religious freedom. Moreover, the women, too, benefit overall from having their way of life protected."

These claims do have considerable weight; that's why there is a moral dilemma here. Yet, I would argue that each of these claims can be answered. It is the case that control of personal or family law is of central importance to religious and sometimes other cultural minority groups. But such laws also are tremen- dously important to women. If the availability of divorce, for example, is not equal-especially if women can be married young and sometimes under pressure-the impact of this inequality is bound to reverberate throughout the marriage.

Albert O. Hirschman argues that the terms of exit from any situation affect the voice and the power of the various people within the situation. It's not hard to see how this theory applies to marriage. If a husband is able to exit the marriage more easily than a wife and does not suffer economically from divorce, then surely this must affect the whole marriage, giving far more

power to the husband. Even when the terms of divorce are equal, the traditional division of labor between the sexes tends to make divorce less advantageous to women because men usually possess more of the human capital. This effect is surely going to be far greater if the terms of the divorce favor the man, as is the case so often when religious law governs marriage. In such situations, it seems extremely unlikely that the woman would be able to exert anything like equal influence over major or minor decisions made within the family, within the marriage, or even about her own individual day-to-day life and conduct.

There is also an argument that has been made by feminists at least as far back as Mary Wilson-perhaps even John Stuart Mill: If women are not equal within marriage, they can't be equal within any other sphere of life. If their marriage is unequal, how can they be equal in terms of work opportunities, the marketplace, politics, or anything else? All other equal rights laws for women that countries might promulgate can be virtually nullified by the inequality of marriage and divorce law.

As to whether women benefit overall from groups' rights even if they are disadvantaged in certain things like marriage and divorce, I think this presents a false dichotomy. Is there any justice in giving women this choice? How often are men required to sacrifice their individual rights to equal treatment in order to preserve or protect their religious or cultural identity? We might well ask, Why aren't women's, like men's, human rights, especially when they are clearly fundamental rights, always given first priority?

One could argue that as a prerequisite to any defense or protection of a cultural group, that group should be required to change its marriage and divorce laws in order to make women equal within them. Of course, this would be a major change for many religions and cultures. But it seems to me that any group seeking official recognition and rights within a liberal society, or seeking to be part of generally recognized human rights community, should at least have to reform its teaching and practices to bring them in line with basic equalities for men and women.

This article was adapted from a talk by Susan Moller Okin, Marta Sutton Weeks Professor of Ethics in Society and professor of political science at Stanford University. Her presentation on Oct. 29, 2001 was part of the Markkula Ethics Center Lecture Series. Okin is the author of Justice, Gender, and the Family, Women in Western Political Thought *and "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?"*

Notes

LESSON 11
NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Contents

What is non verbal communication, forms of non verbal – space, silence, actions, signs,body language, kinesics, facial expressions. Models of adaptation, Intercultural transitions.

Learning Objectives:

- To get familiar with different forms and means of non-verbal communication.

- To study different models of adaptation

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication has semantics and syntactics all to its own, but it is much less well understood than verbal or written communication. It is generally subconsciously learned and understood. Also, it can sometimes contradict verbal behavior, which makes things confusing as well. At such times, nonverbal behavior can be even more compelling than the contradictory verbal information exchanged.

Non-verbal Communication

Meaning and Nature:

Communicating a message without using arbitrary symbols i.e., words or meaning of words, is termed as non-verbal communication. In other words, non-verbal communication is word less communication. You can use many ways of communication, both verbal and non-verbal. Non-verbal languages consist of hidden messages; it is the cues, which convey message. These messages are necessarily wordless or non-verbal, conveyed through without restoring to words or meaning of words, but conveyed through other media like spatial, kinesics, oral cues, objective language action, etc. Kinesics is the most generally used medium of communication. Actions like stroking, hilling, holding, patting and hand shaking convey meaningful messages.

Behavioral expressions or cues that do not rely on words or word symbols are known as non-verbal communication. Words alone in many cases, not adequate to express our feelings and reactions. When someone remarks that he does not know how to express himself in words, it can be concluded that his feelings are too intense and complex to be expressed in words. Non-verbal messages express true feelings more accurately than the spoken or written language. Both kinds of data can be transmitted intentionally or unintentionally. Even smile symbolizes friendliness; in much the same way as cordially is expressed in words. Verbal and non-verbal behaviour may be duplication of one another. If a person says: "Please have a seat" and points towards chair, they can be complimentary. For example, a person smiles and explains "Come in, I am pleased to see you." The two codes, verbal and non- verbal- can be contradictory.

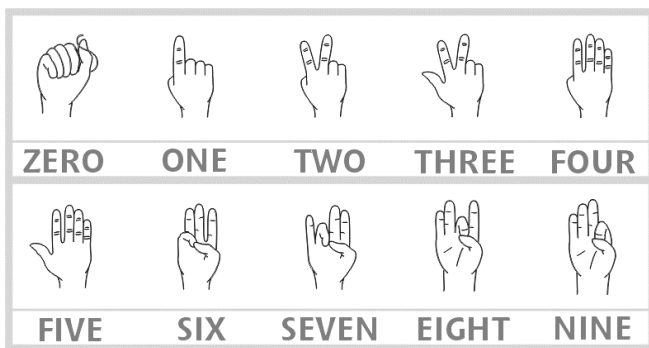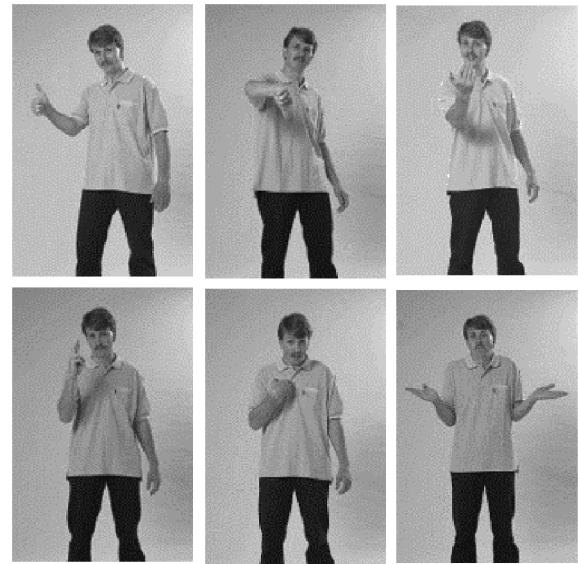Nonverbal messages usually complement verbal messages, such as a service station attendant usually points and uses other gestures while giving directions to a stranger from out of town. At other times, nonverbal symbols completely replace verbal messages. Teachers with cold, fixed stares can easily tell students to be quiet without uttering a word. When nonverbal messages contradict what you say verbally, others usually believe the nonverbal message. For example, when a woman tells a man that she is interested in hearing about the motivational sales seminar he attended, but she continues reading her computer screen, she communicates a lack of interest.

Forms or Media of Non-Verbal Communication:

Different experts and specialists have classified non-verbal communication into various categories. However, the media of non-verbal communication are discussed in the following paragraphs classified appropriately:

Sign Language: (sign lan·guage) NOUN: A language that uses a system of manual, facial, and other body movements as the means of communication, especially among deaf people. The manual communication used by people who have hearing impairments. The gestures or symbols in sign language are organized in a linguistic way, and each sign has three distinct parts: the hand shape, the position of the hands, and the movement of the hands. Sign language is not universal. American Sign Language (ASL or Ameslan) is not based on English or any other spoken language and is used by the majority of deaf in the United States. Two sign systems, which are based on English, are Signed Exact English (SEE sign) and Signed English (Siglish). Marks or symbols used to mean something is termed as signs of language. Language of hand shapes, facial expressions, and movements used as a form of communication. Method of communication for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in which hand movements, gestures, and facial expressions convey grammatical structure and meaning.

Sign Language (ASL)
c. 2000 - BlackDog - http://blackdog.net

| ZERO | ONE | TWO | THREE | FOUR |
| FIVE | SIX | SEVEN | EIGHT | NINE |

Action Language: It is a language of movements. Action speaks louder than words. By action, one may knowingly or unknowingly be communicating with others. Included in the category of actions are general motions such as walking, as well as the specific gestures like shaking hands, namaste, facial expressions etc. The study of body movements including gestures, postures and facial expressions is called *Kinesics.* Gesture comprises an entire subset of behaviors involving movement. Some are cultural indicators and are specific to a particular group. Others may be connected to job or an occupation as in signals used at airports or the hand signal used on a noisy construction site or traffic signals etc.

Everyday, you may be using gestures constantly and without much thought- wrinkling your nose when discussing something unpleasant or shrugging your shoulders when a friend asks for your opinion and you are sure you have one. A persons' overall body orientation or posture typically communicates his or her level of interest, liking, and openness. Hand and body movements demonstrate and reinforce meanings intended by verbal messages. For example, pointing to your sweater on the chair while explaining that 'it is lying over there'. Others include stretching your arms over your head to emphasize your fatigue, slapping your hands against your head in effort to recall a thought etc. Unintentional hand, arm, leg or other bodily movements used to reduce stress or relive boredom. For example, waiting endlessly for your turn at the doctor's office may elicit such actions such as pencil tapping, nail biting or chewing eyeglasses or frame or file etc.

Objective language: (Artifacts) Objective language medium of non-verbal communication indicate display and arrangement of material things. If you have the largest office in a building all to your self, and other people find themselves crowded four or five in a same size or smaller room, you can be sure that the status and power implications of your space are clear to everyone. Objective language with reference to silence or non-verbal communication refers to dress and decoration, which communicate a great deal about the speaker's feelings emotions, attitudes, opinions etc. Clocks, jwellery, hairstyle, they all communicate something especially about that person. Dress of army men differs from civilians, land army, air force and naval personnel according to their rank. The executive look is different between men and women.

This method may include intentional or unintentional communication of material things like clothing, ornaments, books, buildings, room furniture, interior decorations etc. Objective communication is non-verbal message communicated through appearance of objects. These objects exist in a particular cultural setting only.

Spatial or Environmental: It is relating to the place or environment in which the actual process of communication takes place. It may be physical or psychological. The environment for communication must be congenial and conducive to effective communication. For example, in-group communication it is the responsibility of the group leader

Silence: In many circumstances, silence also is an effective medium of communication. Through silence, people evoke response from others. In a number of situations if no response or reply is received within a specific period or happening of a situation, the silence on the part of respondent signifies communication. The practice of silence is usually taken as approved in number of personal, business and social transactions as practice, custom, tradition or understanding. Sometimes, silence itself is considered equivalent to speech. In some cases, silence is considered as fraud and in some other cases it is not fraud. Thus silence is likely to affect the willingness and consent of another person also. However, silence as a medium of communication is considered as a dangerous mode of communication.

Demonstration: It is a process of showing how something works. It indicates a display or exhibition of how something works. It is a public expression of opinion by holding meetings and processions showing play cards. Demonstration is made and dramatised as a means of emphasis on the subject under consideration. Take foe instance, a salesman giving a demonstration to a person or group pf persons as to how to operate the product. Such demonstrations naturally work out to be more effective than providing written or oral description of the same. Demonstration as to how to use or operate a particular product provides a clear and better understanding of a product.

Proximics: The distance that the people keep themselves between the speaker and the listener is termed as Proximics. Generally, people are not conscious and aware about Proximics but the distance affect interpersonal communication. Personal space is an invisible factor or rule. Space between persons indicates relations at the same time and is a dimension of interpersonal communication. Cultural patterns regulate personal space and interpersonal communication. They are unspoken and invisible rules governing personal distance. People who stand too near when they are more intimate. When they are not so close, they should be at a distance.

Time: Use of time is also as chronemics as an important non-verbal method of communication. Time also conveys the message. Time speaks. Punctuality or delay speaks pleasant or unpleasant feelings and attitudes. Late arrival to attend a meeting conveys something. In certain circumstances, arriving at an appointed place on or before time communicate something. A telephone call at too early hours or late night conveys, significant message. For instance, a telephone call at 1.00am or 2.00 am, communicates something of urgency, unusual message to be attended to on a priority basis.

Paralanguage: Another important dimension is paralanguage. Sounds are the basis of paralanguage. It includes tone of voice, power or emphasis, pitch, rhythm, volume, pause or break in sentence, speed of delivery, loudness or softness, facial expressions, gestures, body movements, postures, eye contact, touch etc.

Some nonverbal cues are cultural, whereas others are probably universal.

relational nonverbal - explain our relationship to other person(s)

status messages - indicating our power position through nonverbal communication

deception - can signify whether one is lying or deceiving through nonverbal cues. Certainly polygraphs are based on this idea.

Nonverbal Codes

1. **proxemics** - use of space to communicate
2. **Eye contact** - more cultural than universal (different cultures interpret eye contact differently.
3. **facial expression** - more emotive and more universal
4. **chronemics** - use of time. linear or monochronic cultures tend to see time as a zero-sum resource ("time is money"; you can spend, save, or waste time); whereas polychronic cultures see time as multiply layered; many things happen at once.
5. **silence** - can also be meaningful; this is more cultural than universal.

Nonverbal studies run the risk of overgeneralization sometimes; for example, not all Amish are silent...

semiotics - sign=signifier + signified. **codes** are used to interpret the meaning of signifiers. Codes are the rules which connect signifier to signified.

Cultural Spaces

Martin & Nakayama discuss various relations with space and place, including "home" (which has the most specific relation to individual identity - where do you feel most "at home"?), the "neighborhood" (which is more collective than individual), and "region" (which can be national, internal, or trans-national.) Travel and migration also create changing cultural spaces. Martin & Nakayama also discuss the so-called "postmodern cultural spaces" inhabited by many people - spaces that are truly ephemeral and fluid; they do not exist in a specific geographic location but rather they are notional spaces which only come into existence as they are used. This essay discusses the representation of postmodern spaces in film.

Intercultural Transitions

Types of Migrant Groups

1. **sojourners** - travelers, voluntary; usually limited period of time and with a specific purpose. Educational exchanges, corporate personnel, etc.
2. **immigrant** - mostly voluntary movement seeking a better life, or to be with family, or to find jobs or money or opportunity. "Choice" is relative but some measure of it is present for the immigrant.
3. **long term refugees** - forced to relocate permanently, usually due to economic, political, social, or natural disaster.
4. **short term refugees** - forced to relocate for shorter periods of time (though sometimes indefinitely). The difference is they usually intend to return.

Models of Adaptation

1. **Anxiety & Uncertainty Management Model** (Gudykunst) - sees **ambiguity** as the key to managing intercultural relationships. The goal of communication is seen as reducing ambiguity and its consequent anxiety. *predictive uncertainty* - can't predict what the other culture will do in reaction to something. *explanatory uncertainty* - you can't explain why the culture will react in a given way. This model helps us to understand how we negotiate new cultural contexts by decreasing uncertainty and anxiety.

2. **U-Curve Theory of Adaptation** (Sverre Lysgaard) - argues that adaptation follows a "U-Curve."

anticipation adaptation

shock, disorientation, identity crisis
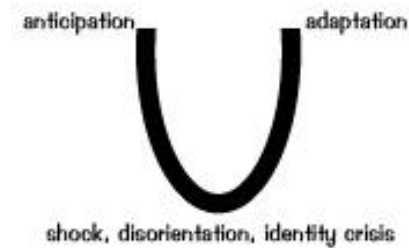
3. **Transition Model** - Janet Bennett talks about culture shock as a smaller category fitting within "transition shock" - other transitions e.g. aging also produce similar crises and shocks.

   One assumption of the transition model is that all transitions involve loss as well as change - experiencing the new first involves losing the old. "fight or flight" - most people adapt to abrupt transitions to new situations by leaving or by fighting against perceived threats. Such responses can be useful and productive, but in more extreme forms can be hostile and counterproductive.

4. **Communication System Model** (Young Yun Kim) - argues that stress and anxiety provoke *adjustment* and eventually *growth.* This process occurs through communication. Communication helps the adaptation take place, but it can also increase culture shock because it increases exposure to the other culture.

Three stage process of adaptation:

- taking things for granted (and surprise when that doesn't work - expectations can be wrong)
- making sense of new patterns through communication experiences
- understanding new information

Individual Influences on Adaptation

Certainly race, class, gender, personality, age, and other factors will all play a role. The environment or **context** might be seen as more or less "friendly" to adaptation. It can help if the new environment is closer to the home culture (e.g. Americans going to the UK). Potential **outcomes** can include (1) psychological health, (2) functional fitness (a utilitarian perspective), and (3) the development of an *intercultural identity* with full integration into the culture.

Identity and Adaptation

Three key issues:

1. how much the migrant wants to become part of the new culture
2. extent to which the migrant wants to interact with the new culture
3. ownership of political power

Modes of Adaptation

1. **assimilation** - "melting pot" - loss of old culture and complete embrace of the new
2. **separation** - can be voluntary (e.g. Amish or Hasidim) or involuntary (e.g. apartheid). Separation involves the maintenance of a distinct and separate culture from the dominant culture.
3. **integration** - daily interaction with the new culture while maintaining a strong sense of cultural distinction. (e.g. Armenians in US cities).
4. **marginalization** - the culture is out of touch both with new and old cultures - usually b/c they have been pushed to the margins by the dominant culture, or in some cases been practically exterminated through genocidal policies (e.g. many native Americans experience this).

Notes

LESSON 12
LANGUAGE

Contents
Introduction, language and parole, Study of language, meanings and language, Cross cultural comparisons of the language and meanings, Language and perception, recent researches, using Global english.

Learning Objectives:
- To understand the concepts of language and parole.
- To understand cross culture comparisons of the languages and their meanings.
- To study the use of global english.

Introduction
Language is one of the most important cultural factors influencing advertising since communication patterns are closely linked to cultural norms (Hong et al., 1987). Translation and back-translation may overcome blunders regarding language, but language is a mirror of a culture. Differences among languages go far beyond mere translation problems. For example, a movie that was a blockbuster in the US may fail in Korea even after proper translation. Similarly, domestic advertising that works well may not necessarily work in a foreign country. Good ideas are difficult to create but these good ideas may not be universal. People who believe in universal good ideas may be preoccupied with ethnocentrism that refers to people's tendency to place themselves at the center of the universe and not only evaluate others by the standards of their own culture but also believe that their way of doing things is right, proper and normal.

Klopf (1981) states that as cultures differ from each other so do their communication practices.

Hall (1987) suggests that different languages exhibit contextual variations: high context variation and low context variation. A high context communication or message is one in which most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. On the other hand, in low context communication, the information is vested in explicit code (Hall, 1976).

In other words, high context cultures are intuitive and contemplative, and they tend to use indirect and ambiguous messages, whereas, low context cultures are analytical and action-oriented and tend to use explicit, clearly articulated messages. Contextual differences in cultures have been used to help explain differences in advertising practices.

Tayor et al., (1997), for example, compared US and Korean television commercials in terms of information level and found that US commercials with high levels of information are more effective than ones with little information. Korean subjects, on the other hand, were less responsive than US subjects to commercials containing much information. This may be due to the differences between American English and the Korean

language. For instance, American students learning Korean often find Korean expressions, both written and spoken, very vague or abstract and difficult to translate into English. In Korean, what is most important is not what is stated explicitly but rather what the speaker implies.

This situation also occurs when American students studying Japanese. In general, the Japanese consider a direct or decisive expression impolite or even offensive. For example, in a situation where an American would say, "I think she is hiding something from us," a Japanese person may say, "It is not impossible to feel that she may be hiding something from us, if I try to think that way." It is understood that the Japanese speaker thinks she is indeed hiding something. But by using the expressions "It is not impossible to feel..." and "if I try to think that way," the speaker softens his statement. This kind of indirect expression is prevalent in communication among the Japanese, including advertising (Kishii, 1988). Preference for indirect means of communication is also predominant among the Korean population.

The preference for indirect means of communication hinders the use of some of the creative techniques commonly used in the US, not because of legal factors, but because of its language characteristics. Comparative ads, for example, are not considered to be in good taste in Japan (Schoell and Guiltinan 1990), and a familiar ad is seen as being "pushy" and "phony" by the Japanese (Helming, 1982). Therefore, directly translating a successful American ad featuring comparison into Japanese can be a disaster. The indirect communication pattern of the Japanese may reflect the importance they place on group harmony and not standing out in a crowd, as opposed to Westerners who often make their stance or opinion clearly known.

According to the report by Dentsu (1990), the Western approach to advertising, with its emphasis on detailed explanation of the brand's virtues, is not common in Japan. This may be due to the Japanese preference for the indirect forms of expression discussed above. In the Japanese culture, the more one talks, the less others will perceive him or her as trustworthy or self-confident. In this way of thinking, if a person is truly good, it will be proven naturally without having to be explained verbally. Moreover, minimal information content can be explained in a way that Japan has relative cultural uniformity. Therefore, there is not much need to express things in so many words because Japanese people talking to each other have the same cultural background and, like Koreans, more or less understand each other immediately like Koreans. An implication for this is explaining everything about a brand in great detail may be taken as an affront by consumers, who may feel that the advertiser has underestimated their intelligence.

We communicate not only through spoken language but also via nonverbal language such as signs, colors and symbols.

Advertisers should note that nonverbal methods of communication are no more universal than verbal methods.

Just as one word can mean different things in different countries, nonverbal cues vary in their meaning. An example of a common word with two different meaning is "closet". In the U.S. "closet" refers to a place to hang your clothes whereas in the U.K. it refers to the toilet. Similarly, international advertisers may encounter problems with connotative meanings of nonverbal cues such as signs, colors and symbols. For example, the meanings associated with specific colors vary from culture to culture. While black associates with mourning, white is the color that signifies death in Korea, Japan, and India. Red has positive meaning in Denmark but is associated with the occult in many African countries (Jacob, Keown, and Ghymn, 1991).

Numbers also have different meanings in different cultures. The number 13 is considered bad luck in the U.S. but the number 4 is associated with death in Korea, Japan and China because the Chinese character that means death has the same pronunciation as the Chinese character meaning the number 4.

Langue and Parole

Between 1906 and 1911, Swiss linguistic theorist Ferdinand de Saussure introduced the distinction between *langue* and *parole* in his infamous Course on General Linguistics:

la langue	la parole
- literally: "tongue" or "language" - the general systematic structure of any particular language - cannot be directly accessed; is only available to us through individual acts of parole.	- literally: "speech" or "speaking" - the individual utterances in which speakers engage - individual acts of parole make up langue

Study of Language

1. **semantics** - focus on the meanings of words

2. **syntactics** - study of grammar and structural rules of language

3. **pragmatics** - focus on the impact of language on audiences ("language is as language does")

4. **phonetics** - study of phonemes (units of sound).

Language and Meaning

- Universal Dimensions of Meaning

  - **translation** & **interpretation**

  - **semantic differential** (Charles Osgood): a means of measuring attitudes or affective meanings (the "attitude towards act"). As the latter link shows, Osgood's method has been wildly influential (even to the point of plagiarism) in market research. Osgood's method is complex, but Martin & Nakayama discuss its three basic features: measuring the **evaluative dimension** of meaning (whether a word is felt to be "good" or "bad"), the **potency dimension** (how

strong the affective reaction to the word), and the **activity dimension** (what quality or speed of activity is suggested by the word).

- Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Meaning

  Language use across cultures can be analyzed according to these dimensions of meaning. It is important to recognize that different cultures experience these dimensions differently for various words or utterances.

Language and Perception

- **Nominalist Position**: holds that reality is totally external to language; our perceptions of reality are shaped by reality, not by language.

- **Relativist Position**: holds that language structures reality. This is sometimes characterized as the "prison-house of language." The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is an excellent example of a relativist position. The classic case study used to illustrate this hypothesis — the number of Eskimo words for "snow" — is the result of an unfortunate scholarly hoax which has probably already claimed far too much scholarly attention. Sapir-Whorf is often rejected *tout court* by scholars flashing such stories; often missed in these critiques is the more solid critique that Sapir-Whorf is less a hypothesis than a philosophy. Of course, none of this really harms the merit of the argument, which has in fact had a significant amount of influence in linguistic scholarship.

- **Qualified Relativist Position**: holds that language is a tool rather than a mirror of perception. Language helps to shape reality, but is not the only influence on reality. Reality is not seen as purely internal or external to language.

Recent Research Findings

Thomas Steinfatt researched the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and found problems in the following areas: children, cross-cultural studies, and studies of deaf children. Neverhteless, language is seen as a powerful influence on perception and, more importantly, action. Gudykunst and Ting-Toomy analyzed communication style cross-culturally and found the following areas of difference:

- **direct v. indirect** - the extent to which people explicitly communicate their intentions

- **elaborate, exact, and succinct**

- **personal/contextual** - personal style enhances emphasis on the "I" whereas contextual emphasizes the speaker's positionality in a structural relationship

- **instrumental/affective** - instrumental is goal oriented for the speaker; speech is an instrument. affective is process- and receiver-oriented - language enhances social relations.

Language and Power

The study of discourse is the study of language as a social phenomenon.

- **Co-Cultural Communication** - Mark Orbe describes how language works between dominant and subordinate social groups. Many subordinate groups are "co-cultural" in that they consciously or unconsciously shape their views to

match those of the dominant groups. Orbe divided general orientations toward co-cultural communication into three categories - *nonassertive, assertive,* and *aggressive.* Within any of the orientations, a co-cultural individual might emphasize *assimilation, accomodation,* or *separation* in relation to the dominant group. The table on p. 162 breaks this down for us.

- **Semiotics** - the study of meaning production (or semiosis). Roland Barthes argues that meaning is conveyed through the use of **signs** which are combinations of **signifiers** and **signified**.
  - **Signifier:** sound-image which represents something else. Can be a word, a symbol, a picture, or a real object (such as a stop sign).
  - **Signified:** the concept or idea that the signifier suggests.
- **Discourse and social structure** - Different social positions create different meanings for words and utterances. If your friend says, "you should read this book," it means a very different thing (and conveys a different perlocutionary force) than if your teacher tells you the same thing.
- **Power and Labels** Speech acts signify social positions. Language functions as an exercise of power. People can feel trapped or isolated by labels. Labels can be intentionally hostile, while others might unintentionally communicate inequality.

Moving Between Languages

- **multilingualism** -people who speak more than one language may have a very different - and many would say much richer - perception of reality. Learning a new language can help open up entire worldviews and perceptions that are new and fascinating. The tensions which arise from a multilingual world are numerous.
- **Translation and Interpretation** - Translation is the process of converting a *source text* into a different language and producing a *target text.* Of course, cultural differences in word usage makes translation a difficult exercise, and rarely will two translators agree on the proper translation of any given source text. Interpretation is the act of processing information verbally between languages. Translation and interpretation raise issues of equivalency and accuracy, as well as questions of the subjective role of the translator or interpreter.
- **Language Politics and Policies** - we have already discussed the hostile reaction to American multilingualism embodied by such political movements as "English-Only." Many nations have language policies, and while declaring English the official language of the U.S. may seem as pointless as declaring the sun our official source of heat, these issues have import beyond mere xenophobia in many places.

English is frequently the language used in global business even though it is not the language spoken by the majority of people in the world.

Using global English

It is therefore very important for native English speakers to be sensitive to the fact that English is a foreign language for many of their associates around the world, and the extent to which it is understood and spoken may vary widely.

For example, in some countries such as Japan, English is generally studied in junior high and high school, but the method of instruction emphasizes reading and grammar. Therefore, many Japanese may have more familiarity with written English than spoken English. The Japanese are also very shy and hesitate to speak for fear of making a mistake. However, never make the assumption that a person does not understand English – it can cause embarrassing situations.

Another factor to consider is that non-native English speakers around the world may be more familiar with British English than American English, or vice versa. The degree to which your colleagues speak English may also vary by region, occupation, educational background, level of international experience, etc.

Native/bilingual English speakers should to learn to adjust the way that they speak when interacting with those who are less fluent in order to facilitate successful communication and prevent or minimize communication breakdowns.

Tips for Native English Speakers – Speaking

- Slow down and be patient. Avoid the temptation to speak more loudly or show irritation
- Remember that others are trying to speak your language Enunciate clearly

Summarize your point frequently and when necessary repeat key points

- Watch gestures – do not over do and be sure that they mean the same thing in other cultures

Try to keep sentences short. Some things to try and avoid are:

- Either/or questions
- Idioms or colloquialisms, slang, jargon
- Reduction of speech
- Negative questions and contractions
- Complicated sentences

Use visuals whenever possible, such as graphs, charts.

Tips for Native English Speakers – Listening

- Learn to use reflective listening
- Repeat key words/phrases to confirm understanding
- Watch for words that may have different meanings in other cultures

It is not impolite to ask for confirm that you understood the point.

Tips for Native English Speakers – Writing

- Avoid long or complex sentences
- Do not present someone with too many points at once
- Avoid Idioms or colloquialisms, slang, jargon
- Review everything you write to try and determine if a non-native speaker may have difficulty understanding the meaning
- When in doubt, lean toward the formal side

Begin communication with a preliminary statement, such as thanking someone for his or her last communication. This applies to both spoken and written communication

Tips for Native English Speakers - Using Technology

- Cultural differences exist, so try to determine the standard practices and preferences
- Always be aware that your email or fax message may be seen by others
- Before planning videoconferences, etc. determine what technology is most readily available
- It is often helpful to set up a schedule of regular calls or meetings. Prepare agendas in advance and get a list of all attendees
- Designate a note taker and send a copy of the minutes to participants.

Remember, it is to everyone's advantage to achieve mutual understanding and communicate effectively. Cultural Savvy works with clients to assist them become effective global communicators and learn to communicate across cultures.

India is rich in languages, boasting not only the indigenous sprouting of Dravidian and Indo-Aryan tongues, but of the absorption of Middle-Eastern and European influences as well. Distinct, often ancient, and rich literary traditions are to be found in several languages, among them Bengali, Hindi, Tamil and Urdu, not to mention one of the world's most voluminous traditions of antiquity, Sanskrit.

Hindi, in the Devanagari script, is the only official federal language of India, though the other tongues are endorsed as co-official by the central government. It is the mother tongue of 18% of the people, though it is said to be spoken well by about 30% of the population and understood sufficiently by perhaps an even greater number. While English, due to India's colonial past, is safely embedded in educated Indian circles and enjoys associate official status in the government system, it is not largely spoken by the vast preponderance of the country.

Individual states, whose borders are mostly drawn on socio-linguistic borders, are free to decide their own regional languages for internal administration and education, so there are 18 official languages spoken throughout the country. Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Malayalam, Kannada, Oriya, Punjabi, Assamese, Kashmiri and Sindhi, are among the official languages which are widely spoken.

Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil and Urdu are the largest official languages outside of Hindi. Urdu is the official language of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir while *Bangla* or Bengali is the official language of West Bengal (and the neighboring nation of Bangladesh). Linguistically, Hindi and Urdu are the same language, the difference being that Hindi is written in Devanagari script and has more words from Sanskrit and Prakrit while Urdu is written in the Arabic script and has more words from Persian and Arabic.

Sanskrit and Tamil are the classical languages of India. Though an official language, Sanskrit is not used for conversation, though spoken Sanskrit classes and youth camps are becoming more widespread. It is mainly used in rituals and ceremonies or as part of daily prayers in Hinduism. Tamil is spoken by 66 million people around the world, most of them in South India and Northern Sri Lanka.

In all, there are 24 languages which are spoken by a million or more persons, in addition to the thousands of dialects.

Alphabets of Indian Languages

Indian languages have corresponding distinct alphabets. The two major families are those of the Dravidian languages and those of the Indo-Aryan languages, the former largely confined to the north and the latter to the south. With the exception of Urdu the alphabets of all these languages are native to India. There are those scholars who believe the scripts of the Northern languages (like Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi and Punjabi) to be distant derivations of the Aramaic alphabet, though this is a disputed theory primarily because the number and grouping of sounds and letters are so radically different.

Phonetic Alphabet

A remarkable feature of the alphabets of India is the manner in which they are organised. It is organized according to phonetic principle, unlike the Roman alphabet, which has a random sequence of letters.

The classification is as follows

	voiceless consonants		voiced consonants		nasals
	un-aspirated	aspirated	un-aspirated	aspirated	
guttural	k	kh	g	gh	ng
palatal	ch	chh	j	jh	ny
retroflex	t	th	d	dh	nn
dental	t	th	d	dh	n
bilabial	p	ph	b	bh	m

vowel based	y	r	l	w

aspirations	s	sh	sh	h

This classification is observed in all the languages under discussion. Additionally each language has a few special letters signifying sounds specific to that language, as also a few symbols representing composite sounds.

Finally, the list of vowels is separately specified, as follows a, aa, i, ii, u, uu, e, ai, o, au, um, (a)h Additionally in Vedic Sanskrit, rr, rrr, lrr, lrrr Note that the list read as pairs represents shorter and

longer versions of same vowel. Here the first a is like u in bus. (a)h is special to Sanskritised words, occurring in word endings as in duhkh(a)h, meaning pain or suffering. It is impossible to say any of the consonants without the associated vowel and the default way of saying a consonant attaches the neutral a sound to it.

In languages of Eastern India like Bangla, Oriya and Assamese, a is spoken almost o.

The classification of these sounds is universal. Every language in India has a corresponding symbol, and also, with some modifications, the corresponding sound. In fact we may be tempted to think that all languages at least of the Indo-European family have the corresponding alphabets, give or take a few, and sometimes give or take a row or column.

For instance, English has t and d of the third row, but th and dh of fourth row. (In fact in English th spelt in all the articles and common nouns is actually the pronunciation of dh, the aspirated d).

In French on the other hand, third row is absent, but t and d of the fourth row are used. English does not have the th and dh of the third row.

For nasals, Sanskrit imposes considerable systematics. The above scheme records that the nasal occurring in conjunction with any given row has a sound characteristic that row. For instance the nasalisation occurring in the word "Ganga" is that of the first row, while the nasalisation occurring in the words "India" or "integral" are character- istically front palatals. Speakers of any language have to necessarily speak in this manner though they never realise it.

The classification of the "vowel generated" may seem rather curious. The belief here is that y sound arises from conjunction of ii with a, w sound arises from trying to say u (as in put) or uu in conjunction with a. Old Sanskrit of the Hindu Rig Veda has two more vowels, rr and lrr, as also their corresponding longer versions.

It is likely that the rr was guttural like the French r, more akin to a vowel than a consonant. The lrr remains a mystery for being classified a vowel. But this classification then explains r (as in run) and l (as in long) simply as conjunction of these vowels with the a sound.

The economy of this classification in the fact that effectively each of the five main rows is generated by one letter, the others are systmeatic modifications of the same. In modern Tamil, a great simplification of alphabet has been achieved by having only one symbol for each of the five rows, the specific hardening and aspiration understood from context while reading. Tamil script indeed spells *kathai* (story) and *gadhai* (weapon of Bhima) the same.

Urdu alphabet

Urdu is unique among Indian languages. It is derived from a proto-Hindi tongue known as *Khadi Boli*, whose vocabulary is Prakrit and Sanskrit-derived. Thus, most of Urdu's grammar is 'genetically' linked to that of older Prakrits. Much of Urdu's vocabulary (about 40%), on the other hand, derives its sources from Persian and Arabic. The word Urdu, in Turkish, means "camp", "tent", or "military encampment". Presumably these

cantonments were where Mughal armies, mostly Muslim speakers of Persian (and hence intimately aware of Arabic), and proto-Hindi-speaking natives, mostly Hindu, interacted, soon forming a new mixed language. For this reason, the Persian script, in turn derived from Arabic script, was adopted and molded to fit with the Indian sound-system. For this reason, while the Urdu language itself has (with the exception of four sounds) phonemes identical to that of Hindi, its script has no connection to native Indian alphabets.

Notes

LESSON 13
CULTURE, COMMUNICATION, AND CONFLICT

Contents

Introduction, Intercultural conflict, Orientations to Conflict, Conflict as oppurtunity, Conflict as Destructive, Interpersonal approach to conflict, Types of conflict, strategies and tactics, Gender and ethnicity, Interpretive and critical approaches and Managing conflicts.

Learning Objectives:

- To understand different intercultural conflicts.
- To study various approaches to intercultural conflict
- To learn to manage conflicts.

Introduction

Conflict, of course, is inevitable in all human social interactions. Conflicts occur at multiple levels - interpersonal, social, national, and international. Conflict need not be considered bad or something to avoid at all times; in fact, there are often reasons to treat conflict as an opportunity for growth and development.

Characteristics of Intercultural Conflict

As usual, Martin and Nakayama offer a number of dialectics with which to understand intercultural conflict. Intercultural conflict can be thought of as both individual and cultural. They can be viewed as personal and social. And the history/past-present/future dialectic can be enlightening. Ambiguity is typical in intercultural conflicts. Ambiguity tends to make people respond with a "default conflict style," which is often counter-productive. Obviously language issues raise further challenges. And different orientations to conflict management styles can complicate intercultural conflict.

Two Orientations to Conflict

Conflict as Opportunity

This perspective is common among interpersonal communication scholars. What is **Conflict**? a real or perceived **incompatibility** of goals, values, expectations, process, or outcomes between two or more **interdependent** individuals or groups. Conflict is portrayed as an opportunity to grow in relationships, and to establish or find healthier, stronger, and more satisfying relationships. Augsburger suggests that this perspective on conflict, shared by Western cultural groups, has four main assumptions:

1. Conflict is normal and useful.
2. All issues are subject to change through negotiation
3. Direct **confrontation** and conciliation are valued.
4. Conflict is a necessary renegotiation of contract, a release of tensions, and a renewal of relationships.

Benefits of working through conflicts include gaining new information about other people or groups, being cognizant of and defusing more serious conflicts, and increasing overall cohesiveness. Individuals should be encouraged to think of creative solutions to conflict resolution. The most desirable response, at least according to studies of interpersonal conflict, is to recognize and work through it in an open, productive manner. Relationship¼s without conflict are not necessarily better than relationships with conflict - in fact, quite the opposite. They can mean that partners are ignoring or avoiding the issues that need to be dealt with. Any good therapist will tell you that real conflicts will not go away through denial. They need to be resolved in one way or another eventually. Conflict can be understood as a renegotiation of contract and should be celebrated.

Conflict as Destructive

Many cultural groups view conflict as unproductive for relationships, and even actively destructive. Sometimes spiritual and/or cultural values dictate that conflict is dangerous or wrong. Augsburger predictably outlines four assumptions of this approach:

1. Conflict is a destructive disturbance of the peace
2. The social system should not be adjusted to the needs of its members: rather, its members need to adapt to the established values.
3. Confrontations are destructive and ineffective
4. Disputants should be disciplined.

The Amish, for example, see conflict not as an opportunity for personal growth, but rather as certain destruction to their community harmony. The reaction to conflict is often avoidance, because of the strong spiritual weight given the value of **pacifism** (this tends to be true even though a more thorough understanding of the Amish and their view of pacifism might distinguish between "violence" and "conflict.") Legal and personal confrontations tend to be avoided because the use of force is prohibited in the Amish value system. It is often preferable according to this viewpoint to lose face or money than to escalate a conflict. This is true both in terms of support for military confrontation as well as for personal and business relations.

Cultural groups that view conflict as destructive often avoid low-level conflict and may seek third party intervention from an **intermediary.** Intervention might be informal (as when a friend is asked to intervene) or formal (as when professional help is sought). Discipline is sometimes seen as a means for censuring conflict. This sends a message that conflict is wrong and should be avoided; it is seen as better to not "make waves." While this approach may sometimes seem like the path of least resistance, it rarely eliminates conflict, and can be a difficult and possibly risky orientation to interpersonal relationships. The "peacemaking" approach is one way of approaching interpersonal conflict which strongly values the other person and encourages his/her growth, attempts to de-escalate conflicts (or at least keep them from further escalation), or attempts to find creative negotiation to resolve conflicts when they do arise.

Ting-Toomey suggests that these two orientations are based on different cultural values to identity and face-saving. The conflict-as-opportunity orientation stems from a concern for saving individual dignity, while the conflict-as-destructive orientation stems from a higher value attributed to maintaining harmony in interpersonal relationships and saving the dignity of others.

The Interpersonal Approach to Conflict

Types of Conflict

Cole's study found that Japanese students use most of the same categories of conflict as those identified in the U.S.:

1. **Affective Conflict** (when emotions seem incompatible)
2. **Conflict of Interest** (seemingly incompatible preferences for goals or plans)
3. **Value Conflict** (when different ideologies seem incompatible)
4. **Cognitive Conflict** (thought processes or perceptions seem incongruent)
5. **Goal Conflict** (people disagree about preferred end state)

Strategies and Tactics

Cultural background may influence the way people deal with conflicts. There are at least five styles of **conflict management**.

1. **Dominating Style** (win-lose; reflects high concern for self and low concern for others; uses forcing behaviors to win.)
2. **Integrating Style** (high concern for both self and others reflected in an open and direct exchange of information aimed at reaching a solution acceptable to both parties; seen as most effective for most conflicts, but requires the most time and energy).
3. **Compromising Style** (reflects moderate degree of concern for self and others; involves sharing and exchanging information; valuing a kind of "fairness" whereby both parties give up something to find a mutually acceptable decision. may require less time and energy than the integrating style, but what is acceptable to both may satisfy neither.)
4. **Obliging Style** (one party plays down the differences that separate the two parties while emphasizing the commonalities.)
5. **Avoiding Style** (reflects low concern for self and others in U.S. cultural contexts, but in some other contexts this is viewed as an appropriate style that enhances harmony of relationships.)

Gender & Ethnicity

Sometimes the clash of communication styles between men and women seem cross-cultural (a well known book title comparing men and women to aliens plays on this idea). Major differences that have been observed between the sexes as far as conflict management styles go include:

1. how they show support
2. how they talk about difficulties
3. how they tell stories
4. how they talk about relationships

The relation between ethnicity, gender, and conflict is more complex. Studies suggest contradictory evidence for how men and women from different ethnic groups deal with conflicts. Martin and Nakayama point out that different conflict management styles do exist, but that it is probably rude to assume that a person will behave in a particular manner due to his/her ethnicity and/or gender.

Value Difference & Conflict Style

Contrasting value differences, such as individualism and collectivism, may influence communication patterns during conflict. Studies suggest people from individualistic cultural backgrounds are more concerned about their own self-esteem, more direct, more controlling, confrontational, and solution-oriented. People from more collectivist societies tend to be more concerned with preserving group harmony and saving the dignity of others. Thus their communication style may be less direct, and they may choose avoiding or obliging conflict management styles.

Interpretive and Critical Approaches

These approaches look at conflict in a more complicated manner, underlining the social and cultural aspects of conflict. Conflict is seen as rooted in cultural differences in the context of social, economic, and historical conflict.

Social conflict may arise from unequal or unjust social relationships between groups. These conflicts may be motivated by the desire for social change; such as in **social movements**. These movements might use confrontational communication methods to highlight systematic injustices. Social movements see confrontation as an opportunity for social change. Violence or nonviolence may characterize the confrontational style. Social movements highlight issues related to intercultural interaction.

Economic Contexts can also underlie intercultural conflicts. These are often expressed through cultural differences and blaming. Kivel suggests that blaming minorities (historically immigrants, black Americans, Jews in Germany, for example) for economic problems usually diverts social attention away from the decision makers who are really responsible for the problems. Prejudice and stereotyping that lead to conflict are often due to perceived economic threat and competition. This is an important context for understanding intercultural conflict.

Historical and political contexts are also sources of conflict. Many international conflicts have centered around border disputes, for example. Historical reasons for conflicts can help us understand the claims of both sides. (For example, in the Gulf War, most Americans had no idea that the border dispute between Iraq and Kuwait long predated 1990). Identification with a particular historical group can lead to future conflicts fueled by historical antagonism (e.g. Arab-Jew; Serb-Kosovar). When conflict occurs, historical context may be illuminating.

Managing Conflict

Productive vs. Destructive Conflict

Augsburger gives us yet another list of four items: characteristics of productive conflict which are different from destructive conflict.

1. individuals narrow the conflict in terms of definition, focus, and issues

2. individuals limit conflict to the original issue

3. individuals direct the conflict toward cooperative problem solving

4. individuals trust leadership that stresses mutually satisfactory outcomes.

Competition vs. Cooperation

Competitive relational atmospheres produce coercion, deception, and poor communication, whereas cooperative atmospheres promote perceived similarity, trust, flexibility, and open communication. The key is that the atmosphere must be introduced in the beginning stages of relationships or group interaction because once a relationship starts out competitively it is difficult to make it cooperative. Exploration helps in this, and blaming must be suspended. If parties are all committed to this process, they will share joint ownership in the solution, which may be innovative or interesting.

Dealing with Conflict

The authors suggest the following: look at conflict dialectically, step back and show self restraint when appropriate; though sometimes it is better to be assertive and show strong emotion. Stay centered, do not polarize, maintain contact, recognize the existence of different management styles; identify your preferred style; be creative; recognize the importance of cultural context, and be willing to forgive.

Mediation

When individuals cannot work through conflict on their own, they can hire someone to do it for them (or have one imposed by legal means). In the U.S., this often means a lawyer, usually one who is likely to ignore cultural variations. Augsburger suggests that culturally sensitive mediators engage in conflict **transformation** rather than conflict resolution or conflict management. Conflict transformers help disputants think in new ways about the conflict, but this requires a commitment by both parties to regard each other with good will and mutual respect. Traditional societies may use mediation based on nondirect means. Mediation is advantageous because the disputants are actively involved and in practice tend to buy into the resolution of conflict. It is also more creative and integrative, and can be a lot cheaper than filing or being the object of a lawsuit.

Notes

LESSON 14
MASCULINITY AND FEMINITY

Contents
Cross cultural Gender Development, gender bias and language.

Learning Objectives:
- To understand gender biases in different cultures.
- To study various approaches to intercultural conflict
- To learn to manage conflicts.

Cross-cultural Gender Development

I. Gender versus Anatomy

A. Gender is the social script that accompanies identification with a determination of your sexual status (i.e. Male or female).

1. Or sex is the biological difference (maleness and femaleness) (genitalia), and gender is learned patterns of behavior that we call masculine and feminine.

B. As we have discussed, the society determines what it means to be "masculine" and what it means to be "feminine" - - and Margaret Mead's Classic study of tribes around New Guinea showed how variable this can be (some are the reverse of ours).

1. there is a Chinese expression:

   "***I do not know the face of Mount Lu Simply because I'm standing on top of it***"

   a. cannot easily see your own culture being "on top of it" - there must be some movement from it to see it.

C. In Asia, not only are these gender roles different from ours, they have also been changing very rapidly in the last few decades and therefore provide us with a fascinating look at Gender roles.

II. Traditional Asian Gender Roles

A. In the article, "The Family", Chueh-hein was described as: "the eldest son of the eldest son and for that reason his destiny was fixed from the moment he came into the world" (Jin, 326).

B. In China

1. Philosophical differences:

a. before we discuss differences etc., we must come closer to understand their different way of seeing their "worlds".

b. Chinese overriding concern has always been the establishment of harmonious relationships with others. Their "philosophic thinking" is always concrete, this worldly and above all, pragmatic " (Hall and Ames, From Africa to Zen.)

c. Chinese - the family was the model of all types of relationships, including between ruler and subject - - there was no separate public sphere.

1. Quoting Ames/Hall:

" China remains a culture grounded filiality and the model of the family that cultivates filial dependency. Individualism is a signal of selfishness and license."

2. A daughter cannot pass on the family name - - and could not be highly regarded by a traditionally agricultural society.

a. an example of this would be how her ancestor tablet would be made of flimsy paper and placed under a door rather than engraved in wood and on an alter or ancestor shelf, like her brother's would have been. (Olson, 1995 paper for East-West Center),

b. in order for her to acquire a place for her ancestor shelf, **she must be married**.

   1, And, when she married, she also had to live with her husband's family (patrilocal).

3. a Chinese girl's role was to be "pleasing to the eye" (Yanfen, 193).

   a. in the old days, prior to this century, this meant to have "**bound feet**" "**bound feet**":

1. in "**Wild Swans**", a highly recommended book on 3 generations of Chinese women in the CHANG family, the grandmother had bound feet. The ideal was to have them about 4 inches or less in length, and one did this by turning up the front toes in the direction of the arch, then taking a stone and breaking the bones of the feet and binding them. It was an extremely painful process and made the women barely able to walk.

4. In traditional China, and still somewhat today, the **family takes *precedence***.

a. "Chinese tradition made it virtually impossible to say no to a relation. The obligation to one's family took precedence over one's own moral judgement." (Wild Swans, 99).

5. Before you see their idea of gender roles only in the negative, Dr. Cyndy Ning (East-West Center presentation Aug. 8, 1995) says that it is some ways **easier for women in Chinese society**.

a. this is because in West, we have mutually exclusive categories for men and women, but for China, they have the concept of the ***Yin/Yang***, which both males and females have **BOTH** - - only that one is on the *"ascendancy."*

C. **In Japan**:

1. Japanese abhor excess; they admire restraint.

2. Qualities admired:

   Irregularity (not smooth, same pattern)

   Impermanence, Perishability

   changing seasons

   - - temples built to be replaced every 20 years (some).

— Buddhist truth " People suffer because they try to hold on to things but cannot"

Simplicity

Austerity

Naturalness (love nature, seen as good)

Shinto — gods in Nature.

Mysteriousness

Tranquillity

Good manners - - similar as moral values

3. Zen Buddhism has important role in Tea Ceremony and in culture of Japan. (Varley, lecture (above) East-West Center July 27, 1995).

4. Women's Role - - Predominantly mother:

a. Japanese women did, and still do, give children a lot of attention - - also tend to sleep with them for years - - attending to their needs, making infancy carefree.

5. Women under the rule of mother-in-law:

a. In the wedding ceremony, the bride exchanged cups of sake with bridegroom's parents before the bridegroom. The wedding ceremony was thus an adoption ritual rather than a marriage contract between two individuals: the family first adopted a girl as a daughter-in-law and then married her to the successor of the house. (Chizuko, p. 132).

b. the first family law, established in feudal era, created a patriarchal and patrilineal family system throughout the nation, known today as the "ie" system (Ibid.)

c. but women have exclusive responsibility for the household - - even family finances. Chizuko 1. saying "Husbands are better healthy and absent".

6. women who did not marry and who lost their husbands were considered deviant and labeled as social anomalies. (Tamanoi, p 20)

7. women were to be "***ryosai kenbo***", which means "good wife, wise mother" (Uno,294).

a. role of wife to rear children to be loyal and obedient subjects.

8. 1898 Civil Code placed nearly all women under the authority of the male head of household. - - only under rare circumstances could a women live outside of male authority (Uno).

9. since women were not considered self-supporting, female employees did not necessarily receive a living wage.

III. Changes in Asian Gender Roles: China:

A. the Rise of Communism, which took over mainland China in 1949, was supposed to change the role of women and to free people from the "old"

1. **Mao ZeDong** (Mao Tse Tung) had a policy in the "Cultural Revolution" (where he was trying to regain control after losing it from several famines, caused by the "Great leap forward"), pushed for the eradication of the "four olds" - - - "old ideas, old culture, old customs, and ws284 old habits (Wild Swans, p 284).

a. "joining the Revolution" meant going through the 5 mountain passes, which meant adopting a completely new attitude to family, profession, love, life-style and manual labor.(WS - 141)

B. The role of women changed, supposedly making it much more egalitarian - - since all forms of the bourgeoisie were to be eradicated.

C. Mao's attempt to regain power by using the "Red Guard", turned people against party and against all authority, turning family member against family member. It had, and still has, severe consequences.

1. **Effect of Cultural Revolution: Devastating to Families**.

a. Anne Thurston (1993 "The Dragon Stirs") indicated that the game of getting rich is being played with such fanaticism not because people are confident about the future, but because they are so uncertain about it (p. 25)

1. China is in a state of disarray, the "old values have "crumbled.

2. "During the Cultural Revolution we saw our fathers either persecuting others or being persecuted themselves.. In both cases they were cowards (because) when they were persecuted, they did not fight back".

3. "We do not know how to love. We never had normal families or saw love between our parents."

4. Confucianism put family loyalty at the root of the human system, but the politics of class struggle pitted family member against family member.

D. Today in China, women are also making a move into the job market, but the government is still making it difficult to attain equality: "in 1984, an ordinance passed in Beijing (used to be called Peking) that prohibited work units from allowing women to hold jobs that involved the use of considerable effort or might be harmful to women's health.: (Loscocco,Karen and Xun Wang, 1992, in Sociology and Soc. Research, 76, 3, p. 121).

E. One-child per family policy does not apply to the 55 minority populations, according to Dr. Dru Gladney. China has begun to limit minority births as of 1993-4, but they are generally not bound to the the one-child per family (p. 188, China Briefing, 1994).

IV. Changes in Gender Roles: Japan.

A. Japan's New Adaptation - 1995

1. Business Week ((4-10-95) describes how Japan is having to adjust to cultural/religious differences as it moves into Asian manufacturing.

a. In Indonesia, Sanyo strike in 1994 after Sanyo refused to allow 33 of its female assembly-line workers to wear Muslim traditional dress (safety). After 4 months, Sanyo agreed to a compromise in which they could cover their arms and legs, as Muslim more's dictate,

B. **Parenting:**

1. interesting series of studies of family types and parenting conducted by Dr. Mary Martini, Univ. of Hawaii. In articles

written (1994-95) for Early Development and Parenting, she described differences in parenting, at the beach in Hawaii and at the dinner table.

a. Hawaii is a multi-ethnic area, with no clear majority (Anglos, in 1995, about 33%, Japanese about 23.3% and 12.5% are designated as "Native Hawaiians.

b. **Japanese-American parents focus, almost exclusively on their children (like in home videos).**

1. seem to meet children's needs before children seem to be aware of them.

2. Japanese emphasize ***interdependence.***

*3. **Try to soothe into a continuous state of calm.***

4. try to avoid confrontations and clashes of will. - - by saying "no" and forbidding to rediverting their attentions.

2. Anglo-Americans spend more time in solitary activities.

a. Anglo-Am. seem to go to the beach to relax as individuals.

b. children are reminded "parents have needs to"

3. **At home - dinner:**

a. Japanese are concerned about "belonging, dependency, one's proper place and reciprocity" (Martini quoting Lebra, p. 6)

b. in Caucasian meals at distinct events - - focused, while evening meals in the Japanese-American homes are less focused on formal discussion, and half watch television, play games, play with pets, listen to music. J-A are more relaxed.

C. Even though there are more Japanese women working, she takes working as part of her fulfillment of the role of mother - - justifying work "to fulfill family obligations" (Chizuko, p. 140).

1. the very **Equal Opportunity Law of 1986**

   forbids the discrimination in all phases of employment, but still exists while telling women they should be "Good wife and Wise Mother" - - - puts them into a real dilemma. (Tamanoi,28).

D. **Christmas Cakes and Wedding Cakes** (Brinton, 1992)

1. How are Japanese women like Christmas cakes? (ask class)

2. Japanese response: "Because they are popular and sell like hot cakes until 25 and after that you have a lot of trouble getting rid of them."

3. conclusion of Brinton in her study:

a. family plays a great mediation role between the individual woman and formal institutions in Japan.

b. a central role of education of women in contemporary Japan is preparation for family roles.

c. **most Japanese women quit their jobs (hired sometimes to give executives wives) when they get married, not to return until children leave home (unless for part-time work).**

d. **marriage is considered her lifetime employment.**

E. Japanese women have made some attempts at equity - - like the Japan's Women's Council.

1. 1970 - First manifesto on Women's Liberation.

2. **as of 1991 - Uno says: although there were ample signs that some women sought increased participation in the public world, there were also indications that many were reluctant to abandon their "difference" from men, especially as mothers**.

V. **Comparison of Gender Roles with USA and Changes**

B. America's ideas of gender roles were somewhat framed, during the 1950s and through the 1970s by the "cowboy" or

"John Wayne" image.

1. Not that it was all wrong, but we must learn the strengths and weaknesses of this and learn how to relate to the global, rather than isolationist mentality.

2. David McClain (Ph.D. - MIT) told a story of a friend, a Dick Halloran, who was renting a house from a Japanese landlord, and the roof was leaking. He called the landlord but it didn't get fixed and so the next month, he didn't send it in. His landlord called him and said "you didn't pay the rent" - - for which he replied "I'm sorry, I have been busy on a trip, I must have forgotten to do that. Oh, by the way, have you forgotten about the roof being fixed?" (and didn't pay his rent). Roof not fixed. Next month, rent not paid, the landlord called again. Landlord called again. Again the American, David Halloran, responded, "it must have been another trip that led me to forget. Oh, by the way, did you remember about fixing the roof. A couple of days later, the landlord had a crew out fixing the roof, upon which, a day later, he sent both months rent to the landlord.

Gender Bias in Language

Language is a very powerful element. It is the most common method of communication. Yet it is often misunderstood an misinterpreted, for language is a very complicated mechanism with a great deal of nuance. There are times when in conversation with another individual, that we must take into account the person's linguistic genealogy. There are people who use language that would be considered prejudicial or biased in use. But the question that is raised is in regard to language usage: is the language the cause of the bias or is it reflective of the preexisting bias that the user holds? There are those who believe that the language that we use in day-to-day conversation is biased in and of itself. They feel that the term *mailman*, for example, is one that excludes women mail carriers. Then there are those who feel that language is a reflection of the prejudices that people have within themselves. That is to say that the words that people choose to use in conversation denote the bias that they harbor within their own existence.

There are words in the English language that are existing or have existed (some of them have changed with the new wave of "political correctness" coming about) that have inherently been sexually biased against women. For example, the person

who investigates reported complaints (as from consumers or students), reports findings, and helps to achieve equitable settlements is *ombudsman* (Merriam Webster Dictionary) (Ombudsperson here at Indiana State University). This is an example of the gender bias that exists in the English language. The language is arranged so that men are identified with glorified and exalted positions, and women are identified with more service-oriented positions in which they are being dominated and instructed by men. So the language used to convey this type of male supremacy is generally reflecting the honored position of the male and the subservience of the female. Even in relationships, the male in the home is often referred to as the "man of the house," even if it is a 4-year-old-child. It is highly insulting to say that a 4-year-old male, based solely on his gender, is more qualified and capable of conducting the business and affairs of the home than his possibly well-educated, highly intellectual mother. There is a definite disparity in that situation.

In American culture, a woman is valued for the attractiveness of her body, while a man is valued for his physical strength and his accomplishments (50). Even in the example of word pairs the bias is evident. The masculine word is put before the feminine word. As in the examples of Mr. and Mrs., his and hers, boys and girls, men and women, kings and queens, brothers and sisters, guys and dolls and host and hostess (52). This shows that the semantic usage of many of the English words is also what contributes to the bias present in the English language.

Alleen Pace Nielsen notes that there are instances when women are seen as passive while men are active and bring things into being. She uses the example of the wedding ceremony. In the beginning of the ceremony, the father is asked who gives the bride away and he answers, "I do." The problem here is that it is at this point that Neilsen contends that the gender bias comes into play. The traditional concept of the bride as something to be handed from one man (the father) to another man (the husband-to-be) is perpetuated (52). Another example is in the instance of sexual relationships. The women become *brides* while men *wed* women. The man takes away a woman's virginity and a woman loses her virginity. This denotes her inability, apparently due to her gender, to hold on to something that is a part of her, and enforcing the man's ability and right to claim something that is not his.

To be a man, according to some linguistic differences, would be considered an honor. To be endowed by genetics with the encoding of a male would be as having been shown grace, unmerited favor. There are far greater positive connotations connected with being a man than with being a woman. Neilsen yields the example of "shrew" and "shrewd." The word shrew is taken from the name of a small be especially viscous animal, however in Neilsen's dictionary, a "shrew" was identified as an "ill-tempered, scolding woman." In the same light, the word shrewd comes from the same root; however, it was defined as "marked by clever discerning awareness." It was noted in her dictionary as a shrewd businessman" (52). It is also common-place not to scold little girls for being 'tomboys' but to scoff at little boys who play with dolls or ride girls bicycles.

In the conversations that come up between friends, you sometimes hear the words "babe," "broad," and "chick." These are words that are used in reference to or directed toward women. It is certainly the person's prerogative to use these words to reflect women, but why use them when there are so many more to choose from? Language is the most powerful tool of communication and the most effective tool of communication. It is also the most effective weapon of destruction. There are times when people use the language to validate whatever prejudices they may harbor. For years, Merriam-Webster Dictionary held as their primary definition for the word nigger something to the affect of " term used to refer to persons of darker skin." This proved to be true even after most other dictionaries changed the definition of *nigger* to mean an "ignorant or uninformed person." Blacks directly felt this. The fact this notable dictionary continued to use as their definition this stereotype validated to the rest of the English speaking world that this was an appropriate reference to make when talking to or about Blacks. Even today, Merriam-Webster continues to use this definition as well as another that says that *nigger* means "a black person," along with a definition that says a nigger is a "member of a group of socially disadvantaged persons." But even in that, one cannot ignore the underlying prejudicial tones of that definition.

Although there are biases that exist in the English language, there has been considerable change toward recognizing these biases and making the necessary changes formally so that they will be implemented socially. It is necessary for people to make the proper adjustments internally to use appropriate language to effectively include both genders. We qualify language. It is up to us to decide what we will allow to be used and made proper in the area of language.

Notes

LESSON 15
INDIVIDUALISM- COLLECTIVISM

Contents
The concept of individualism and collectivism, Individualism/collectivism-specialisation, standerdisation, formalisation, centralisation, Individualism v/s collectivism, predicters.

Learning Objectives:
- To understand the concept of individualism and collectivism.
- To understand the predicters of individualism and collectivism.
- To understand the influence of individualism and collectivism on culture.

Individualism- Collectivism
Value dimensions are a group of interrelated values that have a significant impact on all cultures. Hofstede (1980) has developed a taxonomy (a classification system) that identifies value dimensions, that are influenced and modified by culture like individualism-collectivism and power distance. In individualistic cultures, each individual is the most important part of the social structure, and each individual is valued for his/her unique persona. People are concerned with their own personal goals and may not possess great loyalty to groups.

In collective cultures, on the other hand, individuals are very loyal to all the groups they are part of, including the work place, the family, and the community. Within collectivism, people are concerned with the group's ideas and goals, and act in ways that fulfill the group's purposes rather than the individual's. Samovar et. al., (1997) note that while individualism and collectivism can be treated as separate dominant cultural patterns, and that it is helpful to do so, all people and cultures have both individual and collective dispositions.

Fundamental issue involved in "individualism versus collectivism" dimension is the relation between an individual and his/her fellow individuals. At one end of the scale there are societies in which the ties between individuals are very loose and everybody is suppose to look after his/her own selfinterest and maybe the interest of his/her immediate family. At the other end of scale there are societies in which the ties between individuals are tight.

Individualism/collectivism - specialization.
High individualism is positively related to independence and power seeking. High independence is connected with high individual responsibility. High individualism also means focusing on personal goals and this leads to competitiveness. High individualism expresses high diversity. High diversity as well as high competitiveness positively influences specialization. But on the other hand high power seeking is against sharing power of decision making and, if specialization ("the division of labor within the organization, the distribution of official duties" - decision making too?) means delegation of decision making power, then specialization is reversely related to individualism.

All above considerations show that there is no simple answer on relation between these two dimensions; high individualism can cause high specialization as well as it can be an obstacle.

Similar considerations can be done for collectivism and specialization. Because collectivism is considered to be in opposition with individualism, it can be expected that simple answer concerned the relationship between these two dimensions does not exists, i.e. high collectivism can cause high, as well as low, specialization within the organization. In my opinion, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

a. High individualism tends to cause high specialization.

b. High collectivism tends to cause low specialization.

Individualism/collectivism - standardization.
Individualism would probably influence standardization the same way as it influences specialization. Standardization was defined as any procedure that occurs regularly, is legitimatized by the organization, has rules that cover circumstances, and applies invariably. Procedures occur in the organization if it is such a need. Needs for procedures grow when specialization, i.e. the division of labor within the organization grows. It suggests that these two variables, specialization and standardization are not independent, or even if they are independent, they are positively correlated and high standardization within the organization cannot exist without specialization.

Does collectivism influence standardization? High collectivism calls out for individual sacrifice which is against individual achievements. Low individual achievements do not require any procedures which can serve as evaluation criteria. It seems that high collectivism would cause low standardization (inverse relationship). High collectivism also means high group responsibility, which in turn does not require specialization on narrow task and accompanying procedures (standardization). Once again, high collectivism should be assisted by low standardization (inverse relationship). On the other hand, high collectivism can be followed by high routine task. Because high routine task means high standardization then if high collectivism is followed by high routine task, it leads to high standardization (positive relationship).

Collectivism can be identified rather with the group task then with the individual task, and because the group task does not lead to standardization high collectivism should be followed by low standardization (inverse relationship). Again, we can see that there is no simple answer to the question "how collectivism influences standardization"; it can cause high as well as low standardization. The hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

Individualism/collectivism influence level of standardization but it must be some other factors which serve as catalysts.

Individualism/collectivism - formalization.

Formalization is the extend to which rules, procedures, instructions, and communications are written. First of all we should notice that high standardization is required to achieve high formalization; if rules or procedures do not exist there is nothing to write. Than we can say that high formalization means high standardization but it does not mean that high standardization is followed by high formalization. If we assume that high individualism causes high specialization and standardization than we can expect high formalization provided there are no any other factors influencing formalization. The assumption that standardization is the only factor influencing formalization is wrong. Language, specially written language, can influence the level of formalization. In Japan it is very complicated to express what you want by writing. You can make several interpretations of what is written down. You can pronounce it in several different ways and what is more important, the meaning can change completely.

Gipsy nation is another example of the nation that uses only spoken language. Does it mean that language and its simplicity or complexities are the factors that should not be omitted while considering formalization?

The above shows that interdependence between individualism/collectivism and formalization is not simple. First, because we are not able to identify its (individualism's) influence on specialization and standardization, and second, because individualism is one of many factors that influence formalization and individualism's influence could be meaningless.

High individualism can lead to high formalization provided there are no factors that serve as constrains or strong obstacle.

Individualism/collectivism - centralization.

Individualism means strong independence and individual responsibility. Individualism is characterized by strong personal goals and competitiveness. Independence seeks for power. In an environment with a strong power desire, competitiveness plays important role. High independence and competitiveness ask for decision making power. Taking into account what is said above we can state that

The probability of highly centralized organization within the society with strong individualism is very low.

Individualism vs. Collectivism

It has been suggested that individualism-collectivism is the major dimension of cultural variability identified by theorists across disciplines (Hofstede, 1980).

Individualistic cultures emphasize the goals of individuals rather than group concerns and needs. Thus, the emphasis in individualistic cultures is on a person's initiative and achievement (Tomkins, 1984). Individualistic cultures rely on factual information for decision-making as opposed to seeking group harmony and consensus (Gudykunst et al., 1985). People in individualistic cultures depend more on articulation of words for expression (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984).

Collectivist cultures are more nonverbal and communicate through contextual and implicit codes that are based on culturally defined social rules and expectations (Gudykunst & Kim. 1984).

These communication preferences have implications for advertisers. In highly individualistic cultures, for example, it may be more effective to present very specific facts that can assist individuals in their decision-making. In collectivistic cultures, advertisers may benefit from image-based or symbolic appeals that point out the positive social consequences of a particular purchase.

Individualism-Collectivism describes the degree to which a culture relies on and has allegiance to the self or the group.

Predictors:

- **Economic development**. Wealthy cultures tend to be individualistic, whereas poor cultures tend to be collectivistic.
- **Climate**. Cultures in colder climate tend to be individualistic, whereas cultures in warmer climates tend to be collectivistic.

Note: Hofstede found a strong negative correlation between a culture's scores on the power distance index and its scores on the individualism-collectivism index. High PDI cultures tend to be collectivistic, whereas low PDI cultures tend to be individualistic.

Consequences: Collectivistic cultures tend to be group-oriented, impose a large psychological distance between ingroup and outgroup members and ingroup members are expected to have unquestioning loyalty to their group. In a conflict situation, members of the collectivistic cultures are likely to use avoidance, intermediaries, or other face-saving techniques. Conversely, people in the individualistic cultures do not perceive a large psychological distance between ingroup and outgroup members. They value self-expression, see speaking out as a means of resolving problems, and are likely to use confrontational strategies when dealing with interpersonal problems.

Notes

LESSON 16
ETHNOCENTRISM

Contents

What is Ethnocentrism? Problem with ethnocentrism, Interethnic encounters, Cross-cultural understanding milestones, Coping with culture shock.

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the concept of ethnocentrism.
- To understand the concept of Interethnic encounters.

Ethnocentrism

What is it? Why are people ethnocentric? What is the problem? What can we do about it?

A snowmobile race sponsored by the Inuit (Eskimo) community council in a village on the Hudson's Bay in the Canadian Arctic, Christmas 1969. Inuit friends urged me to join in a snowshoe race across the river ice, but, knowing I was inexperienced at this, I was reluctant to participate. They persisted, however, and, recognizing that they wanted me to be involved, I agreed. Of course, I was the last one to return, way behind everyone else in the race. I was very embarrassed, but to my surprise, people came up to me and congratulated me, saying, "You really tried!" A month later, when I was on a caribou hunting trip with three Inuit men in a remote area, we got trapped by a winter storm and had to go several days without food. This was when I learned that trying was much more important than winning. While the Inuit like to win, their greater value on trying has a distinct adaptive function. One way anthropologists learn about other cultures is "participant observation," being involved in their daily life, watching what they do, and doing what they do. We seek to learn the meanings and (more important) the functions of their ways. We Are also involved in "cross-cultural comparison," comparing their life experiences with other groups (mostly our own). In the case of the snowshoe race, I learned about Inuit values on trying, but I also learned about American values on competition and winning.

"Ethnocentrism" is a commonly used word in circles where ethnicity, inter-ethnic relations, and similar social issues are of concern. The usual definition of the term is "thinking one's own group's ways are superior to others" or "judging other groups as inferior to one's own". "Ethnic" refers to *cultural heritage*, and "centrism" refers to the central starting point... so "ethnocentrism" basically refers to judging other groups from our own cultural point of view. But even this does not address the underlying issue of *why* people do this. Most people, thinking of the shallow definition, believe that they are not ethnocentric, but are rather "open minded" and "tolerant." However, as explained below, *everyone* is ethnocentric, and there is no way *not* to be ethnocentric... it cannot be avoided, nor can it be willed away by a positive or well-meaning attitude.

To address the deeper issues involved in ethnocentrism calls for a more explicit definition. In this sense, **ethnocentrism** can be defined as: **making false assumptions about others' ways based on our own limited experience**. The key word is *assumptions*, because we are not even aware that we are being ethnocentric... we don't understand that we don't understand.

One example of ethnocentrism is seen in the above comments on the Inuit snowshoe race. I assumed that I had "lost" the race, but it turns out the Inuit saw the same situation very differently than I did. Westerners have a binary conflict view of life (right *or* wrong, liberal *versus* conservative, etc.), and I had imposed my "win *or* lose" perspective of life on the situation. As a result, I did not understand how *they* experience life, that trying is a basic element of life. This did not necessarily involve thinking that my ways were superior, but rather that I *assumed* my experience was operational in another group's circumstances.

Another example illustrates how basic ethnocentrism is. If we go to a store and ask for a green coat and the sales clerk gives us a blue one, we would think the person was color blind at the best or stupid at the worst. However, "colors" are not so simple. The Inuit lump shades of what AngloAmericans call "blue" and "green" into one color category, *tungortuk*, which can only be translated as "bluegreen." Does this mean that they cannot see the difference? Just as we can distinguish between different shades (such as "sky blue" and "navy blue," and "kelly green" and "forest green"), so can the Inuit. If they want to refer to what we would call "green," they would say *tungUYortuk*, which can be translated something like "that bluegreen that looks like the color of a [conifer] tree." The point is that something so "simple" as colors has very different meanings to us and to the Inuit. How could an Inuk "feel blue"? Colors, after all, are only different wavelengths of light, and the rainbow can be divided in many different ways.

There are many, many examples of such differences in meanings that make life experience so unique for all the human groups around the world. For example, English has tenses built into our verb forms, so we automatically think in terms of time

(being "punctual," "time is money," "make the time," etc.). But Algonquian Indian languages do not have tenses (not that they cannot express time if they wish), but rather have "animate" and "inanimate" verb forms, so they automatically think in terms of whether things around them have a life essence or not. So when Chippewa Indians do not show up for a medical appointment, Anglo health care workers may explain this as being "present oriented," since we normally cannot think except in terms of time frames. But this is the essence of ethnocentrism, since we may be imposing a time frame where none exists.

The assumptions we make about others' experience can involve false negative judgements, reflected in the common definition of ethnocentrism. For example, Anglos may observe Cree Indians sitting around a camp not doing obvious work that is needed and see Crees as "lazy". Westerners generally value "being busy" (industriousness), and so may not appreciate the Cree capacity to relax and not be compelled to pursue some activities of a temporary nature... nor realize how much effort is put into other activities like hunting.

Assumptions can also reflect false positive attitudes about others' ways. For example, we in urban industrial society frequently think of Cree Indians as being "free of the stresses of modern society," but this view fails to recognize that there are many stresses in their way of life, including the threat of starvation if injured while checking a trap line a hundred miles from base camp or when game cycles hit low ebbs. False positive assumptions are just as misleading as false negative assumptions.

Examples abound in our local communities, as well as around the world. *When you think about your own experience with people from other ethnic groups and with attitudes expressed about relations with other countries, what examples come to your mind where you may have imposed your own views and feelings about life on their experience?*

Everybody is ethnocentric, as all of us around the world assume things about other people's ways. The question is **why** are we ethnocentric?

The definition given above emphasizes that we make false assumptions *based on our own limited experience*. This is all we know... what we have already experienced is the basis for our "reality", what we *expect*. It is normal to assume it is the "natural" basis of reality... because our own ways work for us. Our perceptions of colors, our time frames, our values on industriousness, our social roles, our beliefs about Life and the Universe, and all our other ways help us organize life experience and provide important meanings and functions as we move through daily and life span activities. Therefore, our limited experiences we have already had are the basis for interpreting new experiences, in this case, others' behavior. Since we have not experienced everything they have experienced, how can we **not** be ethnocentric?

So what is the problem with ethnocentrism?

Ethnocentrism leads to **mis**understanding others. We falsely distort what is meaningful and functional to other peoples through our own tinted glasses. We see their ways in terms of

our life experience, not *their* context. We do not understand that their ways have their own meanings and functions in life, just as our ways have for us.

At the heart of this is that *we do not understand that we do not understand*! So we aren't aware that we can develop more valid understandings about how they experience life.

At the best, we simply continue in our unawareness. Yet this can have consequences within our own society and in international relations. We may be well meaning in interethnic relations, for example, but can unintentionally offend others, generate ill feelings, and even set up situations that harm others. For example, it is easy *not* to see the life concerns of others (particularly minorities and the disadvantaged) or conversely to pity them for their inabilities to deal with life situations (like poverty or high crime rates). How do *we* feel when someone doesn't recognize our concerns, or feels sorry for us because we can't "just let go" of a stressful situation?

A lack of understanding can also inhibit constructive resolutions when we face conflicts between social groups. It is easy to assume that others "should" have certain perspectives or values. How often are *we* prone to address conflicts when others tell us how we should think and feel?

Ethnocentrism is also evident in international relations, creating conflicts and inhibiting resolution of conflicts. For example, how might our Western binary conflict view of life (A *versus* B) influence our interpretation of another group's intents when they express a different position on an issue? Is it just another" viewpoint, or is it "against" our viewpoint? If we don't "win" the conflict, will we "lose"? We may have positive intentions (from our viewpoint) in "helping" other groups deal with certain "problems," but how do *they* see the problem and what kind of solution do *they* want? Some peoples around the world see Americans as very competitive and violent people, as evidenced by our business practices, Hollywood movies, and events like the Columbine High School massacre. How much does this describe *your* personal experience? How do you think this perception might influence their assumptions about our intents in relations with their societies? An ultimate case of such misunderstandings is warfare, where many people are killed, maimed for life, have their families, subsistence, health, and way of life disrupted, sometimes forever.

There are extreme forms of ethnocentrism that pose serious social problems, of course, such as racism, colonialism, and ethnic cleansing. These views are generally condemned by the world community, but we regularly see such cases in the news.

Can better understandings of others' life experience avoid conflicts that drain the resources and well-being of all parties, and instead promote cooperative relations between peoples to the mutual advantage of all?

So here we have a **paradox**: we falsely assume because we are not even aware we are assuming... and furthermore it is the normal thing to do. We cannot *not* be ethnocentric, and we cannot will it away or make ourselves have a completely open attitude. Is it ever possible *not* to be ethnocentric?

So what can we do about ethnocentrism?

Addressing ethnocentrism is not a matter of trying *not* to be ethnocentric. This is an impossible task, since we will never experience every life situation of everyone around the world. We will always have our assumptions about life based on our existing limited experience. So a much more productive approach is to catch ourselves when we are being ethnocentric and to control for this bias as we seek to develop better understandings.

In science, grounded understandings are not developed from the absence of biases, but rather the recognition and *control* of biases. The scientific process helps us have a clearer view of what we *do* understand in the context of what we do *not* understand. Ethnocentrism is a bias that keeps us from such understand-ings of other people's life experience, but it *is* possible to recognize this bias and control for it... so that we can go on to develop more valid and balanced understandings. This calls for us to develop our learning skills, but it *can* be done. Many of us know people who have moved to other societies and have learned to become functional in their new social settings, evidence that it is possible to develop more grounded under-standings. Anthropologists, of course, have worked on systematically developing these skills for well over a century.

- The first step in developing more balanced understandings is to **recognize** that we do *not* understand, that we are falsely assuming something that is not the case and is out of context. How can we consciously become aware of something that is happening subconsciously? In this case, how *can* we know when we are being biased?

  One of the most effective means for recognizing that ethnocentrism is inhibiting our understandings is to watch for **reactions**. Reactions tell us that we *are* assuming something and that our assumptions are *not* working.

  We can always observe our *own* reactions. When we have negative reactions towards others (such as thinking "that doesn't make sense" or "that's wrong," or feeling offended or confused, etc.), these are clues that our assumptions are not working in the situation. For example, we may feel Cree Indians are "unfriendly" because they are often nonexpressive in social situations, but recognizing our reaction can provide an opportunity to better understand Cree values on self-control which can be adaptive when a small family group has to be self-sufficient in a winter camp far from others' help. Observing our positive reactions towards others (such as thinking "that's really nice" or "that's wonderful," or feeling pleased or satisfied) can also help us to be aware that we are not understanding. For example, Anglos frequently think the Inuit are "happy" and "friendly" because they smile a lot in social situations, but recognizing this reaction can provide an opportunity to better understand Inuit social values which are adaptive where subsistence is based on cooperative hunting.

  We can also observe *their* reactions. If we blissfully go on in our misconceptions but they don't respond the way we would, this is also an important clue that our assumptions are not working in the situation. Again, their reactions may be both positive and negative. For example, if a Cree shows gratification when we give him a gift, recognizing his reaction can provide an opportunity to better understand adaptive Cree values on economic leveling (rather than assuming that our "generosity" has been duly recognized). Also, if an Inuk responds to our inquiry about how to keep our shoulders warm while spending weeks on a mid-winter hunting trip with a surprised "You mean you want to be warm all over?", recognizing his reaction can provide an opportunity to better understand Inuit concepts of self and the environment (rather than providing us with the desired "answer" to maintaining our own concept of bodily comfort).

  In general, reactions tell us first about **us**. Why do we think people should be "friendly"? should appreciate material goods? should feel warm all over? When we refer to others as "primitive" or "superstitious," what are we saying about our own premises that we value in life? When we idealize others as being "simple" or "not wasting anything," what are we saying about the problems we perceive in our own way of life? When others consider us as "technologically skilled" or "selfish," what does this say about us that we may never have realized? Cross-cultural encounters revealing more about our own perspectives, values, and emotional investments than about others, and so provide us unique opportunities to learn more about *ourselves*.

- Once we realize that we are *not* understanding, we are now in a better position to seek more valid and balanced understandings.

  The first step involves an attitude: we are the learners. In this process, it is important to remember that *we are the learners*. We do *not* know, and that is why we are seeking to develop better understandings. They are the ones who *do* know what their life experience is like... we are asking them to *help us understand* better. The best method is to ask for their explanations about what they do or say. ("Can you help me understand *X* better") In particular, avoid posing questions that impose our own realities and bound their realities. ("Why do you use 'green'?") Also, we should give people an out, and respect their right to not share with us (just as we may not want to share things that are 'private' or 'sacred'). If we appreciate that their life experience can be as valid for them as ours is for us, acknowledge that we may be misunderstanding, and ask them to help us understand, most people are more than willing to help us understand better. (This is a lesson I learned primarily from the Inuit, and many others have contributed to it since.)

  Next, we have to ask two sets of **questions** (first to ourselves) to provide more insights into life experience in *their* context:

(1)   *What are their **meanings** about the behavior and situation?* (In anthropological terms, what is their emic experience?) This includes both their cognitive *views* and their emotional *feelings*. This essentially involves inquiring about *their* perspectives on their own life experience, including specific cognitive views about colors and the structure of the

Universe, feelings about social relationships and proper behavior, and every other area of cultural life. Also, observing what they are *not* ready to talk about can open new insights about their introspection and sense of self or about why they consider certain rituals to be secret. We need to keep in mind that there are many meanings of any given behavior and that these are often very deep in people's subconscious and are often difficult to put into words. For instance, how would we explain to someone from another culture what "freedom" means to Americans? Usually it is these differences in meanings that are the basis of ethnocentrism.

(2) *What are the adaptive* **functions** *of the behavior and situation?* (In anthropological terms, what is their etic experience?) How does this help the group adapt to life challenges (ecologically, biologically, economically, socially, psychologically, etc.)? This is the question which is usually *not* asked on a common level, yet is the one that can provide the greatest insights and understandings. For example, some people may accept that a group's belief that witchcraft causes illness is meaningful to them (rather than simply writing this off as "superstitious"). But they may fail to consider that such beliefs often have important *functions* in these groups. For example, the character and behavior of "witches" defines norms of socially unacceptable and disruptive deviancy, and in contrast also defines "good" behavioral standards for the group. This also serves as a mechanism of social control, because people are afraid of being accused of witchcraft if they step out of accepted boundaries of behavior. If we did not ask about the functions of beliefs in witchcraft, we would never develop insights like understanding that such views can help promote constructive behavior that helps the whole group adapt. A particular meaning may have an important function in another area of life, such as a religious belief in witchcraft having an important social function. We also need to keep in mind that there are many functions of any given cultural practice, including ecological, biological, economic, social, and psychological functions that help a group adapt to life challenges. "What are the adaptive functions?" is the question that is generally *not* asked, but which usually leads to the greatest **insights** into others' cultural system.

Asking about the meanings and functions of behavior is not a matter of "insiders" or "outsiders," however. We can analyze the meanings of our own behavior, which are highly complex and normally seated deeply in our subconscious, as with our idea of "freedom." We can also analyze the functions of our own behavior. For example, why is "freedom" such an important American value? how does it help us adapt? Sometimes outsiders can see things we don't usually see because they are contrasting our behavior with others' ways, but being an insider does not preclude members of any group from understanding their own behavior.

When we start asking about how others' ways are **meaningful** and **functional** to its participants, we come to realize that there are many valid ways in which human beings can experience life.

Perhaps no one can ever have complete understanding of another people, without fully experiencing everything they experience. However, this does not mean we cannot develop a *functional* understanding, to interact successfully with others. The many immigrants who have become functional members of our society demonstrate this is possible, as well as anthropologists and others who have become functional members of other groups. One **goal** that is achievable, however, is to make sure that what we what we *do* understand is valid and balanced in the context of recognizing what we do *not* understand.

How can we develop these skills? Like other life skills, *practice* at every opportunity helps us develop our abilities to catch ourselves being ethnocentric and asking good questions to better understand others' cultural behavior.

How does all this concern the idea of relativism, a prominent value in anthropology?

"Relativism" usually means not judging others' ways and accepting them as equal to our own. This may be a positive value in terms of interethnic relations, though it is often unrealistic since we cannot avoid ethnocentrism. We do not necessarily have to agree with others' ways, and we have the right to our own ways, since they provide important meanings and adaptive functions for us.

The real issue of relativism, I believe, is at *what point is one group justified in intervening in the behavior of another group?* There are areas where most people around the world believe there is little justification, such as how an ethnic group defines a desirable marriage partner. There are also areas where most people believe there is great justification, as with genocide and atrocities that violate international principles of human rights. Also, there are areas where most people readily accept aid to meet catastrophic circumstances, like relief supplies for earthquake victims.

There is a wide gray area in between where different opinions abound, such as "free trade" which fosters both investment opportunities and child labor. Who is right in these circumstances? There are few absolute answers, but there are some guiding principles included in the international Declaration of Human Rights which can be applied in evaluating what to do. What are the community positions about the situation? Most groups have norms that are both meaningful and functional. If they promote well-being within and across groups, then we have to ask what right we have to intervene. If situations arise that jeopardize the adaptive balance within and across groups, there may be some room for addressing the situation, as long as it *includes* all the groups concerned and it is made clear whose well-being is being served on the part of all parties involved. As indicated, the *world* community has reached an international consensus about human rights and about world functioning and balances.

We need to be careful, however, in **how** to be involved. There are many examples of people using stated values to justify their own vested interests, as with efforts to "civilize" or "develop" other countries, which has promoted access to raw materials and new markets for their own industries. There are also many examples of people being sincerely well-meaning towards others (in terms of their own values) with dire unforeseen

consequences, such as introducing medical technologies which undermine local social structures and cohesiveness. Whose interests are being served the most? What is the overall impact on the group's adaptation?

Before we act, we need to evaluate several issues:

· *What is our basis for becoming involved?* What are our cultural views involved? our values? our vested interests? Even where "justice," "health," "standards of living," and other views are shared by others, they exist in different *contexts* of cultural meanings and functions. We are still acting from *our* values, and do we have the right to decide they are valid for *them*? Why do we want to "help"? We can be more effective in determining mutual solutions if we can control for our own life views, and recognize what *we* want to get out of the results.

· *What are their meanings and functions regarding the situation?* What do they want? What are the likely outcomes for them? What do they get out of the results? Where we have more valid understandings, we have a more sound basis for identifying the *common overlap areas* where effective agreements and solutions can be reached.

Self-determination is one of the most effective means of social change for all parties concerned. Who is in the best position for understanding what is best for them? We all make mistakes, but they are *our* mistakes and we have the opportunity to develop from them. If we decide *for* others, then they will never have the opportunity to test their own initiative in doing what is best for themselves, to develop their own judgements, to learn from their own mistakes. Also, it is when people are denied the legitimacy of their own life goals that they may turn to radical means outside accepted practice like terrorism. I believe our most effective role is to **support** them in achieving their own goals where these overlap ours.

In the long run, hasty "solutions" that impose one side's views about the situation rarely work. How many times have we enthusiastically acted with high hopes, only to realize later that there were unforeseen and unwanted consequences that we ourselves may have generated? The most effective resolutions are those that negotiate the common areas which allow each party validation of their own ways, where the solution is desired by each party, and, of course, where each party is really *able* to make a contribution.

Interethnic encounters, then, can be an opportunity.

One of Anthropology's greatest contributions is this concept of ethnocentrism and *how to recognize and control for it* so we can go on to develop more valid and balanced understandings of other cultural ways and of ourselves.

A standard scientific principle is that *diversity is adaptive.* The more different resources a group has, the more potentials it has for adapting to life challenges. We have come to realize this in ecodiversity, but perhaps we still have to realize this in terms of ethnic diversity. The more different ways of experiencing life available to a society, the more resources it has for meeting adaptive challenges. One of the United State's greatest strengths is its ethnic diversity. We have available within our society

adaptive resources from peoples all over the world, available to contribute to our continued adaptation.

When we encounter people from other ethnic backgrounds, we have an *opportunity* to learn **new ways** of seeing and experiencing life which we never knew existed. In a larger framework, we can learn the tremendous **potentials** humans have for being human. These potentials also exist for *us*, possibilities that we never knew we could be, such as looking at life in a complementary perspective instead of as an inherent conflict; and, on the negative side, possibilities that we want to be sure that we *not* foster, such as the brutality exhibited by average young American men as they massacred Vietnamese civilians at Mi Lai. We can also better understand **ourselves**, by contrasting our own ways with other life experiences and asking about our own meanings and functions.

When we go beyond ethnocentrism, there are whole new areas of understanding the possibilities in how all humans can experience life.

Ethnocentrism, coined by William Graham Sumner, is the viewpoint that one's ethnic group is the center of everything, against which all other groups are judged. Within culture, language, behaviour, customs, and religion can be a basis for ethnic distinctions, and sub-divisions.

In the modern world, however, the crossing of the lines between cultures, that at one time happened only occasionally, has become an everyday occurrence. Technological advances in communication have progressively overcome previous obstacles to communication - physical obstacles that once helped to keep ethnic distinctions distinct. Ethnic lines still exist, and co-exist, and cultures of the world often find that their central concern, that of maintaining an identity despite rapid transculturation, is still possible.

The reasons for maintaining an ethnicity are often personal, and relate to the cohesion of familiar personal and social elements - in other words, attachment or accustoment. We all are born into a human culture, and it is the culture that shapes our self-awareness and understanding of other individuals. It also reflects, depending on the cultural teaching, customs or patterns of behaviour in relating to other cultures. This behaviour can range from universal acceptance or feelings of inferiority compared with other cultures, to racism, which many consider an aspect of xenophobia.

Some examples of ethnocentric behaviours are represented by such social phenomena as economic isolationism, counter-cultures, anti-establishmentism, and widespread social patterns of interpersonal abusive behaviours as ostracization, prejudice, and discrimination.

Ethnocentrism leads us to make false assumptions about other peoples. We are ethnocentric when we use our cultural norms to make generalizations about other peoples' cultures and customs. Such generalizations — often made without a conscious awareness that we've used our culture as a universal yardstick — can be way off base.

Ethnocentrism also influences communication between human beings.

Ethnocentric thinking causes us to make wrong assumptions about other people because . . .

"They" may not be very good at what we are best at.

By evaluating "them" by what we are best at, we miss the many other aspects of life that they often handle more competently than we do.

Some very simple examples of ethnocentric thinking. . .

We often talk about British drivers driving "on the wrong side" of the road. Why not just say "opposite side" or even "left hand side"?

We talk about written Hebrew as reading "backwards." Why not just say "from right to left" or "in the opposite direction from English."

We encourage SNU students going on short-term missions to use the phrase "Oh, that's different" rather than more pejorative terms when encountering strange customs or foods.

Cross-cultural understanding milestones

"I'm normal; you're weird"

As globalization moves ahead, what can move us forward on the path toward cross-cultural understanding? To monitor their progress toward a destination, travelers in the U.S. often check the numbers on metal markers placed every mile along U.S. highways. For thousands of years, European travelers have depended on numbered "milestones" to mark progress toward their destination.

Cultural awareness is more than just realizing that another culture is different from ours. It is learning to value that other culture. So, how do we get to that point?

Here's some milestones usually encountered in the journey toward true cross-cultural understanding:

1. Point of departure: "There's no one else here"
- Mind-set: Blind monoculturalism [more info]

2. "Our way is the only right way."
- Mind-set: Ethnocentrism [more info]
- Different means deficient

3. "Wait a minute, there may be another way."
- Mind-set: Willingness to crack open the door
- Awareness creates some sensitivity to cultural lenses

4. "Oh, you mean there are reasons why people respond differently."
- Mind-set: Tolerance
- Discernment gives birth to understanding

5. "It's OK to be different."
- Mind-set: Favorable acceptance
- Respect for cultural differences

6. "Multi-cultural living can enhance our lives and even be fun."
- Mind-set: Appreciation and admiration
- Esteem

Destination: Embracing the joy of multiculturalism and cross-cultural understanding

To invite people to make the journey to cross-cultural understanding is not an invitation to an uncritical relativism. A superficial relativism trivializes differences and can even gloss over evil. For instance, an occasional misguided anthropologist has denounced attempts by others to get tribal groups to move away from cannibalism ("it is, after all *their* way")

As we consider whether to embark on this journey that will bridge cultural differences, we must not be deterred simply because some who have fervently preached "diversity" did so because they had hidden — and not so hidden — "agendas" to advance.

The road to cross-cultural understanding will not always be easy. There will be misunderstandings. There will be clashes of priorities and even deep differences of opinion. Those must not be allowed to lessen the delights awaiting us at the end of this path.

Coping with culture shock

Globalization: Survival skills for missionaries, foreign exchange students and others working to bridge cultural differences

This animated diagram illustrates two paths people take during the four phases of long-term cross-cultural encounters. The term "culture shock" was coined by Kalvero Oberg in a 1954 report published by Bobbs-Merrill.

The confusion and anxiety brought on by culture stress or shock may cause us to think, do or say things that are contrary to God's purpose.

INITIAL
ATTITUDES

For a non-animated version of this diagram, .

Symptoms of culture shock:

- Unwarranted criticism of the culture and people
- Heightened irritability
- Constant complaints about the climate
- Continual offering of excuses for staying indoors
- Utopian ideas concerning one's previous culture
- Continuous concern about the purity of water and food
- Fear of touching local people
- Refusal to learn the language
- Preoccupation about being robbed or cheated
- Pressing desire to talk with people who "really make sense."
- Preoccupation with returning home

Coping strategy for culture shock: Survival techniques

How can we cope with culture shock? Having some information about culture shock is a first important step. Then, to successfully cope, make sure your attitudes mirror those

suggested in green and red in the top half of the diagram. Follow these tips on surviving situations with unfamiliar verbal and non-verbal codes:1

Focus on what you can control

People in culture shock often feel out of control. So, don't worry about things you cannot change.

Don't invest major energy in minor problems

People make "mountains out of molehills" even more quickly in cross-cultural situations than they do in their own culture

Tackle major stressors head on

Don't avoid things

Ask for help

Create a wide support network as quickly as you can in your target culture

Write it down

Record your thoughts and frustrations in a journal. This will give you a healthy outlet for expressing your feelings.

Knowing how to survive culture shock or stress can be useful to missionaries as well as to aiding foreign students who come to our country to study.

Help from the Bible

Can Scripture help us with cross-cultural adjustment? Well, the book of Acts is a good place to start. Paul moves around the Mediterranean planting churches in different cultural contexts. To the Philippians he wrote: "I learned to be content whatever the circumstances." (Philippians 4:11). As Paul coped with various cultural issues, he was also dogged by Jewish Christians from Israel who tried to force Gentile converts to become Jewish.

Another possibility would be the story of Ruth. Here's a young woman who left her home country and culture and moved to Israel and wound up ultimately being in the list of Jesus' ancestors!

Other stories to look at include:

- Joseph: He wound up being forced as a slave into another country and culture. He kept his faith and lived in such a wise way that he rose to a position of power. (Genesis 37-50)

- Daniel: Living in Babylon during the exile period, he kept his faith while also being a person of influence in the Babylonian government.

- Abraham: Abraham had some failures in his cross-cultural encounters. Because of fear, he introduced his wife as his sister during a visit to Egypt. (Genesis 12:10-20)

Notes

LESSON 17
IDENTITY

Contents

What is identity? Social Psychological Perspective, Communication Perspective, Contextual Identity Formation, Resisting Ascribed Identities, Social and Cultural Identities, Stereotypes & Prejudice, Stages of Minority Identity Development, Majority identity development, Culture and Identity.

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the concepts of identity.
- To understand stages of identity formation.
- To understand the correlation of culture and identity.

What is Identity?

This chapter deals with the question of identity. At a technical level, to say that something is *identical* to something else is to say that they are the same. A=A. On a human and social level, identity is much more complex. Naming a person's identity always involves the use of language, which is inevitably inadequate to its task. Language is a representation of reality, but it is also (and always) an edited representation. As Kenneth Burke argued, language is a *reflection* of reality, but it is also and at the same time both a *selection* of reality and a *deflection* of reality. To identify oneself as, for example, "Jewish," is at the same time to reflect reality (one belongs to a particular religious or cultural group category), to select reality (it tells us nothing about what else one might be), and to deflect reality (focusing on one's "Jewishness" is in essence a deflection of attention away from one's existence as a carpenter, scientist, soldier, or prophet, for example).

Martin & Nakayama approach the question of identity dialectically and take us through three approaches to identity - social psychological, communication, and critical.

Social Psychological Perspective

- Identity is created through the interaction of self and group.
- Identity is always multiple - we play a number of different "roles." Erik Erikson, a follower of Sigmund Freud, attempted to map out the psychosocial development of **ego identity** in young people. He found that identity development was not consistent — while he could map out common stages of identity formation, these stages were reached at different times for different people, and development usually occurred in spurts, especially around certain crises or other important events. Often such crises are triggered in interaction between individual and group identities. Cross-cultural research into ego identity has suggested that different cultures define self concept differently, giving identity a cultural basis.

Communication Perspective

This perspective stresses the nature of self/group interaction as *communicative.* Identities emerge through social interaction and communication. Identities are in a sense *negotiated* through the medium of language.

avowal	ascription
the process by which an individual portrays him or her self. A way of communicating who the self is. Representation of the self (and by the self) to others.	the process by which others attribute identity to an individual. What others perceive when presented with the avowed self.
There is an obvious interrelation between these phenomena. If, for example, you portray your avowed identity to others by wearing a Lakers t-shirt everywhere you go, that act will have some impact on the identity others ascribe towards you. But these two identities may not be (in fact, are probably not) commensurate.	

Core symbols are associated with various group identities, and emerge and change through communication. For example, individualism is one core symbol of "American" identity.

Critical Perspective

- **Contextual Identity Formation**

  Identities are formed in a context and should be understood in these contexts. Such contexts include history, economics, and politics. The history of slavery, for example, is one powerful contextual factor that situates both "black" and "white" identity in the U.S.

  Overdetermination: Our identities are overdetermined by a host of factors over which we have little if any control. These factors may influence both our avowed identities and our ascribed identities in powerful ways. French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, who has written much about overdetermination, pointed out that we are never outside of language. It is not that we have no control over who we are; only that language and history exert a powerful (and often unexamined) influence over our identities.

- **Resisting Ascribed Identities**

  When we try to resist the identity that society and history ascribe to us, we must perforce begin from within that identity. French philosopher Louis Althusser, in a landmark essay entitled "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (click here for another review), introduced the notion of interpellation to describe the process by which individuals become subjects of ideological formations as a kind of "hailing." He compares this hailing to the feeling of knowing that a police officer means you when s/he calls out "Hey, you there!" Resisting one's interpellated identity is a very difficult process, since interpellation takes place at a subconscious or barely conscious level.

- **Dynamic Nature of Identities**

  Identity is always in motion - it is never stable. Everyone changes over time, whether they actively seek out such change or not. Identity is not a fixed state but a fluid and constructed process. We are always engaged in identity construction, maintenance, and/or transformation.

Social and Cultural Identities

Martin & Nakayama discuss the following identities: gender (which is not the same as sex) identity, age identity, racial identity, ethnic identity, religious identity, class identity, national identity, regional identity, and personal identity. Most of the explanations need little elaboration, but a few concepts should be highlighted:

- **"gender" v. "sex"**: "gender" is the name for a social role established for the sexes; "sex" refers to a biological category. While these two categories most often coincide, they are not equivalent.

- **racial formation**: a new way of understanding racial identification as a "complex of social meanings" rather than as an objective biological category. Michael Omi and Howard Winant pioneered this notion as a way of underscoring the fluidity of some racial categories in light of the seeming rigidity of others.

- **bounded v. dominant identities**: bounded identities are more specific yet do not dominate an individual's identity perception. For example, most whites in the US have "whiteness" as a dominant identity and experience specific national or ethnic categories (German, Irish, etc.) as bounded.

Stereotypes & Prejudice

- **stereotypes**: "widely held beliefs about a specific group of people" (128). We have discussed in class the notion that stereotypes come from the natural linguistic tendency to organize phenomena into meaningful categories. In a human social context, stereotyping involves buying into widely held belief systems about particular groups that are usually detrimental to intercultural understanding and communication.

- **prejudice**: "a negative attitude toward a cultural group, based on little or no experience" (128). Pre-judge - to evaluate before all the information is in. There are many ideas about where prejudice comes from and what its exact relation to stereotyping is.

- **discrimination**: "behaviors that result from stereotyping or prejudice — overt actions to exclude, avoid, or distance" (129). Discrimination based on various identity formations may be blatant and institutional or subtle and interpersonal.

Stages of Minority Identity Development

Note that these are stages in a fluid, dynamic process. These are not set in stone, they do not take place in a vacuum, and not all people experience them in the same way.

1. **unexamined identity**: stage of acceptance of dominant norms and a lack of desire to look into one's identity and reconstitute it.

2. **conformity**: internalization of dominant norms and attempt to assimilate to the dominant culture.

    Note that in this stage many people judge themselves through the lens provided by the dominant culture. This leads to **alienation**, as one sees oneself through a lens that considers one inferior.

3. **resistance and separatism**: can involve total embrace of everything in the minority culture, and a rejection of dominant norms.

4. **integration**: ideally, one develops a secure and confident identity, seeing beyond separatism and embracing an integrated identity that incorporates one's experiences holistically.

Majority Identity Development

Educator Rita Hardiman provides the following stages for majority identity development:

1. **unexamined identity**: similar to stage one of minority identity development.

2. **acceptance**: internalization of an ideology of superiority. Not necessarily openly supremacist, but the subject will internalize ideologies of domination. "passive" vs. "active" acceptance - active acceptance involves open expressions of cultural superiority.

3. **resistance**: resistance to the ways in which cultural privilege is bestowed upon the dominant group.

4. **redefinition**: redefinition of the dominant culture and attempts to openly challenge dominant cultural privilege.

5. **integration**: again, ideally one integrates belongingness to a dominant culture with an awareness of its privilege and an appreciation of the values of minority cultures.

What is "Whiteness"?

Theorists of intercultural communication have begun to focus on the dominant racial category in the US, "whiteness," in at least three different ways:

1. **location of structural advantage**: linked to privilege, but not equivalent or coterminous with it. There are different levels of access to white power in US society. Note that increasing social awareness of white privilege leads to an increasing awareness that not *all* whites have access to such privilege. Stay tuned for more discussion of this phenomenon when we discuss the "race traitor" phenomenon.

2. **standpoint from which to view society**: emphasis here is on the way in which a "white" perspective differs from others. Again such a perspective is in American society inevitably marked by privilege. Events such as the marked difference in black and white reactions to the O.J. trial highlights the importance of whiteness as such a standpoint.

3. **set of cultural practices**: Are there a set of cultural activities that mark "white" culture in the U.S.? While such a set of practices may not be as immediately obvious as that of either minority groups or bounded white identities, there is little question that some such practices exist. Richard Dyer defines whiteness negatively, suggesting that "whiteness" in America is often perceived as the *absence* of culture (we see this idea satirized in such cultural products as "Play that Funky Music White Boy," "White Men Can't Jump," and "A History of White People in America." Ironically, one could argue that such products are themselves characteristically "white" cultural practices.)

Multiraciality/Multiculturality

For more and more people, this is the way racial identity develops - it can be somewhat confusing. There are tensions that exist within the cultures some people find themselves between. **Global nomads** grow up in many different cultural contexts usually because they move around a lot (e.g. "military brats"). Children of parents from different cultures often have no clear sense of cultural or racial identity. Peter Adler finds that a multicultural individual must come to grips with many different cultural realities and thus develop a sense of self that does not include the sense of "belonging" experienced by many monoracial/monocultural people. Milton Bennett describes the perspective as "ethnorelative" based on people's attitudes towards cultural difference. (see p. 138). Adler finds that individual s can ideally become **culture brokers** who help negotiate tensions between cultures and facilitate cross-cultural interaction. Janet Bennett identifies two different kinds of marginality with the multicultural experience: **encapsulated** marginality (trapped by the multicultural existence, the individual feels pressure to choose between cultural identities, to assimilate to one identity or the other) and **constructive** marginality (using multicultural existence as a positive resource - aware of the significance of being between two cultures).

Language and Communication

- language changes over time and constructs identity over time. Look at the various meanings over the last 30 years or so held by terms like "black," "colored," "Negro," etc. Stuart Hall's experience discussed on 140-1 underscores this fluidity.

- identity and assumptions about the identity of others have a large impact on the communication process.

Culture and Identity

What is Culture?

The word 'culture' stems from the Latin "colere", translatable as to build on, to cultivate, to foster. Leibnitz, Voltaire, Hegel, von Humbold, Kant, Freud, Adorno, Marcuse,... all have reflected on the meaning of the word in different versions of its use. In the early stages of the philosophical debate about what is 'culture', the term often refers to the opposite of 'nature', whereas 'culture' was referring to something constructed willingly by men, while 'nature' was given in itself.

Since the 18th century, the word 'culture' emerged more in the sense of 'products that are worthy': somewhat reduced to Dürer, Goethe and Beethoven, the term was used to describe Elite and high-culture concepts, particularly in continental Europe. This definition of culture is still vivid; Rickert, in Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft (The science of culture and the science of nature), defines culture, following the Elitist approach, as: "Gesamtheit der realen Objekte, an denen allgemein anerkannte Werte oder durch sie konstruierte Sinngebilde haften und die mit Ruecksicht auf die Werte gepflegt werden" (The totality of real objects, to which the general values, or sense constructions of those, are related, and which are cared for with regards to the values.) (Rickert, quoted in Maletzke,1996:16).

Equally, during the mid-nineteenth century, the concept of mass culture and popular culture emerged, fueling the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and the Birmingham School. In the words of Stuart Hall, of the Birmingham School, 'culture' is "both the means and values which arise among distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and relationship, through which they 'handle' and respond to the conditions of existence" (Hall, quoted in McQuail,1994:100).

Another view of culture, focuses of culture as a set of values and attributes of a given group, and the relation of the individual to the culture, and the individual's acquisition of those values and attributes: in the words of Geert Hofstede: "the collective programming of the mind" (quoted in Victor,1992:6). Fisher, quoted in the same work, defines culture as :"It is shared behavior, which is important because it systematizes the way people do things, thus avoiding confusion and allowing co-operation so that groups of people can accomplish what no single individual could do alone. And it is behavior imposed by sanctions, rewards and punishments for those who are part of the group" (Fisher, 1988).

In the context of this paper, we will adopt the definition of culture as the totality of the following attributes of a given group (or subgroup): shared values, believes and basic assumptions, as well as any behavior arising from those, of a given group. Culture is understood, in this context, as collectively held set of attributes, which is dynamic and changing over time.

A group can thereby be various forms of social constructions: it is not merely any nation, but also supranational and international groups are possible, and often clearly distinguishable.

The individual and the culture in which is lives is a complex set of relationships. On the one side, the individual determines its culture, on the other, it is determined by its culture. By contributing to the culture around him, the individual is part of the cultural change.

S.G. Summer introduced the concept of "Ethnocentrism" early this century: it refers to the tendency that most people see their own culture as the 'center of the world'. Often this phenomenon has been seen as a result of "naive" thinking, following from the assumption of the world in itself being like it appears to the individual: a set of 'self-evident' rules, roles, categories and relationships, seen as 'natural'. The concept of ethnocentrism is often displayed in the form of nationalism.

Returning to our initial discussion of what constitutes a 'culture', various concepts are often displayed as the basic differentiation of cultures (Maletzke, 1996: 42):

- national character / basic personality (Nationalcharkter/ Basispersönlichkeit)

- perception (Wahrnehmung)

- time concept (Zeiterleben)

- space concept (Raumerleben)

- thinking (Denken)

- language (Sprache)

- non verbal communication (nichtverbale Kommunikation)

- values (Wertorientierungen)

- behavior: norms, rules, manners (Verhaltensmuster: Normen, Rollen, Sitten)
- social groupings and relationships (Soziale Grupierungen und Beziehungen).

Often, culture has also been described as 'ordered into' three layers, in fact like an onion, where one peel has to be taken off in order to see the following layer.

The three layers of culture are explained as:

The outer layer, artifacts and products, is the most explicit of all layers: including language and food, architecture and style etc.

The second inner layer, norms and values. Norms are "the mutual sense what is right and wrong" while values represent the "definition of what is good and bad" (Trompenaars and Hempden Turner,1997:22).

The innermost layer, basic assumptions, represents the core assumptions of what life is, assumptions about how to handle everyday problems that have become self-evident.

This explanation of the visibility of the layers is based on a very practical approach to culture, whereas Maletzke's basic differentiation provides a more profound approach to the actual criteria that influence the different levels. These criteria are explained in the following section:

The National Character/Basic Personality

Each nation has its own character, the French are not like the English, and the Dutch not like the Germans. However, the attempt to define what makes each of the characters distinct will provide massive difficulties. The idea of a 'national character' is based on the assumption that people from one nation share basic common behavioral patterns and personality traits, differentiable from other nations. The concept has however been often criticized, and is often only fueled by perceptions of the one nation towards the other, resulting in a number of attributes that one nation apparently displays: the Germans are orderly, hard-working and humorless... However, findings in that field have been often contradictory, particularly from highly diversified cultures. The methodological difficulties may be one of the reasons why the term 'national character' has widely been replaced with 'basic personality' or 'social character' in modern literature.

The two later concepts, although also often deemed as equally unreliable, stem from the idea that the child is being subject to cultural influence during his early stages, and hence develops a 'basic personality' similar in various cultures. Equally the 'social character' concept tries to identify the common character structures of a culture.

Perception

Perception is not a passive, objective and neutral process. Every perception is seen as an active process: "what is perceived is becoming part of the subjective experience, embedded into the whole of the personality structure of that person, including whatever the person's development process, his cultural and material environment has given him or her as ways of thinking and viewing things" (Maletzke, 1996:48). The human being distinguishes actively between important and unimportant: perceives objects actively and clearly, while others are only partially perceived or ignored.

Visual perception is one of the traits where the culture specific view objects is clearly demonstrated: Most Europeans will have difficulties distinguishing for example Japanese faces. Tajfel (in Maletzke 1996,49) describes an experiment where US Americans and Mexicans were presented with a series of photos, depicting situations which were only known to the one or other nationality. Each participant was found to remember more accurately and vividly the photos showing situations that were familiar to the own culture. The other photos were only relatively vague if at all remembered.

Equally, the perception of feeling is altered in different cultural surrounding: shaking hands, kissing, have different perceptions in various cultures. Interpersonal distance may be perceived as essential or undesirable (English culture or Latin culture).

Also the perception of what smells 'good' or 'bad' can be highly different in various cultural surroundings.

Time Concepts

The culture has a significant impact on the concepts of time. Time can either be perceived as linear (western perception) or circular (eastern perception). Equally the orientation, or outlook, of the culture can be focused on either the past, the present or the future.

Another concept is the notion of monochronic and polychronic time conception. The monochronic time concept follows the notion of "one thing at a time" and time is money", while the polychronic concept focuses on multiple tasks are handled at one time, and time is subordinate to interpersonal relations. The following table gives brief overview of the two different time concepts:

Table 1 Monochronic and Polychronic Cultures

	Monochronic Culture	Polychronic Culture
Interpersonal Relations	Interpersonal relations are subordinate to present schedule	Present schedule is subordinate to Interpersonal relations
Activity Co-ordination	Schedule co-ordinates activity; appointment time is rigid.	Interpersonal relations co-ordinate activity; appointment time is flexible
Task Handling	One task at a time	Many tasks are handled simultaneously
Breaks and Personal Time	Breaks and personal time are sacrosanct regardless of personal ties.	Breaks and personal time are subordinate to personal ties.
Temporal Structure	Time is inflexible; time is tangible	Time is flexible; time is fluid
Work/personal time separability	Work time is clearly separable from personal time	Work time is not clearly separable from personal time
Organizational Perception	Activities are isolated from organization as a whole; tasks are measured by output in time (activity per hour or minute)	Activities are integrated into organization as a whole; tasks are measured as part of overall organizational goal

(Victor, 1992:234)

Equally, the concept of 'punctuality' and 'scheduling' is different in various cultural surroundings. Depending on the context of the culture, the time is subordinate to the people's needs, or the people's needs subordinate to the time. For example: a lecture that is scheduled for 60 minutes will be expected to last for not much longer or shorter than that in most low context cultures. If the lecturer

continues, s/he will probably be asked to finish. As observed by Victor (1992) such a behavior would be highly unlikely in a high context culture, such as Saudi Arabia. The time would be taken as subordinate to the topic, and the lecture might continue significantly beyond the scheduled time, if further discussion is required.

Space Concepts

The question of how we perceive space is equally depending of the culture. The western cultures focus their attention on objects, and neglect the space in-between. The Japanese, on the other hand, honor the space in-between as ma. In a different system, the Hopi Indians have in their language no words for a fixed room: all objects are described in their relation to each other, but no concept of a three dimensional space exists (see E.T. Hall, 1969).

Also the way we deal with space is different. The concepts of the private space, the space orientation, the interpersonal distance and the space design. The interpersonal proxemics are discussed in more detail in the non-verbal communication section.

Thinking

The way we think equally depends, and is influenced by the culture. Maletzke (1996:63) identifies the major paradigms for thinking as:

logic and prelogic

Most of classical Western thinking is based on the Aristotelian view of logic: analytical, linear and rational. Other cultures emphasize a more complex set of logic, which can be described as holistic, associative and affective.

inductive and deductive

While inductive thinking evolves from the particular and evolves into a theoretical model, concepts or theories, the deductive thinking established overall concepts first, which are then proven by specific, empirical findings. Deductive thinking is usually associated with the Latin American, Arab and Eastern European cultures.

abstract and concrete

The vision of the abstract or the concrete is another dominant model in thinking. Western cultures in particular have developed a highly abstract way of thinking, largely loose of emotions. Concrete thinking models however favor a more plastic, emotional way of thinking.

alphabetical and analphabetical

Related to the abstract and concrete models of thinking is the concept of alphabetical and analphabetical thinking. In cultures that have a high degree of alphabetical perception, the abstract thinking is favored, as writing is in itself an abstract picture of any situation. An analphabetical communication system however favors a direct, connected to the person, time and situation approach.

Each of the concepts of thinking are, of course, interconnected. With some care, the concepts of logic, inductive, abstract and alphabetical can be associated to the Western cultural influence area, however, those are not rigid, and can probably not be applied large-scale. A particular problem would be here, for example, the shift from printed words to highly visual media, shifting thinking from abstract and alphabetical to concrete and analphabetical.

Equally the 'frame of reference' is an enormously important part of thinking and perceiving. A frame of reference is the higher perspective from which a given situation is regarded, and evaluated. An example for an ideological 'frame of reference' is given by Wedge who illustrates what visitors from the Soviet Union perceived when visiting the USA: They were sure that they were monitored and that large parts of the country remained hidden from them. The fact that workers were exploited, that the USA was ruled by 'socially influential circles', that education was only available to the wealthy and that every thought was dominated by the craving for money remained the dominant thoughts about the USA.

Connected is also the believe in or rejection of magic, witchcraft and superstition, bound by the belief that certain thoughts and rituals can influence the world. While it is generally accepted in the western industrialized countries that the world is logical, clear and law-based is this view not dominant in other cultures. Such traditions as Fengshui or the difficulties in attributing telephone numbers in Japan show this.

Language

A symbolical-abstract language is the dominant sign of any culture. The language of any group is directly connected to the world view of the group. Humbold wrote regarding language: "Die Verschiedenheit der Sprachen ist nicht eine Verschiedenheit an Schällen und Zeichen, sondern eine Verschiedenheit der Weltansichten" (The difference in languages is not a difference in sounds and signs, but a difference in worldviews). The most well known theory stemming from this is the Sapir-Whorf theory : "The real world is to a large extend unconsciously build on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached" Whorf notes: " the linguistic system ... of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade..." (in Victor, 1992:20).

It is also important to note, that language, just as every other of the cultural determinants, is a dynamic entity that evolves and changes with the time. In Arabic, for example, more than 600 words were known to describe a camel about 25 years ago. Today most of these words have disappeared (Condon and Yousef).

The interchange of Language ad the frame of reference is also remarkable. Maletzke (1996) distinguished that the German word 'Blatt' can have different meanings in botany (a leaf), for a piano player (the score) , graphic designer (the sheet of paper) or players of card games (the set of cards). Equally, subcultures can have their own distinctive words or meanings of words.

Non-verbal communication

Although language can be understood as the main way of communication between humans, it is not the only mean. Non-verbal communication can be classified under the following headings (Argyle):

Kinesics

Is a relatively far reaching expression for body language, a major factor that can differ from cultures to cultures, in particular when no, or little visual information is available on the other culture. One example of such a major misinterpretation: When Khrushchev visited the US at the height of the cold war, he greeted the press with a clasping of his hands, shaking them over each shoulder. This expression is understood to be a sign of greeting of friends in the USSR, symbolizing the embracing of a good friend. In the US this gesture is understood to be the symbol of the winner in a battle; consequently, the US media understood the message as a sign that the USSR would be victorious over the US.

The examples of misunderstanable, kinesic signs is endless. One of the explanations for that is of course the fact that many of them are based on proverbial sayings in a language, which can not be translated literally. For example the French "ça t'a passé sous le nez" (literally: that has passed under your nose) is often used to describe "you missed your opportunity", the kinesic sign for it is, of course, passing a hand under the nose, which makes perfectly no sense to members of a non-francophone culture.

The amount of kinesics usage varies of course equally, also for what they are used. Asian cultures, for example, are less inclined to show any kinesics at all, southern Europeans are far more open to show them. The kinesic usage is also related to genders.

Proxemics

This refers to the way in which people structure the space around them. Generally spoken, low context cultures have a tendency to have farther distances than high context cultures, although this does not apply to south-east Asian cultures, who are equally high context and prefer a large distance. For example shaking hands is something that is highly uncomfortable for Chinese, while even the tap on the shoulder, often practiced by US Americans, can be interpreted as threatening in Northern European countries.

Appearance

The way how a person 'appears' has been shown to be highly correlated with the evaluation of that person. Appearance can of course be broadly classified in to different ways: biological appearance and acquired appearance.

Biological appearance includes skin color, color and the shape of eyes, texture and color of hair, stature and body structure. Stereotyping is, in that area, a very vital fact, that leads to differentiated behavior based on biological, physical appearance.

Equally the mode of dressing affects evaluation of a person. While in most Western societies suits, and formal attire reflect professionalism, this is not necessarily the case in all societies, in Arabian societies, a ghutra and thobe might be preferred. It is however a widespread assumption, for example, that a suit is required for business purposes, and represents civilized behavior. The perception of dress however is again different regarding the various styles: for example the Italian, more flamboyant, style of dressing might be judged by a UK person as simply 'nouveaux riche', and ridiculously fancy.

Posture

Posture is the fairly fixed concept of standing, sitting, etc. .The way someone sits or stands may, particularly when interpreted together with other non-verbal behavior lead to confusion in intercultural settings.

Oculesics

Oculesics is the use of the eyes in a communication setting. In most Western cultures again, the use of direct eye contact symbolizes listening and attention. However, direct eye contact is seen as unfavorable by for example various Asian cultures. The length of the eye contact is also a cultural variable, as it might extend to become perceived as aggression when used for too long, or as uninterested, when perceived too short.

Haptics, tacesics

Haptics deals with touching behavior in different societies. While haptics can be hostile (kicking), more often haptic behavior is used to indicate the degree of intimacy. Heslin (1974), distinguished between the following degrees of intimacy:

- functional/professional
- social/polite
- friendship/warmth
- love/intimacy
- sexual arousal

The most widespread heptic symbol is the hand shake. This however differs in degrees, length and strength between the various levels of intimacy (or gets completely replaced by more intimate heptic behavior). A level 3 handshake for example in Spain could include the use of a double grip, which might cause confusion for, for example, a German. Equally the level 2 handshake is stronger in Spain than in Northern Europe, and might hence be interpreted as 'over-friendly' by Northern Europeans, while the level 2 handshake of the Northern European might be interpreted as functional only by the Spaniard.

Even more confusing would be a confrontation of a 'non-contact' culture, such as a Northern European one, with a 'contact-culture', where frequent touching is a sign of friendship or politeness (level 2 or 3). For example an Indian heptic behavior might be interpreted as a level 4 or 5 behavior.

Paralanguage

Paralinguistics are also a major player in cross-cultural confusion. For example the notion that Americans are talking too loud is often interpreted in Europe as aggressive behavior or can be seen as a sign of uncultivated behavior. Likewise, the British way of speaking quietly might be understood as secretive by Americans.

The speed of talking equally is different in various cultural settings. For example Finnish is spoken relatively slowly in comparison to other European languages. This form of

speaking has often resulted in the Finish as being regarded somewhat 'slow' and lax.

Further importance is given to the amount of silence that is perceived as right during a conversation. A Japanese proverb says "Those who know do not speak - those who speak do not know"; this must come as a slap in the face of, for example, US Americans where even a slight silence is seen as embarrassing, and hence is filled up with speaking, something often perceived as hypomanic. Similarly, but different in usage, is the avoidance of silence in Arabic countries, where word games are played and thoughts repeated to avoid silence.

Symbolism and Passive Non-verbal Communication

The symbolism and other forms of passive non-verbal communication are equally a major influence factor for communication problems between different cultures.

The meanings of colors for example can be highly different in various cultures. Although Lüscher (1948) found color association, and effects highly equal in European societies, and those studies have been confirmed to equally be valid in US America and Canada (Cheskin, 1957), however little research has been done outside of that cultural area. More dangerously are, however, historically associated colors and shapes: for example a red circle symbolizes for many south-east Asians Japanese aggression during W.W.II. Green has become a color dominantly representing Irish and Ireland in countries with a high Irish immigration rate, such as the UK, US and Australia, while being totally associated with the ecological and peace movement in continental Europe.

Numerical symbolism equally can vary. An example of this is the number 13, in Christian cultures often associated with bad luck (in Christian mythology, 13 is unlucky as 13 attendants were at the Last Supper), while in Jewish societies, 13 is a number of luck: The Talmud teaches that God has 13 attributes.

Politically and religiously connected symbols can equally cause confusion, or even anger. A cross, for example, worn in a Middle Eastern Arab society might be interpreted as a direct attack onto the Islam (and may even be forbidden to be worn by law).

Values

Most of our actions and behavior is based on values, on what is perceived as evil, good or neutral. The categorization of behavior in those categories is of course different in various cultures. In the book 'Variations in value orientations' Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck explore these differences. Their basic thesis are:

- People of all times and in all societies have a limited amount of problems, for which they have to find solutions.

- For each of the major problems, there are only a limited numbers of possible solutions.

- For each problem, every society has the same amount of solutions available, however each society weighs the possible solutions differently. Doing this, a list of values is

created. With social and structural change the weighting of those values is changed.

The five main problem areas are defined by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck as:

- Human nature orientation

- Man nature orientation

- Time orientation

- Activity orientation

- Relational orientation

Following the three categories of evil, neutral and good, the resulting table shows a variety of possible value orientations:

Table 2 Value OrientationsOrientationPostulated Range of Variationshuman natureEvilmutable immutableNeutral Mixmutable immutableGoodmutable immutableman-nature-timeSubjugation to NatureHarmony with NatureMastery over Natureactivity Past Present Futurerelational Being Being-in-Becoming Doing Lineality Collaterality Individualism(Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, 1961; 12)Also Religion is an important shaper of the values, and draws its principles and laws from them.Behavior: norms, rules, manners, rolesIn every culture, patterns of behavior can be found to be judged as 'correct' or 'incorrect'.

Norms and rules of a culture determine how to behave. While the value orientations discussed in the previous section deal with behavior on a very abstract basis, the norms, rules and manners of a society deal with behavior in concrete, every-day-life. Various examples, probably the most illustrious in intercultural research, can illustrate the differences encounterable in different cultures.

The taboos vary equally from culture to culture: an example is the avoidance of the term 'hangman' in, for example German, where a variety of replacement terms are used. Equally, various religions do not allow the name of God to be pronounced. So various alternative expressions are found (like: Almighty, Father, Lord...).

The expectations of how to behave, of what 'role to play' is equally differentiated across cultures. While most western cultures have very little differentiation between personality and 'role', other cultures have clear boundaries. One of the most dominant examples of such a cultural misunderstanding were POWs in Japanese POW camps: For the Japanese, once a soldier is captured and becomes a POW, he has to behave like that. The behavior of the (Western) POWs caused outrage, as they continued to behave in their ways.

Social Groupings and Relationships

Societies are grouped together: they contain families, classes, castes, status, elites... While those social structures are dynamically changing in today's world, they can still be found in all societies, although the importance has diminished in many. Equally the Indian caste system has officially been abolished, while it is still clearly visible and adhered to.

While the interaction between groups can vary drastically from culture to culture, the relationship of the individual to the group is equally volatile: both depend on and interact with each

other, however depending on the cultural environment, the emphasis may be more on the individual or on the group the individual belongs to. One of the most quoted examples of this concept is the fact that in traditional Mandarin, no word describing the concept of 'personality' was in existence.

Also the individual to individual relationships, their depth and extend, can vary enormously. While for example it is often quoted that the Americans are very open, and have lots of friends, each one for specific purposes, the Russians are said to be far more selective and 'unapproachable', however once a friendship has been made it extends far deeper and is a friendship for every situation.

Related to this category is also the 'speed of getting to the point' in a business or personal situation: depending on the cultural surrounding 'direct talking' can be viewed as rude, and a 'getting to know' phase is more important at first.

Axioms of the Previous Section

Culture can be understood as a shared set of attributes of any group, by which this group organizes its living together, its environment and its solutions to the questions of the society.

The individual lives in a complex set of relationship with its environment: the individual is hence influenced by the culture surrounding it, as well as influencing it.

There are ten distinct features in which cultures differ from each other: the national character/basic personality, perception, time concepts, space concepts, thinking, language, non-verbal communication, values, behaviors and social groupings and relationships.

Each of the distinct features are interconnected, and influence each other. Every change in a single feature can cause changes in the others.

Chapter 2: Culture Acquisition and Modification

The question of why any individual develops 'cultural behavior' is of course central to the debate of this project. While I have pointed out, in the previous section, what determinants exist in cultures, we can now proceed to the question of culture acquisition, culture change and acculturation.

As I have argued before, the individual is in the midst of a complex system of interaction with its immediate surroundings: the culture that s/he lives in. The infant gets like this born into a set of relationships, in its early years consisting of its family members. Through them it experiences the culture of the family; the cultural attitudes, behaviors, norms and values that dominate the process of educating the early infant. These values represent, in turn, the culture(s) of the parents and their parents in modification and adaptation to the current situation. This notion is particularly important for the emergence of similar cultural attitudes in cases of Diaspora identities.

With an increase in age, the individual increases its relationship to outside the family, including the school, later the university or work place and the peer-group. The individual also enters the wider influence area of the media and slowly the area of political and social influence and learns from those experiences. The two areas of influence can be, relatively, distinct: the family and the

immediate social surroundings, and equally the social-economical-political surrounding. This explains, for example the emergence of multicultural persons in a single cultural surrounding: for example the British Born Chinese, or Turkish-Germans.

While the family surroundings, and their influence on the child while developing its identity are highly personal, the social reality (that is the general social, economic and political environment) can be subject to intensive investigation, and abstraction, as those phenomena can be more directly generalized.

The emergence of a national culture, is of course a difficult process of certain norms and values that are shared across the individuals that live in a 'national state or territory' or associate themselves to a certain 'national group', a concept that in recent years has deminished in importance, particularly because of the decline of the nation state and the break up of society in various subgroups, mobile social classes and various ethnic, religious and racial groups, that were less evident before. Each of those groups have, sometimes complimentary to or replacing of a set of cultural attributes in 'competition' to the 'national culture' per se.

A critical point in the discussion of the individual, and its acquired attributes, and the culture it adheres to, is of course the idea of 'imagined communities'. As Malcolm (1994) argues, there has not been a fixed, unified Serb or Croat identity since the Middle Ages that could be resurrected. However, the individuals behave as if there was, and develop a set of apparently national symbols and a national culture for this 'imagined community'.

Returning to the origins of this discussion, the acquisition of culture, we can identify the two main areas: the family and immediate social surroundings, and the social reality. Changes in these surroundings will be reflected in the cultural attributes of the individuals involved, depending on the amount of individuals involved the changes can mean a change in entire groups: changes in the political system, for example, represent such a fundamental change.

The world, in which we live, is in a continuos change, with the advancement of technology, and changes in the political and economical structure the changes have become a continuum with great speed. The cultural adaptation has, for many, become part of everyday life. In the following section I shall explore the changes that occur in the cultural surroundings of the individuals.

Axioms of the previous section

The child is exposed to two major influence factors: its family and the social reality of the society it lives in.

Cultural attributes are transferred through both. Cultural transfer can be personal (family, friends) or impersonal (media).

Each society consists of various groups and sub-groups: each have a set of cultural attributes, that can be understood as complimentary or replacing the set of variables of the larger unit.

LESSON 18
CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Contents

Introduction, Viewpoint of localised approach, Viewpoint of standerdised approach, Religion and cultural misunderstandings.

Learning Objectives:

- To study different approaches to cultural misunderstandings.
- To learn correlation between religion and cultural misunderstandings.

Introduction

There has been a long debate as to whether advertising messages should be standardized or localized. The localization approach requires that advertisers focus on the differences among countries in order to develop advertising messages tailored to a local market. Proponents of this approach emphasize cultural uniqueness and the advertising industry environment in a foreign country. The standardization approach, on the other hand, focuses on the similarities among cultures and develops global advertising campaigns eliminating the need for localization. Proponents of this approach see the world as a global village in which the differences among cultures have diminished and consumers develop similar needs and wants quite independent of location.

This paper aims to review what has been said about the standardized approach and the localized approach. Then it focuses on what international advertisers should consider before developing an advertising approach.

Cultural factors and advertising environment characteristics are important areas to look at before developing an international advertising campaign. These factors and characteristics are individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, perception of time, religion and language, which reflect the differences in cultures and government control of advertising and commercial breaks during programs which are characteristics of an advertising environment. Following is the viewpoint of the standardized approach.

Viewpoint of Localized Approach

Advertising theorists supporting the localization of advertising messages suggest that advertising is one of the most difficult marketing elements to standardize. Sometimes this is because of the regulatory restrictions that require changes in copy or make certain media unavailable, like TV commercials for cigarette in some countries (Baudot, 1989). However, the difficulty is more due to cultural differences. Culture is viewed as all pervasive. "No matter how hard man tries, it is impossible for him to divest himself of his own culture...people can not

act or interact at all in any meaningful way except through the medium of culture" (Hall, 1966).

Proponents of the localized approaches argue that advertisers must consider differences among countries, including- but not limited to - culture, stage of economic and industrial development, stage of product life cycle, media availability and legal restrictions (Britt, 1974; Unwin, 1974). They cite many international blunders which they claim attest to the dangers of not adapting advertisements to a foreign culture (Ricks et al., 1974).

Green, Cunningham and Cunningham (1975) reported that while groups of consumers from four different countries, Brazil, France, India and the US, may have similar needs, they rated the importance of product attributes differently.

Muller (1987) compared Japanese advertisements with American advertisements for similar products and observed numerous differences between the two types. Advertisements of each country exhibited some degree of sensitivity to the cultural uniqueness of the particular consumer market.

Synodinos, Keown and Jacobs (1989) investigated advertising practices across 15 countries. In their findings, there were striking dissimilarities in the creative approaches. They attributed those dissimilarities not only to cultural factors but also advertising industry environments.

Due to a lack of cultural and social awareness of a foreign country, countless advertising blunders have occurred. These range from the seemingly minute errors of a faulty word in advertising copy, to major problems arising from failing to conduct a thorough market study before committing hundreds of thousands of dollars to a multinational advertising campaign.

An individual's cultural environment significantly affects the way he or she perceives information. If a sender of a message lives in a cultural environment different from his or her intended receiver and wishes to communicate effectively, a knowledge of the culture of the receiver is necessary (Schramm, 1954).

Culture is a reasonable factor to be examined in relation to emotional and rational appeals in advertising. The notion of culture relates to how the world is perceived, organized, communicated and learned (Hofstede, 1991). People of different cultures have shown different orientations toward individualism-collectivism, authority, uncertainty (Hofstede, 1991) and perception of time (Hall ,1983). Each factor influencing advertising in terms of culture and its implication will be addressed in turn.

Viewpoint of Standardized Approach

As the number of global brands selling in any one country increases, and because the desire to build a single brand image exists, agencies will be pushed to make advertising more standardized.

Global advertising is based on the belief that people around the world have the same tastes and that they are significantly similar in regard to "love, hate, fear, greed, joy, patriotism, pornography, material comforts, mysticism, and role of food in their lives" (Lynch, 1984). Therefore, consumers anywhere in the world may be satisfied with the same promotional appeals. Proponents of the standardization approach contend that differences among countries are a matter of degree rather than direction and therefore, advertisers should focus on consumer similarities around the world (Fatt, 1967; Levitt, 1983). They also claim cost reductions in planning and control and the building of a unified brand image. When it comes to cost savings, for example, it is much less expensive to produce a single set of advertisements for use in several markets than to produce many different sets of advertisements. Imagine the costs involved when 40 different artists in 40 different countries are hired to draw the same pictures and each one charges you when one artist could have handled the entire job for one fee.

The issue of building a unified brand image has also become important since international travel has increased and transnational media has developed (McNally, 1986). More and more individuals are exposed to advertising messages deriving from foreign countries. As a result, advertising designed for separate markets may result in confusion of product image by consumers. Europe is often singled out as an area where inter-country mobility and growth of cross-national media are homogenizing the market place and, thus, creating the need for consistent product presentation. As advertisers search for benefit from transnational audiences, McDonald's Europe, to illustrate, sees satellite TV dramatically changing the commercial television situation on the continent. (Cote, 1985).

While globalization has been hailed as the new wave in marketing and advertising by some, others have contended that while people's basic needs and desires may be the same all around the world, how they satisfy them may vary from country to country. The viewpoint of the localized approach will be examined in the following part.

Religion

Knowledge of religious traditions of a country is essential to the international advertiser in order to understand why consumers behave the way they do in a particular market. Although numerous religious groups exist in the world today, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Shinto are considered the major religions in terms of numbers of adherents. The influences of religion on international advertising are manifold (Ricks, 1988). For example, Islam is the national religion in Malaysia and there have been cases where commercials have been withdrawn from the media because of complaints from religious authorities. The Seiko watch company ran a commercial using the theme, "Man Invented Time, Seiko Perfected It". A series of commercials with this theme ran on RTM networks...until RTM received a complaint charging that the commercial should be withdrawn because God, not man, invented time. The company was told that if they wanted to advertise in Malaysia, they must change their

slogan. The company changed its theme to "Man Invented Timekeeping, Seiko Perfected It" (Frith, 1987).

Religion may also influence male/female roles that may impact various aspects of a marketing program. In attempting to gather market information on female consumers in the Middle East, one marketer planned to conduct a focus group interview. Because of the very secluded role of women in this society, the marketer had to invite husbands and brothers to the focus group sessions instead. Similarly, even telephone surveys of women or addressing mailed questionnaires to women for the purpose of collecting market data would be considered highly inappropriate (Hashmi, 1987).

Another major area to be dealt with for international advertisers is education. From an international advertiser's standpoint, consumers must be able to read advertising messages and product labels as well as understand warranty and guarantee information. Advertising programs may need to be modified if large percentages of consumers are illiterate in certain markets. In Afghanistan, Malaysia and Hong Kong illiteracy rates are 81.8%, 30.4% and 22.7% respectively as opposed to US with 0.5% of illiteracy according to Statistical Yearbook by UN. Levels of education may also reflects the degree of consumer sophistication; therefore, complex messages may need to be adapted depending on education trend in a particular country.

Cultural Misunderstandings

This is a collection of interesting (and sometimes tragic) incidents of cross-cultural miscommunication. They emphasize the importance of appreciating cultural differences when traveling or working abroad.

An American supervisor on an oil rig in Indonesia shouted at his timekeeper to take a boat to shore. Since one never berates an Indonesian in public, a mob of outraged workers chased the supervisor with axes!

~

Managers at one American company were startled when they discovered that the brand name of the cooking oil they were marketing in a Latin American country translated into Spanish as "Jackass Oil."

~

Pepsodent tried to sell its toothpaste in Southeast Asia by emphasizing that it "whitens your teeth." They found out that the local natives chew betel nuts to blacken their teeth which they find attractive. Some were also offended by the slogan, "Wonder where the yellow went..." interpreting it as a racial slur. Ignorant of foreign language, 3M introduced its scotch tape in Japan with the slogan, "It sticks like crazy." The Japanese interpretation of the slogan was "it sticks foolishly."

~

When Coca Cola was first marketed in China in the 1920's, the name was translated phonetically ("ke-kou-ke-la") to mean "female horse stuffed with wax" or "bite the wax tadpole" depending on the dialect. It was quickly revised to sound more like "happiness in the mouth."

~

Columbia Pictures produced a movie in Egypt that resulted in all Columbia pictures being banned from the country due to the inaccuracies: accents were Pakistani, clothes were Moroccan, and behavior was American. Most offensive was the portrayal of Gamal Abdel Nassar, the Egyptian President, kissing his wife in public—highly unacceptable in Islamic countries.

~

A company advertised eyeglasses in Thailand by featuring a variety of cute animals wearing glasses. The ad was a poor choice since animals are considered to be a form of low life and no self respecting Thai would wear anything worn by animals.

~

Olympia office products attempted to sell its ROTO photo-copiers in Chile, but did not realize until too late that roto can mean "broken" or designates the Chilean lower class.

~

American Motors tried to market its new car, the Matador, based on the image of courage and strength. However, in Puerto Rico the name means "killer" and was not popular on the hazardous roads in the country.

~

Ford had a series of problems marketing its cars internationally. Its low cost truck the Fiera meant "ugly old woman" in Spanish. It's Caliente in Mexico was found to be slang for "streetwalker." The Pinto was introduced in Brazil under the name of Corcel which was discovered to be Portuguese slang for "a small male appendage." Ford removed the nameplates and substituted the name, Corcel, which means horse.

~

A major U.S. cereal company promoted a commercial in England featuring children and directed toward them. The English, however, dislike children being used in commercials and attempts to influence them, and forced the company to change the commercial. A sales manager in Hong Kong tried to control employee's promptness at work. He insisted they come to work on time instead of 15 minutes late. They complied, but then left exactly on time instead of working into the evening as they previously had done. Much work was left unfinished until the manager relented and they returned to their usual time schedule.

~

McDonald's developed a series of "Hispanic ads." They considered all Hispanics the same until they received complaints from Puerto Rico that the "ads were too Mexican," and had to be changed.

~

A shampoo was sold in Brazil with the catchy name of Evitol—which was translated to be a "dandruff contraceptive."

~

Kellogg had to rename its Bran Buds cereal in Sweden when it discovered that the name roughly translated to "burned farmer."

~

A telephone company tried to market its products and services to Latinos by showing a commercial in which a Latino wife tells her husband to call a friend, telling her they would be late for dinner." The commercial bombed since Latino women do not order their husbands around and their use of time would not require a call about lateness.

~

Parker Pen is known internationally for its popular gift products, especially the Jotter style. It had to change the name for some Latin American countries where the term can mean "jockstrap." When they marketed the ballpoint pen in Mexico, its ads were supposed to say, "It won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you." However, the company mistakenly thought the wor "embarazar" meant embarrass, but the ads said "It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant."

~

Pet Milk had trouble promoting its products in French speaking countries. Among the many meanings, pet can mean "to break wind."

~

The Sunbeam Corporation did not test market in Germany the name of its "Mist-Stick"— a mist-producing hair curling iron. Mist translates in German as "excrement" and a "manure-stick" did not draw much interest.

~

When Pepsico advertised Pepsi in Taiwan with the ad "Come Alive With Pepsi" they had no idea that it would be translated into Chinese as "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the dead."

~

Esso S.A.F. discovered that its name translates as "stalled car" in Japanese.

~

The soft drink Fresca was being promoted by a saleswoman in Mexico. She was surprised that her sales pitch was greeted with laughter, and later embarrassed when she learned that fresca is slang for "lesbian."

~

A new facial cream with the name "Joni" was proposed to be marketed in India. They changed the name since the word is Hindi for "female genitals."

~

A cologne for men pictured a pastoral scene with a man and his dog. Where it was marketed in Islamic North Africa a dog is considered unclean and a sign of bad luck.

~

The American icon, Colonel Harlan Sanders' KFC, was resisted in Germany because it offended some consumers who associated "Colonel" with the American military. KFC also discovered that their slogan, "finger-lickin good," in China was mistranslated as "eat your fingers off."

~

American tourists in Arabic countries have tried to expedite repairs on various items by setting deadlines. Typically, Arabs dislike deadlines and may feel threatened and cornered, with the result of never getting around to the work.

~

General Motors couldn't understand why the Chevy Nova was not selling well in Latin America, until they were told that in Spanish, "no va" means "it doesn't go."

~

Proctor & Gamble used a television commercial in Japan that was popular in Europe. The ad showed a woman bathing, her husband entering the bathroom and touching her. The Japanese considered this ad an invasion of privacy, inappropriate behavior, and in very poor taste.

~

An American business person refused an offer of a cup of coffee from a Saudi businessman. Such a rejection is considered very rude and the business negotiations became stalled. A Japanese manager in an American company was told to give critical feedback to a subordinate during a performance evaluation. Japanese use high context language and are uncomfortable giving direct and confrontive feedback. It took the manager five tries before he could be direct enough to discuss the poor performance so that the American understood.

~

Unlike visiting in the United States, when an American visitor brings a gift of food or drink to a Arab household, the hosts may be offended because such gifts imply that they cannot afford such items or are untrusted.

~

"All Tempa-Cheer" was promoted successfully by Proctor and Gamble as a wide temperature range laundry detergent. The ad was nearly meaningless to the Japanese who usually wash clothes in cold water.

~

An American couple traveled with their pet poodle in an Asian country. Dining at a restaurant they had difficulty communicating to the waiter that their dog was also hungry. They were initially pleased when the waiter took the dog to the kitchen, supposedly to be fed—but were horrified when the waiter returned later with the cooked dog! One company printed the "OK" finger sign on each page of its catalog. In many parts of Latin America that is considered an obscene gesture. Six months of work were lost because they had to reprint all the catalogs.

~

Proctor & Gamble introduced Cheer laundry detergent in Japan with the add showing it rich with suds. However, the Japanese use large amounts of water and fabric softener and the suds did not develop. Cheer was also advertised to work at all temperatures, which is relatively meaningless to the Japanese who generally wash in cold water. In Africa, Gerber marketed its famous babyfood with the picture of the Gerber baby on the label. They did not know that this particular country uses labels only to present a picture of the food inside!

~

An ad promoting United Air Lines indicated that "We know the Orient." To graphically support the point the ad paired the names of countries below the pictures of foreign coins. Many tourists were not convinced since the countries and coins did not correspond! Not to be outdone, for it's in-flight magazine, UAL headlined an article about Paul Hogan, star of Crocodile Dundee. The title said, "Paul Hogan Camps it up" which unfortunately is Australian slang for "flaunting homosexuality." Johnson baby powder was marketed in Japan but it failed on its first try. Japanese homes are very small and simplicity and neatness are paramount. Consumers could not tolerate the dust that collected everywhere when the box was shaken. (J&J later adopted a wipe on pad).

~

Proctor and Gamble did not realize that Japanese parents change baby diapers more frequently than do American parents, but often do not have the storage space. Sales were poor until P&G realized their error and made smaller boxes and thinner diapers.

~

General Foods tried to market Jell-O in Great Britain in the same way it had effectively marketed the product in the U.S. Unfortunately, gelatin is sold only in its jellied form and the powdered is not considered proper. Problems were barely avoided by a quick product change.

~

Nike made a television ad promoting it's shoes, with people from different countries saying "Just do it" in their native language. Too late they found out that a Samburu African tribesman was really saying, "I don't want these, give me big shoes."

~

A Hong Kong banker was discouraged because local customers would not come to his office. He asked local business people who told him it was due to "bad feng shui." He consulted a geomancer who advised him to move to another office that was more propitious—and his clients eagerly used his excellent services. When President George Bush went to Japan with Lee Iacocca and other American business magnates, and directly made explicit and direct demands on Japanese leaders, they violated Japanese etiquette. To the Japanese (who use high context language) it is considered rude and a sign of ignorance or desperation to lower oneself to make direct demands. Some analysts believe it severely damaged the negotiations and confirmed to the Japanese that Americans are barbarians.

~

Leona Helmsley should have done her homework before she approved a promotion that compared her Helmsley Palace Hotel in New York as comparable to the Taj Mahal—a mausoleum in India.

~

Time Magazine ran an ad in Spanish in its Brazilian edition—forgetting that the primary language in Brazil is Portuguese.

~

A shoestore in Bangladesh was destroyed when local Muslims became offended with a Thom McAn logo on some sandals was mistaken for the Arabic characters for Allah.

~

McDonnell Douglas Corporation had difficulties in India with a promotional brochure of its aircraft. It had inadvertently used old photos from National Geographic that portrayed turbaned men who were Pakistanis, not Indians.

~

In 1989 the Polaroid company decided to introduce a slide copier into the European market. The failed to realize that standard paper sizes vary considerably and made late adjustments at unexpected extra expense.

~

A golf ball manufacturing company packaged golf balls in packs of four for convenient purchase in Japan. Unfortunately, pronunciation of the word "four" in Japanese sounds like the word "death" and items packaged in fours are unpopular.

~

A major soapmaker test marketed a soap name in 50 countries, and what it found was enough to make them change the name. The proposed name meant "dainty" in most European languages, "song" in Gaelic, "aloof" in Flemish, "horse" in one African language, "dim-witted" in Persian, "crazy" in Korean, and was obscene in Slavic languages.

~

General Motors of Canada was fortunate enough to sell 13,500 Chevy Malibu's to Iraq—only to discover that the hot and dusty climate was incompatible with the cars. Iraq refused delivery of 12,000, and while GM attempted to reengineer the cars, Iraq experienced political problems and the cars were never delivered.

~

A college student was talking with an English friend, found her wardrobe attractive, and complimented her "pants." The friend laughed, knowing that Americans did not understand that "pants" to Brits referred to underware.

~

A soft drink was introduced into Arab countries with an attractive label that had stars on it—six-pointed stars. The Arabs interpreted this as pro-Israeli and refused to buy it. Another label was printed in ten languages, one of which was Hebrew—again the Arabs did not buy it.

~

American medical containers were distributed in Great Britain and caused quite a stir. The instructions to "Take off top and push in bottom," innocuous to Americans, had very strong sexual connotations to the British.

~

In 1985 Bechtel pulled out of a joint venture in New Guinea. It seemed flawed from the start. Bechtel had 33 months to build a new plant, organize services, and meet a production deadline or face financial penalties. They planned to place a mine at the top of a mountain in an isolated rain forest, creating a town of 2,500, camps for 400, a power plant, air strip, roads, hospitals,

and support services (for natives who had never seen a Westerner). The natives who were recruited to work (while receiving 400 inches of rain during the rainy season) had no concept of private property, modern money, central government, or work regulations. The multicultural workforce of 5,000 was composed of mixed indigenous people and imported technicians from the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Korea, and Philippines. The road builders did not believe in working around the clock (the contractor finally went bankrupt). Natives also did not like the work schedule so they went with bows and arrows to shut down telephone lines, roads, and frighten personnel. There was an 85% turnover in the native workforce.

~

FEDEX (Federal Express) wisely chose to expand overseas when it discovered the domestic market was saturated. However, the centralized or "hub and spoke" delivery system that was so successful domestically was inappropriate for overseas distribution. In addition, they failed to consider cultural differences: In Spain the workers preferred very late office hours, and in Russia the workers took truck cleaning soap home due to consumer shortages. FEDEX finally shut down over 100 European operations after $1.2 billion in losses.

~

Coca Cola tried marketing its domestically successful two liter bottle in Spain. It finally withdrew the bottle from the Spanish market when it discovered that the refrigerator compartments were too small to hold the liter size. [Note: a recent e-mail from a student who works for Coke in Spain refutes this, reporting that it was taken off the market for design and recycling reasons and later reintroduced— Thanks Rob!]

~

A U.S. napkin company advertised in Great Britain that "You could use no finer napkin at your dinner table." Sales were hardly brisk given that to the British "napkin" means "diaper."

~

In Quebec an American-based canned fish manufacturer placed a newspaper ad that showed a woman in shorts playing golf with a man. The ad continued that she could enjoy golf that afternoon and still have time to prepare a dinner of canned fish. Too bad that the ad missed the customs that women did not wear shorts on golf courses, play golf with mixed teams, or serve canned fish as a main course.

~

The Disney Corporation misjudged the amount of food and accommodation needs, and souvenir spending practices of people visiting EuroDisney in France. The demands were so low that the 1,100 room Newport Bay Club was temporarily closed during the Winter months of 1992.

~

U.S. and British negotiators found themselves at a standstill when the American company proposed that they "table" particular key points. In the U.S. "Tabling a motion" means to not discuss it, while the same phrase in Great Britain means to "bring it to the table for discussion."

~

An American banker in England drew nervous laughter when he unintentionally made an after dinner speech in which he indicated he was "full" and "stuffed" after dinner. The terms imply being drunk and sexually involved in British slang.

~

McDonald's received many complaints from local authorities in 1988 when it displayed the Mexican national flag on its placemats. The Mexicans were offended by grease and ketchup defacing their national symbol and quickly confiscated the place mats.

~

Mountain Bell Company tried to promote its telephone and services to Saudi's. Its ad portrayed an executive talking on the phone with his feet propped up on the desk, showing the soles of his shoes— something an Arab would never do!

The American slogan for Salem cigarettes (Salem—feeling free!) was trnaslated in the Japanese market as "When smoking Salem, you feel so refreshed that your mind seems to be free and empty."

~

An American t-shirt maker in Miami printed shirts for the Spanish market which promoted the Pope's visit. Instead of the desired, "I saw the Pope," in Spanish, it proclaimed, "I saw the Potato."

~

Chicken-man Frank Perdue's slogan, "It takes a tough man to make a tender chicken," was remarkably mistranslated into Spanish. A picture of Perdue with one os his birds appeared on billboards all over Mexico with the caption, "It takes a man to make a chicken aroused."

~

In Italy, a campaign for Schweppes Tonic Water translated the name into "Schweppes Toilet Water."

~

China is sensitive to Japanese economic overtures due to its conflict with them during the war. However, the growing economy in China has led Japan to introduce the Toyota Predo land cruiser sport-utility vehicle, to the car-hungry Chinese market. They unfortunately did not do much market research since the name sounds a lot like *badao, which also means "to rule by force"* or *"overbearing."* The ads also showed stone lions (traditional symbol of Chinese power) saluting and bowing to the Prado, which resulted in the Japanese formally apologizing for the 30 magazine and news ads.

~

Think this is the last entry? Not on your life! Read the paper every day and you can find examples just like these...

Notes

LESSON 19
BARRIERS IN EFFECTIVE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Contents
Introduction, What are barriers? Types of communication barriers, Cultral barriers, breaking barriers.

Learning Objectives:
- To understand the concept of barrier in communication.
- To learn how to break cultural barriers.

Introduction
The human communication system can be compared with a radio or telephone circuit. Just as in radio transmissions, where distortion can occur at any point along the circuit (channel), there can be similar barriers in human communication. The source's information may be insufficient or unclear. Or the message can be ineffectively or inaccurately encoded. The wrong channel of communication may be used. The message may not be decoded the way it was encoded. Finally, the receiver may not equipped to handle the decoded message in such a way as to produce the response (feedback) expected by the source.

'Barriers' are any obstacles or difficulties that come in the way of communication. They may be physical, mechanical, psychological cultural or linguistic in nature. In business communication, for instance, the major obstacles arise because of the set-up of an organisation - the organizational barriers. The size of an organisation the physical distance between employees of an organisation, the specialization of jobs and activities, and the power and status relationships, are the main organizational barriers. Besides, then are the barriers, raised by interpersonal relationships between individual and groups, the prejudices of both individuals and groups and the channels they use to communicate. Barriers to communication also occur if the sender and receiver are not on the same "wavelength." This is as true in human communication as it is in radio transmission. On the human level, being on the same wavelength involves shared experiences. That is, the source can encode only in terms of the experiences he or she has had. This is why two people from completely different cultures may find it difficult, if not impossible, to communicate.

In the 'jargon' of communication, all barriers whatever their natural are clubbed under a common label- 'noise'. A term from modem physics it denotes not only atmospheric or channel disturbance, but all barriers that distort communications in any manner.

Physical Barriers
Four main kinds of distractions act as 'physical barriers' to the communication process. These are:

(1) The Competing Stimulus in the form of another conversation going on within hearing distance, or loud music or traffic noise in the background. The cawing of crows or a plane passing overhead can, for example, drown out messages altogether.

(2) Environmental Stress: A high temperature and humidity, poor ventilation, vibrations felt, a strong glare - all can contribute to distortions in the sending and receiving of messages.

(3) Subjective Stress: Sleeplessness, ill health, the effects of drugs and mood variations give rise to forms of subjective stress that often lead to great difficulties in listening and interpretation.

(4) Ignorance of the Medium: The various media for communication are: oral, written, audio, visual and audiovisual. The use of a medium with which the communicators are not familiar would turn the medium itself into a barrier.

Psychological Barriers
Each of us has a certain 'frame of reference', a kind of window through which we look out at the world, at people, and events and situations. A frame of reference is a system of standards and values, usually implicit, underlying and to some extent controlling an action, or the expression of any belief, attitude or idea. No two individuals possess exactly similar frames of reference, even if they are identical twins. To a large extent our experiences, particularly our childhood experiences, and the cultural environment we have grown up in influence our frames of reference.

Linguistics and Cultural Barriers
A language is the expression of the thoughts and experiences of people in terms of their cultural environment. When the same language is made use of in a different culture, it takes on another colour, another meaning.

Mechanical Barriers
Mechanical barriers are those raised by the channels employed for interpersonal, group or mass communication. Channels become barrier when the message is interfered with by some disturbance, which (1) increased the difficulty in reception or (2) prevented some elements of the message reaching its destination or both. The absence communication facilities too would be a mechanical barrier.

This type of barrier includes any disturbance, which interferes with the fidelity of the physical transmission of the message. A telephone that is in poor working order, making demands on the yelling ability of Sender and Receiver, is a mechanical barrier in interpersonal communication. So also is 'cross-talk' often heard over an 'intercom' link in an office, or during long-distance calls. In Group Communication, a rundown or 'whistling microphone, and wrong placement of loudspeakers are disturbances which are mechanical in nature. (the communicator who stands too close or too far from the mike is another matter). In mass communication, mechanical barriers would include such disturbances as static on the radio, smeared ink in a newspaper, a rolling screen on television, a barely readable

point-size, or a film projector or video that does not function perfectly.

Cultural Barriers to Effective Communication

Effective communication with people of different cultures is especially challenging. Cultures provide people with ways of thinking—ways of seeing, hearing, and interpreting the world. Thus the same words can mean different things to people from different cultures, even when they talk the "same" language. When the languages are different, and translation has to be used to communicate, the potential for misunderstandings increases.

Stella Ting-Toomey describes three ways in which culture interferes with effective cross-cultural understanding. First is what sahe calls "cognitive constraints." These are the frames of reference or world views that provide a backdrop that all new information is compared to or inserted into.

Second are "behavior constraints." Each culture has its own rules about proper behavior which affect verbal and nonverbal communication. Whether one looks the other person in the eye-or not; whether one says what one means overtly or talks around the issue; how close the people stand to each other when they are talking—all of these and many more are rules of politeness which differ from culture to culture.

Ting-Toomey's third factor is "emotional constraints." Different cultures regulate the display of emotion differently. Some cultures get very emotional when they are debating an issue. They yell, they cry, they exhibit their anger, fear, frustration, and other feelings openly. Other cultures try to keep their emotions hidden, exhibiting or sharing only the "rational" or factual aspects of the situation.

All of these differences tend to lead to communication problems. If the people involved are not aware of the potential for such problems, they are even more likely to fall victim to them, although it takes more than awareness to overcome these problems and communicate effectively across cultures.

Breaking Communication Barriers

We live in a culturally diverse world. People will encounter individuals from different races, religions, and nationalities in their day to day encounters. There is often anxiety surrounding unfamiliar cultures. What manners are acceptable? What will offend a person from a very different background? It can be paralyzing to deal with other people if we do not know what to expect. The following suggestions discussed in the manual, Becoming a Master Student, by Dave Ellis are applicable to people in a variety of settings.

The desire to communicate is the first step in being effective. No matter what tools you gain in cross cultural communication - The desire to connect with another human being is the bond that will express itself clearly. A genuine effort to understand another person goes along way in the path to communication.

Knowing about other cultures will help you develop your skills. Be proactive when approaching a new culture. This is a learned skill which means it will require research, practice, and growth. People from different backgrounds may have varied approaches to conflict management, learning styles, family structure, religion, and most other aspects of life. It is impossible to

know the varied systems of all cultures, so approach this process one culture at a time as you meet and deal with new people.

When dealing with diverse people look for similarities. Our goals, dreams, and aspirations may be more alike than our skin color. Parenting approaches may differ, but the common bond of a mother and a child crosses many barriers. Most people have basic needs in common, like Maslow's hierarchy of needs that suggest all people have physiological, safety, acceptance, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs. Considering these things it is easy to see our essential common ground. And this is where we can begin our comprehension of others.

Put your new information about other people into action. Make a personal inventory of your own biases. Where has your ignorance held you back from appreciating other people? What have you learned that makes this old paradigm obsolete? Help to educate people in your family and group of friends about your new leanings. Be careful. People become attached to their ignorance, and have difficulty accepting new ideas. It may have taken you a while to gain the knowledge necessary to deal with people. Encourage others to be open, but know that information is integrated when a person is ready to accept it. Form alliances with people from different cultures to know what challenges they have dealing with your culture. Help the general community to grow by raising awareness and promoting fair treatment for all people.

It is important as you become a promoter of cross cultural communications that you reach beyond stereotypes. These do not represent the population they seek to identify. It is necessary to evaluate people on an individual basis. Stereotypes often reflect the differences in socioeconomic status, religion, or dialect. These differences are apparent in all races and cannot identify one specific group of people. It is important to suspend judgment, avoid misconceptions, narrow perspectives, and immature reactions. Stereotypes often contain a granule of truth, but this tiny truth cannot characterize an entire culture. Getting the whole picture is being active, and thinking critically about people and their behavior.

Ultimately the barriers that exist between cultures are weak We need desire, information, and the willingness to take interpersonal risks to break them. An individual's ability to be open to new ideas and new people will go a long way in the process of cross cultural communication. It starts with a smile and acceptance. It leads to an exciting new world full of clarity and connectedness.

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LESSON 20
TRENDS IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Learning Objectives:

- To get familiar with latest trends in intercultural communication.
- To learn how different media are contributing in intercultural communication.
- To understand how films can contribute in intercultural communication.

Trends in intercultural communication

At the end of the 20th century the world in general, and the developed world in particular is presenting itself in a new outlook. The Western model of liberal democratic societies has been victorious over authoritarian systems in Latin America and Europe. In our society we can see a change in political groups and activism: politics is no longer emphasizes itself as the binding and controlling mechanism of social cohesion and democratic legislation, but presents itself as the national regulator of the neo liberal world economy. The consciousness of many political and scientific elites is subdued to this neoliberal worldview, regarding the problems of social integration and democratic legitimization only in the terms of a cost-benefit-analysis and utility preferences.

By the way of 'globalization', as a result of the internationalization of commodity flows, migratory movements, pollution and information, the classical congruence of nation, state, and democracy is in a process of dissolution. The pressures of deregulation have forced states to give up protective barriers, and sovereign powers, on a large scale to provide the underlying economy with sufficiently large markets. More and more powers of the nation states are transferred to intergovernmental institutions, providing themselves with tools more powerful than those of the dissolving states, and it seems acting with a never increasing expansionism. The rise in the consciousness of sub-state-nations and stateless nations is equally a threat for the traditional order and reflects the political reorganization of the world.

In the advent of the neoliberal world-order, the subjective reality, and cultural integrity, of the individual has become under increasing attack by new means of international communication and information flow. The dominance of global players in the media is a phenomenon that can not be left untouched. The emergence of the global concepts of movies, shows and series, as well as the emergence of a global audience of a concentrated media ownership, with its impact on program contents, is a concept without precedence. Modern media content is characterized by a never ending stream of popular and mass culture oriented programming and has banned alternative views and discussions from the consciousness of the mass audience. While fighting for viewer ratings, the programming of most stations is dominated by economic interest factors rather than intellectual context. In the truest sense of the word, the culture has been comodified and is viewed as a cost-benefit factor for the attainment of the global media audience and the global information society. Politics has not been left untouched by this new global information society, and presents itself under the pressure of the popular, where context has often been sacrificed for media-representation and mass audience appeal.

Global Business

The changing business environment, the changes in communication technology, the political changes, encourage and facilitate the emergence of global business, transnational companies and the emergence of common markets around the world.

Free Trade and Common Markets

Free-trade agreements, such as NAFTA or more dynamic organizations such as the European Union, have given rise to enormous possible markets for a large amount of companies. The premise of 'globalization' is in fact the most important single concept emerging in today's market economies.

With the emergence of a global economy, the export of business culture and business interests is evident. Today most bigger companies are run no longer in a 'national' way, but are strongly influenced by one management style or another; a massive export of Anglo-Saxon or Asian business culture, and their respective values.

Foreign Direct Investment, TNCs, Oligopolization

Foreign direct investment rose from $68 billion in 1960 to $2.1 trillion 1993, tripling between 1985 and 1993, showing a more rapid pace of globalization (UNCTAD,1994). The largest part of this investment was accounted for in the three major economic regions: US, Western Europe and Japan.

While the numbers of transnational corporation rose from 7,000 to 37,000 from 1973 to 1993, with 206,000 overseas affiliates (UNCTAD, 1993), the structure equally changed from largely independent overseas subsidiaries and affiliates to integrated operations: in 1990 intra-firm trade accounted for around one third of world trade.

While the number of TNCs has increased immensely, the markets also experience an enormous oligopolization, as competitors are going out of business or are merged into existing operations. Examples of this trend are numerous. Only two companies manufacture, for example, jet airplanes, and one company supplies 80% of the worlds computers with operating systems. In areas where there are still numerous players, the joint ventures, mergers and co-operation agreements have also been the dominant paradigm of the recent years: examples include the telecom co-operations like Global One and Unisource, and of course the recent merger of Chrysler-Daimler (and Nissan's commercial vehicle unit).

Capitalism and Western Culture Export

Morley and Robins explore critically the concepts of the globalization in the light of cultural change: "Historical capitalism has , of course, always strained to become a world system. The perpetual quest to maximize accumulation has always compelled geographic expansion in search of new markets, raw materials, sources of cheap labor and so on. The histories of trade and migration, of missionary and military conquest, of imperialism and neo-imperialism, mark the various strategies and stages that have, by the late twentieth century, made capitalism a truly global force. If this process has brought about the organization of production and the control of markets on a world scale, it has also, of course, had profound political and cultural consequences. For all that it has projected itself as transhistorical and transnational, as the transcendent and universalizing force of modernization and modernity, global capitalism has in reality been about Western-ization - the export of Western commodities, values, priorities, ways of life. In a process of unequal cultural encounter, 'foreign' populations have been compelled to be the subjects and subalterns of Western empire, while, no less significantly, the West has come to face with the 'alien' and exotic culture of its 'Other'. Globalization, as it dissolves the barriers of distance, makes the encounter of colonial center and colonized periphery immediate and intense" (1995:108).

Political and Socio-economical Changes

From colonial power to neoliberal Europe

The current century has seen a magnitude of rise and fall of political power and economical, political, social and structural changes, which without doubt have influenced any society's culture that was touched. From the imperial ages early this century, Europe in particular has seen the decline of the colonial power, the democratization and communization, the rise and fall of totalitarian, nationalistic and socialist regimes, and their decline. Europe has also experienced the fall from economic and political superpower, in a century that was for a long time been best characterized as the USSR-USA century. Equally Asia has been struck by fundamental changes: from the imperial China to the communist China, the rise of the Tiger Economies, the Vietnam war, the Korean war, the independence of India, the Iran Iraq war, the Gulf war,... to name just a few.

This summary of some main political, economical and structural changes can only highlight some of the movements that have taken place in the recent past. It can not, and does not attempt to be a fully fledged analysis of current political trends, but merely a overview of some changes that have influenced national culture in Europe and beyond. For the Western part of Europe, the end of WW2 marked the era of a new beginning. With fall of the Third Reich and the Mussolini state came the separation of Europe into East and West, into democracy and communism, a major driving force for the recent history, and cultural changes.

European Integration

After the wars of 1870, 1914 and 1939, for the first time the European continent embarked onto a mission to calm the national tension between France and Germany. Monet, Schumann, Adenauer and de Gasperi provided the new framework for the vision of a politically and economically united Europe, and the 'rapprochement' of the former powers Germany and France. Driven by Adenauer and de Gaulle, after his return to power in 1958, the EEC, merged in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome, was a major driving force in Europe, and provided, at least for some, the viable alternative to regain the power lost to the USA and the Soviets after WW2. Other, similar organizations, such as the Council of Europe and to a lesser extend the Brussels Pact of 1948 attempted a less fixed program of integration, and creation of a common market.

NATO, established in 1949, on the other side, was a clear organization born out of the division of the world into the two major influence zones, and provided a mechanism of military defense of those states with a neoliberal worldview towards the threat of those operating under the socialistic paradigm. EFTA on the other hand provided Europe with the alternative version of a unified market, but political autonomy.

The quest to establish a common European market, the extension of the neoliberal world order, was the driving force in the European integration that has been a major force in the past 50 years or so.

Revolt and Social Change: May 1968

After W.W.II, Western Europe became the 'anti-Communist bastion', and moved to the center of the cold war, while at the same time trying to cope with its recent past. In Germany in particular this lead to enormous potential unrest, fueled by the introduction of the 'Emergency Situation Laws' (Notstandsgesetze) and the Spiegel-Scandal. Coupled with a formerly unknown witch-hunt for alleged communist activities and the rise of neo-fascism in Germany of the 60s, the student movement got heavily politicized. Other reasons for the unrest potential included the Vietnam War, particularly in the US and in recently war torn Europe. The killing of Martin Luther King, followed by the killing of 46, 2,100 wounded and some 21,000 arrests in the US caused further outrage in the US and in other countries whose political regimes were close to that.

The writings of Herbert Marcuse and the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School were the most widely acknowledged base of the student movements in Europe. Particularly the notion, by Marcuse, that the working classes have lost their revolutional potential, and it could only be the students, intellectuals and social outsiders who could evoke a revolution, was a major influence factor for the students movements in Germany and France. The criticism of the political activism by the press lead to further rise of the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory and the Dialectics of Enlightenment. While however those works were highly analytical and critical of the commercialization and commodification of the news and media in general, they fell short of providing a reasonable alternative vision to the student movement. This missing vision was soon to be replaced by the works of Mao, Marx and Che Guevara, calling for an active revolution.

The student revolt reached its high points during April and May 1968: Particularly in France, where the students gained the support of the workers, and some 10 million people went on strike, calling for political reforms. The government of de Gaulle had to make far reaching compromises and abandon the

further liberalization of the French economy as a result of the unrest. In Germany, where the students did not seek the support of the workers, and hence the protests remained mainly confined to student-police fights, the new government of 1969, a social-democrat-liberal coalition, introduced many ideas of the student revolt into their programs, and issued a far reaching amnesty for the prisoners kept after the revolts. The reform of the German educational system for example, the reformed second cycle of the grammar schools and the comprehensive schools are direct results of the 68 movement. Equally, the emerging of the Green party can be widely attributed to the students of 68.

On a more universal level, the feminist movement , the abortion discussion and liberalization, sexual liberalization as well as the peace movement have found a vital support in the 68 movement and much progress can be attributed to the 68 movement in Europe and the Flower-Power movement in the US.

However, the movement fell short to convince the politics for the need of any economic reforms, with the exception of France, where however the economic reforms were less than hardly visible.

Extension of Power: the fall of Franco

The quest for democratization, and with it the extension of the neoliberal market economy, particularly in western Europe, took its next step when the last remaining totalitarian regime ended with the death of Franco in 1975, and the democratization of Spain resulting in the general election of 1977 and the constitution of 1978. With the return of such symbolic figures as Josep Tarradellas, Dolores Ibarruri and Felipe Gonzalez Spain's path to democracy and her becoming part of what has often been called Churchill's vision of the 'House of Europe' seemed secured. With the failed putsch attempt in 1981, the golpe, the rule of the military in Spain finally came to an end. With Spain's entry into NATO in 1982, the symbolically strong opening of the Gibraltar boarder in 1985, and the membership in European Community in 1986 Spain joined the democratic states of the West, and the common market.

Extending the neoliberal world view to the East

The next major step in the history of Europe was the fall of communism, and with it the division of Europe. With the Soviet president Mikahail Gorbachev the policies of glasnost, perestroika and uskoreniye rose. In the light of the new policy, Hungary passed its draft law on independent public associations in 1988, a major step towards ending communist party rule. With the first free election in Poland in June 1989 and the collapse of the regimes of the GDR, the most symbolic of all collapses with the fall of the Berlin Wall, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania in November and December the division of Europe started came to an end. In March 1990 Lithuania was the first of fifteen Soviet republics to declare independence, and the shedding of Article 6 of the Soviet constitution; ending the Party's leading role. In April Hungary saw its first democratic elections since 1947, with the conservative Magyar Democratic Forum forming the first democratically elected government, and, in a later election, the first democratic president, the Free Democrat Göncz Árpád . 1991 started with the ill-fated attempt

to crush nationalist secession among the Soviet republics, particularly in Vilnius and Riga. The equally ill-fated coup in August in Moscow ended with the rise of Boris Yeltsin to become the dominant figure in Russia, and finally the Soviet Union got officially dissolved on New Years Eve. The later confrontations, the siege of the White House and Ostankino Television Tower, in October 1993, also ended with Yeltsin remaining in power.

Eastern Europe today is still in a transition to a full neoliberal order, but the necessary infrastructure has been build up. Extensive support from the Western nations for the changes towards market economy, and heavy investment have been streaming in ever since. The media landscape has been revolutionized, with commercial channels broadcasting in all countries of the former East, offering the same diet of programs as everywhere else in the West.

Yugoslavia

Europe's most bloody recent transition must be the fall of Yugoslavia. After the death of Communist leader Tito in 1980, both Croatian and Serbian nationalism fueled immensely. Under the leadership of Slobodan Milosovic Serbian nationalism gained momentum in 1988/9, and resulted in the walkout of the Slovenian and Croatian delegations during the 14th Special Congress of the League of Communists in January 1990. The victory of HDZ, the Croatian Democratic Union, under the leadership of the right-winger Franjo Tudjman in April 1990, lead to further tension. With Slovenia and Croatia breaking away from Yugoslavia, and rising tension and breakaway movements in ethnic mixed regions such as Krajina, Kosovo, Sandzzak etc. Once again, concentration camps, massacre, rape and terror returned to Europe. In the words of Branka Magras: " the year 1992, scheduled to be a milestone on the road to European unity, has seen Sarajevo and other Bosnian cities slowly bombarded to pieces and their inhabitants starved before the television eyes of the world" (1992).

The support for the extreme right in Croatia, by the Western governments, has given rise to far spread criticism of the interest of extending markets rather than looking for the 'guilty ones' and fostering true democracy.

New Democrats, New Labor and Neue Mitte

Together with the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe came another political phenomenon: the virtual collapse of the traditional left in political culture. In the US, the UK and in Germany, the traditionally left parties have left the vision of social democracy and committed themselves to largely neoliberal targets; the links to trade unions have largely been stopped, the Calvinist ethic of the 'responsibility of the individual' rather than the collective responsibility has been introduced, deregulation and liberalization of markets has become priority, together with those elements that help the economical progress: tax cuts and restructuring of the welfare state.

Nowhere else has the swing of the left to a promoter of neoliberal politics been more evident than in the UK: the conservative Tories have been left without any vision and program, trying to respond to what used to be their political field, and is now Labor's domain: the economy. Since 1997 it is

Blair's 'Deal with the City' (and Clinton's 'Alliance with Wall Street') that promote a completely new vision of the social democrats: the market economy. The social-democratic visions of Roosevelt and Johnson, the 'Great Society', have been abandoned by US Democrats, and the slogan 'Leistung muss sich wieder lohnen' (performance must be rewarded again), in 1989 used by the conservative CDU in Germany is now guiding principle of the SPD (social-democrats) party program for the 1998 elections.

Western Politics and Commercial Influence
The question, what are the intentions of Western politics is one with probably as may viewpoints as participants in the debate. The interconnection of economy and politics can however not be underestimated.

Western politics still sees itself as a regulator of the capitalist economy in its states, however, it is equally involved in opening up opportunities and markets for the national economies, sometimes at the expense of democracy, but always under the guise of it. Those that comply with the opening of markets have been given lavish support, although they did not play by all the rules of Western democracy: Carlos Salinas in Mexico, Carlos Menem in Argentina and Boris Yeltsin in Russia are examples of this. Even dictatorships have been supported for 'creating a favorite climate of investment': Pinochet in Chile, Marcos in the Philippines and Suharto in Indonesia. Others, refusing to comply with the neoliberal order had to endure boycotts and even military intervention: Cuba and Nicaragua.

The quick intervention of the US in the Gulf is one of the most widely discussed cases in the scenario of the Western states as protectors of economic interest, the destabilization of the Allende government in Chile by CIA actions another. Protectionism, in the forms of quotas and tariffs as well as subsidization of products shows other areas where the governments seem to at least largely defend industrial rather than consumer interests.

The problematic situation, and the need for politics to bow down to economic pressure, and hence to more often neglect social and ecological issues is highlighted by Uwe Jean Heuse: "Einzelstaaten sind unfähig, ihr Sozialrechte und Umweltnormen gegen Globalunternemen durchzusetzen. Die vaterlandslosen Aktiengesellschaften finden immer einen Weg, nationale Bestimmungen auszuhebeln und einen Staat gegen den anderen auszuspielen" (The single states are unable to implement their social laws and ecological norms against [the pressure of] the global corporations. The homelandless PLCs always find a way to get around national directives, and to play with one state against the other). (1998:1).

An even darker image about the power of politicians is painted by Herman and McChesney: "By 1996 Forbes magazine exulted in the fact that the world's governments, be they ostensibly left or right, could no longer 'interfere' with the prerogatives of business without suffering an economic punishment that would bring them down; governments have effectively lost their power to govern. Political debate and institutions therefore have largely become irrelevant" (1997:32).

Conclusion
The foregoing presentation of major political changes can efficiently be used to present major impact on cultures. The changes that have been presented have significantly changed the value orientation of societies: from Russia to Portugal, from Ireland to Greece. The fundamental impact a change in political and economic environment can have on the social structures and values of a society can at no stage be left unconsidered. Even a relatively 'short' event, like the Gulf war can show major shifts in the self-understanding of a society: Lloyd deMause (1990) describes that prior to the Gulf war "American national culture has been characterized by feelings of guilt, depression and sinfulness - partly linked to the 'Vietnam Syndrome'. " After the war ,"in George Bush's words, America could finally 'kick the Vietnam Syndrome'. What the war offered was the possibility of renewal and revitalization: America could rediscover its moral purpose and emotional wholeness ... This epic spectacle sustained a sense of national integrity and moral regeneration."

A simple consideration of the force of the impact of the gulf war and the far more fundamental changes that have occurred in other parts of the world will be able to explain the need for political environment consideration when explaining shifts in culture.

At the same time, politics as such have become less important: the political institutions have come under pressure from a more and more global industry, resulting in more dramatic changes towards a full scale, neoliberal world order.

Media Trends

Influence of the media on society
Media can "serve to repress as well as to liberate, to unite as well as fragment society, both to promote and to hold back change" (McQuail, 1994: 64). This makes media an extremely powerful tool, a promoter of social, structural and cultural change, a role model for those that follow it.

Mass media, television, cinema, magazines and newspapers are a power factor. McQuail summarizes their potential as:

- Attracting and directing public attention
- Persuasion in matters of opinion and belief
- Influencing behavior
- Structuring definitions of reality
- Conferring status and legitimacy
- Informing quickly and extensively
- (idem., 1994:64).

Given the power potential of the mass media, the question of who's reality is presented; who owns the media and in whose interest, are the dominant questions in discussing the impact of media in the culture transformation of society.

Decline of the Public Broadcasting in Europe
During the 1980s Europe has seen a dramatic restructuring of its media landscape: the emergence of commercial television and a genuinely global commercial media market. This has brought about the relative decline of the former state, and often independent broadcasters. In the wave of general deregulation,

the public broadcasters were diminished in importance, and became subject to the viewer ratings war in order to maintain their financial support.

In reflecting the role of the public broadcasters, Herman and McChesney conclude: "If their [the public broadcasters] performance is poor, people will be ignorant, isolated, and depoliticized, demagoguery will thrive, and a small elite will easily capture and maintain control over decision-making on society's most important political matters" (1997:4).

Equally Jürgen Habermas described that the public sphere works best, where it is free from society's political and economic pressures. This statement must alarm anyone, who is researching the impact of the decline of public broadcasting, and the influence of the current media landscape.

The emergence of Commercial Broadcasting
Various literature focuses on the "global conglomerates" that control a large amount of the media to date. Herman and McChesney (1997) identify 6 global players: News Corporation, Time-Warner, Disney, TCI and Bertelsmann. Their interests in European media and other, dominant players is presented in annex 1.

Table 3 The five largest media conglomerates Company Country Turnover $bTime-WarnerUSA18.7Walt Disney / ABC Capital USA16.4BertelsmannGermany13.9ViacomUSA11.0News CorporationAustralia9.3 (Die Zeit, Edition 08.09.1995)

Other than the main players world-wide, media ownership is also characterized by other corporations on a less large scale. However, the concentration in media ownership, and its interconnectedness to the economic powers can not be easily dismissed. The influence of each individual owner, and their clients, on the social reality transmitted via their respective media is of course the clue to the social reality as perceived by the viewers. This is not to say, that the viewer is a passive receiver and remains critique-less in front of the image of the world that is presented to him. But the way that information and images of reality is transmitted and displayed can have significant impact.

Table 4 Production PricesCountryProduction costBuy-in price Germany400.00060.000

France471.25047.500

UK546.30070.000 Italy400.00042.500 Spain264.00016.000 Production and buy-in price of one hour of drama in US$ at the beginning of the 90s. (Meckel, 1996, 148).Commercial, global media contentCommercial stations rely exclusively on the advertising revenue generated. They are trapped between providing mass appealing content and economic pressures to reach certain audiences, and influence their behavior. The solution to the problem is of course the co-production, export and copying of viewer catching, mass appealing and profoundly popular culture programming, that sustains and supports the interests of the economy. A view that is contradictory to the intentions of the advertising purchasers can not be allowed to be aired or printed. Equally, the media are subject to the scrutiny and regulation by political powers, who in turn are equally influenced by the economic power base. The view, the social

reality that is constructed in the media hence has to based on sustaining the political and economical order.

Media contents presents itself today as a global form of entertainment. The concepts of game shows, talk shows, soaps and films are equally created around the world to mirror one type of society. What works in one country is exported heavily through a complex network of distribution and co-operation agreements as well as economic interests in stations in other countries than their homebase. 'Dallas', 'Dynasty', 'Roseanne', 'Ellen' and 'Married With Children', 'Nurses' and 'Golden Girls', 'X-Files', 'Startreck', 'the Simpsons', all are example of universally distributed programs on TV. Game shows like 'The Price is Right' and '5 versus 5' are produced around the world, and even Japanese concepts, long-time deemed as purely local entertainment, provide now a form of global entertainment in the form of the game show 'Endurance'.

Figure 1 Co-operation and Distribution Agreements of some media companies (1996)Co-operation and global distributionMost of the first and second tier media firms have distribution and co-operation agreements with the other players. For example: Disney has co-operation agreements with Bertelsmann, NBC and TCI, Kirch, CLT Ufa, Canal Plus and TF1. Some even have joint channels: such as Viacom and Time-Warner with the "Comedy Channel". For a more in-depth discussion of this phenomenon, the reader is referred to Herman & McChesney's book "Global Media" which analyses the global distribution and ownership in depth. In another interesting look at the European (or active in Europe) media moguls, Berlusconi, Kirch and Murdoch , Kleinsteuber points out that all of them have co-operation and distribution agreements. He discusses the influences, and in particular the differences of the "mogul" companies and the more capital based companies, like Viacom or Time-Warner. He traces, for example, that Berlusconi has joint-ventures with Kirch both in Germany, France and Italy, and co-production agreements with both Kirch and Murdoch (Kleinsteuber,1996, p.136f.). The influence of Bertoluscoat's political ambitions on the content of his media certainly highlights the dangers of such a political-economical mix of mass influencing power.

Diversification into Multimedia Services
Another trend is the diversification into multimedia services, jointly produced with telecommunications and information providers. Some of the alliances are detailed below. The quest for the 'dominance of the mind' reaches far beyond the current perspective that is detailed in this section. With the emergence of the multimedia conglomerates the message of the media conglomerates reaches even further beyond the current limits, and the globalization of content can be driven to new highs.

Cinema Globalization
The cinema industry, owned and operated by the most dominant media firms, also shows the signs of globalization, or as often claimed, Americanization. Meckel (1996, p.148) states that the market share of US-produced films shown in cinemas across the EU grew from 56% in 1985 to 76% in 1995. As Frank Webster (1995) remarks: in 1991 "Dances with Wolves, Terminator 2, Robin Hood Prince of Thieves and Silence of the Lambs were box office leaders in Germany, Britain, Italy, France,

Spain, Australia and the USA - pretty well everywhere that there were cinemas". The co-operation and distribution agreements, the ownership of TV studios, cinemas and TV stations, video distribution, print media and radio and the multimedia services makes economic sense for the distribution of the world vision of these conglomerates. The circle of promoting and using the produced material to the full extend is closed by the shared ownership.

Furthermore, the local, small size cinemas have experienced an enormous decline. Where the multiplex, fully commercialized cinemas have moved in, the independent cinemas have moved out, reducing the cinema menu to mass culture production (see Meckel, 1996).

Localization of Focus

At the same time however there seems to be a trend to localize media, media focus and media content, particularly in Europe. This new market is of course opened by the wider availability of media, however is quite strongly progressing. Examples of this localized or regionalized focus can be found in various countries:

In Spain for example TV3 and Ch33 of the Generalitat de Catalunya provide localized content and news with great success.

In the UK, BSkyB, the satellite media group, launched Sky Scottish, providing news and features for Scotland.

In Germany, various TV stations in Munich, Hamburg and Berlin provide highly localized general programming TV.

In Belgium and the Netherlands, the local stations provide daily local information, while the Amsterdam station has evolved to a full TV program.

Although most of these stations provide the viewer with a link to his/her immediate surroundings, offering localized news and information, most of them also carry a large amount of "American-style", popular culture programming, such as films, talk shows and game shows. This type of program falls in line with the general programming that is offered through the globalized media firms, who in fact sometimes own and always distribute through these local channels. Equally, these channels represent the emergence, and out-sourcing of the local or regional advertising markets, and are often hence subject to the same programming constraints as their national and international counterparts. Morley and Robins (1995) conclude on the topic that "this new regionalism puts value on the diversity and difference of identities in Europe, and seeks to sustain and conserve the variety of cultural heritage, regional and national." (idem. 1995: 17) This celebration of the emergence of this type of media focus as the herald of the emergence of a local community appears to be a somewhat early bunch of flowers, for what really can be seen as just another part in the chain in the recuperating of production cost and the focus to provide the economy with a platform for their advertising.

In a deep ranging discussion regarding the two-way move of media, Matthias Kurp states: " As a reaction to the globalization of all communication processes and the emergence of a 'World culture', more and more counteracting forces develop with a local or regional focus. The maxim "Think global, act

local" dominates therewith the paradox of simultaneous globalization and fragmentation." (Kurp, 1996, p.213)

Figure 3 Americanization of TV: Volume of US programming on TV imports (1983)Resistance towards globalizationEqually, there seems to be a resistance to the "Americanization" of TV culture emerging in more and more European countries. While the EU commission is fostering protectionism in trying to enforce EU produced programs, the swing towards locally produced programs has been more radical in some countries than enforced by the EU.

The German media situation can be seen as quite examplatory of this trend. While in the beginning of commercial stations virtually all prime time programming was American, by now most programming is produced in Germany itself (this overview is relating to the dominant commercial broadcasters RTL, SAT1 and Pro7 who can afford to produce locally): The average of American produced programming is some 33% in prime-time.

In the UK, BSkyB announced only recently, that it would switch to more UK produced programming in order to revive subscriptions to the service. At present, this resulted in one series and some documentaries being produced in the UK, but further own-productions are planned.

This trend also seems to be echoed in the Netherlands and Belgium, where VTM (Vlaamse Televisie Maatschapij / Flemish Television) has gone over to produce some 40% of its prime time programming in Flanders. Equally, RTL4 and RTL5 have stepped up own production activities.

It can however not be said that for any TV station producing its own programming comes cheap. This can well be explanatory why, overall, only some 30% are own produced programming, 5% Co-productions and 38% bought in (Meckel, 1996, p.145).

Global Content, Produced Locally

The BSkyB announcement may be taken as explanatory for the trend in this apparent resistance against Americanization. As a profoundly commercial operator, and exempt from the EU content directive, BSkyB is making the move not in an attempt to reflect more the diversity of national, or supranational UK culture, but in an economically based intention. Herman and McChesney characterize BSkyB's programming policy as: "offering popular fare and audience-attracting special events, while neglecting anything profound, challenging and merely contributing to the public sphere"(1997;168). While the UK audience is served the story of a UK football team (in BSkyB's new series 'Dreamteam'), the series is produced around problems and with a plot that can be found in any US series, the only change is the surrounding.

Equally, series produced by the RTL-brand of channels reflect no local values whatsoever, nor do they in any way reflect any notion of national identity other than the place where they take place. In 'Gute Zeiten, schlechte Zeiten' or the Dutch counterpart 'Goede tijden, slechte tijden' the problems encounter are to a large extend the same as can be found in any comparable family soap that has made its way around the globe. Any notion of political or social debate are barred from the content;

current problems in the countries remain unreflected in the lives of the soap opera stars.

Conclusion

Television, on which this debate has focused the most, is certainly not the only media with significant impact on its audience. It is however the most powerful of all tools, and the most widely spread. In 1996, Carmen Luke reported, that some 99% of all households own a TV set in Australia, 60% own two or more, and 72% own a VCR (1996).

Economic pressure has lead the governments to deregulate the media situation in many countries of Europe, where previously the commercial media was relatively restricted, and in the case of most countries, the public broadcasters provided an unpreassured platform for program content, and a platform for a 'national identity'.

The point to make here, is the fact that the commercial media has been, out of necessity for its own economic survival, the driving force behind the depolitization and banalization of the public sphere. "The stronger the positions of the culture industry become, the summarily it can deal with consumers' needs, producing them, and even withdrawing amusement" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944). It gives "full play to audience-attracting programs featuring sex and violence, all in accord with the market logic" (Herman & McChesney, 1997:188).

The media hence contributes to the emergence of the 'global culture': Tom Cruise, Pamela Anderson, Brat Pit and so forth are role models for millions of people, their behavior is mirrored, digested and internalized. The norms and values, the morals of the culture industry, they represent are taken over. If they drink coke, the followers do.

The Internet

The Internet merits a different section of discussion. Primarily, because it is a quintessential different form of experiencing than television or cinema. While both TV and cinema, even with the large amounts of channels provided by now, are a passive form of communication, the Internet makes the communication activity active. The viewer actively chooses what s/he is prepared to see, and with whom to interact. While the media is essentially a one way communication process, where the feedback is only very marginally provided (by means of viewer ratings), the Internet offers the possibility of a far more interactive experi-ence, with a feedback directly provided (this is particularly important in activities such as interactive games and chatting, while less in the WWW).

The Internet also offers the possibility to jump boarders and cultures "at a single mouse click", and offers an unlimited resource for information of any kind and flavor. At the same time, the Internet breaks down the barriers between the more traditional entertainment services (TV, cinema, magazines etc.) as providers of content, the software firms, as providers of access software, and the communication sector (telephone), as providers of the links.

The Emergence of the Net

The Internet emerged in the 1960s as a US Department of Defense project. Linking with academic institutions during the 1980s, it emerged as a public, global computer network at the beginning of the 1990s, reaching widespread distribution also into non-academic or defense related homes. The spectacular growth of the Internet can be seen at the hostcounts presented below both for Europe and world-wide.

Table 5 Hostcount developmentDateEuropean Hostcount1World-wide HostcountJanuary 19985,942,49129,670,000January 19973,921,94616,146,000January 19962,284,7509,472,000January 19951,106,0774,852,000January 1994587,1352,217,000January 1993303,8281,313,000Source: Network Wizards (www.nw.com) and RIPE (www.ripe.net)Also the following abstract of the Dutch Volkskrant shows the uptake of the Internet: "Van de ondervraagde bedrijven met meer dan honderd werknemers zegt 58 procent over een Internet-aansluiting te beschikken. In Januari was dit nog 35 procent.(...) Binnen een jaar komt daar volgens de huidige gegevens nog 20 procent bij" (Of the asked companies with more than 100 employees, 58% says to have an Internet connection. In January, this was 35%. Within a year the current figures will grow by 20%.) (De Volkskrant, in van Ruler, Groendijk et al, 1996:95).

Internet Users and Usage

The total amount of Internet users remains of course still unknown. Hammond (1996) estimates the amount of users at around 50 million in 1996, 100 million in 1997 and 400 million by the year 2000. With the emergence of alternative connection methods to the telephone access, this number might however be well surpassed by then. In January 1997, the distribution of Internet access in households is shown in the table below.

Table 6 Internet access in 1997Country% Japan18.4 USA16 Germany11.7 Hong-Kong11.7 Taiwan10.3 UK9.5 Australia8.9 Singapore7 France6.5 South Korea6.3 Italy5.8 Source: IDC/ Link in Hammond 1996 p.290

The main uses of the Internet have been documented by a Nielsen Research in 1995. The persons 16+ in the US and Canada using the Internet in the past 24 hours (over 24 hours ago) who used to...

Table 7 Internet usage <24hrs >24hrsAccess WWW 72% 44%Send E-mail 65% 48%Download Software 31% 19%Par-ticipate in an interactive discussion 21% 21%Participate in a non-interactive discussion 36% 43%Use another computer 31% 21%

Utilize real-time audio or video 19% 17%

(Source: Hammond, 1996:275)

Critical Mass Levels

The critical mass conceptual framework helps "to better understand the size of the audience needed for a new technol-ogy to be considered successful" (Morris & Organ, 1996: 6). Morris & Organ conclude: "Each of the[se] specific Internet services can be viewed as we do specific television stations, small town newspapers, or special interest magazines. None of these may reach a strictly mass audience, but in conjunction with all the other stations, newspapers, and magazines distributed in the country, they constitute mass media categories. So the Internet itself would be considered the mass medium, while the individual sites and services are the components of which this medium is comprised" (Morris & Organ, 1996: 6). They

also quote Valente (1995) who "notes that the critical mass is achieved when about 10 to 20 percent of the population have adopted the innovation" (Morris & Organ, 1996: 6). This would indeed suggest, that the Internet has reached critical mass in the US, Japan, Germany , Hong-Kong and Taiwan. It also suggests that it is close to have achieved that status in the UK and Australia. With the growing boom of the Internet, it may well have achieved this status by now.

Following the notion of the erosion of the boundaries between true mass communication and interpersonal communication, Neuman (1991) notes: " The quintessential characteristic of the new electronic media is that they all connect with one another. We are witnessing the evolution of a universal, interconnected network of audio, video and electronic text communication that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communications... The ultimate result... will be intellectual pluralism and personalized control over communication." (Neuman, 1991 in: McQuail, 1994: 88)

The Commercialization of Cyberspace

While the Internet in the beginning was a distinctive academical network, and frowned upon any commercialization, the growth, and potential for commercial growth, has resulted in the effective commercialization and commodification of Cyberspace.

US government support for the backbones of the net has been withdrawn in 1995 and been handed over to seven firms, including the telecom giants MCI and Sprint. As Bart Ziegler notes: "an already compromised ban on commercial use of the Internet ended altogether" (1995).

The battle of Microsoft and Netscape for the dominance in Internet access software is just one of the examples of the commercialization of every aspect of the Net: Cello and Mosaic, the predecessors of the browser software were free software, developed and distributed by academic institutions such as the Swiss CERN.

While it is true that everyone can create a Website with little investment, attracting visitors to such a site is costly and time consuming. The traditional media firms have been heavily investing in branding and promoting their sites through their other operations, resulting in an enormous popularity of sites connected to the traditional media. Herman and McChesney observe: "The relevant media analogy for the Internet, then, is not that of broadcasting with its limited number of channels, but, rather, that of magazine publishing or book publishing. Assuming no explicit state censorship, anyone can produce a publication, but the right to do so means little without distribution, resources and publicity" (1997:125).

The emergence of the 'push' technology is equally a sign of the dominance of certain media and software firms aiming to broadcast their commercial content: News Corporation, the Microsoft/NBC venture MSNBC and CNN all provide direct 'push' feeds of streaming video and audio and information. The advertising vision of a 'web in the web', dominated by a handful of highly profitable, commercial websites, has become clearer.

In summary, we can say, that the Internet has experienced an enormous boom over the last decade from a small and rather closed network to a major influence factor, which has reached critical mass level in a number of countries. It has also been commercialized heavily, and traditional media companies have moved in to provide commercial on-line content.

Axioms of the Previous Section

The neoliberal worldview has been the major political model in the last years: it has been victorious over alternative political models.

Global business has increased like never before: the emergence of TNCs and Free Trade areas is evidence of this.

The rise of Western TNCs, and their pursue of markets, has lead to an enormous export of Western lifestyle and culture, contributing to the growth of a multinational hybrid culture.

The traditional forces opposing the rise of a neoliberal worldorder have declined, alternative political models have, largely, ceased to exist .

Western politics is promoting the extension of the neoliberal worldorder, and is increasingly under pressure of the global industry.

The decline of public broadcasting and the emergence of commercial media has helped to shape a multinational hybrid culture.

The global, commercial media is in a concentrated ownership of a few companies, linked to each other by distribution and co-operation agreements.

The programming of most media has become non-political and non-critical, it displays the same content to a world-wide audience, either through globally shared programs, or locally produced programs with global content.

The Internet facilitates the global communication enormously: it has reached critical mass levels in a number of the Western countries.

The Internet is in the stage of developing into a commercial information medium, the analogy most likely towards the media environment is the publishing business.

Films as a tool for learning about culture

Culture is expressed in many ways - and one of the richest treasure chest of culture is art. We take a look at films expressing cultural values.

Films are more than just films - they express a rich variety of cultural values, traditions and history. From the global block-buster movies, such as the Hollywood productions -frequently a celebration of individualism - to the more arty movies such as the Spanish Jamón, Jamón. From the subtle happiness of ordinary people in many modern English films - to the collectivist expressions in Japanese cinema.

World cinema provides a very special look at different aspects of everyday life in different cultures. And frequently the films around the world express cultural variables so impressively, that although these films are a blockbuster in their own culture, they are frequently hard to export. Just consider the European film market: Although geographically close, German films frequently

don't make it to the UK, or even to France. And if they do, then they are usually a very limited release, available only in independent cinemas. Equally, independent films from the UK export badly into central Europe. One of the reasons why is certainly the culture gap - the problems, the values and the solutions proposed are simply not accessible to people from an other culture. Even so it may be geographically close.

But it is exactly this expression of cultural values that makes these films so valuable for learning about another culture. With the right amount of curiosity and attention to detail, the viewer can explore the film and it's lead, it's images and symbolism and discover another culture through the eyes of the director.

Take "The Marriage of Maria Braun", a German movie about post W.W.II Germany - which, filmed some 25 years after the war was over, explored everyday life in Germany after W.W.II - and how a country coped with it's past. Take "Jamón, Jamón" - the Spanish movie about honour and masculinity in a small village, loaded with symbolism. Take "Strawberry and Chocolate " for a look at the Cuban society,...

Many intercultural trainers already use - and promote the use of films for learning about another culture. "Films are an excellent tool for teaching about other cultures" says Carl Simeon, an intercultural trainer in Paris. "They provide a very good alterna-tive for lectures and documentaries - particularly when the films are watched in a group and discussed after the viewing". But even outside the classroom a trip to the local independent cinema may be a very rewarding trip indeed!

Notes

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