青山学院大学総合研究所 国際政治経済研究センター 研究叢書　第6号
「国際コミュニケーションにおける言語と文化」(1996・3・31) 抜刷

Intercultural Ethics: New Ways of Learning to Get Along with Each Other

Richard Evanoff

Introduction

There is a growing body of literature in the field of intercultural communication specifically concerned with the ethical dimensions of cross-cultural interactions (Condon and Saito 1976, Johannesen 1978, Asuncio-Lande 1979, Barnlund 1979, Hatch 1983, Jaska and Pritchard 1988, Cortese 1990, and Kale 1991). These studies can be distinguished from more descriptive accounts of cross-cultural values (e.g., Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961, Nishida 1981, and Hofstede 1984) in terms of both method and focus. Whereas the latter are primarily concerned with empirical research and theoretical analysis of the value-orientations of existing cultures, the former attempt, in various ways, to address the problem of how persons from cultures with differing ethical values can successfully interact with each other. The descriptive/theoretical approach is undoubtedly useful in pointing out the tremendous diversity in values which exist between various cultures in the world, but it does not speak directly to the problem of how ethical dilemmas arising out of cross-cultural encounters can be resolved. In order to address this problem, the scientific study of cultural values can be profitably supplemented with a philosophical approach to intercultural ethics. While philosophers have just recently begun to discuss ethics from a cross-cultural perspective, there seems to be a growing interest in the field (see, for example, May and Sharratt 1994).

In an influential paper, "The Cross-Cultural Arena: An Ethical Void," Dean C. Barnlund (1979) called for a metaethic which would be created or synthesized out of existing cultures. He hoped it would serve as a superordinate set of guidelines that would govern communication between cultures and win wide support from as many countries as possible. Of course, no such metaethic as yet exists, at least none which has won universal or near-universal support. The task I have set for myself in this paper, however, is of much more limited scope. While I am also interested in developing a metaethical approach to intercultural ethics (in the general sense that metaethics involves discourse about ethics rather than the formulation of specific ethical norms), my method will be dialectical rather than either deductive or inductive.

Precisely the fact that no universal ethical norms exist renders any deductive approach to intercultural ethics problematic. How are such transcendent norms to be found in the first place and, assuming they could be found, how could they compel universal agreement? Just as ethical standards vary from culture to

culture, so too do the culturally influenced reasoning processes which would enable us to arrive at any such metaethic. Condon and Yousef (1975, chap. 10) suggest that both "epistemic structures" (the way arguments are built) and rhetorical patterns (the way arguments are presented) vary from culture to culture. Shifting from a search for universal ethical norms to a search for universal metaethical principles does not really solve the problem, but simply removes it one step. Universal "meta-principles" can only be established by appealing to other, more transcendent "meta-principles," which in turn can only be established by appealing to other, even more transcendent "meta-principles," and so on *ad infinitum*. In his lectures Milton Bennett colorfully refers to this kind of overanalyzing (over-*anal*-yzing?) as "metashit."

On the other hand, an inductive approach, which begins by looking at values which already exist within cultures and then attempts to isolate values which are common in all cultures, is equally problematic. In the first place, there are few, if any values, which are shared by all cultures. Moreover, even if such "least-common-denominators" could be found, they would undoubtedly be too vague and general to have much practical significance. Furthermore, existing research shows that there is often considerable variation *within* cultures with regard to the values people hold. If individual cultures themselves do not have a set of agreed-upon values, how can a universal set of agreed-upon values ever be found? And even then, the mere existence of universally shared values would not necessarily imply that they are ethical. Greed is probably more universal than altruism, for example, but that does not necessarily mean that greed is more virtuous (although some would undoubtedly argue that it does).

I would not like to entirely discount efforts made in either of these directions, however, because interesting developments are occurring in each. With regard to epistemic structures, for example, Maruyama (1980) has empirically identified at least four major "mindscapes" which cut across cultural lines. His types – H, I, S, and G – are reminiscent of, though not precisely equivalent to, the four types earlier identified by Pribram (1949) – universalism, nominalism, intuitive, and dialectical. But whereas Pribram had merely suggested that these types were characteristic of Western culture, Maruyama has offered evidence that they exist in varying proportions in all the cultures he has studied, even though in any given culture one type may dominate the others. While Maruyama's work does not establish the basis for universal epistemic

structures, it at least indicates that epistemic structures are not determined exclusively by culture and that there can be substantial agreement not only in content, but also in method, between people from different cultures who share the same mindscapes.

With regard to inductive approaches, it seems that even among anthropologists the debate over cultural universals is not yet concluded (see Tennekes 1971). Hatch (1983) moreover suggests that it may still be possible to evaluate cultures in terms of their ability to provide for human well-being. The fact that people from different cultures share certain biological and psychological features in common as human beings suggests the possibility that there can be universally shared values as well. The kinds of food people eat, for example, may be determined by cultural and environmental factors, but the fact that people must eat is a universal biological need. Cultures are established to fulfill such needs, and if they have the means to fulfill these needs, but not the will to do so, they can be regarded as unethical. The same analysis can be applied to "higher" psychological needs. Current development ethics speaks not only of "basic *material* needs," but also of "basic *human* needs" (Gasper 1994). Social interaction, for example, could be included among these needs even though the specific *form* of social interaction may vary from culture to culture. We may be justified, then, in saying that cultures which are able to satisfy a full range of basic human needs are superior to those which are not (by this criteria, of course, certain "primitive" cultures based on self-sufficient agriculture and a strong sense of community may be superior to more "advanced" industrial cultures where hunger and social alienation are increasingly prevalent).

As I have indicated, however, the approach I have adopted is dialectical rather than deductive or inductive. Instead of attempting to formulate a universal set of metaethical principles (arrived at either through deduction or induction) that can then be applied to particular ethical problems, I would like to investigate how entirely new and different ethical norms can be generated out of specific cross-cultural interactions. My contention is that ethics can be looked at not simply as the static application of culturally determined norms to particular situations, but also as a dynamic process in which individuals in intercultural situations may be able to transcend the ethical norms instilled in them by their respective cultures. The constructivist approach I adopt denies any transcendental ("otherworldly") source of truths or values, seeing these instead

as human creations, or constructs. (A succinct summary of the constructivist position is provided in von Glasersfeld 1984; fuller treatments are given in G.A. Kelly 1955 and Berger and Luckmann 1966; recent applications to communication theory are discussed in Delia 1987 and Applegate and Sypher 1988.) Kelly's definition of "constructive alternativism" is worth quoting at some length:

> ...There are various ways in which the world is construed. Some of them are undoubtedly better than others. They are better from our human point of view because they support more precise and more accurate predictions about more events. No one has yet devised a set of constructs which will predict everything down to the last tiny flutter of a hummingbird's wing; we think it will be an infinitely long time before anyone does. Since an absolute construction of the universe is not feasible, we shall have to be content with a series of successive approximations to it. These successive approximations can, in turn, be tested piecemeal for their predictive efficiency. Essentially this means that all of our interpretations of the universe can gradually be scientifically evaluated if we are persistent and keep on learning from our mistakes.
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> *We assume that all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement....* We take the stand that there are always some alternative constructions available to choose among in dealing with the world. No one needs to paint himself into a corner; no one needs to be completely hemmed in by circumstances; no one needs to be the victim of his biography. We call this philosophical position *constructive alternativism.*
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> ...[I]t is not a matter of indifference which of a set of alternative constructions one chooses to impose upon his world. Constructs cannot be tossed about willy-nilly without a person's getting into difficulty. While there are always alternative constructions available, some of them are definitely poor implements. The yardstick to use is the specific predictive efficiency of each alternative construct and the overall predictive efficiency of the system of which it would, if adopted, become a part. (pp. 14-15, emphasis in the original)

The key ideas here seem to be that no set of constructs take account for the

whole; constructs can be evaluated through testing; some constructs may prove to be better than others; and constructs are susceptible to change. Exposure to different ways of thinking through cross-cultural contact undoubtedly increases the number of the constructs which are available to us. Nonetheless, these constructs, as with those in our own culture, are susceptible to testing. Some may prove to be more adequate than others, and we can revise or replace our existing constructs. In other words, we can "deconstruct" old ways of thinking and "reconstruct" new ones. We need not, as Kelly says, be victims of our own cultural biographies. Constructivism rejects the idea of a fixed "human nature" and regards the individual personality as mutable. New patterns of thought can be generated by recombining old ideas in new ways. That is, the human mind is able to imagine new connections between things which may or not have any grounding in reality. Some may be purely fanciful (unicorns); others may have greater "predictive efficiency" (Einstein's theory of relativity).

Since constructivism arose out of the sociology of knowledge it has perhaps shown more interest in epistemological questions (the social construction of knowledge) than in ethical questions (the social construction of values). I would argue, however, that the basic orientation of constructivism can be applied equally well not only to thinking and knowledge, but also to behavior and ethics. The latter are my primary concerns in this paper and my central thesis is that entirely new ways of doing things can emerge through the creative imagining of new possibilities. My approach is philosophical, however, rather than empirical because I am more interested in how people might be able to successfully resolve ethical differences in areas where no agreed-upon norms yet exist. That is, I am not so much concerned with how people *actually* behave as with how it is *possible* for them to behave. Reflection on such possibilities (which may or may not exist in the real world) is properly the task of philosophy, not science (which properly concerns itself with theories of how knowledge and values develop within particular cultures, based on empirical data and interpretations). Nonetheless, our task here must also be grounded in the facts of human experience and I have sought to provide concrete examples, which are mostly drawn from cross-cultural encounters between Japanese and Americans. By intentionally confining myself to these two cultures, I avoid any attempt to formulate the kind of universal metaethic that Barnlund has called for. But perhaps some of the perspectives I develop can later be applied to

cultures other than America's and Japan's. Before beginning a philosophical analysis (where the two cultures might go), however, I will offer a bit of empirical description (where the two cultures have already been).

Japanese and Western ethics in historical perspective

Borden (1991), building on the work of Glenn (1981), has proposed a "cultural orientation model" which describes cultures along three axes: closed-minded/open-minded; abstractive/associative; and universalistic/particularistic. (For the first pair, Glenn uses the terms "narrowing and broadening the frame of reference"; the terms "absolutizing" and "pluralistic" might also be appropriate). Closed-mindedness is the tendency to think rigidly in terms of "absolutes," which are seen as constituting an unchangeable body of "truth" or as normative rules which people from a common cultural background must subscribe to. Open-mindedness is the opposite in that it maintains a tolerant attitude towards different beliefs and values. Abstractive thinking emphasizes general principles and rational thought. Associative thinking, on the other hand, is concerned with specific contexts and direct experience. Universalism attempts to apply the same standards of thought and behavior to all people, whereas particularism applies these standards only to one's own group, recognizing that other groups may have different standards.

To avoid stereotyping, it should be recognized that all six tendencies can be found in varying degrees in both Japanese and Western culture and, moreover, that they are susceptible to change over time. It would be a fair generalization, however, to say that until relatively recently the closed-minded (absolutizing), abstracting, and universalistic tendencies have been dominant in Western culture whereas the open-minded (pluralistic), associative, and particularistic tendencies have been dominant in Japanese culture. The trickiest pair is perhaps the first, since closed-mindedness can refer either to an unchangeable body of "truth," characteristic of the West, or to conformity to particular cultural norms, characteristic of Japan. That is, the "absolute" can be based on either establishing universal principles (i.e., closed-mindedness combined with universalistic and abstracting tendencies) or maintaining cultural homogeneity (i.e., closed-mindedness combined with particularistic and associative tendencies). Nonetheless, from a past-oriented, intracultural perspective the relatively rigid (closed-minded) application of universal principles in the West

can be legitimately contrasted with the more flexible, case-by-case (open-minded) approach of Japan. It can also be said, however, that from a present-oriented, intercultural perspective both cultures have recently begun moving away from their traditional forms of closed-mindedness to a more open-minded orientation. Before looking at how changes in this orientation, and the others as well, have come about in modern times, however, let us very briefly offer a few examples of how the respective orientations have historically exhibited themselves in the West and in Japan.

The absolutizing, abstracting, and universalistic tendencies in traditional Western thought can found in a number of areas. In philosophy there has been an emphasis on absolute truths (derived from Plato's theory of ideas), abstract logic (beginning with Aristotle), and universal ethics (Kant's categorical imperative, for example). The Judaic religion developed the idea that there is one "true" God, regarding the gods of other nations as "false." Moreover, the Jews thought of themselves as a "chosen people" whose mission it was to be a "light to all nations." Judaism eventually become more particularistic (concerned with preserving a distinct identity rather than with proselytizing), but from its inception Christianity has, with a fair amount of consistency, tended to regard itself as the "one true faith" with a worldwide mission. Catholicism is defined as that which is believed "at all times, in all places, and by all people," and even when Christianity split into a myriad of competing sects, following the Protestant Reformation, the ecumenical idea that all Christians should be "one" has persisted. Since Roman times Western legal thought has made a distinction between law (applying to everyone) and custom (applying only to particular cultures). Cicero viewed the highest form of law, natural law, as "one unchanging and eternal law valid for all nations and for all times." The modern "universal declaration of human rights" can be seen as an extension of this concept. Western science was founded on the premise that rational argumentation and empirical observation would lead all reasoners and observers to the same conclusions. The assumption, of course, is that everyone reasons and perceives things in exactly the same way. At about the same time that Western scientists began to explore the universe with their telescopes, navigators began to explore the globe in their ships. With the growth of capitalism the West came to see itself as "superior" both in material wealth and in technological achievements to non-Western cultures. Classicial imperialism

believed that it was the "white man's burden" to "civilize" more "primitive" people. Politically, Western-style democracy was set forth as a model for other nations to emulate. The effort to create a "global market" and a "new world order" are the modern equivalents of these traditional economic and political ideals.

The pluralistic, associative, and particularistic tendencies in Japanese thought should be seen in the context of Japan's long period of isolation (from 1635-1853 the country was closed to foreigners). In the absence of outside influences Japan was able to develop a highly homogenous culture which emphasized its distinctiveness from, rather than its similarity to, other cultures. Even earlier, however – undoubtedly because of its geographic isolation – Japanese culture had been preoccupied with establishing its own identity. The indigenous form of religion, Shinto, has concerned itself more with tracing the origins of the Japanese people than with proselytizing non-Japanese. Unlike the Western Bible, which doesn't shy away from describing the creation of the entire world, the *Kojiki* confines itself to the creation of the Japanese archipelago. It is hardly surprising to see that Shintoism was used before and during the Second World War as a prop for Japanese nationalism. Moreover, as a religion Shinto thinks in terms of a plurality of immanent spirits (animistic *kami*), rather than in terms of a single transcendent diety. With no need to metaphysically justify their religious beliefs, the Japanese could, as Hajime Nakamura (1964) notes, embrace an essentially "this-worldly," phenomenalistic outlook. Thinking engages itself more with concrete images than with abstract ideas. There is less interest in reason and logic, more interest in feeling and intuition. Since logical consistency is not highly valued, various perspectives can be tolerated. Japan was thus able to assimilate Buddhism and elements of Chinese and Korean culture to its own needs with little internal resistance. (Religious tolerance still seems to be more highly developed in Japan than in West.) Nakamura contends, however, that while the peaceful coexistence of different religions and cultural influences helped to instill a sense of tolerance (open-mindedness) among the Japanese, it also contributed to an underdeveloped spirit of criticism. Ethics, moreover, was not grounded in transcendental principles but in the tendency to emphasize what Nakamura refers to as a "limited social nexus," i.e. the group. Behavior is regulated in the context of hierarchically organized social interaction, with a single divine-human being, the Emperor, at the top. Those

who are outside of the group or who owe no allegiance to the Japanese Emperor are outside the scope of ethical consideration. They have no obligations to the group and the group has no obligations to them.

The historic differences between the two cultures should not be overemphasized, however, because there are important similarities as well. In the medieval period, for example, both cultures developed feudal economic and political systems along hierarchical lines, with strong ideological support from their respective religions. During the same period, however, the two cultures also developed strongly cooperative tendencies among the common people as a means of defense. High levels of cooperation among peasants (sometimes leading to revolts) were not uncommon either in the medieval West or in feudal Japan. Japanese Buddhism and Western Christianity each fostered lay religious movements which emphasized inner personal empowerment as a counterbalance to outward social control. Both Japanese-style cooperation and Western-style democracy can be seen as having their origin in the need to take the perspective of the common people into consideration. They are, in effect, simply different solutions to the same problem. In Japan the emphasis on mutual obligations and maintaining the harmony of the group implied that no one, including those in positions of power, could act in purely self-serving or arbitrary ways. (The perversion of this position, of course, is obligations without rights and conformity without freedom.) In the West the emphasis on individual rights and uniform laws for all social classes equally implied that no one, including those in positions of power, could act in purely self-serving or arbitrary ways. (The perversion of this position, of course, is rights without responsibilities and freedom without a concern for social justice.) The occasional name-calling (Westerners claiming that Japanese are "conformists"; Japanese claiming that Westerners are "egotists") and debates over which system is "better" ignore the fact that mutual obligations and personal freedom are reconcilable, just as individual rights and social responsibilities are reconcilable. Past fascist tendencies in both Japan and the West can be seen as simply having taken the perverse route in their respective cultural traditions.

The universalizing tendencies of the West and the particularlizing tendencies of Japan can be seen as containing both positive and negative elements. One positive aspect of Western universalism is its inclusivism; in principle no one is excluded from participation on the basis of race, color, creed, or national origin

(to borrow from America's Civil Rights Act of 1964). A negative feature is that Western universalism often fails to admit that there can be genuine differences among people from different cultures; as a result it sometimes attempts to impose its values on others. Westerners who truly believe that they have a set of values which are both absolute and universal naturally see it as their duty to propagate these values to others, either through persuasion or force. Universal values thus become "totalizing," to use postmodern language (Lyotard 1984). The West draws a circle around its own particular set of values, calls this the "total," and then proceeds to regard everyone who falls outside this circle as "other," that is, as marginal, inferior, or heretical. Persons can choose to be either assimilated in the great "melting pot" or thrown out with the garbage, so to speak. Cultural imperialism is a persistent problem in Western universalism. As we have already suggested, the modern attempt to draw all the world's cultures into a single global political and economic order is perhaps merely the latest manifestation of this tendency.

One positive aspect of Japan's "cultural particularism" is its respectful attitude towards cultural differences; it recognizes that countries might have different values and rarely attempts to impose its own culture on others. (Certain actions of Japanese in the Asia during the Second World War may partially refute this claim, however.) A negative aspect, however, is that the preoccupation with Japanese "uniqueness" often leads to exclusivist attitudes towards non-Japanese. In attempting to answer the question "what it means to be a 'real' Japanese," an extensive popular literature, called *Nihonjin-ron* – "theory of the Japanese" – has arisen (see Taylor 1983, chap. 1, for a critical overview). The emphasis on "uniqueness" can sometimes also, in its own way, imply a level of superiority. While Japanese do not regard the mastery of some aspect of Western culture as unusual (Seiji Ozawa becoming a classical music director, for example), the reverse is not always true. Japanese culture is sometimes thought to be "inscrutible" and therefore incapable of being mastered by Westerners (it is impossible, for example, for Americans ever to write "real" haiku – a sentiment I have actually heard expressed in Japan, which reminded me at the time of the old debates in America about whether Brits could ever learn to play jazz or whites could ever sing the blues).

I would argue that the trend towards "multiculturalism" in America and towards "internationalism" in Japan are attempts by both nations to break out of

these historical paradigms. Multiculturalism involves a breakdown of traditional Western universalism and a recognition that there can be valid cultural differences not only between America and other countries, but within America itself. Internationalism in Japan correspondingly involves a breakdown of the traditional concept of cultural "uniqueness" and a recognition that Japanese are fundamentally the "same" as people from other countries. While both movements are sometimes superficial in their approach (Americans thinking they are being "multicultural" if they eat ethnic food or listen to ethnic music and Japanese thinking they are being "international" if they eat non-Japanese food or listen to non-Japanese music), both movements also involve a serious widening of ethical consciousness and an expanded awareness of cultural complexity. Every culture is in a sense "unique" and at the same time people throughout the world can be seen as sharing a common humanity; ethics must take both cultural differences and cultural similarities into consideration. The dialectical tension between cultural universalism and cultural particularism can thus potentially result in a synthesis which recognizes the possibility of a "unity in diversity," a theme that will be further developed towards the end of this paper.

It is important to see, however, that Japan and America are approaching this synthesis from different angles: America moving from an appreciation of similarities towards an appreciation of differences and Japan moving from an appreciation of differences towards an appreciation of similarities. There is apt to be some misunderstanding, then, when Americans and Japanese discuss these issues. The emphasis of the Western interculturalist on "cultural differences" can easily play into the hands of those Japanese who want to maintain a strong distinction between Japanese and Western culture and thereby maintain a sense of their own uniqueness. Conversely the emphasis of Japanese interculturalists on "cultural similarities" can easily play into the hands of those Americans who equate internationalization with the spread of Western cultural values. Bill Kelly (mss., no date) has looked at this problem in considerable detail and suggests that while Western ethnocentricism takes the form of denying differences, Japanese ethnocentricism takes the form of denying similarities. Thus, the methods for overcoming these two types of ethnocentricism will also be different. In the West, the emphasis should appropriately be on respecting differences, while in Japan it should appropriately be on acknowledging

similarities. Ultimately a model needs to be constructed which reconciles these two different, but complementary approaches.

The breakdown of old paradigms and the creation of a new ethical awareness inevitably results in a sense of confusion. In the West this breakdown has been largely metaphysical – the death of God, the undermining of "absolute" moral standards, an awareness of dark side of our political and economic developments, increasing doubts about the ultimate benefits of science and technology to humanity, etc. It is doubtful that many Japanese regard these problems as serious. They cannot moan the loss of a God they never believed in; there are no absolute moral standards in Japan to be undermined; despite Japan's economic might, which indeed has an enormous influence internationally, most Japanese do not regard Japan as having attained superpower status; science and technology are both uncritically accepted, almost worshipped. Rather, in Japan the breakdown has been a lost of cultural identity and the feeling that "Westernization" is obliterating traditional Japanese values. These are problems which, of course, the West does not face. We can suggest at least three possible solutions to the loss of traditional values in both Japan and the United States:

The first response is retrenchment. Thus one can find both in Japan and the United States those who mourn the loss of "traditional values" and who seek to reestablish the old values. While many of the old values certainly may be worth retaining, cultural conservatives frequently adopt an uncritical reverence for tradition. Values are preserved not because they are "good" but because they are established; new values are rejected not because they are "bad" but because they are in conflict with the older, established values. Genuine ethical reflection – deciding whether certain values are worthwhile or not on the basis of informed judgment – is thus impeded. Retrenchment is based on an "essentialist" view of culture: once the defining characteristics of a culture have been determined they can then be refined into absolutes. Essentialism implies that it is possible to define, for example, what it means to be a "real" American or a "real" Japanese. Persons who identify themselves with a particular culture are thus obliged to follow the norms of their culture or else be regarded as "deviants." Ultimately essentialism becomes little more than an apologia for the status quo.

In this context we can see why multiculturalism is regarded by some as a threat to "real" American culture. Multiculturalism implies the full acceptance

into society of groups which have hitherto been marginalized from American society on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, and the like – and the fact that these groups have not previously been fully integrated into American society shows just how "un-universal" the old universalism really was. Unity was previously based on a glossing over of differences and these differences must be fully recognized before any higher form of unity can be achieved. It is interesting to see how this move towards a wider unity is taking place in the context of the breakdown of supposedly universal values. On the one hand, there is the danger that the formerly excluded groups will become scapegoats for all of society's problems, since they are widely perceived as contributing to the disintegration of previous social norms. ("Japan-bashing" can perhaps be seen in the same context since the Japanese are perceived as not playing the international trade game in accordance with America's "universal" rules.) Another danger, however, is that multiculturalism can degenerate into a new form of cultural particularism which is equally essentialist in orientation, i.e., an attempt to define the essence of what it means to be "black," "female," or "gay" and to thereby establish a distinct identity. "Identity politics," as it is called in the United States, may in fact be a legitimate way for marginalized groups to gain full social recognition. But exclusive focus on a particular identity can also generate separatist tendencies in which groups begin to believe that they are innately different from, and perhaps even superior to, other cultural groups coexisting in the same society. The boundary between the dominant culture and the "other" remains, even though the terms are reversed, eg. women are good, men are bad; blacks are good, whites are bad; etc. Thus, instead of challenging the existence of the boundary, which maintains the status quo in the first place, they may simply retreat into further isolation.

We can also see why "internationalism" may be perceived by some as a threat to "real" Japanese culture. Japan's self-consciousness about its national identity is perhaps a natural response to what is widely perceived as the rapid "Westernization" of Japanese culture. I would argue, however, that "modernization" is a more apt expression than "Westernization" and that the conflict between traditional and modern values that Japan is experiencing is at root not unlike the conflict presently being experienced between traditional and modern values in all industrialized cultures. While Japan has superficially adopted many outward forms of Western culture – food, music, fashion,

architecture, etc. – the inward way of thinking in Japan remains in many ways significantly different from the West. Japanese "uniqueness" does not need to defended if Westernization is not a real threat. Moreover, Westerners may legitimately beg to differ with Japanese whose use of the term "Westernization" is based on superficial stereotypes (eg., "The younger generation doesn't work as hard as the older generation because they have become too 'Westernized'"). "Westernization" is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it can be used to promote social change (the argument, for example, that Japan needs to "catch up" with the West in terms of gender equality). On the other hand, it can be used as a term of derogation: the Japanese expression *bataa kusai*, "smelling like butter," is used to describe Japanese who have lived abroad a while and become too "Westernized." Americans, for their part, use the term "gone native" to describe Americans who adopt the ways of other cultures. Perhaps the expression *shoyu-kusai*, "smelling like soy sauce," should be introduced to describe Americans who have lived in Japan a long time and become too "Japanized"! Ultimately, however, I would suggest that greater understanding could be promoted if all such labels, including the label "Westernization," were simply dropped from our vocabularies.

A second response to the breakdown of traditional values is nihilism. If the old values can no longer be believed in or legitimated, then we owe no allegiance to them. Popular nihilism expresses itself, both in Japan and the United States, in various counterculture movements, such as punk rock and alternative lifestyles, most of which are harmless. In the strict sense, however, nihilism is a purely destructive impulse which rejects all values and sees no prospect whatsoever for establishing new ones. It is difficult to be a consistent nihilist, however. As Camus suggested in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, the logical conclusion of nihilism is suicide: a total rejection of values implies that one's own life no longer has any value as well. If, however, we choose life rather than death, we are obliged to continue choosing among various courses of action and our choices ultimately imply that we regard one course of action as "better" than another, regardless of the criteria we use. All choices are not equal. But because nihilists reject any form of ethical reflection from the start, they are incapable of generating any real social change and thus implicitly lend their support to the status quo. They are "against the establishment" but have nothing better to offer in its place. The implicit value judgment is that since no value judgments are

possible we are not permitted to make any value judgments whatsoever (as if human beings aren't supposed to have values).

A softer form of nihilism locates ultimate ethical decision-making in the individual rather than in cultural norms: people are free to "do what they want." Values are no longer seen as being culturally determined but are regarded as purely "subjective." The subjectivist position ignores the fact that ethical decisions always have objective consequences. We do not live in a vacuum but in a real world in which our actions have an impact not only on other people but also on the environment. Our social and ecological "embeddedness" implies a responsibility towards anything that will be affected by what we do. Moreover, my own happiness is dependent on the happiness of others. If I write the perfect novel, for example, but no one reads it; if I give a gift which is not appreciated; if I love someone but my love is unrequited, my own happiness is incomplete. Ethical individualism is like masturbation – pleasurable in its own way but not the real thing. It should be noted, however, that an emphasis on individual subjectivity is perfectly compatible with both America's and Japan's modern consumer societies, which sees the market economy as an impersonal mechanism through which people can satisfy their individual desires. Everything comes to be seen as simply a matter of consumer preference, including which religion we believe in (if any) and which values we choose to adopt. The postmodern contention that ethics is simply a matter of individual taste and that the breakdown of traditional cultural values liberates individuals from social norms is, in the context of late-twentieth century capitalism, as reactionary and supportive of the status quo as retrenchment is.

A third possible solution is to see the breakdown of traditional values as an opportunity for growth. Jungian psychology suggests that individuals cannot be completely whole unless they have fully integrated opposite tendencies into their present personalities. Could this same concept be applied to cultures? If the tendencies toward absolutism, abstraction, and universalism have been dominant in the West, then the West needs to develop its pluralistic, associative, and particularistic capacities. Conversely, if the latter tendencies have been dominant in Japan, then Japan needs to develop its capacities for absolutism (in the sense of being able to take a firm stand), abstraction, and universalism. The solution here is not either-or, but both-and, and it represents a dialectical synthesis of seemingly contradictory tendencies based on the critical retention

of some aspects of the dominant tendencies and the critical adoption of some aspects of the nondominant tendencies. Neither culture has yet reached this solution, however, and both seem to caught up in the process of going over to the other side in a more or less uncritical manner. This makes for some interesting intercultural interactions – the Western dharma bum interested in Buddhism and haiku meeting the Japanese engineer interested in technology and development, for example. Of course, the Japanese engineer has absolutely no knowledge of or interest in Buddhism and haiku, while the Western dharma bum has absolutely no knowledge of or interest in technology and development. The American fails to live up to the Japanese person's expectations of what Americans are supposed to be like, and vice versa.

While this option provides opportunities for growth there are also at least two risks. The first risk, as we have already hinted at, is that in going over to the other side we may end up becoming just as one-sided as we were in the past, except that we are now on the other side. In the West, an appreciation for its "opposite" has easily led to irrationalism and identity-based groupishness, combined with a denial that rationality and universalism have any value whatsoever. In Japan, an appreciation for its "opposite" has easily led to materialism and hyper-technology, combined with a denial that spirituality and simplicity have any value whatsoever. In West we see an explosion of New Age religions and cults which, upon scratching the surface, don't really seem to go very deep in their spiritual understanding (from a traditional Eastern point of view). In Japan, we see efforts to create individual "lifestyles" based on extravagant consumption which, upon scratching the surface, don't really seem to get to the heart of what having an individual identity is all about (from a traditional Western point of view).

The second risk, as we also hinted earlier, is that we will continue to think in terms of old stereotypes, eg., that the West is rational and materialistic while the East is intuitive and spiritual, or that Americans are individualistic and democratic while Japanese are conformist and authoritarian. What also must be seen is that the "opposite" tendencies we need to reappropriate are not the exclusive properties of other cultures, but are present in latent form within our own cultures. Thus, the West also has an intuitive tradition which began with ancient Greeks such as Pygathoras and reached its culmination in the mystics of medieval Europe. The fact that this tradition has historically often been

suppressed by the state and religious institutions does not mean that it has nothing to offer the present. Japan as well has an "individualistic" tradition in the form of Buddhist meditation and in the martial arts, both of which involve a high degree of personal development. Democracy in Japan might be better based on Japanese notions of group cooperation (combined with Buddhist-style individualism) rather than on Western traditions of individual rights (combined with social responsibility). The familiar proverb "the nail that sticks up gets hit down" has typically been used in Japan to refer to the suppression of individual personality traits, but if Japan could achieve a society in which such individual traits were fully developed and accepted, the fact that everybody had them would mean that no one would be different. The expression "the nail that sticks up gets hit down" could then be fruitfully applied to politicians, corporate leaders, and others who typically act out of self-interest rather than out of a concern for the entire group. "Beating down the nail" could thus be associated with the elimination of hierarchy – perhaps even revolution! The point is that the same cultural justifications can be used to accomplish very different ends.

Universalism and relativism as philosophical concepts

Having briefly discussed the historical development of ethical tendencies in Japanese and Western cultures, it is time now to look at universalism and relativism in more philosophical terms. On the one side, cultural universalism has a difficult time establishing its metaphysical credentials. The attempt to ground ethics in a transcendental set of absolute values has proven elusive in the history of philosophy (as Plato himself perhaps foresaw in his self-criticism of the doctrine of the Forms in the *Parmenides*). Most foundational approaches to ethics turn out upon closer examination to be little more than the reification of culturally derived norms or individual prejudices. Yet, while we can agree with the postmodern criticism of "totalization," I would argue that it is nonetheless possible to formulate a *holistic* approach to ethics which avoids postmodernism's essentially nihilistic conclusions. Totalizing involves drawing a boundary around a particular set of values, proclaiming them the "whole," and dismissing everything that falls outside as "other." Any attempt to describe a total perspective results in a coercive attempt to fit everything within its own procrustean bed. Christianity began as a religion which transcended Greek and Jew, but after Constantine made it the official religion of the Roman Empire it

adopted an antagonistic stance towards both heretics within and infidels without. Science started out as an attempt to arrive at pure knowledge untainted by personal or cultural values, but soon came to regard every other form of reasoning, including reasoning about values, as either invalid or irrelevant. Democracy was originally a means for increasing participation in government and promoting the values of equality and freedom, but the system that eventually evolved could also be used to promote inequality and oppression and to thwart any attempts to challenge it.

A holistic approach, however, would simply refuse to draw such boundaries in the first place. Totalizing is like standing in a field and saying that all that one sees is all that exists. Holism is the attempt to perpetually walk beyond the horizon. In other words, precisely because there is no "center," movement is possible. A "center" – whether conceived of as God, culture, the individual, the market, or whatever – simply tethers us. There need not be any *telos*, or final goal which we are inexorably moving towards, although it is indeed important for us to be able to imagine potential futures. The future is open-ended. As we walk beyond the horizon, however, we see how little we have already experienced; we become open to new experiences; our previous universalizing tendencies begin to look like petty attempts to defend our own part and call it the whole; and we become aware of myriads of new possibilities. All of this should create a bit of humility with regard to what we have achieved thus far and awe before what it is still possible for us to achieve. Certainly no culture can presume itself to be the "end of history." Since it is impossible to know the "whole," we are constantly moving on towards new horizons. Each terrain gives us a partial perspective, which adds to our understanding, but none of these partial perspectives can be mistaken for the whole. Our present may be nothing more than a single wave in an ocean of future potentialities.

In this light the word transcendence can be given an entirely new meaning. Rather than refer to an otherworldly source of absolute values, it can mean the this-worldly struggle to go beyond present configurations. Transcendence, so defined, is the ability to imagine new possibilities which do not yet exist; the task of ethics is to both envision and evaluate such possibilities. We can imagine a world that is better, and preferable to live in, than the one that already exists. This project cannot be accomplished through scientific, empirical methods but only through "speculative" and imaginative ones. Science deals

with the world as it is, ethics with the world as it might be. Science can predict what will happen in the future only on the basis of what has happened in the past. The future we might choose, however, can only be explored in the imagination. Scientific accuracy about how things work is thus no substitute for ethical judgment; ethical judgment involves making choices about future behavior, not make factual observations about past behavior. Nonetheless, I would argue that ethics also needs to be grounded in concrete experience to prevent its wings from melting in a flight of pure fancy towards the sun. Intersubjective agreement about what we would like to accomplish needs to grounded in a knowledge of what is actually possible. Two people "subjectively" agreeing to swim around the world does not make this activity "objectively" possible. In other words, the dialectic must involve "objective" reality as much as "subjective" ideas. In this sense ethical hypotheses can be tested in much the same way that scientific hypotheses are tested. Do our visions of the future work, are they achievable, are they inclusive, are they just? Such an approach sees ethics as a creative process. Whereas "totalizing" is static and adverse to paradigmatic social change (because it regards the present paradigm as all that is possible), holism can be dynamic and dialectical, moving in ever-greater circles towards a "whole" it may ultimately never reach. In the process the scope of ethical concern is widened beyond one's own self, family, culture, nation, species, and planet to include the entire web of interconnected relationships one finds oneself in. In philosophy this idea is called ethical extensionism. Nash (1989) has suggested that ethics is indeed evolving beyond merely human concerns to include a concern for non-human forms of life and the universe as a whole. Humans are not, as Aristotle suggested, merely social animals.

We can add that there are precedents for ethical extensionism in the religious traditions of both Japan and the West. Buddhism contends that ultimately there is "no self," that is, that no boundaries can be drawn between one's self and the rest of the universe. Everything is interrelated and what is usually thought of as the "self" is merely a mirage. Expressed in more positive terms the self is identified with the highest principle: you are the Buddha. Holding on to our own individual desires and concepts simply results in self-centered egotism, and these must be transcended. Interrelatedness implies the notion that compassion must be extended to all beings. In the Western mystical tradition God is not

seen as a "being" above and beyond the world but as immanent in the world. Yet the fact that God is present in all beings also means that God is "transcendent"; God is not confined to any one particular being. Immanence and transcendence are simply two different ways of describing the all-pervasive presence of the divine. There are no boundaries between ourselves and God, nor between ourselves and other beings (whether human or not). The self is identified with Christ – God became humans so that humans could become God, in the formula of Athanasius. Love for everything that exists becomes the ethical ideal. Legalism – getting bound up in totalizing rules and regulations – is its opposite.

Modern formulations of these ideas can be found in deep ecology. Devall and Sessions (1985, pp. 66-67) write:

> In keeping with the spiritual traditions of many of the world's religions, the deep ecology norm of self-realization goes beyond the modern Western *self* which is defined as an isolated ego striving primarily for hedonistic gratification or for a narrow sense of individual salvation in this life or the next.... Spiritual growth, or unfolding, begins when we cease to understand or see ourselves as isolated and narrow competing egos and begin to identify with other humans from our family and friends to, eventually, our species. But the deep ecology sense of self requires a further maturity and growth, an identification which goes beyond humanity to include the nonhuman world. We must see beyond our narrow contemporary cultural assumptions and values, and the conventional wisdom of our time and place, and this is best achieved by the mediative deep questioning process....The "real work" can be summarized symbolically as the realization of "self-in-Self" where "Self" stands for organic wholeness. This process of the full unfolding of the self can also be summarized by the phrase, "No one is saved until we are all saved...."

In the same way that the destructive impulses of our "narrow contemporary cultural assumptions and values" can be deconstructed, the destructive impulses of our individual egos can also be deconstructed through a "meditative deep questioning process." Warwick Fox (1990) has further developed this idea in what he calls "transpersonal ecology." My own personal well-being is integrally

dependent upon the well-being of every social and ecological matrix I am a part of.

If cultural universalism needs to be radically re-thought, so too does the concept of cultural relativism, which is increasingly under attack even as a methodological principle in anthropology (Tennekes 1971). From a strictly philosophical point of view, it is clear that cultural relativism cannot be simply equated with ethical relativism. Earlier attempts to link the two (Westermarck 1924, Westermarck 1932, Herskovits 1947, and Herskovits 1973) have now been largely discredited. Hatch (1983) argues that cultural relativism arose out of modern anthropology's need to move beyond the ethnocentric view that Western culture is superior to more "primitive" cultures. Hatch indicates that while a strong form of cultural relativism resulted in the skeptical (I would say nihilistic) view that "nothing is really either right or wrong, or that there are no moral principles with a reasonable claim to legitimacy" (p. 64), a gentler form involved simply a call for tolerance, which "...expressed the principle that others ought to be able to conduct their affairs as they see fit, which includes living their lives according to the cultural values and beliefs of their society." (p. 65)

As far as it goes, the emphasis on tolerance is admirable and something to be retained. Philosophically, however, the shift to culture as the ultimate arbiter of values is problematic. The empirical fact that people from different cultures act in accordance with varying ethical norms does not logically necessitate the ethical *imperative* that people must act in accordance with these norms (in more philosophical parlance, an "ought" cannot be derived from an "is"). Moreover, the call for tolerance is itself an ethical imperative about how we ought to regard another culture's values. Hatch writes:

> To say that values vary from culture to culture is to describe (accurately or not) an empirical state of affairs in the real world, whereas the call for tolerance is a value judgment of what ought to be, and it is logically impossible to derive the one from the other. 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. (pp. 67-68)

Tolerance, as an ethical norm, implies accepting all cultural values as "equal,"

whether we find them admirable or morally repugnant. It obliges us to accept not only cultures with peaceful and benign tendencies, but also those with oppressive and inhumane tendencies. As ethical relativists we could not, for example, criticize Hitler's Germany, as Jaska and Pritchard (1988) point out, nor oppressive and inhumane tendencies within our own cultures for that matter. Moreover, ethical relativism absolves us from any responsibility to act in solidarity with victims in other cultures who may suffer from these oppressive and inhumane tendencies.

Cultural relativism, then, cannot become an ethical desideratum. Despite its current fashionability, based on its promotion of tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding, ethical relativism can be ultimately just as static and reactionary as ethical universalism. If distinct cultures are regarded as the ultimate locus of ethical norms, then these norms must by implication be passively accepted (i.e., "respected") without protest or criticism not only by outsiders but also by people living within those cultures. Existing forms of power and authority are thereby legitimated and the status quo goes unquestioned. The final result is that genuine ethical reflection is effectively squelched and blind conformity to a given set of cultural norms is encouraged.

The solution, of course, is not for outsiders to attempt to impose their own values on another culture (since this merely substitutes one set of culturally derived norms for another), but rather to encourage active ethical reflection on the basic questions of what should be done and why. This reflection involves looking first of all at our objective situation. It can also involve, of course, both dialogue within cultures (intraculturally) and dialogue between cultures (interculturally). Since no culture's values are ever completely homogenous, there might actually be as much ethical disagreement within cultures as there is between cultures. To dismiss such ethical dialogue as stodgy, irrelevant moralizing simply binds us further to the tyranny of culturally imposed values. Without the leverage of ethical reflection there is no way cultures can be moved ahead in new, and hopefully more just, directions. A recognition that existing values are inadequate can lead us either to the melancholy conclusion that "there are no moral principles with a reasonable claim to legitimacy" or the revolutionary possibility that entirely new values can be created.

A constructivist approach to intercultural ethics

A constructivist approach to intercultural ethics may be able to show not only how new ethical norms can be created but also how ethical dilemmas in intercultural situations might be resolved. We are now ready to outline such an approach in more detail. A theoretical basis for this outlook can be found in Berger and Luckmann's, *The Social Construction of Reality*. In this book Berger and Luckmann suggest that the relationship between humans and culture is dialectical. On the one hand, humans create culture; on the other, humans are created by culture. Humans do not behave solely by instinct but instead create social orders to fulfill their needs. No particular social order is to be found in the biological make-up of human beings, and within certain parameters a great deal of variety is possible, which accounts for the tremendous amount of cultural diversity found in different geographic regions and historical periods (the mere fact of geographic and historical diversity does not necessitate, of course, the value orientation of either cultural relativism or historicism). There is no one "right" way of doing things (although I think it could still be said, from an ethical point of view, that some cultures are more just and better adapted to their physical environments than others). Berger and Luckmann say that behavior is "externalized" when it is not specifically determined by biology but results from a conscious choice between alternatives. Externalization inevitably results in the objectivation of human artifacts, social patterns, and culture in general – that is, they acquire objective reality. This objective reality in turn has a reciprocal influence on human behavior, which may in fact limit future choices.

A concrete example may help to clarify this last point. Imagine an open field in which movement is possible in all directions. We are free to move where we choose. Suppose, however, that we decide, for whatever reason, to build a wall across this field. In building the wall we externalize ourselves and the wall becomes objectivated (part of objective reality). The wall now restricts our movement, however; we are no longer free to move in any direction we choose. Thus, while our behavior has modified the plain by creating the wall, the wall we have created will in turn modify our possibilities for future behavior. So it is with the creation of all social institutions. Berger and Luckmann offer this concise three-point summary: "Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. [Human beings are] a social product." (p. 61)

The third moment in this dialectical process, called internalization, is the

means by which objectivated social reality once again becomes part of human consciousness through socialization (i.e., the process by which human beings become a social product). Berger and Luckmann devote considerable space in their book to the socialization process, but a brief summary is possible. First, we must look at how cultural values are generated and what it is that the individual is being socialized into. In every situation there are a variety of possible courses of action. It is burdensome, however, to have to be constantly choosing which course of action to take. Consequently humans tend to behave habitually. Over time these habits are institutionalized in social and cultural norms (as "right" and "wrong" ways of doing things). Institutionalization also makes mutual predictability in human relationships possible; we can often anticipate how people will act in certain situations and can adjust our own behavior accordingly. Not all of these norms will prove necessary or useful over time, however, and cultures are constantly in a process of sedimentation – sifting out which norms are "memorable" and therefore of importance and which are not. Norms which are retained become part of cultural traditions, which are then communicated from generation to generation.

The socialization process itself begins with the acquisition of specific roles in society (child, parent, sibling, spouse, colleague, boss, subordinate, etc.). On the basis of tradition, certain socially determined forms of behavior come to be considered appropriate for each of these roles. Since these forms of behavior are not innate, they must be learned. In the process of being educated into these roles, however, we may become alienated from our "true selves"; that is, we may be unable to recognize a "self" apart from the roles themselves. We have become a "social product." We may also, however, forget that the norms we are acting in accordance with are human constructs. Social norms can then be said to have become reified: we come to regard them as part of the "original makeup of things" or as "human nature" rather than as human constructs which are subject to modification and change.

This account of the socialization process seems to lead to a form of cultural determinism which denies the possibility of free choice. But Berger and Luckmann believe that there are always "cracks" in the process and that it is impossible for individuals to ever become completely socialized. Furthermore, it must be remembered that Berger and Luckmann see culture and human behavior as being in dialectical tension with each other. To an extent culture does

determine behavior. But, on the other hand, behavior also determines culture. Reificiation can be seen as the source of the essentialist view of culture – the idea that there are certain characteristics which define a culture's "essence." Constructivism, however, follows the existentialist maxim that "existence preceeds essence." Culture is defined not in terms of some mysterious "essence," but by what people actually do. If a group of people begin to act in an entirely different way from the way they have acted in the past, they simply redefine their culture. The possibility of redefining culture is what makes the constructivist position dynamic and progressive. Determinism denies this possibility, however, because it sees the individual as acting exclusively in accordance with existing cultural norms, without the freedom to create new ones.

Reclaiming our ability to challenge existing cultural norms and create new ones is difficult, however, because of the tremendous pressure society exerts to keep itself in a relatively stable state. When the rate of change is too slow stagnation occurs, but when the rate is too fast society is in danger of flying apart at the seams. Moreover, there are powerful groups in every society which have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Berger and Luckmann see ideology as being a powerful tool towards this end. Ideologies are formed when particular power interests come to be associated with particular legitimations of the social order which define what is "reality." Legitimations are second-order objectivations of meaning which attempt to make sense of (explain/rationalize) those first-order objectivations which have become institutionalized. Berger and Luckmann delineate several levels of legitimations, ranging from language to folk wisdom to intellectual theories to entire symbolic universes. It is the latter which provide individuals with a sense of what is "real" and "unreal." Reality is only explainable in terms of a symbolic universe; whatever falls outside that universe is regarded as "unreal," chaotic, meaningless, or downright insane. "Universe maintenance" is society's attempt to maintain a particular worldview through religion, theology, philosophy, science, etc. Deviants from this worldview are subjected either to therapy (the attempt to reintegrate the individual back into "reality") or nihilation (marginalizing the individual and dismissing his or her ideas as "crazy"). It is important to note that power is usually implicit within the legitimations themselves; physical force is unnecessary to enforce social conformity unless the legitimations begin to lose

their persuasiveness.

In modern society (both Japan's and America's) many legitimations are in fact losing their persuasiveness. There is a discrepancy, for example, between the *ideal* that government should be "of the people, by the people, and for the people" and the *fact* that ultimate political and economic power lies mostly in the hands of an elite minority. Moreover, we are increasingly aware of how our ideals can be effectively manipulated by these elites to achieve their own ends. Habermas (1975) sees legitimations as in a state of "crisis," and argues that a new rational discourse is necessary if society is to be reconstructed on the basis of maximizing both freedom and justice. Postmodern critics such as Lyotard (1984), however, see the breakdown of legitimations as liberating in itself; any attempt to create a "new rational discourse" would simply result in the creation of new totalizing metanarratives (or "master stories") which legitimate the social order. Ultimately new power interests would take control and we would end up with the same coercive tendencies that we find in our present system. The failure of Marxism is often pointed to as an example: despite its lofty egalitarian and liberatory ideals it ended up creating a highly inegalitarian and oppressive social system.

Given our former criticism of both cultural universalism and cultural relativism, it can be seen that from a constructivist point of view the task is neither to create a new superstructure with universalizing tendencies nor to end up wallowing in the mush of postmodern relativism. On the one hand, we can share with Habermas the idea that rational ethical discourse is necessary but reject the possibility that this discourse will lead inexorably to a single solution. Habermas's Marxist background makes me wary on this latter point. The model I am thinking of here, again, is a dynamic one, analogous to the scientific method. Science aims at a total view of reality but realizes that this total view cannot be achieved by quick metaphysical "solutions." Rather, it involves a painstaking step-by-step journey of exploration and discovery. In ethics as well we can aim at the "whole" while rejecting any single solutions (or dogmatic "universals") that come up short. On the other hand, we can share with Lyotard and the postmodernists the need to question existing legitimations which simply maintain hierarchical power relations in society. In this sense, the deconstruction of socially constructed views of reality can be a liberating project. But as critics often point out, the weakness of the postmodern position

is that its emphasis on autonomy rejects the possibility of collective action to initiate social change. Here again I see a possible analogy with science, which may permit a solution. Science not only breaks down wrong-headed opinions and superstitions, but also permits the construction of new theories, some of them quite grand. The theories, however, always remain open to criticism and revision. The process, moreover, is not merely a matter of individual autonomy, but of collective dialogue.

Berger and Luckmann, like Mannheim before them, feel that it may be possible for intellectuals, who are cognizant of the socially constructed nature of "reality," to place themselves above the fray of competing ideologies. They write that pluralism is a precondition for social change and that intellectuals are by definition marginal types who may thus be able to lead society forward. I would argue, however, that this position may be little more than vanguardism. Unless a recognition of the socially constructed nature of "reality" is widespread in society (i.e., not confined to intellectuals), society as a whole will remain captivated by its own mystifications. And unless the "self" is also deconstructed on a widespread scale, any deconstruction of current social legitimations will simply unlatch a Pandora's box of competing egos. In the dialectical relationship between humans and culture, the two go hand in hand. Social structures cannot be effectively changed without a profound change in people's consciousness. In the absence of such changes, those who call for social change will simply continue to be misunderstood and marginalized, perhaps even subjected to "therapy" or "nihilation." Furthermore, there must be, as I have previously argued, positive visions of the direction in which we would collectively like to go (cataphatic imaginings in addition to apophatic deconstructions). This project does not involve *finding* a single rational order for society, but rather *creating* one out of the myriads of possible alternatives. The fact that these alternatives do not yet exist is also problematic in societies which demand concrete precedents and empirical proofs before moving ahead. Another problem is that realizing such alternatives with the full participation of all members of society is probably impossible unless the groupings are very small; there must be the prospect for full communication between all members of society on a local level. Smaller units of participation, however, would also permit a variety of different solutions to be proposed – rather than one big final totalizing Solution.

I would hope, then, that there is a possibility to overcome current social

mystifications and to reconstruct society along entirely different lines, but I acknowledge that this is an extremely difficult process. We may be stuck with things as they are for quite some time. The socialization process has enormous power to shape the individual's view of reality and also the ethical norms which people take as "given." The fish is unaware that he is swimming in water. It may, moreover, be extremely difficult for the majority of people to transcend the norms their culture tells them are "true" and reach the point where they can engage in a rational reflection on values. Frankena (1973) writes:

> We may...move from a rather irrational kind of inner direction to a more rational one in which which we achieve an examined life and a kind of autonomy, become moral agents on our own, and even reach a point when we can criticize the rules and values of our society, as Socrates did in the *Apology* and the *Crito*. Some find too much anxiety in this transition and try to "escape from freedom" in one way or another..., some apparently can make the transition only with the help of psychoanalysis, but for others it involves no major difficulties other than the use of some hard thought such as Socrates engaged in. (Frankena 1973, p. 8)

The fear of a void, meaninglessness, and chaos outside of socially constructed "reality" is a strong inducement not only to keep things as they are, but to tenaciously defend things as they are. If the society we have created is just, then perhaps there is no need to change – we can remain in a blissful, if ignorant edenic state. If the society we have created is unjust, however, then the reification of our present values becomes an impediment to the creation of a just society. The capacity to criticize one's own culture and transcend it does not, however, necessitate becoming isolated individuals set against society, outsiders, or rebels without a cause. Rather, it creates a space from which humans can "dereify" current social legitimations and reclaim that side of the constructivist dialectic which sees humans not just as the creations of culture, but as the creators of culture. Since we can never really position ourselves outside all social relationships, our only alternative is to recreate them in more satisfactory ways. Nihilism, through a lack of imagination, denies that such new possibilities can be created. Cynicism recognizes the that world we would like to live in (which we imagine) and the world we actually live in (which we

experience) are at a variance, but lacking either the motivation or a sense of empowerment, succumbs to the existing situation rather than taking responsibility to change it. Hope is the position that even if we fail, we cannot run away from our obligation to try.

Developing intercultural sensitivity

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 cultures 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 the intercultural experience of confronting a culture whose norms are different from our own, we either can retreat back to our own cultural norms (ethnocentricism), deny that there are any valid norms to govern our behavior in such situations (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 intregate 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. A brief summary can be offered:

(1) *Denial*: the inability to recognize genuine cultural differences because groups are isolated from and intentionally separated from other groups.
(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).
(3) *Minimization*: while superficial cultural differences in matters of food, clothing, etc. are recognized, human commonality is emphasized in terms of either physical universalism (eg., "we're all human") or transcendent universalism (eg., "we're all children of God").

(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).

(5) *Adaptation*: the development of communication skills which allows 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.

(6) *Integration*: a bicultural perspective which utilizes multiple cultural frames of reference and constructs a personal identity not based on any one particular culture.

Bennett describes the first three stages as "ethnocentric" and the latter three as "ethnorelative." Bennett draws on the earlier work of William Perry (1970), 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 specifical 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, I think, 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 ethical 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. A developmental model applied specifically to the Japanese situation might reverse the poles of thesis and antithesis, but the synthesis would be the same. That is, in Japan increases in reflectiveness would lead one from relativism (the acceptance of differences) to universalism (the acceptance of similarities), but the integrated state would be the same as with Westerners.

Stages which are similar to Bennett's "integrated" stage and Perry's "commitment in relativism" stage have been described by other authors as well. Ruth Useem and Richard Downie (1976), for example, speak of "third cultures"; Muneo Yoshikawa (1988) of "inbetweenness"; Peter Adler (1977) of "multicultural man"; and Janet Bennett (1993) of "constructive marginality." Despite certain unique features in their formulations, I would suggest that all of these designations are roughly synonymous. While Useem and Downie refer to children who have been simultaneously socialized into two distinct cultures as "third culture kids," the term "third culture" is increasingly used in the field of intercultural communication to describe the conscious process by which adults as well become bicultural through intercultural experiences. Yoshikawa (1987), in the context of East-West intercultural contacts, speaks of a "common ground – a sphere of 'between' – where East and West meet meaningfully and creatively" (p. 328) and, moreover, claims that the "sphere of 'between' does not represent exclusively either the Eastern perspective or the Western perspective but rather a third perspective." (p. 329) Adler speaks of the multicultural person as being "neither a part of nor totally apart from his culture" and quotes Paul Tillich's notion (from *The Future of Religions*) that there can be "a crossing and return, a repetition of return and crossing, back-and-forth – the aim of which is to create a third area beyond the bounded territories, an area where one can stand for a time without being enclosed in something tightly bounded." (p. 26)

Adler regards the multicultural person as someone who is "psychoculturally adaptive," who is "propelled from identity to identity through a process of both cultural learning and cultural unlearning," and who "maintains indefinite boundaries of the self." (p. 30) Because multicultural persons are able to stand outside their own cultures and maintain open boundaries, they are "unfettered by the constricting limitations of culture as a 'totalistic' entity" (p. 37). J. Bennett also sees "constructive marginals" as in a process of creative and dynamic growth. She distinguishes "constructive marginality," which is based on self-differentiation from "encapsulated marginality," which results in psychological disintegration. Both the constructive and the encapsulated marginal have stepped outside of their original cultures into a cultural "void," so to speak (following Barnlund's concept of an "ethical void"). The constructive marginal sees this emptiness as space for individual creativity, i.e., space in which a world can be created; the encapsulated marginal experiences this emptiness as loss and disorientation. Moving beyond culturally prescribed norms means either that the individual will begin to decisively contruct his or her own identity or that there will be a loss of identity, difficulty in decision making, alienation, excessive self-absorbtion, multiplicity, and a "never-at-home" feeling.

If I may interject a few personal observations at this point which may make the difference between constructive marginality and encapsulated marginality clearer: Americans living in Japan experience a tremendous amount of freedom. On the one hand, they are not expected to "act like the Japanese" (differences are respected even though foreigners may not be completely accepted into the culture). On the other hand, since they are no longer living in America, they do not really have to conform to American cultural norms either. Some American sojourners find this lack of cultural grounding unsettling; others see it as an opportunity for playful creativity. The former type usually expect stimulus from their environment. If the environment in Japan does not provide the expected amount of stimulation, they may soon return home. If no poetry readings in English are available in Japan, for example, the sojourner may decide that it's time to move back to San Francisco. The latter, however, use the absence of stimuli as an opportunity to generate something new. If no poetry readings in English are available in Japan, then let's organize some! Whether a person finds the experience of living abroad horrifying or liberating depends a lot on the individual's inner creative capacities, i.e., whether they become encapsulated

marginals or constructive marginals.

I would argue that integration (as an umbrella term for all the perspectives we have been discussing) is a fundamentally different concept from the concept of adaptation, which has been written about extensively in the field of intercultural communication (see particularly the essays in Kim and Gudykunst 1988a, and also Furnham and Bochner 1986, Ellingsworth 1988, Kim 1989, and Kim 1991a). Much of the existing theorizing has been framed in terms of individuals adapting themselves to the norms of the host culture. 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 visiting, and an "adjustment" phase in which they begin to adapt their personal norms to the norms of the host culture. Missing from this account is the possibility that at least some of the norms the individuals start out with may, upon ethical 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. Consequently, it may be the culture, rather than the individual, which needs to change. Usually, of course, host cultures have more power to change sojourning individuals than the reverse.

The question, moreover, is not only how long it takes a sojourner to "accept" a new culture (which may be a relatively short and uncomplicated process) but also how long it takes the culture to "accept" the presence of sojourners (which may be a relatively long and complicated process). Some cultures are more accepting of differences than others. In the American "melting pot" superficial differences are tolerated but it is nonetheless expected that individuals will share certain common beliefs and cultural attitudes (as well as a common language); given the absence of racial homogeneity in American society ideology has been a unifying force which tends to works against the acceptance of genuine differences. In Japan genuine differences are accepted in foreigners but an overemphasis on these differences can simply make it easier for Japanese culture to hold foreigners at arm's length – since Japan views itself as a "homogenous" culture foreigners may feel tolerated but never really accepted. A more adequate ideal is perhaps that of the "salad bowl" or "mosaic" (the

Canadian model) which allows individuals both to retain significant aspects of their original culture and to join together with others in a multicultural society. This latter model sets particularism (preserving the original culture) and universalism (being able to live together with people from different cultures) in dialectical tension with each other. Adaptation, then, can be a two-way process: adapting individual cultures to the larger culture or adapting the larger culture to individual cultures. Usually, however, it is the individual culture which is expected to "adapt" to the larger culture, not the other way around; it is easier to change individuals than it is to change entire cultures. (It should be noted, however, that in the field of intercultural communication the adaptation of the host culture to the sojourner is sometimes advocated – e.g., native teachers must adapt their teaching strategies to the cultural learning styles of sojourning students. While such advocacy is undoubtedly an attempt to redress the previous imbalance, which placed the burden solely on sojourning students to adapt themselves to the teaching styles of native teachers, it cannot in turn become a one-sided agenda.)

The concept of adaptation is open to considerable refinement, of course. Kim (1991a) argues that the debate between "assimilationists" and "cultural pluralists" dissolves once it is realized that adaptation is an inevitable process; the difference between maintaining one's original culture or allowing oneself to be assimilated into a new culture is a matter of degree and most immigrants in fact tend to follow the maxim, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." According to McGuire and McDermott (1988), two possible consquences of a failure to assimilate are increased deviance and ultimate alienation from the host culture; they note, however, that the degree to which the culture accepts or does not accept foreigners can reinforce deviant and alienated behavior. A comprehensive treatment of the logical possibilities of cultural adaptation is offered in Berry, Kim, and Boski's (1988) "four modes of acculturation": (1) integration – maintaining one's original cultural identity and maintaining relationships with other groups; (2) assimilation – not maintaining one's original cultural identity but maintaining relationships with other groups; (3) separation – maintaining one's original cultural identity but not maintaining relationships with other groups; and (4) marginalization – not maintaining one's original cultural identity and not maintaining relationships with other groups. While Berry, Kim, and Boski's four modes of acculturation is conceptually rich, it

continues to look at integration simply as maintaining one's original culture and maintaining relationships with other groups. This conception grounds identity in one's original culture but does not fully explore the possibility that cultural identity can change as a result of intercultural experience. Thus their use of the term "integration" is somewhat different from the meaning we are trying to give it here.

Yoshikawa's (1987) "double-swing model" goes a bit further in recognizing that individuals can operate on the basis of more than one cultural perspective, but it also seems to suffer from several conceptual confusions. Yoshikawa offers four modes of "intercultural encounter and communication." The first two – the ethnocentric mode (one-way communication from culture A to culture B) and the control mode (the domination by culture A of culture B) – are fairly straightforward and unproblematic. Yoshikawa labels the third mode "dialectical" and sees it as having three possible outcomes: culture A and culture B fuse into a third culture C; culture A allows itself to be assimilated into culture B; or culture A coerces culture B to become part of culture A. Yoshikawa regards the first outcome as genuinely dialectical and the latter two as pseudo-dialectical. The fourth mode – and the one which upon which Yoshikawa's double-swing model ultimately depends – is the dialogical mode which preserves the distinct identities of culture A and culture B but allows the individual to shift between them. Indeed, bicultural individuals can easily shift between two cultural frames of reference, but this is more a matter of social relationships than of internal psychology. When bicultural persons are talking to non-bicultural Japanese or Americans, for example, it may be necessary for the bicultural person to "adapt" himself or herself to the more limited frame of reference of the non-bicultural persons he or she is talking to. But to maintain this duplicity as a part of one's internal psychological make-up seems potentially schizophrenic. A genuinely integrative process would attempt to resolve the tension in some way. Yoshikawa implies that the dialectical mode (the "genuine" dialectical mode in which culture A and culture B fuse into culture C) is inferior to the dialogical mode: "In the oneness of C the differences between the two disappear, the tension created by those differences is reduced, and a peaceful equilibrium remains. This state is akin to mystical unity, an ideal form of dialetical unity...." (p. 320) What Yoshikawa wishes to guard against is a state of equilibrium in which no further progress is possible

(a kind of totalization), but I would argue (with Hegel) that the dialectical process does not necessarily stop once a synthesis has been reached, but rather that the synthesis becomes a new thesis which will eventually be opposed by a new antithesis, and so on, indefinitely. Moreover, this process can be self-generating, rather than one which is caused or "determined" by outside forces; integration need not be a mystical, homeostatic end-state but can rather become a springboard to new forms of development.

The dialogical model is insufficiently critical because it simply sets two cultures side by side in more or less syncretic fashion. In intercultural experience people come to have a much wider awareness of the variety of ways in which it is possible for human beings to act, but some of these ways will be contradictory and cannot be simultaneously implemented. We naturally want to ask in any given situation, which way is better? Does one culture offer a better solution to a particular problem than another? Am I being ethnocentric when I say I prefer cheese made in my home state of Ohio to anything I have ever found in Japan? Am I betraying my own culture to say that Japanese-style baths are more relaxing than American-style tubs? The questions, of course, can become much more sophisticated. But to ask such questions involves critical reflection from a position outside both cultures. There must a principle of selectivity which allows some possible courses of action to be adopted and others to be discarded. This principle of selectivity can be either ethnocentric (adopting only the way things are done in one's own culture) or genuinely critical (adopting what is believed to be the "best" options offered by each of the cultures).

A critical perspective enables the individual to see tensions and contradictions within cultures as well as between cultures, and a dialectical approach would then critique positive and negative features within both of the cultures and attempt to synthesize what are regarded as the positive features of each in some way. Synthesis of this type allows the bicultural person to fully integrate two (or more) cultural orientations within his or her own identity without becoming torn between them. Moreover, interactions between bicultural (or multicultural) individuals will lead not to a state of duplicity but to the creation of a third culture: bicultural Japanese who are familiar with America culture and bicultural Americans who are familiar with Japanese culture would interact with each other in a way that would probably be neither exclusively

Japanese nor exclusively American, but rather a melding (i.e., fusion) of the positive features of each. Yoshikawa seems to suggest this possibility when, at the end of his essay, he rejects a "bipolar structure" and speaks of "a third alternative which questions the silent cultural assumptions of both Eastern and Western perspectives." (p. 329) Yoshikawa thus seems to be ultimately headed in the same direction I am indicating, but has perhaps not fully thought through the logic implicit in his models. My contention, then, is that the dialogical mode precedes rather than follows the "genuine" dialectical mode (the pseudo-dialectical modes could perhaps be readily absorbed into the second "control" mode). In other words, the dialectical mode represents a higher state of conscious integration than the dialogical mode.

Integration in the dialectical sense is thus a more dynamic and creative process than is adaptation, which typically regards the individual's encounter with a new culture as a problem to be solved rather than an opportunity to be seized. Furnham (1988) has suggested that although most researchers have focused on the negative aspects of cultural adjustment, there may also be positive aspects. Adler (1987) has proposed an alternative way of thinking about culture shock, which sees it 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." (p. 29) We might add that it can also lead to increased cross-cultural understanding and social transformation. Kim and Ruben (1988) also present 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." (p. 299) This transformation follows a "stress-adaptation-growth" pattern, which Kim and Ruben frame in terms of systems theory. 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 this system which may stimulate various adaptative strategies as a response. In the process of working out these strategies the individual experiences internal growth. I would simply add that the process of "working out these strategies" can also be seen in constructivist/dialectical terms, not merely in terms of systems theory.

Integration, as I am using the term here, is thus not simply setting two cultures side by side and syncretizing them. Rather it represents a stage at which individuals are able to fully transcend their own culture and to internalize new perspectives gained from a different culture. The process involves, as I have suggested, a critique of one's original cultural values and norms. With increased intercultural experience and reflection some of these values and norms may be deemed worth keeping 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 be a similar process of selectivity in which some values are deemed worth adopting while others are rejected.

I would suggest that this stage may move actually beyond the sixth stage in M. Bennett's developmental model (Bennett himself suggests that new continua can be constructed which go beyond his initial six stages). Although Bennett uses the term "integration" to describe his sixth stage, this stage still seems to involve a dynamic shifting from one perspective to another, either through contextual evaluation or constructive marginality, rather than a genuinue integration of two cultural perspectives. Since Bennett has already used the word "integration" to describe this sixth stage, however, perhaps the new stage could be labeled a "generative" stage, indicating the possible *generation* of entirely new forms of culture. The generative stage would transcend both Bennett's ethnocentric and ethnorelative stages. It would avoid the "absoluteness, centrality, and universalism" that Bennett, writing from a Western perspective, is particularly interested in overcoming. But it would also avoid the problems of uniqueness and particularism in Japanese ethnocentricism. Bennett's embrace of ethnorelativism is understandable in light of his desire to see different cultures as "variable and viable constructions of reality." This appreciation for cultural differences is quite appropriate in the American context (whereas in Japan a focus on cultural similarities might be more appropriate, as discussed earlier). Because Bennett is also trying to develop a model of intercultural sensitivity, he is also extremely cautious (as indeed we should be) about the prospect of cross-cultural criticism from a purely ethnocentric perspective. On the other hand, the dynamic character of Bennett's thought, who in his lectures has defined constructivism as a transactional process which results in the mutual creation of meaning, seems to point in a direction which goes beyond the category of

ethnorelativism.

Both intracultural and intercultural criticism are necessary, however, if new cultural forms are to be generated. This criticism does not need to be ethnocentric. In the process of creating new paradigms, the inadequacies of the old paradigms must first be pointed out. Avoiding such criticism is simply an impediment to the melding and generation of new cultural patterns. Rather than close off all critical discussion out of a polite "respect for cultural differences," we must always remain open to criticism. As the quote from Kelly at the beginning of this paper indicated, "all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement." New possibilities can only be explored, however, if there is space for genuine reflection, including ethical reflection, on the direction we would like society and culture to be going in. Toulmin describes human behavior as developing beyond rule-structured behavior (learning the rules) and rule-applying behavior (applying the rules) to rule-testing behavior (modifying the rules) – changing a recipe, for example, to make a better cake. The goal is not to decide which of the existing cakes is "best" (ethnocentricism), nor to say that each of the cakes is equally delicious – even if we don't really think so but just to be polite – (ethnorelativism), but to try to come up with even better cakes (note the plural form here). Japanese pizza and California sushi are real-life examples of this generative blending of cultures to create new forms – and the possibilities become even more exciting when we begin to explore the possibilities on the psychological and social levels. The generative stage thus provides for the possibility of both personal and social change. Not all of the options we are able to generate will be of equal value (some may be flops, others unworkable) and there is a need for constant testing, but room must be left for experimentation and the possibility of failure.

Models for cross-cultural criticism

Cross-cultural criticism is indeed a tricky business because it can easily fall back into ethnocentricism. The development of intercultural sensitivity is a necessary precondition for fully appreciating another culture on its own terms. Without this full appreciation any criticism we might make of another culture would be made on the basis of a purely partial understanding which usually emphasizes only negative features without recognizing any positive features. Thus, some Japanese tend to dismiss American-style individualism as mere ego-gratification, for example, without fully understanding the Emersonian concept of self-reliance. Some Americans tend to dismiss Japanese-style "groupism" as mere conformity, without fully understanding the genuinely cooperative ideals upon which it is based. The solution to these types of relatively uninformed criticisms is clearly to provide more information which will increase the critics' level of intercultural sensitivity. Furthermore, I have been arguing that it is possible for these seemingly contrastive orientations to be fully integrated. Individualism in the sense of "self-reliance" is not at all contradictory to the concept of "groupism" in the sense of cooperation; the two concepts are in fact complementary. But to achieve any kind of synthesis requires that the contradictory nuances *within* each of the concepts first be unpacked. Combining the cooperative aspect of Japanese-style "groupism" with the self-reliant aspect of American-style individualism produces a personality such as Gandhi's, for example. Combining the conforming aspect of Japanese-style "groupism" with the self-indulgent aspect of American-style individualism produces a personality such as Hitler's. (Gandhi and Hitler are neither Japanese nor Americans, of course!)

The idea of complementarity between Eastern and Western perspectives, leading to higher levels of integration and synthesis, is discussed by Kim (1991b) and applied to a variety of seemingly contradictory cultural traits, such as the West's emphasis on rationality and the East's emphasis on intuition. Moreover, Kim is careful to point out that these traits are mere emphases which should not be regarded as stereotypes. That is, as we have already noted, the West has also developed intuitive traditions just as the East has developed rational traditions, even though these traditions have not historically been dominant parts of the respective cultures. A similar analysis could be applied to the East's and West's respective cultural traditions regarding silence and debate.

The well-known talkativeness of Westerners can be either profound or mindless, just as the well-known silence of Japanese can be either profound or mindless. It is always possible, of course, to combine profound discourse with profound silence. Plotinus offers an example from the history of Western thought, Dogen an example from the history of Japanese thought. The field of transpersonal psychology, employing a concept from Chomskian linguistics, speaks of "deep structures" which exist across cultures (Walsh 1993). The assumption is that there are a finite number of ways in which humans are able to conceptualize their experience and while content may vary from culture to culture, the structures in which the content is organized may be the same. Establishing this fact empirically on the basis of carefully sifting through the historical evidence is time-consuming and often inconclusive. Are the Buddhist meditator and the Christian contemplative really experiencing the same thing? Perennial philosophers say yes; "traditionists" such as Steven Katz (1983) say no. (The former are universalists, the latter particularists.) Finding individuals who have successfully integrated the contents of two cultural traditions into a single psychological framework may provide an alternative solution. It might be possible for someone who meditates to talk about their experience in ways that either Buddhist or Christian contemplatives would be able to understand from the standpoint of their own respective traditions. The individual's experience is the same (obviously, because there is only one individual involved), but the individual may be capable of talking about that experience using different religious vocabularies. The situation may not be any more problematic than someone being able to describe an "ordinary" experience in more than one natural language, say Japanese or English. These two languages conceptualize experience in different ways, but the speaker could nonetheless make his or her experience understood by people who knew only one language or the other.

The implicit ethical judgment that is often made in the field of intercultural communication is that cultural differences should in every case be respected and that it is objectionable for one person to attempt to impose his or her cultural values on another person whose culture is different. In other words, as we have already seen, cultural relativism (the fact that cultures are different) can be easily transmuted into ethical relativism (the judgment that no culture is better than another). Upon deeper reflection it should become clear that "respecting cultural differences" is not really a solution to the problem of how people from

two different cultures can ultimately learn to get along with each other. Even if two persons *respect* each other's cultural norms, as long as they continue to *act* in accordance with the cultural norms of their own respective cultures, they have no basis for common action; in fact, joint action becomes more complicated rather than less so. Carried to an extreme, "respecting cultural differences" means that nothing gets done (even though cross-cultural harmony might prevail). You have your way of doing things and I have mine. Since our ways of doing things are different, we must resign ourselves to not working together at all. Whereas "respecting cultural differences" is intended to draw people together, it can in fact keep them apart. If the kind of critical argumentation that could lead to a viable "third culture" solution is proscribed from the outset, relationships remain polite but also superficial.

In the absence of overarching norms to govern cross-cultural norms, it is tempting, of course, to simply fall back on the norms of our own culture. If we decide from the start, however, to adopt one of the particular cultures as our frame of reference, we cannot avoid a situation in which one of the participants imposes his or her culture on the other participant. Usually it is considered the responsibility of sojourners to adapt themselves to the norms of the host culture, but is this any less of an imposition than the attempt of sojourners to impose their cultural values on the country they are visiting? "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" (adaptation) is thus not really an adequate solution. We must then ask, to what extent should people be expected to adapt to the cultural norms of other cultures and to what extent should they be able to challenge those norms? More generally, to what extent is it possible for people from one culture to criticize the cultural norms of people from another culture and on what basis can such criticism be made? Two specific cases may help to clarify the issues involved and to pull together the various points we have made thus far in this paper:

- Following the shooting of Yoshi Hattori in Louisiana in 1992 by Rodney Peairs, a student in one of my classes was helping to circulate a petition in favor of gun control in the United States (1.7 million signatures were eventually collected and presented to President Clinton). Most of the students signed their names but one student refused on the grounds that "guns are part of American culture and it isn't appropriate for Japanese to criticize American culture."

- At a recent conference of the Japan Association of Language Teachers the problem of gender discrimination was raised at a session on hiring practices at Japanese universities. A non-Japanese woman walked out of the session when one of the moderators (also a non-Japanese) defended discriminatory practices on the grounds that "they are part of Japanese culture and we foreigners, as guests in this country, simply have to accommodate ourselves to the Japanese way of doing things."

I would suggest that there are at least three ways in which ethical dilemmas such as these can be resolved. The first strategy is avoidance. Japanese tourists, exchange students, and others may simply decide not to go to the United States – and in the wake of the Hattori incident it seems that at least some Japanese are indeed adopting this strategy. The prevalence of crime in America could also dissuade people from other countries from visiting the U.S. as well (which would have a negative impact on America's tourist industry). Foreign teachers, particularly women, may decide that Japanese universities do not provide an attractive work environment. Or conversely, Japanese universities, wishing to avoid potential conflicts with foreign teachers, may place strict limitations on contracts with foreign teachers. (Indeed, while most Japanese teachers and a minority of foreign teachers are employed full-time at one university and work part-time at others, the majority of foreign teachers in Japan, both male and female, never advance beyond part-time status.) The implication of this strategy is that criticism of the host culture should be avoided. People living a foreign country should "either love or leave it." Or, if they find their personal values to be in conflict with those of the host country, they simply should not go there in the first place.

A second strategy, which we have already discussed briefly, is for sojourners to attempt to adapt themselves to the norms of the host culture. Japanese visitors to the United States can be prepped on how to minimize the risk of violent crime. Foreign teachers can be advised to be "realistic" in their hopes of avoiding discrimination. Such coping strategies are undoubtedly appealing to many sojourners because, as with avoidance, they avoid open criticism and confrontation. But they also involve a considerable suppression of individual aspirations. Japanese are asked to give up any expectation of feeling safe on American streets. Foreign teachers, particularly women, are asked to temper any hopes they may have for achieving equal status in Japanese society. As we have

already argued, however, the strategy of adaptation ultimately seems coercive because it expects the sojourner to simply conform to the cultural norms of the host culture and effectively squelches any attempt to reflect in a genuinely ethical way on the cultural norms of the host country.

While the first two strategies avoid confrontation and "respect cultural differences," a third strategy is to attempt to come up with a set of ethical norms that can be used to deal with such situations. Many cross-cultural encounters are by their very nature anomalous. There are no precedents for the participants to follow; no customs or norms yet exist to give guidance to action. Cultural norms tell us how to deal with people from our own culture, not with people from another culture whose norms are different. On a personal level, the Japanese tourist coming to America or the American teacher coming to Japan each have their own sets of cultural norms which are different from the cultural norms of the countries they are traveling to; they have never had to deal with these problems before. On a cultural level, the problem of crime against tourists in America is increasingly recognized as a special problem which requires special attention (apart from the general problem of crime in America). The practice of hiring large numbers of foreign teachers at Japanese universities is a relatively recent phenomenon which requires, in effect, a new set of rules for how relations with foreign teachers will be conducted. In other words, these are problems which cultures have not really had to deal with before either.

Since ethical guidelines do not yet exist for dealing with these kinds of intercultural problems, they must be created (i.e., constructed). We may first be tempted to look for a set of transcendent norms which are somehow "universal" to guide our behavior, but we quickly discover that such norms are usually themselves constructs which have been given to us by our own culture; they may have little or no credibility with the people from a different culture whom we are expected to deal with. On the other hand, if we take the existing norms of each of the cultures as givens and then attempt to look for commonalities we may indeed discover a few "least-common-denominators" which can suitably govern certain basic situations (for example, the common need for food, shelter, and clothing), but are entirely unsuitable for the more complex types of interactions we often would like to engage in. Norms for these interactions, then, do not yet exist; they can only emerge from creative dialogue between people from two different cultures and must be negotiated. We can agree with

Kalė (1991) that moral suasion is permissible in such situations, provided that it takes the form of a dialogue rather than a monologue. There is still the prospect for disagreement, of course, but once the discussion is put on an ethical plane, rather than remaining on a cultural plane, the disagreements may turn out to be no greater than those encountered in ethical discussions with people from our own cultures. We may in fact arrive at a position in which we feel we have more in common with some people from other cultures than we do with some people from our own cultures.

The creation of new cross-cultural norms inevitably involves a critique of the limitations of existing ethical norms. Cross-cultural criticism can be seen as developing in four stages, which Figs. 1-4 summarize.

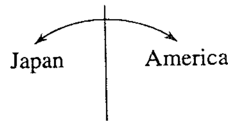

Fig. 1. Ethnocentric criticism: one side is regarded as superior to the other

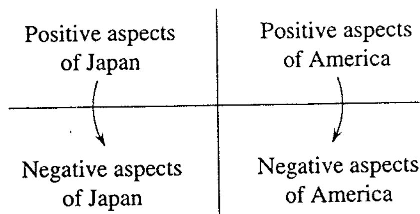

Fig. 2. Intracultural criticism: criticism within each of the particular cultures

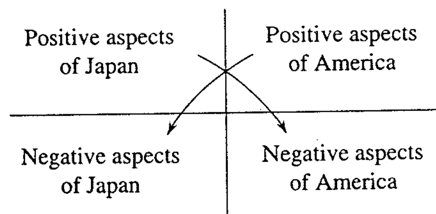

Fig. 3. Cross-cultural criticism: comparing positive aspects of one culture with negative aspects of the other

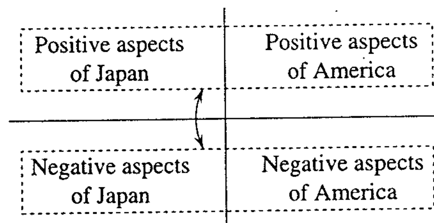

Fig. 4. Integrative criticism: combining positive or negative aspects of each of the cultures

Ethnocentric criticism. At the ethnocentric stage cultural differences are recognized, but one set of values is regarded as superior to another (if no differences are recognized, ethnocentric criticism is not possible). A person thus criticizes the norms of another culture on the basis of the norms found within his or her own culture. Thus, Japanese may take America's lack of gun control laws as a sign of American "lawlessness," and point out how safe Japan is in comparison. American women may criticize Japanese universities on the grounds that America has achieved a superior level of gender equality and that

Japan is "behind the times." Ultimately ethnocentric criticism is based on an uninformed and stereotyped view of cultural differences: Japan is "safe" while America is "dangerous"; Americans don't discriminate against women, but Japanese do. It also implies a coercive imposition of values, i.e., that the U.S. should become like Japan, or vice versa. Ethnocentric criticism is thus the opposite of adaptation: it suggests that only the other culture must change; the individual is seen as having no responsibility to reflect in a genuinely ethical way on his or her own cultural values.

Intracultural criticism. Intracultural criticism can only be made through an informed position which breaks through not only the stereotypes one has about another culture, but also the stereotypes one has about one's own culture. It thus presupposes a high degree of familiarity with *intra*-cultural differences, as well as *inter*-cultural differences. Specifically, it involves recognizing positive aspects of another culture and negative aspects of one's own culture. Familiarity with intracultural differences is not necessarily the special province of people living within a given culture. Indeed, it may be easier for outsiders to see the tensions within a particular culture than it is for insiders. Moreover, a recognition of the positive and negative aspects of another culture is what makes it possible for an outsider to selectively adopt certain features of the other culture for integration into his or her own personality or lifestyle. Other cultures are never accepted "whole," but always selectively, which presupposes the necessity for the outsider to critically evaluate the norms and values of the other culture. Without this deeper critical evaluation, no deeper appreciation beyond mere "respect" is really possible.

In applying intracultural criticism to the above problems, it can be acknowledged then that Japan has it own problems with guns and crime, while there are also many Americans who support gun control. There are Japanese who favor equal employment opportunities for women, while discriminatory hiring practices in America continue to exist (not only for women, but for other groups as well). Furthermore, some areas of America may actually be safer than some areas of Japan and some companies in Japan may actually have less gender discrimination than some companies in America. Noting these facts implies a recognition not only of cross-cultural differences but also of cross-cultural similarities. It is true that one can still speak of *relative* differences (which may in fact be statistically measurable) – more crime in America; more

gender discrimination in Japan – but such differences are a matter of prevalence rather than of type. Faced with similar problems (i.e., problems of the same basic type), a cross-cultural basis is established on which people from two different cultures can search for common solutions.

Cross-cultural criticism. Cross-cultural criticism usually takes the form of comparing the superior aspects of one culture with the negative aspects of another culture. Ethnocentric criticism does this as well, but without a recognition of the negative aspects of one's own culture and the positive aspects of the other culture (a recognition which is only possible through intracultural criticism). To what extent can gun control in Japan serve as a model for gun control in the U.S.? To what extent can progress in equal opportunities for women in the U.S. serve as a model for equal opportunities in Japan? From a strictly ethical point of view, it makes no difference who engages in this sort of criticism, but it is probably more effective when people use the positive aspects of another culture to criticize the negative aspects of their own culture. Using the positive aspects of one's own culture to criticize the negative aspects of another culture is philosophically permissible, but in most cases will be strategically ineffective.

A few caveats must also be mentioned with regard to cross-cultural criticism. First, there is the possibility of reverting to a "reverse" ethnocentric criticism, for example, a Japanese uncritically claiming that Western houses are "superior" to Japanese houses or an American uncritically claiming that Japanese education is "superior" to American education because Japanese score higher on standardized tests. In fact, there are many positive features of Japanese houses, which Japanese who have never lived in an American house may not be aware of: energy consumption, and therefore costs and environmental impact, are generally lower for Japanese houses than American houses, for example. There are also positive features of the American education system that Americans may be inclined to forget about: the emphasis on creative expression over rote memorization, for example. Reverse ethnocentric criticism still operates at the level of stereotypes without having developed sufficient intracultural critiques.

A second caveat is that cross-cultural criticism may be used as a substitute for the rigorous development of internal criticism. In Japan it is particularly difficult to generate internal criticism because Japanese cultural norms discourage open debate. Thus, Japanese feminists may not find it easy to openly

criticize male bastions of power. Instead of simply saying outright that there is a need in Japan for equal rights, feminists might point to other countries with higher levels of gender equality as models for Japan to follow. This strategy can backfire, however, if Japanese feminists are accused of disturbing the "harmony" of traditional Japanese society (they may also be marginalized as having become too "Westernized"). Cultural relativism can thus be invoked to imply that Japan has its own culture which does not need to submit to foreign influence. Ambiguities also arise when foreigners criticize Japan from outside. *Gaiatsu*, or "foreign pressure," is as much a two-edged sword as the concept of "Westernization": it can be used as an ideological justification for either promoting policies certain groups want established anyways (e.g., increased military spending) or avoiding policies they do not want established anyways (e.g., increased agricultural imports). When the criticism is agreed with, it can be used as a leverage for change; when it is not agreed with, it can simply be dismissed as outside pressure (or "Japan-bashing"). In either case, intracultural criticism is avoided. Ultimately, therefore, cross-cultural criticism is a poor substitute for the development of strong intracultural criticism.

Intracultural criticism is perhaps more highly developed in the United States where protest movements of various sorts have flourished from the beginning of its history. Nonetheless, America has its own particular forms of denial which show a lack of rigor in its development of intracultural criticism. Often this takes the form of blaming America's problems on foreign scapegoats rather than on internal shortcomings. America is quick, for example, to blame its trade deficit with Japan on Japan's "closed market," but slow to see that many of its products are simply poorly designed for the Japanese market (only recently have U.S. auto companies begun to sell cars in Japan with steering wheels on the right-hand side). Attention is shifted away from internal criticism towards cross-cultural criticism (often made, however, from a highly ethnocentric perspective). Scapegoating, either in the form of placing the blame on Japan for America's internal problems or placing the blame on "Westernization" for Japan's internal problems, is an abdication of responsibility: internal problems in one culture can be ignored by blaming them on another culture.

Integrative criticism. Integrative criticism is the process which leads to the creation of a hybrid or "third culture" position. It recognizes that there can be shared interests which cut across traditional cultural lines and that these shared

interests may be more important to the individuals concerned than any assumed cultural differences are. Here we can see the possibility, for example, of Japanese supporters of gun control joining together with American supporters of gun control to push for social change. In fact, in addition to the 1.7 million signatures collected in Japan, the host family of Yoshi Hattori also collected 120,000 signatures from Americans. Supporters of equal rights for women can also join forces across nationalistic – and even gender – lines. The group, International Feminists of Japan, for example, has a mixture of both Japanese and non-Japanese members (although at present all are females).

One caveat must discussed in connection with integrative criticism. It is possible to combine not only what might be regarded as the positive aspects of two cultures but also the negative aspects. For example, Japanese schools tend to be strong on factual knowledge (a positive aspect) but weak on creative expression (a negative aspect). American schools, on the other hand, tend to be strong on creative expression (a positive aspect) but weak on factual knowledge (a negative aspect). Japanese students who study at American high schools and then return to Japan for their university education (called "returnee" students in Japan) often develop integrative, third-culture perspectives, which can combine either the positive or the negative aspects of both systems. On the one hand, there are students who are able to combine creative expression (the positive American aspect) with learning facts (the positive Japanese aspect). On the other hand, there are students who are weak in factual knowledge (the negative American aspect) and weak in creative expression (the negative Japanese aspect). These latter often link the relatively relaxed and "laid-back" atmosphere of American high schools with the relatively relaxed and "laid-back" atmosphere of Japanese universities. The most rigorous alternative would be to attend Japanese high schools and American universities, neither of which are relaxed and "laid-back"!

From the intrapersonal to the international

An integrated, "third culture" perspective can be described in psychological terms as the process by which individuals manage to integrate aspects of two cultures internally within their own personalities. It involves a partial rejection of the intial socialization process (accomplished through intracultural 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 culture 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 in his or her personality or lifestyle. When a host culture requires a sojourner to behave in ways which are disagreeable to the sojourner, he or she may not really have the option of acting otherwise, but at least there is the possibility for psychological resistance. The individual may also find other individuals within the host culture who share his or her aversion to certain culturally required forms of behavior and who think there might be a better way of doing things.

Once such a dialogue with others begins, however, we can then also talk about 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. While there is certainly room for more empirical research to measure the extent to which the generation of new ways of doing things together actually occurs, my impression is that it is quite common. As a foreign teacher in Japan, I can recognize that there are different dynamics at work – and thus also a need for different teaching strategies – when I teach classes of students who have never been outside Japan and classes of "returnee" students, for example. In the former classes I find myself acting more as a "Japanese" teacher (combined with certain distinctly American characteristics I have retained), whereas in the latter classes I act more as an American teacher (combined with certain distinctly Japanese characteristics I have adopted). In fact, I am sometimes regarded by my American-educated Japanese colleagues as being more "Japanese" than they are. (I also think they are sometimes more "American" than I am!)

It is interesting to especially note that the atmosphere of a class of Japanese returnee students taught by an American teacher is neither exclusively American nor exclusively Japanese, but something entirely different – a third culture which synthesizes elements of each. I should add that classes run more smoothly when the perspectives are more fully integrated than when they are

held in "dialogical" tension with each other. At first, there may be considerable disagreement about how the different cultural perspectives can be applied to specific tasks. Over time, however, we manage to work out an integrated "methodology" which enables us to concentrate our full attention on the task at hand without constantly having to go back to questions of procedure. The same third-culture perspective often prevails in faculty meetings where both "Americanized" Japanese and "Japanized" Americans are in attendance. On the one hand, we allow for much more open discussion and debate than is perhaps usual in purely Japanese-style meetings. On the other hand, we all recognize the need to ultimately reach a deeper consensus than that which can achieved by the principle of "majority rule" prevalent at purely American-style meetings.

The kind of integrative approach we have been discussing, however, must concern itself not only with empirical evidence (what actually happens) but also with generative "speculation" (what is possible) – in other words, constructing solutions to problems which as yet have no solutions. Nonetheless, several theoretical perspectives have been proposed which can illuminate how people from different cultures are able to join together cross-culturally in an attempt to generate new solutions to common problems. In their lectures Milton Bennett and Janet Bennett, for example, have suggested that constructive marginals 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 for 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. Network theory (Yum 1988) offers the insight that groups form naturally both between members of the same culture and between members of different cultures, although the latter groups may be weaker and more heterogeneous. Convergence theory (Kincaid 1987 and Kincaid 1988) postulates that the longer two cultural groups interact with each other, the more uniform they will become.

One of the most useful and comprehensive theoretical perspectives for dealing with this problem that I have found thus far, however, is that advanced by Marshall Singer in his book *Intercultural Communication: A Perceptual Approach* (1987). Singer's approach brings together several theoretical

perspectives, including constructivism. For Singer, individual identities are constructed out of both cultural influences and individual personality traits. A "personal culture," for Singer, is comprised of "the totality of all our group-related, learned perceptions, attitudes, values, and belief and disbelief systems plus the ranking we make in any specific context of all the groups with which we identify (our identities), plus the behaviors we normally exhibit..." (p.11) Culture is not seen as homogeneous but as consisting of a variety of groups each having their own particular "culture," which may hold competing – even mutually exclusive – perspectives and values. Moreover, individuals are not socialized into merely one particular culture (i.e., the national culture), but into several cultures simultaneously, based on their membership in various groups (e.g., national, ethnic, political, religious, social, gender groups, etc., as well as groups based on personal interests). Since individuals rank their personal values in order of importance, it is unlikely that within any one group there will be two individuals who share exactly the same configuration of values. The cohesiveness of the group, however, depends to a large degree on certain common values which are given a high ranking by its individual members. When an individual's values change and the group's values are no longer highly ranked, the individual may either leave the group or be cast out of it. Complicating the pattern even further, however, is the fact that individuals also rank the various groups they belong to in terms of their importance to the individual. Thus, the values of a religious group, for example, may take precendence over the values of a national group, or vice versa, for any given individual.

Singer develops his theory of communication in six modes. The first two involve communication at the personal level; the second two involve communication at the group level; and the last two involve communcation at the international level:

(1) intrapersonal communication - understanding ourselves
(2) interpersonal communication - understanding others
(3) intragroup communication - understanding our goals and values as a group
(4) intergroup communication - understanding the goals and values of other groups
(5) intranational communication - understanding how our own society and

culture works

(6) international communication - understanding how other societies and cultures work

We should immediately interject the idea that ethical reflection can take place in any and all of these six modes. At the intrapersonal level a person can critically question his or her own values and identity, and work towards constructing new values and identities. While ethical reflection is possible at the personal level, it is never purely "subjective" or a matter of individual will because, at the interpersonal level, we are obliged to confront differing values and identities which call our own values and identities into question. In the process of engaging in interpersonal communication, mutual ethical reflection in the form of dialogue is possible which may lead to a critical expansion of our personal values and an increasingly shared sense of values. Deep friendships and successful marriages/relationships follow this pattern. The same kind of ethical reflection can take place both within and between groups, and within and between national cultures. If we intend to work together as groups or as nations we must ask whether our values are mutually compatible (or whether a new common ground can created) and whether our goals are mutually achieveable.

One important feature of Singer's work is his analysis of the role of power in communication (which he discusses in terms of material and human wealth; formal and informal organization; basic and specific information; ascribed and acquired status; and conscious and subconscious will). Singer acknowledges that the communication process may be unequal because of differences in power distribution. In interpersonal situations strong individuals can dominate weak individuals; in intergroup situations strong groups can dominate weak groups; and in international situations strong countries can dominate weak countries. At the intragroup and intranational levels, power is unevenly distributed along hierarchical lines. Some individuals are leaders and others are followers; some are actively involved in decision-making processes and others play a more passive role. Intragroup and intranational communication is thus primarily an up-down affair with relatively little horizontal communication taking place between less privileged participants. Intergroup and international communication takes place primarily among elites in each of the groups or nations. Relatively little communication takes place between those without power and influence. In

international affairs it is likely that weaker countries will have more ties to stronger countries than they do with each other.

Singer qualifies these conclusions somewhat by pointing out trends which function to increase communication between participants at lower levels. At the intragroup level, for example, many companies are presently attempting to initiate horizontal rather than vertical management styles by decentralizing decision-making. At the international level communication is not confined to governmental elites, but includes "transnational" communication between multinational corporations, exchange students, and the like. I am not convinced, however, that such communication really represents a diffusion of power so much as it does the internalization of existing power structures – overt displays of domination are unnecessary when the rules of the game become internalized. At the intragroup level, players might have the freedom to choose their moves in varying degrees but not to set the rules. Quality control circles, for example, ostensibly increase worker participation by empowering individuals to make more decisions, but the motivation may simply be to find a way to get more work out of one's employees. The primary beneficiaries of the increased productivity which results are usually not the workers themselves but rather the elites who continue to decide what is to be done (goals) even if they no longer decide how it is to be (processes). At far as "transnational" communication is concerned, multinational corporations may rank lower than national governments in terms of official status, but they may nonetheless have more power, both economically and politically, to determine both national and international policies than national governments actually do. It can be further noted that international exchange students are frequently recruited to work in these corporations.

In the field of intercultural communication an ethical perspective which acknowledges this unequal dispersal of power is underdeveloped, but not entirely missing. Folb (1991), for example, argues for the need to look at issues of hierarchy, power, and dominance within cultures (intraculturally), as well as geopolitically. She sees the relationship between dominant and nondominant groups as being asymmetrical and identifies "...configurations of people within a society not only along a cultural axis but along a socioeconomic and a geopolitical axis as well" (p. 127). A good proportion of people working within the field of intercultural communication are particularly interested in how its

insights can be applied to international business situations and political negotiations. A primary concern is how elites in business and politics can overcome their "cultural differences" and communicate better with each other. Less attention is being paid to communication up-and-down the hierarchical structures of our various political, economic, social, and cultural groupings that is genuine rather than merely manipulative. Less attention is also being paid to the prospects for intercultural communication between individuals at the truly lower levels of these hierarchies (lower, at least, than the level of multinational corporations and international exchange students). At an intercultural communication session I recently attended, for example, there was a lengthy discussion of how engineers from Japan and the United States who were working on a joint project to design military equipment could overcome cultural differences in their workstyles. The discussion did not consider the ethical implications of building military equipment in the first place, nor the opinions of people in both Japan and the United States who might be opposed to such joint projects. The "problem" was simply how the two groups of engineers could learn to get along with each other. Once that problem was solved, apparently there were no further problems to consider.

At least five reasons might be cited for the present, somewhat narrow focus in the field of intercultural communication. First, the field concerns itself with primarily with technical questions which are susceptible to technical solutions (the above is an example). These problems are relatively easy to solve, are mostly noncontroversial, and do not involve any messy consideration of the role of power or ethics in communication. Second, the field concerns itself more with cultural differences than with cultural similarities. Indeed, intercultural problems are more likely to be the result of differences than of similarities. But ignoring cultural similarities (the fact, for example, that the U.S. and Japan, are both capitalistic superpowers) makes us less aware of how elites in two different cultures can have values and objectives which are after all quite similar (and perhaps at odds with non-elites in both of their respective cultures). Third, "practically oriented" interculturalists are often most interested in applying the concepts of intercultural communication to international political and business situations (communication among elites, as just mentioned). Obviously there are more career opportunities in these areas than in, say, working with human rights groups or NGOs. Fourth, "academically oriented" interculturalists are keenly

interested in establishing the field of intercultural communication as an academic discipline. Adopting a "respectable" scientific methodology involves bracketing out most questions of ethics and power. Finally, intercultural communication limits itself as a discipline to interpersonal and intergroup communication, thereby distinguishing itself from the field of international communication, which deals with communication between nations, and other traditional disciplines such as anthropology, politics, and economics. A popular saying among some people in the field of intercultural communication is that it does not study Culture, big "C" (i.e., the "objective" manifestations of culture: systems, institutions etc.), but culture, little "c" (i.e., the "subjective" manifestations of culture: behavior, communication styles, etc.).

It is difficult to criticize an academic field on the basis of how it chooses to define its subject matter. If the boundaries are drawn too tightly, however, the field may become myopic and I think it would be particularly dangerous for the field of intercultural communication to become little more than the handmaiden of world elites. A wider, more holistic perspective is needed and this perspective can only be obtained by either enlarging the present field or supplementing it with interdisciplinary studies. Without this wider perspective arguments over "cultural differences" can used as a means of mystifying rather than clarifying certain situations. A few examples:

- When Japan's Sony Corporation bought America's Columbia Pictures a few years back, there were outcries in the United States that Japan was "buying out American culture." There was no corresponding criticism that American business interests were "selling out American culture." In the context of a society which is increasingly polarized between rich and poor, the fact that American stockholders had profited enormously from this and similar deals was not emphasized in the press. There was no recognition among "average Americans" that the interests of big business and the interests of the general public might be in conflict, and that their frustration might more appropriately be directed against those who had sold the company rather than against those who had bought it. By casting the problem in terms of "America vs. Japan," however, American anger was conveniently deflected away from American elites and directed towards the Japanese in the form of Japan-bashing. At the same time, however, there was no criticism among "average Japanese" against

Japanese companies, despite the fact that over the past several decades lifestyles in Japan have risen at considerably lower rates than corporate profits have. Instead, Japanese were encouraged in their media to nationalistically rally behind their companies. By casting the problem as a conflict between two cultures, the real problem was overlooked. If the issue had been cast along class lines – "average Americans" and "average Japanese" vs. the interests of big business in both countries – the criticisms could have been directed in more appropriate directions and an entirely different solution would have presented itself. Fig. 5 shows how the interests of various groups can be seen as either converging or diverging. The vertical axis indicates a cultural analysis, with the dominant view of each of the respective cultures on top; the horizontal axis indicates a class analysis.

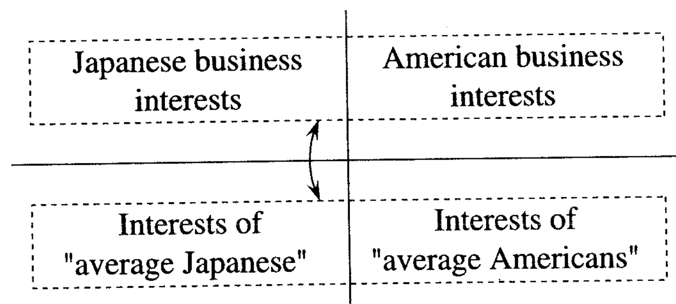

Fig. 5. Divergent and convergent interests between Japanese and Americans based on a cultural analysis and a class analysis

- Japan has often tried to defend whaling on the grounds that whaling is "a part of Japanese culture." At a banquet of whaling supporters held in Japan in 1992 the opposition of U.S. environmentalists to Japanese whaling was labeled "cultural imperialism." According to Kazuo Shima, a Japan Fishery Agency official who attended the banquet, "The issue of whaling is presented as a cultural war between Western civilization and barbarism. Those who oppose whaling say those who eat whales are barbarians." (*The Japan Times*, June 23, 1992, p. 3). Defenders of Japanese whaling sometimes describe Japan as a "fish-eating" culture and America as a "meating-eating" culture, and suggest that raising cattle and

pigs is more environmentally destructive than whaling is. American environmentalists, for their part, do sometimes imply that the Japanese are morally inferior because they are believed to not have an adequately developed sense of animal rights. The "culture war" can be quickly dissolved, however, once a few facts are known. First, not all Japanese support whaling. A recent survey showed, for example, that two-thirds of the Japanese persons were aware of proposals to create an Antarctic whale sanctuary and 73.5% of those are in favor of the idea or indifferent; only 20% are opposed (*Japan Environment Monitor* 64, June 1994, p. 17). Most of the claims that are being made in favor of whaling come from commerical interests, supported by the media. Many environmentalists in Japan are also opposed to Japanese whaling and also question the "cultural argument" in favor of whaling. Eiji Fujiwara (1993) of Tsukuba University and head of the Institute for Environmental Science and Culture, writes, for example:

...[T]hough culture and traditions are important, both change with the times. Many countries of the world have traditions and cultures connected to whaling, but almost all of them have preserved such traditions and cultures only in museums, and are building new cultures that make use of whales without killing them. Whale watching is growing fast even in Japan.

(This argument is interesting not only because of it dynamic view of culture, but also because it uses an appeal to practices in other countries as leverage for change in Japan.)

Second, it is true that American agricultural practices are open to criticism. Agribusiness in the U.S. requires heavy doses of chemicals and fertilizers, depends upon oil-consuming machinery which replaces human labor, and uses up water from underground aquifers, which over time will lead to a deterioration in the quality of American farmland. Raising cattle and pigs consumes more resources and provides less food than raising grain. Nonetheless, because American agriculture is more "efficient" than Japanese agriculture, imports of American agricultural products threaten the livelihoods of some Japanese farmers (particularly those who raise

beef, oranges, and rice). "Cultural arguments" have also been used in Japan to keep out food imports, particularly from the U.S. (e.g., "Japanese culture is historically based on rice farming"; "American beef is not suitable for Japanese stomachs"). Despite the obvious weaknesses of these arguments, it probably does make sense for Japan to try to preserve a fair amount of agricultural self-sufficiency and for the U.S. to try to protect the quality of its farmland. Political and economic interests, however, are thwarting both of these goals: the percentage of agricultural self-sufficiency in Japan has fallen from more than 75% in the 1960s to less than 25% in the 1990s. American agribusiness is obviously more interested in increasing exports than it is in preserving farmland; Japanese politicians are obviously more interested in promoting development than they are in maintaining self-sufficiency (despite the hypocritical use of this argument to keep out imported agricultural products).

Third, unless they are vegetarians, most Japanese that I know eat meat (often imported) and most Americans eat fish, at least occasionally. The problem then is not between "fish-eating cultures" and "meat-eating cultures," but between cultural practices in both Japan and the U.S. which are environmentally sustainable and those which are not. Complicated issues such as these cannot be masked behind arguments over "culture." Fig. 6 shows how the interests of various groups can be seen as either converging or diverging. The vertical axis indicates a cultural analysis, with the dominant view of each of the respective cultures on top; the horizontal axis indicates an environmental analysis.

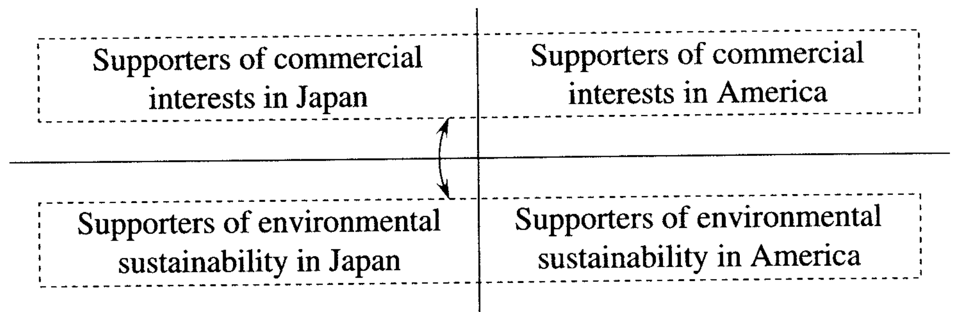

Fig. 6 Divergent and convergent interests between Japanese and Americans based on a cultural analysis and an environmental analysis

It is true that this type of analysis moves beyond an exclusive concern with culture, but I would argue that such a holistic, interdisciplinary approach is necessary if we are to get to the root of what arguments over "cultural differences" are sometimes really all about. What needs to be avoided is the reductionist tendency to think that all problems can be solved by just one particular form of analysis. Feminist analysis, class analysis, environmental analysis, and cultural analysis, for example, can all be used to supplement one another; any single method taken by itself can lead to distortions. In particular, there is a need to avoid simplistic dichotomies: women are good/men are bad; nature is good/humans are bad; the working class is good/the bourgeoisie is bad; my culture is good/other cultures are bad. All of these dichotomies are based on an essentialist view of culture which reifies the values of one particular group and sets them above those of other groups. The result is that while external criticism of other groups waxes, internal criticism wanes. Instead of drawing the line between various identity groups, however, it makes more sense to draw the line in terms of *those who dominate* and *those who are dominated.* The members of one gender, race, class, or culture are not "good" and the members of other groups "bad." Rather, there may be people in each of these groups who are in a position to dominate others and others who are in a position to be dominated. In the same way that the interests of elites often converge across gender, racial, and cultural lines, so too do the interests of non-elites. Being able to discuss issues such as domination in ethical terms rather than in purely cultural terms is the foundation on which cross-cultural solidarity can be built.

Cross-cultural solidarity

The growth of the field of intercultural communication over the past several decades should be seen in the context of increasing globalization. International political organizations, such as the United Nations, have been in place for quite some time now, serving to establish the rules by which international politics is supposed to be played. International economic organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (which replaces the GATT), have been established more recently to set the rules of international trade. The trend is towards an intermeshing of the world's political and economic structures in a "new world order" and a "global market." National economies are becoming bound together in ever-larger regional units through such instruments as the EC, NAFTA, and

APEC. Plans are currently underway to expand existing spheres, create new ones, and further interlink them. The ultimate goal we all seem to be moving towards is a global system based on free trade and international cooperation which will include every country, and if possible, every living human being on the planet. All of these developments are presented in the media in a very positive light. We are all moving toward unity, a Coca-Cola world of peace and harmony (for readers who remember the old Coke commercials) in which everyone joins hands, war is eliminated, and poverty is overcome through unlimited economic growth and development. Intercultural communication may see itself as having a role to play by helping people from different countries to overcome their hatred, racial animosity, and "cultural differences."

These are honorable goals to be sure, but the darker side of this vision is rarely discussed and all the glittering promises may turn out to be nothing more than an ideological blanket for baser motives. The doctrine of unlimited economic growth is premised on the questionable idea that infinite economic progress is possible. Justice is achieved not by sharing the pie with others but by making a bigger pie so that everyone gets a bigger piece. As the economies of the developed countries have begun to stagnate, the next logical area for expansion is the "underdeveloped" countries. Developed countries have two primary motives for wanting to increase trade with these countries: first, these countries currently possess a high percentage of the world's remaining natural resources which the developed countries want in both large quantities and at low prices; second, the relatively large populations of these countries constitute an enormous market in which the developed countries can sell their finished products. These are the motives, not the lofty goals of world peace or justice, that are propelling the world toward greater "unity." The propaganda which supports these motives claims that by giving greater freedom to business and trade, more jobs will be created and there will be greater economic prosperity for all.

The evidence is mounting, however, that this vision is little more than a rehash of the failed "trickle down" theory writ large. Since its inception capitalism has claimed that by giving free reign to business everyone would benefit. With the failure of communism in the East, the present disarray of the labor movement in the West, and the inability of any alternative vision to gain wide support, it would seem that capitalism is finally on the road to getting its

wish, not only at the national level, but at the international level as well. Primary attention should be focused on multinational corporations, which is where real international power is centered. National governments and international organizations exist not so much to put a democratic check on the operations of multinationals as to provide them with a suitable legal and political "infrastructure" on which to operate. The rules are designed to smooth relations among those with power, not among those without power. National sovereignty begins to break down as more and more power is abdicated to international organizations. For example, attempts to restrict the importation of certain products because they do not meet health and safety standards, have been made with child labor, or threaten the collapse of local economies may be regarded as illegal "trade barriers."

Multinationals by definition do not belong to any one country, and their sole reason for existence is to maximize profits – certainly not to promote "international understanding." If more profits can be made by shutting down factories in a developed country and reopening them in an undeveloped country where taxes are cheaper, wages are lower, and environmental regulations are fewer, then so be it. Multinational corporations feel no responsibility for the fact that local communities in developed countries are destroyed as a result and local communities in the underdeveloped countries are being taken advantage of. Indeed, third-world leaders encourage, even plead for, overseas investment on the theory that it will eventually help them to join of the ranks of the developed countries. Workers in many third-world countries are also often willing to accept jobs with working conditions that would not be tolerated in first-world countries (long hours, threats to safety and health, unsanitary environments, etc.) because they have dreams of eventually being able to enjoy the same kind of lifestyles that people in first-world countries have. In fact, however, only a minority of people in the third world are able to attain this status, simply replicating the class structure that already obtains in the first world where divisions between rich and poor are also increasing. Elites in the third world can enjoy their status now and still appeal to existing inequalities as an excuse for even more investment and development. Multinationals, for their part, can justify their own needs for plentiful resources, cheap labor, and large markets on the grounds that their investments are "helping" third-world countries to develop.

As is becoming increasingly clear, however, there is a discrepancy between the subjective aspirations of those who favor unlimited economic growth for all and the objective possibilities for realizing this vision in a world of finite resources and limited capacities for absorbing wastes and pollution. Environmental economists such as Herman Daly (1991) and Joel Kassiola (1990) argue that it is an unrealizable vision to think that our present levels of economic growth are sustainable over the long run. It may be politically popular in both the first and third worlds for politicians to claim that first world countries can continue to enjoy steady incremental growth and that the third world will eventually "catch up." But it is truly utopian to believe that every person on the planet will one day be able to attain the levels of consumption which are prevalent in first-world countries (imagine, for example, how many resources would be necessary just to provide everyone with automobiles and the pollution which would result). Ultimately there will be winners and losers, and a greater polarization between rich and poor, both within countries and between countries. In the meantime, if consumption is not brought within truly sustainable levels, resources will become even scarcer and the environment will continue to deteriorate, perhaps to unmanageable levels. The U.N.'s *Bruntland Report*, which projects a world population of 8.2 million in the year 2025 and calls for "a five to tenfold increase in manufacturing output...just to raise developing-world consumption of manufactuired goods to industrialized-world levels" (World Commission on Employment and Development 1987, p. 43), is not encouraging in this respect, despite its intention to foster greater international justice. A more realistic model would be for first-world countries to drastically reduce their levels of consumption while still managing to provide for the basic needs of their populations. The third-world could still enjoy modest increases in consumption to bring them up to a level where they too are able to provide for the basic needs of their populations. Such a future would be not only just, but also objectively achievable. It is not likely to be politically popular, however, and that perhaps is the main reason why it is usually dismissed as an "unrealistic" option. But who are the real realists and who are the real utopians in this debate? Unless our subjective aspirations are brought into line with objective possibilities, we face a much bleaker future than the pied pipers of unlimited economic growth would lead us to believe. Their vision calls for both unlimited prosperity and international justice but achieves neither.

A further problem is that many of the decisions which are currently being made with regard to the "global market" and the "new world order" are being made by world elites with relatively little democratic input from the lower levels. Internally multinational corporations are hardly managed by democratic processes. Executives are laviously rewarded for eliminating jobs through corporate restructuring in the name of reducing labor costs, improving efficiency, and increasing profits. Richard Reeves points out that the 23 American CEOs who axed the most jobs in 1993 received pay raises averaging 30% ("Cheer Up, Downsizing Is Good News for Some," *International Herald Tribune*, December 29, 1994). Externally, multinationals can use their economic power to thwart whatever democratic checks attempt to restrain them. If they become dissatisfied with local laws or business conditions (e.g., increased regulations, taxes, or union activism), they can use the threat of pulling up stakes and moving elsewhere as a form of political and economic blackmail. The combination of corporate restructuring and shifting production overseas is what is behind the current "hollowing out" (*kudoka* in Japanese) of both the American and Japanese economies. The cause is not a simple recessionary fluctuation in the business cycle but a permanent and irreversible downward spiral which cannot be corrected through remedial government measures. Governments in fact are caught up in the spiral: if corporations are moving overseas and jobs are being lost, the tax base also shrinks. We are then faced with the choice of either raising taxes to maintain the current level of government services or curtailing those services in the name of "fiscal responsibility." Cutting government services at the same time that jobs are being eliminated is hardly a recipe for a just and prosperous society.

On a national level it is impossible for our "representative" form of government to represent all interests in society, especially given the relatively large scale at which they attempt to operate (the nation-state). Usually the interests which gain a hearing are those which have a measure of economic and political power to begin with, i.e., other elites. Media becomes a top-down form of communication, which explains and justifies the ways of these elites to the masses. Political controversy is permitted – since politicians are not the real holders of power in society anyways – but criticisms of corporate practices are carefully circumscribed; advertising revenue and corporate sponsorship may be at stake. A highly filtered view of reality is presented, which maintains the

worldview of the status quo. There is relatively little genuine communication heading in the other direction, from "average persons" to their political representatives. Even assuming that the amount of communication from bottom-to-top could be increased, most of our leaders would simply be too overwhelmed to effectively respond. They would tend to focus their attention, as they do now, on representing those interests which will help them maintain their own power.

The hope has been expressed that new interactive forms of media will increase communication between people at all levels of society. Video cameras can be used, for example, not only by the government to keep tabs on protestors, but also by citizens to keep tabs on the government, particularly on sensitive issues such as police brutality. Advocates for a new superinformation highway claim that it increases the prospects for interpersonal communication at lower levels in the social hierarchy. Nonetheless, in the same way that television only very partially lived up to the claim that it would become a powerful educational medium, so too the new communication technologies may be able only very partially to live up to the claim that they will eventually make our current "democracies" more democratic. Most communication technologies past and present, from the telephone to multimedia systems, are used for commercial purposes which promote consumerism in one way or another. The day is perhaps not far off when we can do our shopping by computer, interactively design our own movies, and use virtual reality as the ultimate means of escape when we tire of the real thing. It is fair to ask if these are the devices that will tune us in to what is really going in the world or if they are merely bread and circuses designed to divert our attention.

On a global level, there are even fewer opportunities for democratic input, particularly in the area of economics. The sessions which led to the creation of the World Trade Organization were often conducted behind closed doors. Business interests were heavily represented, labor and environmental interests less so. The nitty gritty details of many proposals were underreported in the media, perhaps on the assumption that people would not be able to understand them and audiences would be lost. Citizens worldwide were encouraged to trust their leaders and other experts, not to question the viability of the organization for themselves. The problem, of course, is not peculiar to the World Trade Organization, but is a general one which has been recognized for some time.

Few writers in the field of intercultural communication have been able to see the problem as clearly as Tadashi Kawata, professor of International Relations at Sophia University in Tokyo:

> ...[W]e must realize that those who can strengthen their own linkage through the development of communications are generally big nations, big enterprises, and a rich minority. Small nations, medium and small sized enterprises, local industries, lower class and poor poeple, on the other hand, might be placed outside of such communication networks and would then be ignored as marginal by the rest of the world. If this is the case, then conflicts would increase rather than decrease. As the linkages among the strong and rich are increasingly strengthened, linkages between the weak and poor have become relatively weaker. Such could have been anticipated. Rich nations, rich enterprises, and rich classes become richer and richer, while the poor nations, poor enterprises and poor classes are left behind. (1976, p. 34)

In the field of international communication (as distinct from the field of intercultural communication) it has long been recognized that stronger nations can have an enourmous – and largely unreciprocated – influence on weaker nations. One-way communication from developed countries to developing countries in the name of freedom of the press can increase economic aspirations among third-world citizens. Third-world leaders, who are understandably jittery about whether or not they can fulfill these aspirations, sometimes react by limiting press freedom. McPhail (1989) sees the break-up of the mass media and the segmentation of programming as also breaking up audiences into smaller niches, which third-world countries could exploit to their advantage. Broadcasters in developing countries would be able to reach people within their own borders more effectively and also to communicate a more positive image of themselves to the world at large. But again, control seems to be a key issue. Media which is exclusively under the management of third-world elites can be just as propagandistic (and/or mindless) as media which is exclusively under the management of first-world elites. The postmodern break-up of mass-everything into segmented markets does not necessarily lead to grass roots empowerment. The title of the Bruce Springsteen song, "57 Channels (And Nothin' On)," well

conveys the sense of disillusionment many people experience.

The global market presents itself as a value-neutral sphere in which people can come together to satisfy needs and desires of their own choosing. No one is pressured into conformity. No one is "forced" to participate. There are no overarching moral principles in the market to guide behavior; everything is governed by an impersonal, invisible hand. In the process of maximizing one's own personally defined sense of the good life, the happiness of society as a whole is maximized. While the global market emphasizes the values of "freedom" and "choice," it can nonetheless be observed that world culture is in many respects becoming increasingly homogenized. Consumers are offered a wide variety of "choices," but the market also encourages a certain uniformity in the clothes people wear, the food they eat, the music they listen to, the ideas they have (or don't have), the values they believe in (or don't believe in), and so on. Segmented markets are preferable to mass markets not only because they offer more choice but also because they sell more products. Pardoxically, defining an individual "style" within the context of market choice is part of this uniformity. The true individual, the person who refuses to submit to the market, is the genuine heretic of our times. Moreover, the goal of the market is to pull increasing numbers of the world's people into its sphere of gravity, and if possible, to universalize its values. In short, capitalism, as much as Marxism, is a totalizing system that seeks to join all humanity together into a single economic system, while offering people the illusion of freedom and choice. The "other" can be defined in this context as anyone who steps outside the boundaries of the market, who resists enclosure, or who tries to come up with "heretical" alternatives.

The globalization of the economy thus represents a form of cultural imperialism on a global scale. Whereas the older form of imperialism attempted to impose Western values on non-Westerners, the newer form attempts to impose first-world values on "non-first-worlders." In other words, Asian countries such as Japan which have joined the first-world elite are also implicated. "Cultural differences" between Japan and the United States pale before their similarities as first-world nations with similar economic and political systems – and similar global ambitions. The really significant "cultural differences" are not between Japan and the U.S., but between the homogenizing culture of the first world and all the other cultures of the world which it

threatens to absorb. Wolfgang Sachs (1992) dates this new form of imperialism from a speech given by U.S. President Harry Truman on January 20, 1949 in which Truman lumped all the various cultures of the non-industrialized world under the single rubric: "underdeveloped areas." The totalizing impulse of this designation is evident in Sach's analysis, which can be quoted at some length:

> There it was, suddenly, a permanent feature of the landscape, a pivotal concept which crammed the immeasurable diversity of the globe's South into a single category – underdeveloped. For the first time, the new worldview was thus announced: all the peoples of the earth were to move along the same track and aspire to only one goal – development.
>
> And the road to follow lay clearly before the President's eyes: "Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace." After all, was it not the US which had already come closest to this utopia? According to that yardstick, nations fall into place as stragglers or lead runners. And "the United States is pre-eminent among nations in the development of industrial and scientific techniques." Clothing self-interest in generosity, Truman outlined a program of technical assistance designed to "relieve the suffering of these peoples" through "industrial activities" and "a higher standard of living."
>
> Looking back after 40 years, we recognize Truman's speech as the starting gun in the race for the South to catch up with the North.

The condescension towards supposedly "inferior" cultures is also clearly evident here. The U.S. offered itself as a "superior" culture which could serve as a model for less developed cultures to emulate. We "feel sorry" for countries that have not achieved our own standard of living and come to believe that we have an obligation to "help" them reach our own level. The fact that all of these good intentions also gives us access to third-world resources and markets is conveniently left unmentioned.

The problem, according to Sachs, is that we are unable to make a clear distinction between "frugality" and "destitution." A subsistence economy may not have all the "luxuries" of first-world economies, but it does provide people with the essentials of life: food, clothing, shelter, a sense of individual purpose, and community with others. When such cultures are encouraged to enter the

global market, the structures which provide people with these essentials are dismantled. Instead of growing a variety of crops for local consumption, for example, a single crop is grown for export. The community then becomes dependent on the global market for its income, including the income it uses to buy food. The increased mechanization of agriculture, aggravated by the consolidation of small landholdings into larger units, displaces rural labor. Rural laborers move to the cities in search of work, but there simply aren't enough jobs and the jobs that are available are often exploitive. The very policies which were designed to bring them out of frugality and raise their levels of commodity consumption leads, ironically, to a worse situation than before: the laborers and their families end up destitute. Adding insult to injury, the first world then argues that the only way this destitution can be dealt with is through even more economic "development"! The fact that the first world's self-interests are clothed in "generosity" of this sort is particularly pugnacious.

Japan, of course, is not immune to similar criticism. Following the Second World War, Japan bought into Truman's vision, succeeding not only in "catching up with the West" but eventually surpassing it, at least economically if not in terms of individual consumption. Having been Asia's premier success story, Japan is frequently set up as a model for "underdeveloped" countries to emulate. Moreover, Japan is now the world's largest donor of overseas development assistance, having surpassed the U.S. for the first time in 1989. In 1993 Japan's ODA disbursals amounted to $11.25 billion (*Yen Aid Watch*, Vol. 1, August, 1994). The quality of this aid has received low marks, however, not only from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which but also from NGOs who argue that many of the investments are in massive megaprojects that have a negative impact both on the lives of local people and on the environment. One example: together with the World Bank, Japan's Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF – the second largest aid agency in the world after the World Bank) had provided funding to help construct the $3.5 million Sardar Sarovar Dam on India's Narmada River. The dam was the first of 3,000 projected dams of various sizes to be constructed, which would have flooded surrounding forests and farmlands and displaced approximately 200,000 people (figures are from Adam Zagorin, "Damning the World Bank," *Time*, July 25, 1994, pp. 30-32). Japanese multinational corporations are also involved in projects which are destroying both the

environment and indigenous cultures. Trading companies, for example, are continuing to import logs from Sarawak, Malaysia where the rainforests are being cut and the culture of the indigenous Penan is being obliterated. Malaysian government officials support the exports, however, on the grounds that it will help the "backward" Penan to develop – a clear case of elites in both a first-world country and a third-world country conspiring against the interests of a politically powerless culture. Many Malaysian politicians and businessmen own logging concessions in the rainforests, even though they have never set foot in them. In a speech delivered to the U.N. General Assembly in October, 1992 – on the eve of the U.N.'s declared "Year of Indigenous People" – Anderson Mutang, a representative of the Penan, said:

> The [Malaysian] government says that it is bringing us progress and development. But the only development that we see is dusty logging roads and relocation camps. Their so-called progress means only starvation, dependence, helplessness, the destruction of our culture and demoralization of our people. The government says it is creating jobs for our people. But these jobs will disappear along with the forest; in ten years the jobs will all be gone and the forest which has sustained us for thousands of years will be gone with them. (The text of the speech is given in *Kyoto Journal* 22, p. 11.)

In the meantime, of course, the politicians and businessmen will have made their fortunes. Cultural imperialism is no longer a simple matter of Western dominance. It involves highly developed non-Western countries such as Japan as well, and the complicity of high ranking government officials in developing countries against cultures which exist within their own borders.

Can developed countries really set themselves up as models for developing countries? Sachs writes, "Distinctions such as backward/advanced or traditional/modern have...become ridiculous given the dead end of progress in the North, from poisoned soils to the greenhouse effect" (p. 6). With the collapse of communism, capitalism is now touted as the "end of history" – an unending millenium of peace and prosperity. But is our current situation – with its crime, violence, greed, gross injustices, decaying cities, social deterioration, and environmental devastation – really the best that we can hope for? Or can

something better be imagined? Clearly the "global market" cannot be a panacea for all our problems. New visions are needed – workable visions that are grounded in objective possibilities, not utopian calls for "unlimited economic development." This modern-day Tower of Babel is already breaking apart into a cacophony of different languages, none of which is intelligible to the other. The more that efforts are made to bring the various cultures of the world under a single system, the more need there will be for people to create distinct identities for themselves. The rise of nationalism, religious fundamentalism, identity politics, and distinguishing subgroups of all kinds should be seen as a reaction against the homogenizing tendencies of the "new world order." Particularizing impulses become an antidote to universalizing impulses. If the medicine sometimes seems strong, it is because the disease is also strong.

It will not do, however, to simply decry the rising forms of cultural particularism as obnoxious impediments to the creation of a brave new global world. While neither the new cultural universalism nor the new cultural particularism seem desirable as final destinations, out of the conflict of dialectical opposites there is always the possibility of synthesis. Universalism and particularism each have positive insights to offer and negative tendencies to be critically eliminated. The goal, I would suggest is to find a way to preserve both unity and diversity. This is a major theme in current ecological thinking, which is concerned about the preservation of both biodiversity and cultural diversity. A natural "climax forest," for example, permits a wide variety of lifeforms to flourish within the context of an interrelated ecosystem. A planted "monoculture forest," by contrast, contains only one species of trees. Human societies can also be seen as either enhancing or destroying individual and cultural diversity, that is, as either allowing individual and cultural variations to naturally evolve or attempting to create artificial homogeneous systems in which variety is only simulated. We cannot, of course, derive an ethical "ought" for human societies from the empirical "is" of ecological science. The open-endedness of human behavior means that a variety of options will always be available to us, some of which may be desirable and others not. But ecology does provide us with a model for human society in which both unity and diversity can be preserved, assuming that these two goals are in fact desirable to us. Moreover, it should be noted that contemporary environmental philosophy is not only concerned with "saving the environment" but also with creating a just

society. The concept of interrelatedness implies that subjective decisions have objective consequences, and thus ethical implications, at all levels, not only for individuals but also for groups and nations. Activities in one country can have an impact on events in other countries. The slogan "think globally, act locally" is the opposite of the current tendency to act globally (through large multinational corporations and international organizations) and think locally (in terms of parochial, self-serving interests).

Preserving genuine diversity and permitting the evolution of new forms of life and culture can only be accomplished, I would argue, in the context of highly decentralized political and economic units. Power, instead of being concentrated at the top, would be more equally diffused not only within particular societies, but between societies. Two visions from contemporary environmental philosophy can be looked at briefly in this connection. The bioregional vision seeks to establish human societies along lines suggested by natural ecosystems, rather than on the basis of arbitrary human boundaries. Each society, and thus each culture, would be fully embedded in its natural environment. Sale (1991. p. 50) contrasts the bioregional paradigm from the industrio-scientific paradigm as follows:

	Bioregional paradigm	Industrio-scientific paradigm
Scale	Region	State
	Community	Nation/World
Economy	Conservation	Exploitation
	Stability	Change/Progress
	Self-sufficiency	World Economy
	Cooperation	Competition
Polity	Decentralization	Centralization
	Complementarity	Hierarchy
	Diversity	Uniformity
Society	Symbiosis	Polarization
	Evolution	Growth/Violence
	Division	Monoculture

On a practical level the bioregional vision favors participatory democracy at the local level rather than representative democracy at the level of the nation-state.

It is compatible as well with decentralized and democratically managed economic institutions, such as employee-owned companies and cooperatives, rather than with large multinational cooperations where both ultimate ownership and control remain in the hands of elites. When ownership and control remain local, local capital and local jobs are more easily retained by the community. Trade is not thereby excluded, but priority is given to self-sufficiency (local production for local consumption). The needs of the community take precedence over the needs of the market. The bioregional model thus avoids both the capitalist proclivity for concentrating power in the hands of powerful business interests and the Marxist proclivity for concentrating power in the hands of a powerful state.

The libertarian municipal vision of social ecologists seeks to create an ecological society by restoring face-to-face democracy at the municipal level. Bookchin (1987, p 25) defines social ecology as

> ...a sensibility that includes not only a critique of hierarchy and domination but a reconstructive outlook that advances a participatory concept of "otherness" and a new appreciation of differentiation as a social and biological desideratum. Formalized into certain basic principles, it is also guided by an ethics that emphasizes variety without structuring differences into a hierarchical order.

One can see here both a deconstructive critique of hierarchy and domination and a reconstructive outlook which takes participation and differentiation as its key ethical precepts. Differentiation implies accepting biological differences in race, gender, nationality, etc. without ordering them in hierarchies of "good" and "bad." It also allows for a flourishing of individual and cultural differences provided that domination is avoided both within the group and between groups. Participation involves restoring face-to-face democracy at the local level. In practical terms Bookchin's (1991) concept of libertarian municipalism envisions political power being based in local municipalities with social ownership of the means of production (community control, rather than Marxist state-control). It is nonetheless possible for local municipalities to confederate into larger units, provided that ultimate power remains in the hands of the local municipalities; indeed, many of our current problems cannot be solved without a great deal of

cross-cultural cooperation. In sum, horizontal communication would involve *all* the members of the group (not just elites) and vertical communication (in confederated units) would be from the bottom up. The communication process envisioned by Bookchin is thus the exact opposite of our current situation in which most horizontal communication takes place only between elites and most vertical communication is from the top down.

Internationalism in the Marxist sense ("workers of the world unite!") sought to foster solidarity across racial, national, and cultural lines by emphasizing the common problems faced by the proletariat class. I would argue that a similar kind of solidarity needs to be established but on an even broader base. The essential dividing line is not just between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, but between those of all races, nationalities, genders, religions, cultures, classes, and species who dominate and those who are dominated. With Bookchin I share the idea that eliminating hierarchy and domination in all its forms is a worthwhile ethical goal. This goal cannot be achieved, however, by simply changing our current forms of political and economic organization. It also requires a deep change in individual consciousness. Democracy cannot function on the basis of a self-indulgent individualism; it must become more than an unfettered free-for-all of competing egos. The self must be deconstructed along with our social institutions and a higher level of psychological maturity must be attained which goes beyond infantile indulgence and adolescent rebellion. Only then will it be possible for humans to take charge in a responsible way and imaginatively recreate their societies. At the same time, however, transformations in individual consciousness alone will not be sufficient. Without a change in our institutions, structures which permit domination will remain in place. We will be socialized even more deeply into their hierarchies of power and find it increasingly difficult to transcend their mystifications. Plato believed that since not everyone could become philosophers, not everyone could become kings. If we eventually want to get rid of the kings, we will all need to first become philosophers.

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