

DISCUSSION PAPER ON INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND EDUCATION

Submitted by Richard Evanoff, Aoyama Gakuin University,
School of International Politics, Economics, and Business

1. INTRODUCTION

The following is a discussion paper in which I have tried to pull together some ideas from a number of different research projects I have worked over the years concerned particularly with intercultural dialogue. Part of the paper includes entirely new material which attempts to apply this research specifically to the problem of intercultural education. The paper is definitely a working draft, however. I have not yet had time to supply full references or a bibliography, and additional revisions in style, organization, and content may be necessary. At times the paper digresses into areas not specifically concerned with cross-cultural education but, as the first section indicates, I am also interested in trying to place cross-cultural education in its wider social, economic, and political context. The paper does not follow the precise outline given by David in his recent e-mail, but it does cover many of the topics he suggested. While the paper raises issues that I am particularly concerned about and also shows my present thinking on these matters, it is presented in what George Kelly (1969, 147-162) would call an "invitational mood," meaning that I welcome comments and criticisms, and do not regard any of the positions set forth here as fixed. As I argue in the paper itself, dialogue is a means of transforming and enlarging our current perspectives.

2. CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATION IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

The problem of dialogue between civilizations becomes more critical in a globalized world in which there are increased opportunities for cross-cultural contact. Globalization is often presented as moving forward with an air of inevitability, but the historical determinism on which this assumption is based can be safely rejected. It is plausible to argue to the contrary that globalization is a choice and that other alternatives can be not only imagined but also implemented if humans choose to do so. In this section I will try to set the problem of cross-cultural dialogue and education in its wider social, economic, and political context.

One of the central criticisms of globalization as it is presently conceived is that it often results in exploitation, as well as in the transfer of wealth from so-called developing countries to the developed countries. Globalization involves not only the creation of a "global market" but also the creation of global decision-making bodies, such as the WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF, which attempt to legitimate themselves by claiming to promote the interests of all. Critics of globalization claim to the contrary, however, that these institutions in fact often promote the interests of global elites (Bond 1996; Brecher, Childs, and Cutler 1993; Brecher and Costello 1994; Chatterjee 1994; Chatterjee and Finger 1994; Cotte 1992; Gottlieb 1996; Greider 1997; Hettne 1995; Körner, Maass, and Tetzlaff 1986; Lang and Hines 1993; Lyons, Moore, and Smith 1995; Mander and Goldsmith 1996; Martin and Schumann 1997; Merrett 1996; Nader *et al.* 1993; Oxfam Policy Department 1995; Rich 1994; Sassen

1998; Schutt 1998; Singh 1998; Solomon 1995). While elites in both developed and developing countries often act according to their national interests, there are also numerous instances in which the interests of elites converge across national and cultural lines. When this happens, traditional geopolitical divisions between North and South, developed and developing, and the first- and third-worlds become misleading. A more accurate sociological analysis would be a class analysis which places the interests of elites in both the developed and developing countries in opposition to the interests of non-elites in both spheres.

Intercultural communication in the present world order largely takes place among elites, with non-elites being for the most part excluded. As an academic discipline intercultural communication has also focused mainly on how to improve cross-cultural understanding among elites. Cross-cultural education--both in formal academic departments devoted to international studies and in adult education programs concerned with cross-cultural training--has been largely directed towards preparing a cosmopolitan elite with the skills necessary to successfully conduct business overseas, participate in international conferences, engage in international negotiations, and the like, all within the framework of the dominant paradigm of globalization. Teachers, as well as students, come to believe that the purpose of education is to help individuals prepare for and/or advance careers in the global economy. Research has also been increasingly put into the service of corporate interests. Corporate funding of research programs and specific courses allows corporations to increasingly set the agenda for what is studied and taught.

The media, which also functions as a form of education in the sense that it dispenses information and opinions, is also increasingly dominated by corporate interests, not only directly through advertising but also through programming which promotes the values of a consumer culture (Bagdikian 2000; Beder 1997; Greer and Bruno 1996; Herman and Chomsky 1998; Herman and McChesney 1997; McChesney 1997; Schechter 1999; Stauber and Rampton 1995; Solomon 1999; Solomon and Cohen 1997). A large percentage of the news carried in the mainstream media is in fact produced by public relations firms in the form of press releases and video news releases. The information provided by public relations agencies is highly selective. It highlights information which supports the interests of their corporate clients while suppressing information which is not in their interests. Alternative points of view, particularly those which challenge corporate interests, are for the most part excluded from the mainstream media. The media system of the so-called "free world" has been charged by critics such as Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky (1998) as itself engaging in a form of propaganda, albeit one which is controlled not outright by government censors but more subtly by corporate interests. A media system which provides only selective and biased information makes it impossible for citizens to make genuinely informed choices about social, economic, and political issues in a democratic method.

An alternative perspective which has a considerable following among those opposed to globalization as it is presently conceived is the creation of a world order based not on increased free trade and global decision-making but rather on local economic self-sufficiency and more direct forms of political democracy (Albert and Hahnel 1991; Benello, Swann, and Turnbull 1998; Burkey 1993; Carmen 1996; Craig and Mayo 1995; Douthwaite 1996; The Ecologist 1993; Egerton 1998; Evanoff, 1999a; Galtung, O'Brien, and Preiswerk 1980; Gélinas 1998; Goldsmith 1988; Goldsmith *et al.* 1972; Goldsmith *et al.* 1995; Kaufman and Haroldo 1997; Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999; Morrison 1995; Rahman 1993; Roseland 1998;

Sale 1980; 1991; Schumacher 1993; Shragge 1997; Shuman 1998; Smith 1994; Stiefel and Wolfe 1994; Trainer 1995; 1997; Wright 2000). Promoting self-sufficiency rather than free trade would have at least three salutary effects. First, it would free up resources so that non-elites in both developing and developed countries could use their resources and labor to supply their own needs rather than the needs of the global market. Second, it would force elites in both the developed and developing countries to curtail their present levels of overconsumption. The net effect would be an increase in the basic standard of living among non-elites and a decrease in overconsumption among elites. Third, it would introduce a form of development which is genuinely sustainable. Many, if not all, environmental problems faced by the world today have their root cause in an economic system which places primary value on increased production and consumption. Indeed, if there is anything close to a truly universal value in the world today it is the idea that increased economic growth is unconditionally good, despite mounting evidence that such growth is itself often the cause of increased environmental degradation and the growing gap between rich and poor.

The alternative development paradigm poses a strong challenge to traditional capitalist and socialist development models, both of which take increased economic growth as their supreme value. The goal of development in traditional theories is for developing countries to eventually "catch up" with developed countries in terms of material affluence. At least two arguments can be made against this paradigm, however. First, it is unrealistic to think that everyone on the planet can consume at levels currently indulged in by those in developed countries. Ecological footprint analysis suggests that it would take at least two additional planet Earths to provide the entire global population with the resources and sinks necessary to maintain the average North American lifestyle (Wackernagel and Rees 1996). In *Beyond the Limits* (Meadows, Meadows, and Randers 1992), an updated version of *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows *et al.* 1972), researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology concluded that if present trends continue, economic collapse is possible within the next 35-50 years. Even if we could double the present energy supply, recycle 75% of resources, use advanced technology to reduce pollution to one-fourth its present level, double agricultural productivity, and make effective birth control available throughout the world, the collapse of the world economy could be only delayed but not avoided. Ecological economists argue that the only truly workable solution is to implement a steady-state economy in which resources are not used up faster than they can be replenished and pollution is not created in amounts greater than the earth can naturally absorb (Booth 1998; Catton 1982; Costanza 1991; Daly 1992; 1996; Daly and Cobb 1989; Ophuls 1977; Ophuls and Boyan 1992). Technological improvements alone will not enable us to achieve a steady-state economy; rather overconsumption itself must be drastically reduced.

The second argument against the "catch-up" model of development is that it is a failure even by its own standards. Despite the rhetoric, much development assistance is not intended to help the poor at all, but rather to help global capital gain further access to third-world resources, labor, and markets. After four decades of concentrated efforts on "development," the gap between the richest 20% of the world's population and the poorest 20% has actually increased from 30 times more wealth in 1960 to 82 times more wealth in 1995 ("Poor and Rich--the Facts" 1999). The ratio was only 1.5:1 two hundred years ago (Schuurman 1993, 10). Developed countries, which make up one-fourth of the earth's population, presently consume about three-fourths of the earth's resources at a rate per capita that is 15 times that of

most people in the third world (Trainer 1985, 3). At present the 400 richest Americans have as much wealth as the combined GNP of India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh where more than one billion people live (Korten 1995, 108).

Critics charge that conventional development is in many instances the *cause of* rather than a *solution to* the problems of environmental degradation and global poverty (Amin 1990; Athanasious 1996; Biel 2000; Hancock 1989; Latouche 1993; Norgaard 1994; Rahnama and Bawtree 1997; Sachs 1992; 1993; 1999; Sachs *et al.* 1998; Schrijvers 1993; Trainer 1985; 1989). Free trade, as promoted by the WTO, often serves the interests of global capital rather than the interests of the poor and disadvantaged. Crops are grown for export to rich countries, often leaving local populations with insufficient land to supply their own food needs. Goods are similarly manufactured for export rather than for local consumption. Development aid, whether in the form of direct investment, bilateral aid, or multilateral assistance offered through institutions such as the World Bank, is often used not to help the poor but rather to build the infrastructure on which such exploitation is based. Financial assistance frequently results in crushing burdens of debt, which third-world governments, pressured by IMF structural adjustment programs, attempt to repay by reducing social spending on health, education, and welfare. At present more money flows from the developing countries to developed countries in the form of debt repayments than flows from the developed world to the developing countries in the form of new financial assistance. Once it is understood that globalization is a system designed to insure a steady flow of resources, agricultural products, manufactured goods, and indeed money from South to North, it is not difficult to explain why the poor are getting poorer at the same time that global GNP is rising and why conscientious people in both the North and the South are increasingly opposed to this system. As environmental degradation continues and the gap between rich and poor continues to grow, globalization will increasingly lose its credibility. The present system promises a glorious new world of peace and prosperity, but will more likely lead to increased instability and conflict across cultures.

It is estimated that by following the current development paradigm it would take a country such as Sri Lanka 902 years to catch up with the fully developed nations; the 49 poorest countries, including Kenya, India, and Peru, would never catch up (Kassiola 1990, 255). On the other hand, if the overaffluent reduced their per capita resource consumption at least 80%, the problem of global poverty could be overcome within a mere decade or so (Trainer 1985, 248-249). Reducing overconsumption on such a scale does not mean that we must go back to living in caves; rather it means that in a world of ecological limits parity between rich and poor at levels of material affluence that both meet basic human needs and are ecologically sustainable cannot be achieved through more economic growth but only by sharing resources more equitably--not just by redistributing wealth but also by dismantling an exploitive global system which permits a minority of the world's people to enjoy wealth and luxury, but only by forcing others into dehumanizing poverty, creating unjust inequalities, and destroying the environment.

From the point of view of intercultural communication the alternative model of development advocates democratizing the decision-making process in a way that fully takes the interests and concerns of non-elites into consideration. There are at least two approaches to this issue currently being advocated by the opponents of globalization. The first is a reformist proposal to keep the present institutional structures as they are, but to incorporate more people

into the deliberative process and thereby increase communication between elites and non-elites. This approach seeks a rapprochement between global institutions and civil society. One difficulty with this approach, however, is that it leaves hierarchical power relations intact. By including only those elements of civil society which are willing to compromise their present positions and by marginalizing those who remain committed to genuine change, the proposals of the new development paradigm can be considerably diluted, while simultaneously giving the appearance that the problems of globalization are being effectively addressed by existing structures.

The second approach seeks to restore ultimate decision-making power to citizens themselves. One version of this general approach is Murray Bookchin's libertarian municipalism, which advocates the restoration of direct democracy at the local level (1985; 1986a; 1986b; 1987; 1990; 1991; 1994). Bookchin sees local municipalities as providing the most suitable forum for citizens to participate directly in the decision-making process (rather than allowing decisions to be made on their behalf by elected representatives). Municipalities can nonetheless confederate into larger units at the national and international levels, provided that ultimate power remains in the hands of the local citizens. In this model horizontal communication would involve all the members of a local community (not just elites) and vertical communication would be from the bottom up (from the local to the global). The communication process would thus be the exact opposite of the current situation in which most horizontal communication takes place only between elites (in global institutions) and most vertical communication is from the top down (from the global to the local). Cross-cultural communication would be on the basis of what might be called, following Thomas Jefferson, a "people-to-people" model of diplomacy--not unlike the present style of many NGOs.

In its broad features Bookchin's proposal is consistent with the trend, discussed above, towards more localized forms of economic and political decision-making. The general feeling in this movement is that rather than simply accept globalization as inevitable, there needs to be a much wider debate among all citizens about the kind of society we would like to create, both within and between cultures. Economic and political decentralization does not mean that there would be no opportunities or need for cross-cultural dialogue. Isolationism is not a necessary component of the alternative paradigm. Intercultural communication helps us to break out of our cultural mindsets and explore a wider range of what it is possible for humans to achieve. It also enables us to work together on common problems when necessary.

The question of what kind of future world we would like to create is arguably the single most important topic for cross-cultural dialogue at this particular moment in history. Cross-cultural education should not simply inculcate the capitalist values of production and consumption, which itself is a form of ideological indoctrination, but should rather concern itself with developing critical thinking skills which enable us to accurately assess our present situation and with stimulating creative thought in which alternatives can be imagined. Education should be free from corporate influence and aimed at producing not global consumers, but global citizens.

The aim of this agenda is equip citizens to make choices themselves on the basis of accurate information and open dialogue in which every opinion gets a fair hearing. It further seeks to eliminate hierarchical power structures which allow various forms of domination to persist. Hierarchical forms of communication which privilege elites over non-elites,

developed over developing countries, men over women, whites over non-whites, European ethnic groups over non-European ethnic groups, etc. would be replaced by non-hierarchical forms of communication in which individuals and groups are able to interact with each other on an equal basis.

Philosophical support for this idea can be found in the writings of Jürgen Habermas (1979; 1984; 1989a; 1989b; 1993). In Habermas's conception of an ideal speech situation social norms are seen as having universal validity if they are arrived at through a process of uncoerced dialogue in which everyone concerned has had an equal chance to participate. In Habermas's discourse ethics, norms cannot be metaphysically grounded but can only be legitimated through a process of dialogical interaction based on a rational, post-conventional critique of existing cultural norms. Dialogue should include everyone whom we enter into relationships with, regardless of whether such relationships are intra- or intercultural and whether they are direct or mediated through various political, economic, and social institutions. The consequentialist element in this view goes beyond Mill's harm principle--actions are permissible if they do not cause suffering to others--to suggest that *any* action which has consequences for others, whether for good or ill, can only be justified if those who are expected to perform it or those who are subjected to the consequences give their consent.

Discourse ethics contends that ethics is not a matter of "monological" individual reflection but rather a "dialogical" social process which, ideally, reaches conclusions on the basis of considered debate, or what Habermas and others (e.g., Dryzek 1990) refer to as "communicative rationality." The point is not that individuals cannot reflect on ethical matters for themselves or adopt purely personal norms with respect to their private lives but rather that, as far as social ethics is concerned, one person cannot decide *a priori* the principles and norms that will govern other people's actions. The goal of constructive dialogue is not to harmonize the existing conceptions, positions, interests, and so forth individuals bring with them to the dialogue process (which in any event is probably an impossible task), but rather to engage in what Benhabib calls a process of "moral transformation" (1986, 316). That is, individuals both transform and are transformed by the various groups they engage in constructive dialogue with, and out of this process it is possible for entirely new shared conceptions, positions, and interests to emerge. The upshot of discourse ethics is that no positions are exempt from reflective criticism; all must be tested in the arena of public debate and all are open to negotiation.

Habermas's notion of an ideal speech situation can be specifically linked to Dower's contention that a global ethic should concern itself with everyone who may be affected by the consequences of our actions. Dower has offered the following maxim which is a good starting point for any reflection on the possibility of cross-cultural dialogue on ethics: "Where the lines of cause and effect run across nation-states, so do the lines of moral responsibility....According to a global ethic the whole world is one moral domain, and the network of moral relationships extends in principle across the world" (1984, 20; *cf.* Jamieson 1994). The problem, of course, is that increased globalization has dramatically extended the cause and effect relations mentioned by Dower. Bauman suggests that whereas morality previously depended on the close proximity of moral actors in both time and space, in our contemporary situation "...the scale of possible consequences of human actions have long outgrown the moral imagination of the actors" (1993, 217).

While the alternative paradigm we are advocating encourages a diversity of cultural forms, both within and between cultures, and the development of variegated systems of rationality, knowledge, and ethics, it nonetheless recognizes that not all problems can be solved at the local community level--a fact which is particularly true in light of problems which have already been created by globalization, such as global warming, acid rain, inequities of resource consumption, and the rest. Decentralization alone should go a long way towards alleviating these problems by decreasing opportunities for one culture to exploit the labor and resources of another and by making local communities responsible for the impact their cultural activities have on the particular ecological regions they inhabit. Nonetheless, ongoing problems which require decision-making across political and cultural boundaries can only be resolved through cross-cultural deliberation. Such dialogue, it is contended, must concern itself not only with practical matters, such as creating appropriate institutional frameworks for cross-cultural dialogue and formulating specific policies, but also with reaching a measure of agreement on the ethical principles and norms that will govern interactions between cultures.

The need for cross-cultural dialogue does not mean, however, that decision-making power should be concentrated in the hands a relatively small group of global elites. Many of our current problems are so complex that it is doubtful that they can be successfully managed by global institutions alone. There is considerable skepticism, for example, over the Independent Commission on Population and Quality of Life's proposal, made in conjunction with the U.N. Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994, that managing the world's resources "requires rules and institutions with global reach" (1996, 105). This proposal simply legitimates global control over local resources, rather than allowing local areas to manage their own resources. The socialist model of central planning, in which decision-making power is concentrated in the hands of the state, has proven itself to be a dramatic failure. In the capitalist version of central planning, decision-making power tends to be concentrated not in the hands of the state but rather in the hands of a relatively small number of wealthy and powerful multinational corporations whose interests are supported by global political institutions such as the WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF. In opposition to both of these models we contend that decision-making should be as decentralized as possible and that problems should be handled at the appropriate level.

With regard to the scope of decision-making power, Habermas frequently speaks of norms that are arrived at through the dialogical process as being "universal." His use of this term is problematic, however, if "universal" is interpreted in its usual sense to refer to norms that are binding on all persons, at all times, and in all places. In our view, the conception of "universality" must be wide enough to accommodate all who are affected by a particular social decision and yet still be context-sensitive. "Universal" should be understood, then, to refer not to norms which are applicable to all persons, at all times, and in all places, but rather to norms arrived at by a particular group of interrelated people, acting at a specific moment in history, and in particular social and cultural contexts, whether these contexts be intra- or intercultural. Communicative ethics thus understood does not attempt to arrive at a set of acultural or ahistorical norms which apply to the whole of humanity; rather, norms are "universally" valid only within the context of the specific discourse community which formulates them.

Two principles can be proposed to govern the process of constructive dialogue. First, the communicative process should include everyone who will be affected by the consequences of a particular decision or policy (the principle of *inclusion*). It should be noted that one

consequence of this view is that norms which have *not* been reached through an inclusive process involving everyone who is or will be affected by their adoption could be regarded, at least in principle, as non-binding on those who were excluded from participation. Second, the communication process should exclude those who will not be affected by a particular decision (the principle of *exclusion*, which complements the principle of inclusion). The principle of exclusion, which intentionally limits the "universality" of any adopted norm, is intended to prevent unwarranted meddling on the part of unconcerned individuals or groups. We should hasten to add, however, that the principle of exclusion does not preclude individuals and groups expressing empathy and solidarity with those who are oppressed, i.e., with those who are obliged to endure the consequences of others' actions without their consent. Nonetheless, even expressions of empathy and solidarity should, ideally, not be imposed without the agreement of those who are the intended recipients.

As we have argued, in cases in which the actions of individuals have no consequences for others, it seems reasonable to conclude that individuals should be free to adopt whatever personal norms they choose. When the actions of individuals result in consequences for others, however, they become public and the norms which govern them must be negotiated with all those who are affected by them. In fact, there are good reasons to keep the norms of the public and private spheres separate; the public sphere should not intrude on the private sphere, nor should private interests be allowed to dominate the public sphere. Norms must be constructed at the appropriate level to govern the specific relations involved and a clear distinction must be maintained between the private and public spheres (*cf.* Bookchin 1987 and Biehl 1991).

Dialogue can thus be conducted at several different levels. Apel (1980, 227) distinguishes between a micro-domain, consisting of, for example, the family and neighborhood; a meso-domain, consisting of larger political groupings such as the nation; and a macro-domain, which concerns itself with humankind as a whole. Marshall Singer (1987) offers a somewhat fuller typology, noting that communication can occur at any of the following levels: (1) the intrapersonal; (2) the interpersonal; (3) the intragroup; (4) the intergroup; (5) the intranational; and (6) the international.

In applying Singer's framework to cross-cultural dialogue, it is clear that norms can be constructed at each of these levels through a process of reflective activity and dialogue. Thus, there is (1) intrapersonal dialogue in which individuals critically question their own values and decide upon the norms they will adopt as individuals; (2) interpersonal dialogue in which two or more individuals negotiate the norms that will govern their specific relationship; (3) intragroup dialogue in which the members of a group negotiate the norms that will govern relationships within their group; (4) intergroup dialogue in which groups negotiate the norms that will govern relations between them; (5) intranational dialogue in which groups negotiate the norms they will live by in a given political society; and (6) international dialogue in which political societies negotiate the norms that will govern their interaction.

Dialogue at each of these levels is constructive. There is no attempt to "discover" certain *a priori*, universal truths, values, or norms which all individuals, groups, and political communities must adhere to. Rather than formulate ethical norms and principles which are believed to hold at all times, in all places, and for all people, norms and principles are constructed which suit the particular historical and geocultural contexts of the persons concerned and the problems they face. This means that norms and principles must be flexible

and adaptive; they can change as historical circumstances change and vary according to the specific relationships the participants have with each other.

The degree of universality depends on which relationships a given set of norms is intended to govern. Some norms may have universal or near-universal validity (as with global environmental problems), while others may be more limited in scope and applicability. At the interpersonal level, for example, there is no need to posit an essentialist, acultural definition of what constitutes a "good marriage" for all couples. Rather, different couples may construct different norms to govern their own specific relationships. Moreover, there is no need for norms to cover every aspect of a particular relationship, whether it be at the individual, group, or political levels. There can and should be a healthy respect for the individuality and autonomy of the partners in any relationship. The goal of ethics is to facilitate human interactions not to homogenize differences by forcing everyone to act the same.

A great deal of diversity can be promoted at both the individual and cultural levels provided that this diversity does not have negative consequences for others. Maintaining sufficient levels of diversity is necessary in order to avoid the creation of a global monoculture and to allow continued cultural evolution. Sufficient levels of consensus must also be arrived at, however, to allow people to work together on common problems.

3. BEYOND UNIVERSALISM AND PARTICULARISM

Given the fact that different communities have differing forms of rationality, knowledge, ethics, and so forth, how can dialogue across cultures be conducted? The modernist solution is to seek convergence on the basis of assumed foundational, universalist forms of rationality, knowledge, and ethics in which the traditional--and all other forms of divergence --are simply replaced by the modern. The postmodern suggestion is that since all forms of rationality, knowledge, and ethics are relative and particular, no convergence is possible and we should simply accept divergence across cultures. In this section I will critique each of these views and offer a third alternative based on constructivism (for a more detailed account see Evanoff 1996; 1998; 1999b). My concern is primarily with cross-cultural ethics, although the basic theory can be applied to a number of other areas, including education.

Modernism rests on a number of philosophical assumptions which historically originated in the West and were more fully developed in the Enlightenment tradition but are now embraced in varying degrees by non-Western cultures as well. The main assumption is that identical thought-processes confronting an identical world should produce identical conceptions of the world, both with regard to knowledge and with regard to morality. If the world is the same for all observers and if all human beings reason about the world in the same way, then no divergent conceptions should in principle be possible. If divergent conceptions do arise, they can be attributed either to faulty observation (the world has not been correctly observed) or faulty reasoning (thought-processes have not been correctly employed). Some conceptions therefore will be right and others will be wrong. Achieving agreement, whether within or between cultures, is simply a matter of insuring that we employ the correct empirical methods for observing the world and the correct rational processes for thinking about it. From this perspective rationality and logic, knowledge and science, values and ethics, and aesthetics and religion can be foundationally grounded and are therefore universal.

The implications of such an outlook for intercultural communication are that since human beings all live in one world, global convergence should be possible on a single worldview

(Western science), a single economic system (capitalist or socialist), and a single political system (liberal democracy or Marxism). Precisely because the dominant modernist view accepts the assumption that all human thought-processes are essentially the same it tends to see cultural evolution in unilinear terms (Parsons 1966; Rostow 1991). Those countries which accept modern scientific, economic, and political thought are "developed"; those which do not are "undeveloped." The mission of the "undeveloped" is to become like the "developed" and the mission of the "developed" is to help the "undeveloped" do so. Modernism, so conceived, sees all cultures as moving along a single line towards a single goal.

One problem with this view is that it may diminish the capacity to criticize one's own traditions and to consider alternative forms of knowledge, values, ethics, and so forth. If it is assumed that there is only one possible true way of viewing the world, and that one particular culture (e.g., the West) has found that way, the result may be that we come to regard ideas that have arisen out of, and are embedded in, specific historical periods and cultural traditions as universal and valid for all historical periods and cultural traditions. The part is mistaken for the whole. One particular perspective is privileged as the one to be embraced by the whole of humanity, while other perspectives, which may in fact have a measure of validity in their own right, are cut off and ignored. Western science, economics, and politics are not "universal"; rather they delineate particular ways of knowing, thinking, and acting. Despite the fact that they have been embraced to some extent by some non-Western countries, they offer but one set of responses to the common problems of human existence and represent only one possible line of development.

Modern relativism finds its fullest expression in a postmodern perspective which advances a post-positivist critique of foundationalism and argues that all attempts to converge on a single mode of rationality, knowledge, or values, or to see history as moving progressively toward a predetermined telos, are misguided. Expanding on Wittgenstein's (1958) view that "language games" ("discourses" or "narratives" in more recent parlance) arise out of specific "forms of life," postmodern writers such as Lyotard have argued that there can in principle be no single unified view of the world but only a multiplicity of language games, none of which can be privileged over the others. To say, for example, that science is closer to the truth than mythology is on a par with saying that chess is closer to the truth than checkers (Lyotard and Thébaud 1985, 60-61). Discourses which purport to be universal--"metanarratives" in Lyotard's terminology--are totalizing. They presume to embrace final, absolute truth and therefore seek to annihilate all dissenting opinions. Any attempt to arrive at a universal consensus is inherently oppressive because it does "...violence to the heterogeneity of language games" (Lyotard 1979, xxv). Metanarratives should accordingly be regarded with incredulity.

A postmodern approach to intercultural communication would contend that since we all live in "different worlds" which are culturally constructed, no foundational, universal claims regarding knowledge, values, or ethics can be made; all are relative to the culture which makes them. Since discourses are the products of particular forms of life and thus incommensurable across cultures, meaningful dialogue across cultures is also impossible. Postmodernism's cultural orientation is away from universalism towards particularism, while its political orientation is away from internationalism towards parochialism; there can be no unified economic, political, or cultural order. Rather than seek convergence, divergence is welcomed, indeed celebrated. Postmodernists would tend to regard globalization in all its manifestations as homogenizing, and therefore as something to be resisted through a process of

disengagement from the dominant culture. At its most extreme postmodernism degenerates into various forms of racial, nationalist, and religious separatism.

It can be contended that neither the dominant modernist nor the postmodernist outlooks are conducive to effective cross-cultural dialogue. From either perspective there may be little incentive for engaging in cross-cultural dialogue--in the case of modernists because they have a clear conception of the particular direction they think cultures should be moving in; in the case of postmodernists because they think that each culture should be free to move in its own independent direction. Modernism frequently cannot get beyond an ethics of persuasion (attempting to persuade others of the rightness or desirability of modernization), while postmodernism cannot get beyond an ethics of respect (simply respecting differences between cultures without trying to overcome them). We would contend that we need to adopt a self-critical stance towards our own respective cultures which, on the one hand, subjects our existing beliefs, values, and so on to a more genuinely objective evaluation and, on the other, fosters a willingness to learn in a receptive but critical way from other traditions.

By complacently believing that the West's scientific, economic, and political ideas are grounded in foundational "truths" about the world, modernists fail to recognize their contingency. They fail, in other words, to see that their "truths" are only one possible way of describing the world and our place in it. Alternative descriptions and courses of action are also possible. The "superiority" of Western scientific rationality should not simply be assumed. Numerous examples of how "wisdom" is encoded in non-scientific indigenous discourses could be drawn from the literature in anthropology and cross-cultural studies (see, for example, Johnson 1992; Warren, Slikkerveer, and Brokensha 1995) and a great deal of "conceptual pluralism" can therefore be accepted across cultures (*cf.* Norgaard 1994, 75ff.; Evanoff 1997).

Nonetheless, it is also necessary to remind postmodernists that since these alternative descriptions and courses of action are contingent, there is nothing sacrosanct about other traditions, and hence no need to romanticize them; they simply represent different possible lines of development and can be constructively criticized in the same way that the Western tradition can be constructively criticized. The attempt to ground cross-cultural dialogue on foundational principles dissuades individuals from making judgements that deviate from those that are believed to be written into the metaphysical scheme of things; to the extent that existing cultural ideas and practices are believed to be foundationally grounded the status quo cannot be effectively challenged. The postmodernist approach also dissuades individuals from making moral judgements that express solidarity with the oppressed in other cultures and offer alternatives to existing forms of domination; here too the status quo cannot be effectively challenged.

The constructivist contention is that while we cannot simply assume that individuals from different cultures will automatically arrive at a shared perspective on the basis of shared understandings, values, or reasoning strategies, common ground can still be *constructed* through a dialogical process in which both sides are willing to subject their views to critical scrutiny. A constructivist approach to intercultural dialogue sees knowledge, values, and ethics as arising out of the particular form of life shared by people within a given culture at a particular moment in history. As new forms of life emerge, new concepts and norms also emerge. When problems are shared across cultures, new ideas and norms are needed which not only take into account the differing forms of life of the respective cultures but are also able

to effectively address the common problems they face. Ethical norms can be constructed which govern the behavior of a given society's members not only with respect to the relations they have among themselves (social ethics), but also with respect to the relations they have with people from other societies (intercultural ethics) and the relations they have with their natural environments (environmental ethics).

In contrast to foundational approaches which attempt to ground ethics in universal, immutable, and ahistorical principles, constructivism argues for a more pragmatic approach which sees the development of particular moral codes as practical solutions to specific problems arising in particular socio-historical contexts. Whereas foundational approaches start with a given set of principles and then proceed to apply these principles to concrete situations, the constructivist approach does the reverse: it begins by looking at the problems presented in concrete situations and then proceeds to look for--or construct--solutions to these problems. Theorizing follows rather than precedes the solutions which are proposed to solve these problems.

From this pragmatic-evolutionary perspective, the function of ethics is to help people successfully interact both with each other and with the world. As social practices or environmental conditions change, the old norms lose their validity and new norms must be constructed. Ethical formulations can thus be seen as evolving in response to changing social and environmental circumstances.

When problems transcend cultural boundaries, an ethical basis for common action can be constructed through cross-cultural dialogue. Such dialogue is important because it enables people from different cultures to work together on problems of mutual concern. Dower's maxim, cited above, can be recalled here: "Where the lines of cause and effect run across nation-states, so do the lines of moral responsibility" (1984, 20). This idea has nothing to do with universalism in the foundational sense but rather simply contends that the lines of ethical responsibility should extend as far as the consequences of our actions. Whenever we stand in relations with others, regardless of whether we share their particular forms of discourse or not, a new context is formed which necessitates the creation of new norms to govern that context. The old norms, developed in relatively isolated socio-political contexts, may be entirely inadequate to the task. The success of cross-cultural dialogue can be judged in part by the pragmatic criterion of whether or not the problems the participants jointly face are in fact solved.

Even from a contextual and relational perspective there is thus a need to construct narratives which are "meta" enough to cover common problems faced by people who may otherwise be heterogeneous. As was suggested in the previous section, in some situations universal, or near-universal norms could be legitimately be constructed (with regard to global warming, for example), whereas in other situations the norms would remain purely local. Sufficient *convergence* is necessary for the joint resolution of mutually shared problems, and yet sufficient *divergence* in non-problematic areas is also desirable because it allows for the uninterrupted evolution of new ideas and cultural forms. A cross-cultural ethic is needed, then, which avoids both the universalistic notion that all cultures should adopt the same set of norms and the postmodernist idea that cultures should remain in relative discursive isolation from each other, bound only by their own cultural codes.

Cross-cultural dialogue is also important because it enables us to work out the specific principles and norms that will govern relations between cultures. Cross-cultural encounters

create entirely new social situations which may be highly anomic, in the sense that there may be few, if any, already-agreed-upon customs, norms, or precedents for the participants to fall back upon. The cultural norms we initially bring with us to cross-cultural encounters tell us how to deal with people from our own culture, not with people from another culture whose norms are different. In many cases entirely new frameworks will need to be negotiated through a process of cross-cultural dialogue which draws on, but does not remain bound by, the insights contained in any one tradition. Reaching agreement requires a dialectical process of reflection in which the participants attempt to critique existing ethical principles and norms, to integrate positive features of those principles and norms in new ways, and to create entirely new principles and norms to effectively deal with anomic situations.

Since the rules necessary to govern cross-cultural interactions do not yet exist, they can *only* be created through a dialogical process in which, ideally, all sides are given equal opportunities to participate. It is insufficient for one group to simply force its own norms on other groups or for one group to uncritically adopt the norms of another because the relationship between the two groups would then be based on domination and control, i.e., the imposition/acceptance of one view to the exclusion of other potentially better views. Dialogue allows all potentially good views to receive a fair hearing and thus enables the groups to find ways of interacting with each other that are mutually satisfactory and sufficient for joint action on mutually shared problems. Dialogue itself may not be able to resolve all problems, of course, but the alternative to dialogue is a situation in which relationships between the two groups deteriorates or their mutually shared problems remain unresolved.

The purpose of cross-cultural dialogue in this view is not to arrive at "universal" ways of thinking or behaving but rather to arrive at a measure of agreement that enables people to successfully interact with each other across cultural boundaries and to solve problems of mutual concern. Cross-cultural dialogue recognizes that all ways of thinking and behaving are contingent, none are absolute, and therefore alternative ways of thinking and behaving are always available. If the practices of a given culture are called into question, such practices can only be justified if persuasive reasons can be given for why a given set of alternatives has been chosen to the exclusion of others. The argument that "cultural differences must be respected" is not in itself a justification. Cross-cultural dialogue must go beyond simply "respecting cultural differences" by engaging in the potentially subversive act of asking cultures to justify why they do things the way they do. A constructivist approach to intercultural dialogue refuses, in ethnocentric fashion, to take any existing culture as a final model. Rather it subjects all existing cultural traditions to reflective criticism, recognizing both that no one culture has a monopoly on good ideas and that no culture is immune to legitimate criticism. By setting two or more cultural traditions in juxtaposition with each other and engaging in dialogue, new ideas can emerge which will be different from the ideas already present within either one of them.

How, then, is it possible to integrate ideas and plans for action which, on the surface, appear initially to be contradictory? Traditional theories of dialogue emphasize finding pre-existing "common ground" between the disputants and a willingness on the part of the disputants to accept compromise on points which cannot be agreed upon (Fisher, Ury, and Patton 1991; Lewicki *et al.* 1994; Mulholland 1991; Nierenberg 1986; Raiffa 1982; Young 1991). An alternative possibility, however, is to work towards what Pruitt calls "integrative agreements," defined as "...those that reconcile (i.e., integrate) the parties' interests and hence

yield high joint benefit" (1994, 487). Integrative agreements rely on a fundamentally dialectical approach which takes neither the initial conditions of the dispute nor the initial positions of the negotiators as fixed. The basic idea can be illustrated with an example offered by Pruitt: two sisters who were quarreling over an orange finally decided to compromise by splitting the orange in half. The first sister used the pulp from her half to make juice and threw away the rind; the second sister used the rind from her half to make cake and threw away the pulp. An integrative agreement would have given all the pulp to the first sister and all the rind to the second.

It is clear that integrative agreements may not be able to solve all types of conflicts--cases in which both the first and second sisters want to make orange juice, for example--and at times compromise may be the best that can be hoped for. Integrative agreements are especially interesting from a constructivist perspective, however, because they involve reconstruing the problem (instead of simply taking the original positions as they are, they give a more highly differentiated account of the possibilities) as well as dialectical integration (instead of seeing the two positions as "incommensurable," they look for ways in which certain aspects of the original positions can be dropped and others combined). The sort of creative brainstorming found in integrative agreements involves moving beyond making rational decisions within a narrow conceptual framework towards making decisions that take other conceptual frameworks into account and critically synthesize them into a larger framework. Rationality of this latter sort involves going beyond one's present understanding of a situation and seeking out a more objective and holistic view. It involves, that is, a wider understanding of both the situation itself and the perception of that situation held by the person one is engaging in dialogue with.

To illustrate the basic approach, consider as an example the stereotyped view of Asian cultures as being collectivistic and the West as being individualistic. On the basis of purely ethnocentric forms of criticism the debate on this issue would be cast in a purely bivalent form of logic: either collectivism is superior to individualism or vice versa. Arguments could be marshalled in support of either view, with Asians presumably arguing for the superiority of collectivism and Westerners arguing for the superiority of individualism. (The sides could be reversed, of course: Asians enamored of Western individualism could argue against collectivism, and Westerners enamored of Asian "communitarianism" might argue against individualism.)

Critical reflection may reveal, however, that Asian collectivism has both a positive side ("cooperation") and a negative side ("conformity"); Western individualism similarly has a positive side ("self-reliance") and a negative side ("self-indulgence"). We thus arrive at a more highly differentiated understanding of the two concepts. At this stage a more dialectical form of reasoning is employed which takes statements such as "Collectivism [or individualism] is good [or bad]" as being true in some respects but false in others. On the basis of this more highly differentiated understanding, it then becomes possible to compare the positive features of one of the original concepts with the negative features of the other. It may be concluded that the value of "cooperation" is indeed superior to the value of "self-indulgence," while the value of "self-reliance" is superior to the value of "conformity."

At the integrative stage an effort is made to create an entirely new framework which integrates positive aspects of both traditions, while discarding their negative aspects. At the integrative stage the Western value of "self-reliance," regarded at the previous stage as

superior to Asian "conformity," might be combined with the Asian value of "cooperation," regarded at the previous stage as superior to Western "self-indulgence." "Self-reliance" and "cooperation" are complementary concepts which do not conflict in any way and, when combined, represent a superior position to either of the concepts taken in isolation.

Whereas the original opposition between Asian collectivism and American individualism was cast in dichotomous terms (i.e., the two perspectives are "incommensurable"), a constructivist approach shows how the two concepts can be effectively integrated at the formal level. It should be noted that the account given here describes merely the dialectical logic that underlies constructive dialogue and not the process by which initial evaluative judgements are arrived at (i.e., what is to be regarded as "positive" and "negative"). Arguments must still be presented to show why "self-reliance" and "cooperation" are superior to "self-indulgence" and "conformity," for example. The merit of this approach, however, lies in the fact that it shifts the debate away from a debate about "incommensurable" cultural differences to a debate about the viability of particular values which can, in principle, be adopted by any culture.

This basic approach could be applied, I think, to a number of cross-cultural conflicts between East and West (including the thorny issue of human rights). Kim (1991b) similarly thinks that cross-cultural differences between the West and the East can be seen in complementary rather than in contradictory terms. The emphasis on rationality in the West, for example, complements rather than contradicts the emphasis on intuition in East Asian cultures. Moreover, it would be wrong to simply stereotype the West as "rational" and the East as "intuitive"--the West has developed intuitive modes of thinking just as the East has developed rational modes of thinking, even though neither of these modes have historically been dominant parts of their respective cultures. The goal of an integrative approach is to find ways of combining seemingly opposite cultural tendencies into a wider framework which, in the end, will hopefully help to resolve cross-cultural conflicts and also offer a fuller and more holistic view of human possibilities.

4. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

The field of intercultural communication is concerned not simply with providing factual knowledge about other countries and cultures but specifically sees itself as developing skills by which individuals can successfully interact with others in cross-cultural settings. The focus on skills means that the focus of intercultural education is not simply on *what* people think (content, factual knowledge), but on *how* they think (the process of arriving at what is taken to be true, right, good, etc.). The difference is the same as that between learning to appreciate art or music and actually being able to paint and compose. Intercultural education thus supplements, but does not replace, traditional disciplines such as international relations, comparative religious studies, and the like, which are more content-based rather than skills-based. In this section I will focus on some possible contributions the field of intercultural communication can make to cross-cultural education.

Cross-cultural contacts expose people to ideas, values, and forms of behavior which may be radically different from those they have been socialized as accepting as "true" within their own cultural traditions. Intercultural education can be described as being "transformative" (Mezirow 1990; 1991) in the sense that it asks individuals to modify their presently held beliefs and values, to entertain alternative beliefs and values, and to integrate at least some of these new beliefs and values into their own way of thinking. In order to better understand this

process of transformation we will first consider some insights from developmental, cognitive, social, and cultural psychology.

Piaget (1982) viewed both cognitive and moral experience as being organized by the mind through schemas. Piaget calls the process by which experiences are fitted into existing schemas "assimilation." Experiences are interpreted in accordance with concepts already acquired by the individual. Schemas are not fixed, however, but can be changed in light of new experiences. The term "accommodation" is used to refer to the process by which schemas are altered or expanded when new experiences cannot be fitted into existing schemas. Human development in Piaget's view requires individuals to continually be constructing more highly differentiated sets of schemas through which the world can be perceived and interacted with. Differentiation is the process by which individuals are able to make increasingly finer distinctions between various aspects of a given phenomenon. Integration refers to the process by which differentiated knowledge is organized into relatively coherent conceptual schemas. Since the world is complex, the processes of differentiation and integration are in principle never-ending, and there can never be a one-on-one correspondence between the schemas we use to understand the world and the world itself, nor can there be a single theory which comprehends the whole of reality.

Cognitive and social psychologists regard schemas as short-hand devices which permit individuals to process more information in shorter periods of time. Hence, schemas are simplifications of experience. Such simplifications are necessary for the human mind to be able to organize experience and also account for why it is possible for different individuals and cultures to construct different accounts of the same phenomenon. Because the human mind can only be attentive to those features of a phenomenon which it regards as salient, two individuals witnessing the same event may give different accounts of it, not only because they observe the event from different perspectives (*cf.* Nietzsche 1968, 555), but also because they may regard some aspects of the event as more important than others. Features which are regarded as unimportant may simply be ignored. As schemas become more abstract they subsume a larger amount of information, but they also suffer from a loss of detail. As schemas become more specific, detail is recovered but only through a loss of scope. Distortions of the phenomenon itself occur in either case. This conclusion has profound implications, because it acknowledges that there can be no single, absolutely true account of any given phenomenon. Varying constructions of the same observed phenomenon are always possible. No worldview can presume itself to be final; all are partial and incomplete.

One contentious aspect of the Piagetian perspective is the notion that schema development proceeds in stages which move in a unilinear direction. Researchers in the field of cross-cultural psychology increasingly find this view problematic. Empirical tests of Piaget's theory across cultures are inconclusive, and there are indications that there may be a number of different paths which lead to greater psychological development (for a summary see Dasen and Heron 1981). While such criticisms call into question the viability of the idea that cognitive development proceeds in well-defined stages, they do not necessarily refute the general idea of conceptual development. Development can be seen not as a unilinear progression towards a predetermined goal but rather as an enlargement of possible modes of experience. Schemas become increasingly differentiated over time--improving in both quantity and quality--even if they are not moving towards a single end-goal or *telos*. Stages are simply heuristic devices which illustrate the various forms of differentiation and integration that are possible.

A second criticism of Piagetian constructivism lies in the accusation that it underemphasizes the cultural dimension of conceptual development. The cultural psychologist Richard Shweder claims, for example, that "[t]he Piagetian child is a faint copy of the abstract ideal of the logician and empirical scientist" and therefore "...devoid of temperament, tradition, custom, or convention" (1984, 53-54). Shweder has questioned whether we can simply assume a principle of the "psychic unity" of humankind. In Shweder's view, the chief fault with much contemporary theorizing in psychology is that it posits "a central processing mechanism...presumed to be a transcendent, abstract, fixed, and universal property of the human psyche" (1990, 4). At the surface level there are obvious differences in how people think, but it is assumed that by filtering out cultural and environmental influences one eventually arrives at a "pure" processing mechanism which is essentially the same for all people and governed by the same rules of rationality.

Similar criticisms have arisen in (and against) the field of cognitive psychology, where the idea that cognitive development can be thought of as an essentially acultural/ahistorical process involving interactions between brain and environment is increasingly under attack by those who argue that social influences play a much larger role in cognitive development than has been previously acknowledged (see Resnick, Levine, and Teasley 1991; Still and Costall 1991). The received view of mind is essentially Cartesian in that it sees rationality, if not specific ideas, as innate and relatively unaffected by the "world outside"--take away the external world and the mind we are left with will be essentially the same (*cf.* Marková 1991). Accordingly, environmental and cultural factors are seen as have no bearing on how people think (although they may have some bearing on what they think about). Pushed to the limit this idea results in the reductionist view that all human thought can be explained in terms of neurophysical processes.

A framework for seeing how the cognitive psychology/Piagetian constructivist view and the cultural psychology/social constructionist view might be reconciled is provided in Arbib and Hesse's *The Construction of Reality* (1986, chap. 7). Arbib and Hesse reject the idea that cognitive development proceeds in stages but accept the view that concepts are always organized by the mind into cognitive structures. New experiences must be reconciled with existing schemas through the standard Piagetian processes of assimilation and accommodation. It is acknowledged, however, that schemas are acquired not only through direct interaction with reality but also through cultural transmission. Schemas are organized holistically into larger interdependent cognitive networks. Arbib and Hesse use the term "social schema" (which they compare with Durkheim's "collective representations") to designate any network of concepts which are only imperfectly represented in the minds of any individual in a given society. The paradigm case is language which, while forming a normative system, is never completely represented in any one individual. Ideologies and religions are further examples. Social schemas may be temporarily formalized or reconstructed as ideal types, or they may exist implicitly in the social relations individuals have with one another. Through social interaction such schemas come to influence the construction of individual schemas as much as external objects and events do. In this framework much of what we know is indeed learned from others, although it is still possible to arrive at knowledge independently through direct experience. Knowledge acquired through direct experience transforms the stock of socially shared knowledge. The relationship between direct and socially mediated knowledge is thus reciprocal. Social knowledge influences how

individuals perceive the world, but direct experience also enables individuals to challenge what is accepted as social knowledge.

Schemas thus exist not only in individual minds but also in social relations, a view which is very similar to the philosophy of mind espoused by Mead (1934). The mind is not, in Mead's view, something individuals *have*, but rather something that *emerges* out of social interaction and communication with others. Language is essential to this process because it enables us to reflect not only on past experiences, but also on possible future courses of action. The growth of self-consciousness depends upon such reflection. Mind is constituted by the particular interactions it has with both its natural and its social environments and does not exist apart from them. In Putnam's metaphor, "the mind and the world jointly make up the mind and the world" (1981, xi). Stigler, Shweder, and Herdt similarly write, "The dialectical co-construction of a cultural psychology may be more complex, a three-body problem in which self, society, and nature jointly make up self, society, and nature" (1990, viii). Mind should be seen not as transcendent to, but rather as immanent in, specific historical, cultural, and geographical contexts. On this view we do not need the metaphysical assumption that "all minds are the same" to account for whatever similarities might be observed across cultures. To the extent that individuals share similar biological and psychological constitutions, cultural settings, and natural environments their thought-processes will tend to be similar. To the extent that such factors differ their thought-processes will also tend to differ. Certain "universal" similarities can no doubt be noted across cultures but a multitude of differences can also be observed. Determining the extent to which people are similar or different is thus an empirical, not a metaphysical question.

In the constructivist view human behavior is not determined by either nature or culture nor can we look to either for an infallible set of ethical guidelines. Rather, there are choices to be made with regard to how we will act in relation to our natural and cultural environments. The fact that there are choices indicates that there must also be scope for what Mead calls a "process of reflection" (1934, 354-378; 1938, 79-91; see also Dewey 1910, 72) in which possible courses of action are both imaginatively proposed and critically evaluated (the term "reflection" is preferred to "rationality" precisely because it encompasses not only rational but also affective and imaginative modes of thought). Mead allows for the fact that humans are biological organisms which respond to external stimuli; they are also socially conditioned to behave in certain ways. It is the imaginative side of human experience, however, which allows individuals to reflect back on their situation, formulate alternatives, and engage in behavior that leads to both significant personal and social change. This reflective process is situated in specific environmental and cultural contexts. It does not seek to transcend those contexts in the hope of formulating universal "truths" based on foundational, apodeictic forms of rationality, but rather to simply reflect back on them and, if necessary, to change them.

From a constructivist perspective there is nothing inevitable about the particular social relationships we happen to find ourselves in, and when they prove unsatisfactory we can make efforts to change them. It is always possible for individuals to reflect on their respective cultures and decide whether to maintain, modify, or abandon altogether the ideas and values which are dominant. Nonetheless, societies can exert powerful pressures on individuals to think and act in certain ways, either by suppressing innovation or by not making other alternatives available. Even when individuals recognize that the social system they live in is evil or unjust, the socialization process can sometimes be so powerful that change is

inconceivable. Reclaiming our ability to challenge existing cultural norms and create new ones can be difficult because of the tremendous pressure society exerts to keep itself in a relatively stable state. A major part of the problem, of course, is that power relations serve to maintain the legitimacy of certain schemas. Powerful groups in every society (elites) have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Opposition to the dominant power structures also becomes problematic when non-elites come to see their own interests as being best fulfilled by conforming to those schemas. Folb (1991) has suggested that the field of intercultural communication must concern itself more than it has in the past with issues of hierarchy, power, and dominance both within and between cultures.

Arbib and Hesse regard social schemas, particularly ideologies, as tending toward "inertia" (1986, 133ff.). Kelly (1963, 9) as well acknowledges that constructs can be tenacious. Some people may have such a personal investment in their present constructs that they resist any change whatsoever. Human freedom demands, however, being able to reconstrue our present situation and to work for something better. Constructivism rejects both determinism (characteristic of structuralism and Marxism) and voluntarism (characteristic of poststructuralism and Western liberalism) as theories of action. In the structuralist view social structures are essentially seen as determining individual thought and behavior. In Marxist versions of structuralism, history is seen as a "process without a Subject" (Althusser 1976, 99). Marx himself contended, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness" (1970, 21). The Western liberal view, by contrast, reverses the direction of causation and sees social structures as arising solely out of individuals acting in their own self-interests. In its crudest form liberalism holds that society is nothing more than a collection of atomistic individuals.

A third alternative posits a dialectical relationship between the individual and society which avoids the one-way causality of both Marxism and liberalism. On the one hand, humans create culture; on the other, humans are created by culture. In the constructivist view the direction of influence runs not only from culture to individual but also from individual to culture; ideas are not only the *product* of historical forces, as they are in Marx, but also their *cause*, as in Hegel. This dialectical view of human agency can be found in Berger and Luckmann's (1966) sociology of knowledge, Giddens' (1984, 1991) structuration theory, and Bhaskar's (1979) transformation model of social activity. It is the possibility of redefining culture that makes the constructivist position dynamic and progressive. The voluntarist claim that individuals are always "free" to do whatever they want ignores the extent to which social forces shape and constrain the choices individuals are able to make. The determinist claim that individuals cannot initiate social change ignores the extent to which the basic structures of society are susceptible to personal and collective influence. Neither side is exclusively right. Humans do not act totally in accordance with cultural norms nor totally apart from them; in the same way that cultural norms influence human behavior, so too does human behavior influence the construction of cultural norms. It is largely through the process of reflection that prevailing social schemas can be broken down and reconfigured.

In the constructivist view all cultural arrangements are regarded as contingent rather than necessary and thus subject not only to historical, but also to cultural variation. Different cultures develop different standards of truth, goodness, and beauty, or, as Milton Bennett puts it, "... cultures differ fundamentally from one another in the way they maintain patterns of differentiation" (1993, 22). Merely recognizing the *fact* of cultural relativity need not commit

us to the *norm* of cultural relativism, of course. As Hatch writes, "The fact of moral diversity no more compels our approval of other ways of life than the existence of cancer compels us to value ill-health" (1983, 67-68; see also Evanoff 1997). We need only approve of those cultural norms which have been arrived at through a process of reflection and are, minimally, not maladaptive.

Cross-cultural education should aim, then, primarily to develop the individual's capacity for critical reflection. Kohlberg (1981; 1984), who has specifically tried to apply Piaget's insights to moral education, rejects both a maturational theory which sees certain moral concepts as "naturally" emerging in the individual (ultimately making the individual the final arbiter of values) and a cultural transmission theory which reduces value formation to little more than a process of indoctrination (ultimately making culture the final arbiter of values). Kohlberg adopts a third perspective, derived from Dewey (1916), which he labels "progressive interactionism." In this view moral judgements are seen as emerging out of the interaction between individuals and their immediate environments: "...cognitive-developmental theories are 'interactional,' that is, they assume that basic mental structure is the product of the patterning of the interaction between the organism and the environment rather than a direct reflection of either innate patterns in the organism or patterns of events (stimulus contingencies) in the environment" (1984, 11). The task of the educator in this view is to present students with ethical dilemmas that stimulate thought. Such reflection results in "an active change in patterns of thinking" (1981, 54), i.e., an enlargement of one's moral schemas.

The ability to transcend our own culture and to reflect rationally on its values can come about in one of two ways: either by recognizing the tensions which exist within our own culture or by coming into contact with cultures which have constructed reality differently from ourselves. In both cases we are confronted with anomalies--ideas or experiences which cannot be fitted into our existing cultural paradigms--and the same dynamics come into play. We can either defend the existing paradigm, deny that any paradigms whatsoever are valid, or attempt to construct a new paradigm. Applied to intercultural experience of confronting a culture whose norms are different from our own, we either can retreat back to our own cultural norms (ethnocentrism), deny that there are any valid norms to govern our behavior in such situations (relativism / nihilism), or develop the kind of intercultural sensitivity which allows us to appreciate at least some of the values of the other culture and perhaps to integrate them into our own thought and action in novel ways.

Milton Bennett (1993) has offered a developmental model of the latter alternative--intercultural sensitivity--which outlines six stages individuals typically go through as their contact with another culture increases. As with all "stage theories," Bennett's model can be criticized on the grounds that not all individuals may go through all of the stages in the order indicated; his model can be more plausibly taken as merely indicating some of the difficulties individuals may encounter in their attempt to develop a wider, non-ethnocentric perspective. Bennett also includes specific educational activities intended to move individuals from one stage to the next. A brief summary of Bennett's six stages and the relevant educational activities follows:

(1) *Denial*: the inability to recognize genuine cultural differences because groups are isolated from and/or intentionally separated from other groups. Activities to move learners to the next stage include addressing learner anxieties; offering chances to experience difference through films, slides, art, music, dance, etc.

(2) *Defense*: a recognition of cultural differences coupled with a tendency to denigrate other cultures and regard one's own culture as superior (a "reversal" stage is also possible in which the other culture is regarded as superior and one's own culture is denigrated). Activities to move learners to the next stage include developing a strong support group; educating learners to recognize existing diversities within their own cultures; creating experiences unrelated to culture-learning in which people from different cultures can cooperate; creating opportunities for affective bonding over shared emotional issues.

(3) *Minimization*: while superficial cultural differences in matters of food, clothing, etc. are recognized, human commonality is emphasized in terms of either physical universalism (e.g., "we're all human") or transcendent universalism (e.g., "we're all children of God"). Activities to move learners to the next stage include using trained, selected cultural informants in structured methods; exploring values and beliefs of differing cultural systems; contrasting one's own culture with others through demonstrated interaction.

(4) *Acceptance*: cultural differences are accepted because the contextual nature of both behavior and values is recognized (the stage of cultural relativism as opposed to ethical relativism: individuals may accept the fact that different cultures have different ways of doing things even though they may not act in those ways). Activities to move learners to the next stage include developing complex, in-depth values analysis for contrasting cultures; preparing learning for cultural adaptation through homestays, simulations, and role plays requiring cross-cultural empathy.

(5) *Adaptation*: the development of communication skills which allow the individual not only to accept but to empathize with different cultural points of view or to shift from one cultural point of view to another. Activities to move learners to the next stage include preparing learners to understand their own development and to learn-how-to-learn autonomously; using cultural information in unstructured formats.

(6) *Integration*: a bicultural perspective which utilizes multiple cultural frames of reference and constructs a personal identity not based on any one particular culture. Activities to move learners to the next stage include using integrated individuals as resources persons; providing theoretical frameworks for the construction of multicultural identities; developing peer groups of multicultural persons.

Bennett describes the first three stages as "ethnocentric" and the latter three as "ethnorelative." Bennett draws on the earlier work of William Perry (1979), who described the intellectual and ethical development of college students in terms of four stages, which can also be briefly summarized:

(1) *Dualism*: knowledge is equated with facts; "experts" can provide the answers; everything is black and white; ambiguities are avoided; thinking is non-reflective and concrete; life is "unexamined."

(2) *Multiplicity*: ambiguities are grudgingly acknowledged; there are no truths, no ultimate answers; judgments arise out of personal biases; the absence of clearly defined norms leads to license.

(3) *Contextual relativism*: ambiguity is regarded as a fact of life; knowledge and norms are regarded as contextual (i.e., as arising out of specific situations); theories are regarded as human "constructs"; differing interpretations imply a need to "balance" various points of view.

(4) *Commitment in relativism*: contextual relativism is taken for granted, but it is nonetheless possible to intentionally commit oneself to one particular point of view based on a

reasoned examination of the various options; other views are tolerated provided they can also be supported with evidence and sound reasoning.

Both of these developmental models show individuals going through stages of increasing awareness and complexity. What they also indicate is that the tendency to think in terms of universals and absolutes typically occurs only at relatively unreflective stages. As reflection increases and the awareness of differences expands, individuals begin to think in more relativistic terms. But upon even further reflection, relativism is also transcended in Bennett's "integrated" stage and Perry's "commitment in relativism" stage. The movement from universalism to relativism to integration seems, then, to be directly proportional to the amount of reflection the individual engages in. One can also see a dialectical pattern emerge in this universalism-relativism-integration triad, with universalism as the thesis, relativism as the antithesis, and integration as the synthesis.

Stages similar to Bennett's "integrated" stage and Perry's "commitment in relativism" stage have been described by other authors in the field of intercultural communication. Useem, for example, uses the term "third cultures" to refer to "...cultural patterns inherited and created, learned and shared by the members of two or more different societies who are personally involved in relating their society, or segments thereof, to each other" (1971, 14; see also Useem, Useem, and Donoghue 1963). Yoshikawa's "double-swing model" posits a state of "dynamic inbetweenness" in cross-cultural exchanges between Asians and Westerners, a "third perspective" which "...does not represent exclusively either the Eastern perspective or the Western perspective" (1987, 329). Adler, citing Tillich, contends that the development of a multicultural personality involves the creation of "...a third area beyond the bounded territories, an area where one can stand for a time without being enclosed in something tightly bounded" (1977, 26). The concept of "hybridity" has also gained currency in post-colonial cultural studies in Britain (Young 1995; Werbner and Modood 1997). In attempting to maintain nationalistic purity in the face of colonial domination, dominated groups often merely reproduce an "us-them" mentality which does not effectively challenge the source of their oppression. Bhabha (1994) contends, contra separatist theories, that the creation of a "third space," which hybridizes various aspects of both the dominating and the dominated culture, transforms those who were formerly colonized and disrupts the authority of those who were former colonizers.

An integrated, "third culture" perspective can be described in psychological terms as the process by which individuals manage to integrate aspects of two or more cultures internally within their own personalities. It involves a partial rejection of the initial socialization process (through reflective criticism) and a partial resocialization into the values of a different culture (through selective adoption). What is usually retained is a combination of what the individual regards as the positive aspects of his or her original cultures and the positive aspects of his or her adopted culture. At times these two perspectives may remain in creative "dialogical" tension with each other (Yoshikawa's "double swing model") but they may also become more fully integrated (dialectical synthesis or fusion). What the individual regards as the negative features of each of the cultures is discarded and not integrated into his or her personality or lifestyle.

When dialogue between people from different cultures begins, we can also speak of an integrated "third culture" perspective in sociological terms. When third-culture individuals from different cultures (i.e., individuals who have integrated aspects of the other culture into

their own personal psychology) begin working together with each other, they may evolve entirely new ways of doing things. As has been seen, Milton Bennett suggests that integrated individuals can both form support groups among themselves and act as resource persons to facilitate communication between people from different cultures who may still be at more ethnocentric stages in terms of their personal development. Fisher (1980) sees a similar prospect of facilitation in the context of international negotiations, although he recognizes that cross-cultural negotiators may have to face the particular problem of not being fully trusted by either side, each of which may think that the negotiator has gone over to the other.

Not all individuals successfully make the transition to a third-culture perspective, of course. Janet Bennett (1993) distinguishes between "constructive marginality," which achieves higher levels self-differentiation and integration, and "encapsulated marginality," which results in psychological disintegration. Both the constructive and the encapsulated marginals have stepped outside of their original cultures into a cultural "void" (Durkheim's *anomie*), a place beyond conventional social practices where no norms exist. The constructive marginal sees this emptiness as space for individual creativity; in the absence of clearly defined rules opportunities arise for creating new ways of doing things. The encapsulated marginal, on the other hand, experiences this emptiness as loss and disorientation; since all standards are culturally constructed, nothing is true and nothing is worth doing. Moving beyond culturally prescribed norms means either that the individual will begin to decisively construct his or her own identity or that there will be a loss of identity, difficulty in decision making, alienation, excessive self-absorption, multiplicity, and a "never-at-home" feeling. Constructive marginals are in a good position to act as go-betweens in intercultural negotiations because they are capable not just of *understanding* the basic outlooks of two (or more) cultures but also of *integrating* perspectives which on the surface may seem "incommensurable."

Integration is a fundamentally different concept from that of adaptation, which has long been a central organizing principle in the field of intercultural communication (*cf.* Ellingsworth 1988; Furnham and Bochner 1986; Kim 1989; 1991a; Kim and Gudykunst 1988). The familiar "U" curve of cross-cultural adaptation shows individuals going through a "honeymoon" phase in which they have high expectations for their life in a new culture, a "culture shock" phase in which they begin to experience conflicts between their own cultural norms and the norms of the culture they are sojourning in, and an "adjustment" phase in which they begin to adapt their personal norms to the norms of the host culture.

Missing from this "when-in-Rome-do-as-the-Romans-do" account of adaptation is the possibility that at least some of the norms the individual starts out with may, upon reflection, prove to be superior to the norms of the culture they are expected to adapt themselves to. Adjustment problems may not indicate that there is "something wrong" with the individual, but rather that there is "something wrong" with the culture. Although host cultures usually have considerable coercive power over sojourners, once a problematic situation has been subjected to critical reflection it may be concluded that it is the host culture rather than the individual which needs to change.

This raises the possibility of sojourners not simply assimilating themselves to their host cultures, but also constructively criticizing and possibly transforming them. It is often said that such criticism should not be engaged in because it shows a lack of "respect" for the other culture. This may be true of uninformed or vituperative criticism and of attempts to forcefully

impose one culture's way of life on another. But if criticism in the context of constructive dialogue is not engaged in, what are the alternatives? One strategy is avoidance: sojourners intentionally avoid having contact with a given culture. A second is acquiescence: sojourners simply resign themselves to acting in accordance with the norms of their host culture. Such coping strategies are undoubtedly appealing to many sojourners precisely because they avoid open criticism and confrontation. They also, however, involve a considerable suppression of individual aspirations.

A third strategy is to come up with a set of norms that can be used to deal with such situations. As we have argued above, many cross-cultural encounters are by their very nature anomic. There may be no precedents for the participants to follow and no mutually agreed-upon customs or norms to give guidance to action. Since the norms to govern the relationship between the participants may not yet exist, they must be created through the dialogue process itself. It is evident, however, that many of the norms one culture or the other takes as "universal" will simply have no credibility with people from the other culture. Moreover, when commonalities of the "lowest-common-denominator" variety are found, they are frequently unsuitable for the more complex situations the participants find themselves in. These problems are not insurmountable, but they are problems which virtually anyone who engages in extended cross-cultural dialogue will be obliged to face. The attempt to create new norms to govern new cross-cultural situations often involves considerable frustration.

While culture shock can be a debilitating experience for some, for others it can involve a dynamic and creative process of transformation. Furnham (1988) suggests that although many researchers in the field of intercultural communication have focused on the negative aspects of cultural adjustment, there may also be positive aspects. Adler has proposed thinking of culture shock as "...a profound learning experience that leads to a high degree of self-awareness and personal growth. Rather than being only a disease for which adaptation is the cure, culture shock is likewise at the very heart of the cross-cultural learning experience. It is an experience in self-understanding and change" (1987, 29). Kim and Ruben propose a new model for "intercultural transformation," defined as a process of internal change in which the "...individuals' cognitive, affective, and behavioral patterns are viewed to develop beyond their original culturally conditioned psychological parameters" (1988, 299). This transformation follows a "stress-adaptation-growth" pattern. In monocultural situations individuals exist in a state of homeostasis in which their socialized view of reality remains unchallenged. Cross-cultural encounters introduce a perturbation into the system which may stimulate various adaptive strategies as a response. In the process of working out these strategies the individuals experience internal growth.

In Piagetian terms, cross-cultural encounters present fresh perspectives which cannot simply be assimilated into existing schemas, but rather must be accommodated through the construction of larger, more highly differentiated and integrated schemas. Integration is neither a process of taking over the ideas and values of another culture whole nor of simply setting two cultures side by side and syncretizing them. Rather, it represents the stage at which individuals are able to fully transcend their own cultures and internalize perspectives gained from a different culture. The process involves a critique of one's own original cultural values and norms. With increased intercultural experience and reflection some of these values and norms may be deemed worth retaining while others are discarded.

The process also involves, however, a critique of the adopted culture's values and norms. One need not adopt the other culture "whole"; rather there can also be a process of selectivity in which some values are deemed worthy of emulation while others are not. In this process our existing cognitive and moral schemas begin to break down and to be reconfigured on a wider scale. While elements of our previous way of thinking may be purged, new ideas and values may also be accommodated. The new schema is not simply a pastiche of incongruous ideas and values drawn from a variety of cultural sources (as postmodernists might think) but rather a fairly integrated and "synergetic" whole (*cf.* Hampden-Turner 1970). Further development is possible if the process is repeated, that is, if greater differentiation is initiated and new forms of integration are sought out.

At this point we might begin to speak of a seventh stage, beyond Milton Bennett's original six, namely, a "generative" stage in which entirely new forms of culture are creatively produced. The generative stage would transcend both Bennett's ethnocentric and ethnorelative stages. The goal is not simply to say which of the existing cultural pies is best (ethnocentrism) nor to simply say that each of the pies is equally delicious on its own terms (ethnorelativism), but to make a better and different pie. The generative stage provides for the possibility of both personal and social transformation. Not all of the new options we are able to generate will be of equal value (some may be flops, others unworkable), but there is nonetheless a need for ongoing experimentation.

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