

SIETAR JOURNAL



The Neuro- Intercultural Mind

*Interview with
Joseph Shaules
on how cognitive
research is
radically changing
the intercultural
profession*

Galatea of the Spheres
by Salvadore Dali, 1952
heeza.fr

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SIETAR Journal

Editorial

Culture and the new science of the mind

It's almost become a cliché to say that learning a foreign language will open your eyes to other cultural realities. But most people don't realize that language-learning is not only learning alternative vocabulary and phrases but also requires a deep psychological transformation. Essentially it's training the mind to adopt to another language's frame of reference, creating newborn neural templates that, in turn, provide the groundwork for successful intercultural encounters. If there's not an openness to this transformation, the acquisition of a new language will almost inevitably fail.

Our interviewee for this issue, an American named Joseph Shaules, has been researching the mind for over 30 years and has come up with some refreshing new perspectives on the intercultural experience. Beginning as a young English teacher in Mexico, he has constructed a multilingual frame of mind, working not only in English and Spanish but also French and Japanese. This has led him to inquire into the hidden influence of culture on the unconscious mind, helping people get more out of their intercultural journeys. Interview starts on page 3.

In addition, we have published an excerpt from Shaules' upcoming book, which presents an exchange of letters between Edward Hall and media guru Marshall McLuhan. Whereas the latter believed the world would become a global village through communication technology, the former saw cross-

cultural understanding coming about through a difficult process of self-discovery. More on page 11.

Our correspondent in Montreal, Dan MacLeod, wraps up his "Reporter's Sketchbook" column after 9 years and bids farewell to journalism at the same time. Read all about it on page 13.

We also have a thought-provoking piece on feedback in an international setting. Contributor John Magee looks at German- American collaboration and gives reasons why both parties misinterpret each other's signals. Page 19

Lastly, I explore the elements of Donald Trump's mind. Reviewing the historical undercurrents that Americans are exposed to, and the culture of consumerism, I attempt to decipher how the U.S. elected such an attention-challenged personality (page 16).

An issue with many stimulating themes. Enjoy the read.



Patrick Schmidt, Editor-in-chief



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Joseph Shaules

An interview with a compelling and inquisitive intercultural educator



When Sigmund Freud published “Die Traumdeutung” (The Meaning of Dreams) in 1900, he shook up the Western world’s sacred belief that we are consciously in control of our actions. Freud believed that when we explain our own behavior to ourselves or others (conscious mental activity) we rarely give a true account of our motivation. Rather, it’s the subtle and elaborate hidden mind — the unconscious — that dictates our thinking and perceptions. Freud contradicted the widely-accepted belief that people are aware of the reasons behind their actions and his theories were viewed as absolute heresy. It was no surprise he was scorned in many Viennese circles.

Fast-forward a little over a century. Advances in brain and cognition research are showing us that human behavior is often dictated by unconscious mental structures far more sophisticated than Freud could have imagined. Recent insights on how the brain functions provide clues, and even some answers, to long-standing puzzles like culture shock, ethnocentrism, cultural conditioning, stereotyping, etc.

This has important implications in the intercultural world. We’re moving beyond Hofstede’s macro-analysis of national collective behavior and into the micro of neuroscience, examining how culture affects cognitive processes. One of the forerunners in this field is Dr. Joseph Shaules, who has been examining the relationship between culture and the uncon-

scious mind for over 25 years. Well-known in academic circles for his “deep culture” work, he’s the author of several books that explore this topic, including “Deep Culture: Hidden Challenges to Global Living”, “A Beginner’s Guide to the Deep Culture Experience” and “The Intercultural Mind”.

An active member of SIETAR, both in Japan and Europe, he heads the Japan Intercultural Institute and is a full professor at Juntendo University in Tokyo. Despite his busy schedule, he found time for a Skype interview to tell me about his fascinating study of the intercultural mind.

Tell us something about your formative years.

I was raised in San Diego, which is right next to the Mexican border. My first intercultural memories were when I was four years old and my father took me—against my mother’s wishes, and after a messy divorce—to live in a small Mexican village. That adventure ended after six months, when my father was arrested attempting to cross back into the US. It was my most dramatic border crossing to date!

My older brother was my first intercultural role model. He taught himself Spanish in high school, and spent a year in Strasbourg learning French. He majored in linguistics and had dictionaries from different languages on his bookshelf: German, French, Spanish and Russian. That was the coolest thing! They represented an old-world sophistication to me, not typical for California.

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Joseph Shaules

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Living many years in Mexico, Joseph Shaules discovered a whole new world so different from his American upbringing.

In high school, I disliked my Spanish class and would have failed if I hadn't cheated on the final exam. Soon after, though, I got a part-time job at Sea World. I took tickets at the gate, and saw families talking, laughing and joking around in Spanish as they walked past. I wanted to talk to them, so I started keeping lists of Spanish words and phrases on a pad in the pocket of my work shirt. That hooked me on language learning—it opened a door to another world.

Another experience I remember was crossing the border, and going down to the town of Ensenada. I met a young guy named Antonio selling souvenirs to tourists. He and I became friends despite my limited Spanish, and I would go hang out with him. I remember asking him, "What's your house like?" And he said, "It's really nice. It has glass windows." Having glass windows was his definition of a nice house. I was struck by the fact that his "normal" was so different than mine — the music he listened to, the games he played, the food he ate, the house he lived in. I took a semester of Spanish in college, then spent three months in the town of San Miguel de Allende studying Spanish.

My experiences at the ticket gate of Sea World changed the course of my life. I remember wanting to live in Mexico, not just visit. I felt travelling was like scuba diving. You visit another world, but then your air runs out and you have to go back to the surface. Travellers walk through foreign streets



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counting their days and their pennies until they go back to "real life". I didn't want to be a scuba diver, I wanted to be a fish.

On one trip, I fell in love with the city of Zacatecas, and decided on the spur of the moment to move there and start a language school. My Spanish was pretty good by then and I had a "going native" experience — I remember thinking that Americans were cold, obsessed with time, and didn't understand friendship or family. Living in Mexico changed me. I could never be fully local, but I got close enough to feel at home.

When you left San Diego, did you feel that destiny was somehow pushing you to do something different?

I wanted to get out, though some people couldn't understand that. San Diego is a place people move to, not away from. The kids I knew looked down on tourists without a tan. But I was never cool. I was skinny. I had glasses. I didn't know how to surf.

How did you end up going from Mexico to Japan?

My language school was on the edge financially, and I'd heard I could make money in Japan. This was in the bubble years of Japan's booming economy. I cold-called the Japanese consulate in Los Angeles and they recommended a book called "Jobs in Japan". I taught English there for two years, sent money back to my partner, then returned to Mexico.

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Joseph Shaules

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Joseph Shaules first came to Japan to teach English for two years. Later, he returned to make the country his home.

Unfortunately, he spent everything on a failed pizza restaurant venture. I lost my language school and my friendship with my partner. On the other hand, this set me free to try something new. I decided to save money in Japan, then go back to school in the US. After that, I ended up in Japan looking for career options.

After finishing your Master's, you went to France for two years. Why?

My brother James was a father figure for me. He spoke French at home with the family—his wife was from Geneva. Finally, at 34 I had my first chance to visit Europe. After years of living in Asia it felt, strangely, like a homecoming. Learning French connected me to James and those happy memories. I had a sabbatical year that I spent in Paris, then spent a couple years splitting time between Tokyo and France. These days, my work in Japan keeps me busy and I don't spend the time in Europe that I'd like.

How's your Japanese?

Pretty good. I work primarily in Japanese. My wife and I use English and Japanese about evenly. Japanese is deeply different from European languages—it puts me into a different frame of mind. After more than 20 years I am still learning.

You're now doing research in intercultural education. From what I've read of your work, you're devoting your time to



Telegraph.co.uk

foreign-language education, and cultural adjustment.

I've come full circle. I started as a language teacher but got burned out, so I focused more on intercultural communication work. My research has focused on intercultural adjustment, and I teach intercultural communication. In recent years I've regained my interest in language. I'm learning Indonesian. I'm interested in how language learning can open your eyes to foreign cultures. The book I'm working on now focuses on language learning as an intercultural experience.

In the recent interview you gave to Stephen Shrader, you state: "Linguistic meaning is deeply interwoven with culture." Could you expound on that?

It's almost impossible to learn a foreign language purely as an intellectual exercise. It also requires a deep psychological transformation—changes to how we think, act and our way of being. Without an openness towards that transformation, learners get turned off and may develop a psychological resistance to the whole experience.

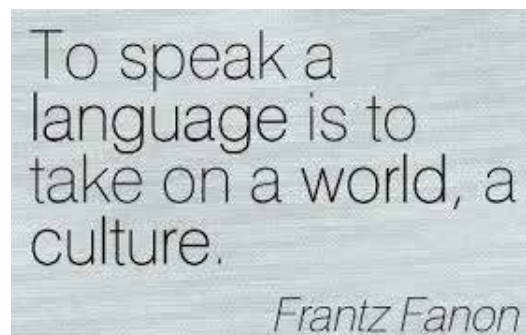
Starting as a young child is different, of course. In the European educational system, many children are starting a foreign language at 6 or 7 years old. But starting a language later in life—even as a teenager—requires a willingness to develop a foreign language self. It takes time and a willingness to feel stupid, yet keep going. We either open up to that challenge or resent it. Sometimes you hear that learning a

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Joseph Shaules

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Joseph Shaules' research is the relationship between language learning and the opening of one's eyes to foreign cultures.



foreign language alone isn't enough to make you interculturally aware. I understand that it's possible to learn vocabulary and grammar and not be transformed. However, in practice, most people who learn to use a foreign language well are the ones who are learning deep cultural lessons as well.

I admit that some talented language learners—my brother James is one of them—who seem disinterested in the cultural side of language learning. I am guessing that his high aptitude allows him to treat language learning as a sort of intellectual puzzle. For most people, though, intercultural curiosity is needed to make long-term progress.

This relates to something you wrote about some years ago. It was about an American man, who hardly spoke Japanese, but was happily living in Japan. Then you had the other extreme, an American woman, who had a PhD in Japanese literature, but couldn't stand living in Japan. What made them so different?

Yes, in my book I referred to them as Jack and Adele. I was researching the question: Is there such a thing as deep and superficial cultural learning? In different ways, they each helped me find an answer to that question.

Jack was a happy-go-lucky American who seemed genuinely happy living and working in Japan. But he remained culturally very American, spoke little Japanese, and had few deep

friendships with Japanese people. He seemed to have a long-term superficial experience in Japan—a perpetual tourist.

He is not, however, a loud-talking alpha-American. He is a thoughtful, fun-loving, and hard-working. But he was living in a privileged English-speaking bubble, and wasn't required to adapt. So he didn't. To learn a foreign language requires a deep form of flexibility—deep in the sense of touching you at the level of identity and unconscious mind. That was not happening to Jack. What I learned was that nice people don't always adapt, and that globalization can insulate us from cultural difference.

On the other extreme, Adele was pursuing a PhD in Japanese literature. Her written Japanese was very good but her communicative and intercultural skills were less so. She loved Japanese aesthetics, but had trouble forming deep relationships with Japanese people. She was highly critical of many aspects of Japanese values and her life in Tokyo.

She had a deeper experience than Jack, but it was highly conflicted. She was pursuing a personal vision of Japanese culture, while resisting the lived experience of life in Japan. All this was psychologically difficult. She went on and on about her frustrations with Japan. At the end, she said "It's really wonderful to talk to someone who really understands." It was therapeutic for her—exhausting for me. She was just reporting the facts as she saw them, and assumed I saw things the same way.

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Joseph Shaules

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Living abroad for a long time does not necessarily guarantee a deep cultural transformation.

They both taught me that – yes, intercultural experiences can be deep or more on the surface. But being in a foreign country for a long time doesn't guarantee a deep experience. Deep experiences may be more meaningful, but they are also demanding.

In a globalized world, where you have intercultural experiences is becoming less important than how you have them. You can jet to Kenya yet stay pampered in a luxury safari camp, or live in Hong Kong without speaking any Cantonese. In the past, travel forced you to confront diversity, whereas staying home protected you from it. That has changed. Now, the choice is more often yours. If you are interested in foreign experiences, you can have them, whether you travel to faraway places or not. If you seek familiarity, you can cut yourself off from those who are different from you — even when you are abroad. It's not the distance traveled that matters; it's the depth of our experiences that count.

With that in mind, you've lived almost twenty years in Japan. Have you found yourself transformed?

Living transforms us, but yes I have been deeply influenced by the 'in-betweenness' of my life. I have caught myself bowing to cars when crossing the street in California! I sometimes remember words in Japanese that I can't recall in English. But I am happy being the inside-outsider, and playing the role of the bridge person.



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What I find interesting is that you, Patrick, are originally from Los Angeles, but when we speak it doesn't trigger my California English. I feel very comfortable speaking a form of international English without local idioms. You obviously have gone through the same process.

At the 2013 SIETAR Europa congress in Tallinn, you gave a provocative talk in which you implied that the intercultural field is falling behind in cultural research. You pointed out that neuroscientists and social psychologists are doing cutting-edge work, and seemed to say that the intercultural field is still arguing about older paradigms. You gave an example of research showing that Chinese and Americans react differently to the word "mother".

My feeling about the intercultural field is that it's a bit behind the curve on new paradigms related to culture and mind. I'm not interested in arguing about Hofstede's work any more, or about definitions of culture, because we have new ways of looking at these issues. Neuroscientists manage to research culture without getting side-tracked by definitional squabbles. Let's just all agree that reification is best avoided, though it's very typical of human cognition, and move on.

To understand culture, we must understand the human mind. Intercultural professionals should have an understanding of conscious and unconscious cognition. I'm think-

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Joseph Shaules

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Edward T. Hall work has very much influenced Joseph Shaules' thinking.

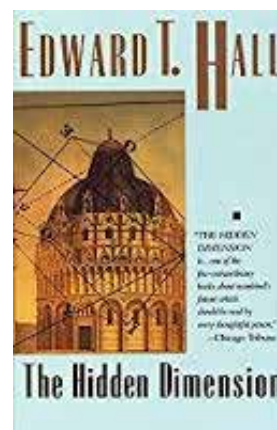
ing of people like Antonio Damasio, Daniel Kahneman, and Timothy Wilson. This work is important because culture, in effect, programs the unconscious auto-pilot that guides so much of our thought and behaviour. That programming is what allows me, as an American, to be a good interpreter of American behaviour. Sharing in a cultural community is not about everyone acting the same, or having a shared sense of identity. It's about relying on similar, unconscious perceptual frameworks to make sense of things. Put simply, the cultural programming of the unconscious mind gives us an intuitive sense of what is normal.

Richard Nisbett has been a pioneer in understanding unconscious cognition, and also explores the deep effect culture has on cognition, society and sense of self. Brilliant work! And every interculturalist should read Markus and Kitayama's work on culture and self-construal. Their landmark paper was published in 1991, but plenty of intercultural professionals are unfamiliar with it. Social psychologists are also doing wonderful cross-cultural research—I'm thinking, for example, of Sheena Iyengar. Look up her TED talk!

Research in cultural neuroscience blows my mind! For an introduction to that, look at Han and Northoff's 2008 article on the affects of culture on cognition as revealed by neuroimaging. As for the example you mentioned, among Chinese subjects the part of the brain that is activated by



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thinking of one's mother is the same as when subjects think about themselves. For American subjects, when they hear the word mother, it activates the same neural networks as when they think of a stranger. Deep-rooted parts of the self are profoundly impacted by culture, yet this element of self is largely inaccessible to conscious reflection.

This touches on Edward Hall's work, who demonstrated that we're unaware of our deep-rooted values and assumptions, making intercultural contact far more difficult than we assumed.

Yes. From my perspective, Edward Hall was 50 years ahead of his time. New paradigms of culture and mind are largely validating his views. He had a remarkable exchange of letters with the media theorist Marshall McLuhan. McLuhan was also a visionary who invented the term global village, and predicted the World Wide Web 30 years before it was invented (*see pages 11-12 for more about their exchange*).

They had disagreements about the psychological impact of globalization. McLuhan believed it would bring about a world of a unified global culture, and that we would lose our individual identity. Hall, on the other hand, saw humans as fundamentally unaware of their cultural blinders. He felt that intercultural contact easily leads to conflict, rather than unity.

I think the intercultural field has been influenced by transcendental thinking inspired by McLuhan's work. Talk of a

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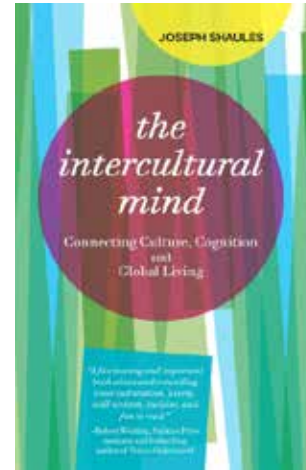
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Joseph Shaules

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Joseph's last publication on cultural neuroscience and intercultural competence.



global village encourages the idea that technology will naturally lead to a global mindset. Hall saw things differently. He understood that confronting our cultural programming is hard work—something akin to psychotherapy. I think he saw it as a process of transformation, without assuming that it leads to some sort of transcendence.

The 21st century is testing the vision of the global village. It's full of conflict and intolerance, both despite, and because of globalization. To my mind, Hall hasn't received the credit he deserves for understanding how deep these differences go, how hard co-existence is, and how prone we are to culture-blindness.

I would feel honoured if my work on deep culture contributed to Hall's legacy. My particular interests are currently language-learning and cultural adaptation, but everywhere I turn, things keep coming back to Hall's fundamental insight: "Hey, you don't realize how deep this stuff is in you."

Richard Lewis, the author of "When Cultures Collide", pointed out in a discussion at the last SIETAR congress in Valencia that Japanese only showed empathy to their own people, not to other cultural groups. As you have lived many years in Japan, could you comment on that?

There is a certain "island mentality" in Japan, and a belief in Japanese exceptionalism. I have an American friend who speaks Japanese well, but complains by saying: "Why don't

Japanese just treat me like a human being." She feels offended that people react to her as a foreigner.

On the other hand, I've heard Japanese in the US complain of the opposite—that Americans just assume that everyone is like them, and prefer to ignore difference. Guests will be shown the refrigerator and told: "Help yourself!". In Japan, for better and worse, guests and outsiders get special treatment, not equal treatment.

In the West we grow up hearing this message that we're alike, it's a Christian message — in the eyes of God we're all the same. And a democratic message — that each of us is an individual member of society.

Well, in many Asians societies people grow up feeling part of a larger whole, "We are who we are, and you are who you are." So, I don't disagree with Richard Lewis's statement that Japanese divide the world into outsiders and insiders. We do need to recognize, however, that our desire to be treated "equally" may be a result of our own cultural conditioning.

I sometimes say that the first important intercultural insight is that people everywhere are similar. The second important insight is that people around the world are profoundly different from each other. The tension between these two

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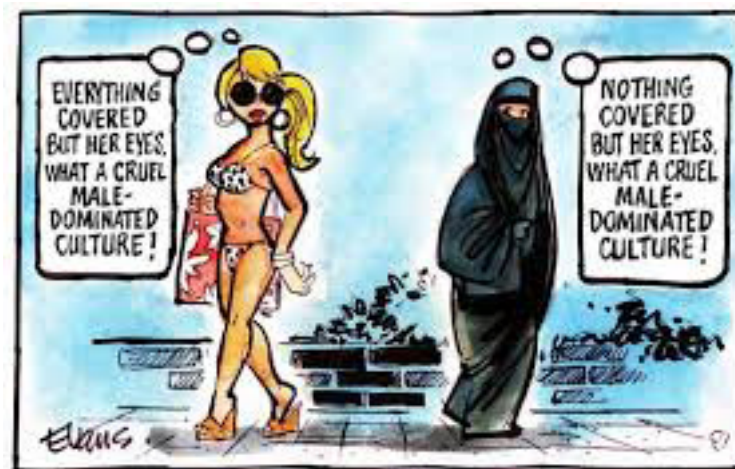
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Joseph Shaules

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Ethnocentrism is natural; it's part of our evolutionary biology.



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contradictory truths is what drives intercultural learning.

One last question: how do you see the future of SIETAR?

In the long term, I am optimistic about the future of SIETAR and intercultural living. At the moment, however, we are facing huge challenges—political chaos, civil war, migration crises, resurgent nationalism, a rejection of multiculturalism. We at SIETAR are the group of professionals that should understand what's going on. Perhaps these huge social changes have caught us off guard. There should be intercultural specialists being interviewed on TV about these issues. But our professional profile is low and it's still a niche profession.

I find a lot of focus on competencies and outcomes, and a tendency to think of intercultural work in terms of products to sell and efficiencies to create. That's all good, but we need to keep our eye on some of these deeper issues.

Building diversity requires a lot of on-going contact—which is demanding, or even threatening. If intercultural professionals are associated with a naïve, feel-good view of multiculturalism, we will be discredited. Marine Le Pen, the Brexit, Donald Trump — their message is a repudiation of feel-good multiculturalism. Culture runs deep and cross-cultural understanding is difficult to achieve.

We mustn't mix up our commitment to social justice with

moralism. There is a danger of feeling morally superior when faced with intolerance. But ethnocentrism is natural, as is our tendency to divide the world into us and them. It cuts to the core of our evolutionary psychology.

My research into cross-cultural adjustment has led me to believe that most people are tolerant—until they have to change something about themselves. Then things get much harder. It's a wonderful time to be an interculturalist. We are facing big challenges, but in crisis there is opportunity. There has never been a more exciting time to do the work that we do.

Oh, one more thing. I know that the Japan Intercultural Institute offers workshops. But that's in Tokyo! Any current plans for training or professional development outside of Japan?

I'm collaborating with Matthieu Kollig and Yvonne van der Pol on a train-the-trainer workshop in Germany in February of 2018. We'll look at some of these new paradigms of culture and mind, and how it can be integrated into intercultural work. Matthieu and Yvonne have been very active in applying these insights in the European training context. We will be using a blended learning format and hoping to build community. In October, I am hoping to present at SIETAR USA—being held in my hometown of San Diego! Next week, I'll be in Korea presenting on deep language and culture learning. I hope I'll bump into you somewhere, Patrick, or you can come see me in Tokyo!

Interviewed by Patrick Schmidt

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Excerpt from the upcoming book, "Transformation and Emergence: A Developmental Model of Linguaculture Learning"

Contrasting views of globalization

by Joseph Shaules

Between 1965 and 1972, a remarkable exchange of letters took place between two visionaries of global living—Marshall McLuhan and Edward Hall. McLuhan, a media theorist, is remembered today for inventing the term global village, and for predicting the World Wide Web 30 years before it was invented. Hall was an anthropologist and foundational thinker in the field of intercultural communication. He is remembered for pioneering work in the area of unconscious culture, and concepts such as high and low context communication. Both men recognized early on that communication technology and globalized media were transforming society and the people in it. They were deeply interested in the psychological impact of increased intercultural contact, and in particular how people develop a more global mindset. In a series of 133 letters, they explored the implications of what we now call globalization—sharing ideas, asking probing questions, and influencing each other's work.

Both McLuhan and Hall realized that globalized communication has profound, potentially transformational psychological and social consequences. They had, however, contrasting viewpoints about the psychological implications of increased intercultural contact. McLuhan had a universalistic bent and was something of a technological determinist. He felt that communication technology—such as writing systems, the printing press and electronic media—has a profound affect on human cognitive processes, and thus on society. McLu-



Christmas Peace On Earth clipart

han believed that communication technology was leading humanity towards a more global consciousness. He felt that electronic media would lead to an evolution of the mind into a "noosphere"—a collective realm of human thought analogous to the earth's atmosphere. He saw a future world of increased unity and shared perception—albeit at the cost of decreased individualism—as our mental worlds increasingly melded into a global shared reality.

Hall, in contrast, was less deterministic about the potential for a more global consciousness. He was interested in how culture shapes our thinking, communication and values in unconscious ways, and he challenged McLuhan to take cultural difference into account when contemplating the psychological impact of communication technology. Whereas McLuhan saw global consciousness largely as a by-product of technological change, Hall saw such a transformation as a highly individualized process—one that depended very much on the psychology of each person. Furthermore, he believed that humanity faces an enormous barrier to greater intercultural understanding—unconscious cultural conditioning. In Hall's view, cross-cultural understanding can only happen through a difficult inner process of self-discovery, through which we gradually gain an awareness of the hidden programming of our own mind. He saw this as a profound transformation—one that required more than good will, a philosophy of tolerance, or superficial intercultural contact.

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According to Edward Hall, increased contact does not automatically create mutual understanding, as exemplified when Britain voted to leave the EU.



the.extrader.com

Nearly a half-century after their exchange, the views of both of these visionary thinkers have proved prescient. Communication technology has, as McLuhan predicted, ushered in an era of borderless virtual communities and unprecedented interconnectedness. Globalization often is a unifying force, and we now live in a more “flat” world with an increasingly interconnected economy. This contributes to what social critic Jeremy Rifkin describes as an expanding circle of empathy, in which we concern ourselves with the well-being of an ever-wider portion of humanity. For increasing numbers of people, multiculturalism and greater acceptance of diversity is the norm. More people are thinking of themselves as global citizens, with an identity that transcends any single cultural community. In many ways, globalization is leading to transformative change that is making many of us more “world wise”.

At the same time, a more globalized community does not always create mutual understanding. The 21st century has been plagued by resurgent nativism, the politics of intolerance, terrorism and social instability. Religious and social conflict in West Asia has increased, with civil wars, extremism, social collapse, and a subsequent flood of immigrants into Europe. The European Union, long considered a symbol of both unity and diversity, has found itself in crisis. There has been a backlash against notions of inclusivity, with increased nationalism evident in the British vote to exit from the EU; the election of Donald Trump in the United States; and

the rise of more exclusionist political parties within Europe. In Asia, the Philippines elected a bellicose nationalist president, and Japanese political leaders are steering the country away from its peace constitution. China has become more strident regarding territorial disputes its neighbors. These trends hint that for hundreds of millions—perhaps billions—of people, increased intercultural understanding and collaboration is not the primary by-product of McLuhan’s global village.

Hall would not be surprised. He understood that increased contact does not automatically create mutual understanding, since our values, cultural identities and worldview are deeply rooted in the unconscious mind. The idea that globalization would provoke conflict rooted in unconscious forms of social identity has also been articulated, notably, by Samuel Huntington, who argued that in the 21st century the primary axis of conflict in our globalized world would continue to be cultural, and involve a “clash of civilizations”. Hall would likely be sympathetic to this view, and see current trends as evidence that the currents of cross-cultural misunderstanding run deep, and cannot be easily reshaped simply by communication technology. As Hall put it, “culturally based paradigms put obstacles in the path to understanding because culture equips each of us with built-in blinders, hidden and unstated assumptions that control our thoughts and block the unraveling of cultural processes.” Hall compared our cultural conditioning to the invisible currents of the jet stream—powerfully shaping our experience of the world.

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Reporter's Sketchbook ...an American in Montreal

Read all about it!

by Dan MacLeod

When I was eight years old, my second-grade teacher came to see my mother to suggest I skip a grade. They sat at our kitchen table drinking coffee and I was stuck waiting, I couldn't go out and play. Miss Kadish gave me a really big sheet of paper and told me to turn it into the front page of the "Boston Globe".

I knew what she meant, I could see it: the masthead across the top, then a headline with a big photo on the right and two columns of print on the left; a couple of smaller headlines below, smaller photos and columns of print; a big square in the bottom right corner with the weather forecast and a drawing of the sun or clouds or rain. This was a great project, I'd draw squares for photos and write funny headlines, I could even put make it snow in May!

What I didn't want to do was write the text. I said, kind of hopeful, "I just do squiggles for the articles, like in cartoons?" And she said, "No, of course not." So I had to write beginnings of actual stories under each headline, a lot more work.

To me, what was important was big block letters across the top and the way the front page looked as a whole: lay-out and headline-writing, the fun parts. Which I'd do 14 years later as editor of the *Université de Moncton* student paper.

...

In 5th Grade, when I was 11, Miss Carroll had us do a



"Jacques, a Fur Trapper"

real newspaper. I wrote the editorial, on our overcrowded high school and where to build the new one; it was what everybody in town was talking about. I said the public golf course should give up 9 of its 18 holes.

My Italian-immigrant grandfather and uncle both played there — their main reward for working hard all week for not much money — but I wasn't swayed by personal relationships. Public school was more important for the public good than public golf. School affected everybody, golfers were a tiny sliver of the population. I was adamant.

I liked that a lot, getting to write whatever I wanted without having to do the work of reporting. It was like writing headlines: *sizzle*, the best part of the steak.

At the same time, I read the paper every day. Three of them, in fact; I sold them off a wagon at the train station for two hours every morning. A tabloid for illiterates, a conservative paper for businessmen and a real paper, with feature stories and investigative reporting. I glanced at the headlines of the first two each day, then read the "Globe".

And I liked writing. Inventing things, seeing them in my mind, was exciting. My first story — "Jacques, a Fur Trapper" — was about a guy on snowshoes in the frozen Que-

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Read all about it!

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From the “Boston Globe”...



bec woods. But I didn't think writing about city council meetings would be very exciting.

...

My last year in high school I wrote a column on state student government (I was vice-chairman of legislation), basically an explanation of Education bills at the State House. It was worth doing but not really fun. Reporting was what was fun and I did a lot. A highpoint was my George Harrison concert critique — an English teacher used it as a model and assigned her class critiques of their own. On the other hand, when I interviewed a spokesman for the John Birch Society (a national right-wing group) and my interviewee asked me where Marx and Engels were from, I said “Russia?”

Two years later, I wrote a letter to the “Globe” from Canada, where I now lived, proposing a story on a bilingual New Brunswick high school splitting into separate French and English ones. I got a letter back saying I should visit Crocker Snow the next time I came home for a visit.

Claudette and I hitch-hiked down and I brought her with me when I went to see Mr. Snow. I figured he was a junior editor who'd invite me to write “on-spec”, meaning you do the work and maybe they don't buy it. I was 20 and she was 18 and I thought of it like a field trip for her.

Mr. Snow turned out to be the Foreign and National Editor. He was amused by us, went out of his way to be friendly to Claudette. Amazingly, he even got her to talk. She spoke very little English and was intimidated to begin with; she'd never been in a big city before and the “Globe” building itself was as big as the paper mill back home in Dalhousie, population 6,700.

I'd told him I was putting myself through school as a musician and he asked her if I was good. “His songs, yes! Really really good! But the *performance sur scène?*” She wiggled her hand *comme ça, comme ça* and made a sound like, “eehnn...” And she and Mr. Snow shared a laugh at my expense.

He was impressed I'd gone to Canada to play Junior hockey, he'd played at Harvard. Also that I was going to university in French. He said, “Did you bring something you wrote?”

Of course I had. I handed over my first (unsuccessful) attempt at a magazine piece: 10,000 words, 42 typewritten pages. He glanced at the title page, a one-paragraph overview, nodded, handed back the stack of paper. “The writing's fine. Give me 1000 words.”

A few months later I published my first piece for mon-

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Read all about it!

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Journalism: a chance to see the planet

ey, my first professional piece, on the op-ed page of the “Globe”, the paper I’d sat on on my wagon ten years earlier. And Snow made me keep in touch, I saw him every Christmas when I visited my family. He always asked about “the writing”, always added, “Not the music, that doesn’t interest me, just the journalism.”

By then he’d founded his own paper, a pre-Internet attempt at global communication. The *WorldPaper* was a monthly broadsheet magazine published as an insert in papers in over two-dozen countries on five continents. The people doing the writing were from those countries — a sort of United Nations of associate editors and reporters— and the paper was published simultaneously in English, Spanish, French, Russian, Arabic and Chinese.

Eighteen years after we first met, I’d be writing for him again, for readers in Moscow, Cairo, Calcutta, Tokyo, Beijing. It was my last real gig in the business, associate editor for North America. In between, I spent most of fourteen years with *Radio-Canada/CBC* in both radio and television, published with a dozen papers in both French and English, and visited two-dozen countries.

...

Incredibly enough, it’s only now, writing this goodbye-to-journalism piece, that it occurs to me...I started at the



“Globe” and ended at “The WorldPaper”. I mean, it literally just dawned on me at the end of the last paragraph. Huh.

Then again, it makes perfect sense because journalism’s a kind of “Gulliver’s Travels” for someone like me, a chance to see the planet. And, for readers, a chance to see the world in words. Adventure combined with human outreach, like “Star Trek” except across oceans.

People are endlessly interested in other people, the stranger the better. We go to exotic restaurants, take foreign vacations, watch movies, read books. But that’s not why we read the paper anymore. People want to see their own beliefs comforted these days, via newspaper, website, radio, tv.

It’s all sizzle, all the time — headlines and noise. Now, even if you write the text, it’s like squiggles anyway, filler.

The world has proven to be a big, complicated, violent place; its problems, endless and impossible. We look inward to where we feel safe and, especially, backward, to when we *felt* safe.

We also look to books and fairy tales, stories all the more real for being made up. In this space, starting in September, I’ll be writing stories.

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The Making of Donald Trump's Mind

by Patrick Schmidt



Back in the “Golden ’fifties”, the world was in awe of the American Way of Life. Elvis Presley, the Fleetwood Cadillac and “from dishwasher to millionaire” all reflected the culture. Fulfilling desires was a perfect response to life’s challenges and the formula quickly spread around the world.

But this perception has changed radically since Trump’s election. The U.S. is no more seen as a model for the rest of the world, with Donald Trump’s shallow intellect, public bullying, disdain for facts, and nihilistic decision-making in the service of an us-against-them celebration of “America First”.

“America First” means only a certain America. Ironically, it resembles the media images alluded to above — TV from 50 years ago. Blacks, Latinos, Jews, Muslims, immigrants of any kind are virtually invisible, as are homosexuals and anyone else seen as too different to fit in (hippies, socialists, atheists, the handicapped).

Donald Trump personifies a sizable segment of “Middle America”, people who avoid complicated questions, prefer simple answers and some form of instant gratification. This gradually withers the ability to think beyond an elementary — and subjective — worldview. Hence, the preference to bomb the hell out of anybody who doesn’t agree with us rather than spending time reconciling complex problems.

But what have been the cultural factors that created such a self-absorbed, ignorant wannabe showman and allowed him to get to the number one position in American society?

Donald Trump, like myself, learned early that what made the country unique was that it was the “land of the free”. Citizens were free to be and do what they wanted — it was a nation of unlimited opportunities, a beacon for people all over the world, which rebelled against the traditions of the Old World and greeted new ideas with enthusiasm.

One in particular was Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s philosophy that if man decided to believe in the good of others, society would become highly efficient and dynamic because trusting people would eliminate the time-consuming process of doubting and judging. It was exactly what America needed to develop itself; when building a nation, decisions have to be made quickly. “Time is money.”

This simplistic notion of life ignores complexity and nuance and has created the typical American trait of being unsentimental, inherent in a people wishing to break away from the past and march into the unknown. It also paved the way to a certain superficiality in human relations, which magnified itself with increased material prosperity.

Rich natural resources, Yankee ingenuity and shrewdness,

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The Making of ...

— continued

"The Apprentice" provides us a look at Donald Trump's idea of reality.



felipesantiago.es

few real historical tragedies, and militant individualism, all in the "pursuit of happiness". It's no wonder America transformed itself into the most powerful and influential country in the world. The belief that anyone could evolve from "rags to riches" allowed millions of poor immigrants to move up the social ladder. These were the seeds that gave birth to the "happy ending" myth.

This belief, however, sends the childish message that good guys always win and bad guys lose. That's all fine and dandy for a 10-year-old but when a complicated problem arises, Americans often refuse to see it from every aspect. This is the result of always wanting to believe in the inherent good of everything. When TV was introduced in the 50s, it reinforced this mindset.

By the time Trump hit television in 2004 with his ersatz "reality show", things were far more cynical. TV had long been used to transform complex issues into superficial images but "The Apprentice" went one step further. It was a Roman circus spectacle for peasants in which a series of victims are humiliated ("You're fired!") over the course of a season before one winner is crowned...and given a job. Trump's audience saw the process like a sports contest, mirroring a simple-minded attitude toward life.

Now that he's in the White House, Trump prefers watching

cable TV to reading government reports and meeting with advisers. Not only does he not read newspapers, he gets most of his worldview from Fox News reports, which pander to the people who voted for him.

But how has this numbness to real survival issues come about? Excessive material wealth, technology and consumerism may provide a clue.

At the end of WW II, the U.S. found itself in a unique position in the world — unlike Europe and Asia, its massive production facilities were virtually untouched. It converted its manufacturing potential into peace-time goods and catapulted the country into a consumer paradise of unbelievable dimensions.

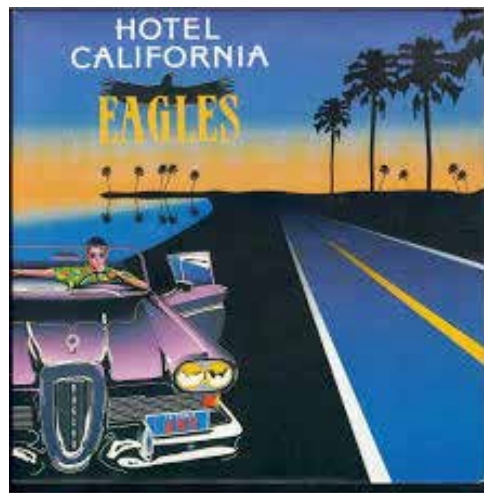
Add to this the technological revolution, which has profoundly altered our ways of feeling and thinking. Take the pocket calculator, for example. At first glance, it saves an enormous amount of time and frees you from laborious mental calculations. What we forget is that it leads us one step further toward non-involvement.

The long-term consequences of passively consuming technological goodies (from TV to the iPad) have slowly resulted in a couch-potato lifestyle, exemplified by Homer, star of "The Simpsons".

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The Making of ... — continued

The Eagles' worldwide hit describes a consumer society gone amok.



Worship for both consumerism and technology creates insecurity by sheltering us from real-life experiences. We notice far too late that our thinking and judgment have gradually diminished. This is clearly noticeable when you meet a person who exclaims “wow” as a reflex but can’t explain why. One gets the feeling that this person doesn’t want to pursue the thought any further and is perhaps unable to communicate in any real depth. A high degree of non-involvement often generates a half-developed personality.

Trump’s rallies, both before his election and since, regularly feature primal chanting and barely-disguised racist themes. Trump’s own speech patterns are similar, as well as the lack of detailed thought. As Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote, “The limits of my language are the limits of my world.”

In the early ‘70s, I already sensed the symptoms of a non-involved lifestyle. Growing up in the southern California, I experienced the era of “sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll”, pushed to the extreme. California was engrossed with hedonic “wow” pleasures and far more advanced in material consumerism than the rest of the country.

The Eagles’ song “Hotel California” articulates this perfectly. I’m not saying I didn’t enjoy it, but I knew a society couldn’t last long if its highest goal was only that of continuous pleasure.

Those were the conditions when I left the country at 23 and ended up in Stuttgart by sheer accident. It was such a sharp human contrast — Germans were still recovering from the horrors of WW II and displaying unusually sincere feelings. Human interactions were more real and done with the goal of the betterment of the community. It was like living in the States in the late 1930s as the country was coming out of the Great Depression.

Two generations later, Germany and most other western European countries enjoy a high standard of living but are showing signs of social fatigue, though not to the extent that we see in the U.S.

Each generation of humans has to face circumstances not of its own choosing, where character is measured and spirit is tested. In the last 70 years, the American mindset has embraced an almost magical consumer lifestyle. Many people live a make-believe existence, where real crises can be denied and reality is replaced by a virtual world of memes, tweets, Facebook.

In a fragmented, attention-challenged America, Donald Trump has now become, if not the norm, the President.

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Feedback in a German-American setting

by John Magee

ACT 1 - Aaron and Martin

Aaron, an American, is a first-rate engineer and manager. Sent to Germany on a three-year delegation, Aaron's job was to increase technical knowledge transfer, integrate critical processes, and to build a cross-Atlantic organization based on transparency and trust. A very tall order for the particular organization he worked in.

After the first year it was time for his structured feedback discussion with his German boss, Martin. The employer, a German multinational, has a systematic and detailed approach to such evaluations. They influence to a significant degree compensation and further career path.

Central to its effectiveness is self-evaluation. Team-members measure themselves against the goals they formulated a year prior together with their team-lead. Aaron is focused, understated, not one to put himself front and center.

ACT 2 - In Agreement: B+

From Aaron's perspective, the year has gone quite well, surprisingly so. A few days before the feedback discussion he reflected on his performance. Aaron believes to have an accurate assessment of where he has performed well and less well. He tends to be overly self-critical.

Martin, a German, a few years older than Aaron, is also a



first-rate engineer and manager. Very grateful to have Aaron in his team, Martin saw this as a unique opportunity to make difficult, but necessary, changes.

A year before they had met and set down ambitious goals. From Martin's point of view the year has gone very well. With few exceptions, and those in less critical areas, Aaron has more than met the goals defined. Martin is looking forward to an even better second year for Aaron and the organization.

ACT 3 - "I'm fired!"

They meet for the discussion. Aaron is quiet, listening carefully, respectful of Martin as a fellow engineer and as his superior. Aaron is also very much looking forward to a meeting-of-the-minds on his performance over the last year, and to discussing the goals they want to reach in the upcoming year. The same goes for Martin.

The discussion does not go as expected, however. Neither from Martin's point of view, nor from Aaron's. On the contrary. Aaron departs the meeting confused, almost shocked, in a bit of a daze. "I'll be fired within six months!", he thought to himself. "How could I have been so wrong in my self-assessment?"

It took several days for Aaron to steady himself. Self-doubt had dominated his thoughts and emotions. Was he out of touch with reality? Did he misunderstand what the goals

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Feedback...

— continued

German feedback concentrates more on improving weaknesses than giving praise.



for the year were? How could he have so grossly misread the situation? Were the achievements over the last twelve months average, mediocre or worse?

ACT 4 - German Feedback Logic

Martin had focused almost exclusively on Aaron's weaknesses. There weren't many, but Martin managed to find some. There was so little talk about the positives, about the progress made. True. But why waste time on what works, on what has worked very well? Martin had voiced his satisfaction very early on in the conversation. Aaron had not picked up on it. "You've done very good work, Aaron. No goal has gone unmet. You're a strong member of my team."

Any German in the room, especially those who know Martin, would have been in agreement. Aaron got a "B+" for the year, a high grade in Germany, where "nobody can be considered perfect", where "there is always room for improvement", where an A is truly seldom, especially from Martin.

Martin then proceeded to focus on how Aaron can go from B+ to A-, how he can steadily, incrementally, systematically address and improve on those areas, not many, where he can stretch even further. Aaron felt that he was nitpicking, being small-minded. Untypical for Martin.

Martin left the meeting a bit surprised, also. Aaron seemed

distracted, not fully engaged. When it came to formulating the coming year's goals, Aaron had little to contribute. Martin sensed that something was wrong and decided to schedule another meeting in a week to discuss the goals.

"Strange. That's not the Aaron I know and respect", though Martin. Personal problems? Family? Homesick? Lousy winter weather in Germany getting to him? Martin just couldn't figure it out. "Such an excellent engineer and manager of people!"

ACT 5 - Off Balance

All of these thoughts and sentiments remained hidden from Aaron, however. And his reactions hidden from Martin. Although they continued to work well together over the next two years, they were never again on the same wavelength.

Twice more they would have these formal discussions, as well as dozens and dozens of communications in which informal feedback was given and received. Aaron always felt a bit off balance with Martin.

Martin sensed it, but could not quite articulate it, much less address it. They were successful together. And that was recognized by senior management. But, they could have gone far higher.

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Feedback...

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In a business context, Americans and Germans have diametrically opposing views on criticism.



The differences briefly

Feedback, both formal (performance reviews) and informal, is complex, however. Its underlying assumptions, intentions and signals must be understood for feedback to be truly effective. Critical is that both sides first understand the differences.

Personal

Germans separate the personal from the professional. Feedback addresses strictly performance. It is given in a neutral and unemotional way. Feedback, whether positive or negative, is not personal.

Americans link the personal with the professional. Feedback addresses primarily performance, but considers how it will be received. Feedback on one's work is feedback on that individual. It is by definition personal.

Praise

Positive thinking in the German business context is not unimportant. Germans differentiate more strictly, however, between a realistic "can-do" attitude and overly optimistic "naïve actionism".

Americans see themselves as positive thinkers, motivators, self-motivators. It is a sign of leadership to seek reasons to praise. In fact, praise is most instrumental when a team is struggling, experiencing defeat and self-doubt.

Critique

Critique is effective only if it is combined with concrete measures for improving the performance of an individual team member. From the German point of view, improved performance is linked directly to lowering the amount of avoidable errors.

However, reducing mistakes is rarely a goal in and of itself in the American business culture. For the goal is to take optimal advantage of opportunities.

Discretion

Sensitive feedback discussions in the German business context are done in one-to-one talks. There are situations, however, when Germans openly criticize a team member in the presence of their colleagues. In fact, open criticism can be imperative in order to get issues "up on the table."

Sensitive feedback discussions in the U.S. business context are always done in one-to-one talks. Discretion is highly important, especially when the feedback is negative. There is very low tolerance for open criticism of team members in the presence of their colleagues.

John Magee is the founder and director of Cultural Influences. He facilitates understanding of differences and cross-border collaboration, especially between the U.S. and Germany. More information on his work at <http://cultureinfluences.com/en/>

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Book Review

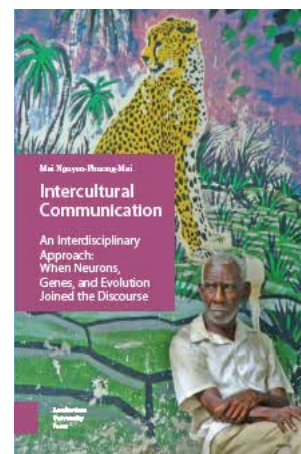
Intercultural Communications

An Interdisciplinary Approach: When Neurons, Genes, and Evolution Joined the Discourse

By Mai Nguyen-Phuong-Mai
Amsterdam University Press, 280 pages
U.S. \$ 43

Courage is perhaps the word that quickest comes to mind when I reflect on the work and activities of Nguyen-Phuong-Mai. Having made her way through the Arab world, a woman alone on a wandering sabbatical, she now undertakes a no less courageous attempt at refreshing our intercultural perspectives and understanding in the light of contemporary research and discoveries in genetics, neuroscience, and human development. She provides up-to-date, readable Aha's for professionals and students alike as she reveals culture with fresh holistic insights in the make-up and interaction of individuals and their communities.

This is a hefty volume but you don't notice its weight because it is so attractively written, avoiding multisyllabic academic textbook jargon while closely re-examining the various areas of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that belong to developing cultural competence. From a cursory view of the topics, one might be tempted to say, "same old, same old", but this is not the case, as the actual treatment is refreshed in the light cast on each subject "when neurons, genes, and evolution join the discourse." Our perception of how community, time, hierarchy, language, etiquette, kinesics, and contexts function are deepened by this joining. We learn to better to sort out our differences and commonalities while recognizing both flexibility for cultural acquisition as well as the dynamics that may limit our adaptation to the cultures we encounter. The text is punctuated with real life images, visually supporting the textual commentary.



Section 4 is titled "Non-verbal Communication: How you Make Them Feel." I object to this line, and don't think I alone hold the pet peeve of seeing statements like, "You make me feel...", so common in diversity work, implying that other's feelings are the results of our words and behaviors. True, others react to what they see us do and say, however, the same automatic mechanisms at work here are discussed in the section on bias in this book. What others see us saying doing and how we look may trigger the knee-jerk reactions in their perceptual frameworks, but one of the most important points of this book is that we are each ultimately responsible for how we choose to frame our perceptions and release those emotions that belong to them in reaction to our experience of others – that is the whole point of what neuroscience is now telling us. You don't "make me feel...", "I make me feel...!" Tolerance is not just the acceptance of difference without giving offense, but also the ability to avoid taking offense. It is part of cultural competence to master our thoughts and feelings when we are on the receiving end of what is normally unintended discomfort caused by the words and behaviors of others.

Fresh air rustles through the leaves of the tree of culture as the pages turn. "Tree of culture" is not just this reviewer's purple patch, but a core model which the author uses to illustrate the organic development of culture from its roots to the green- ing of its leaves. Hopefully this book is a harbinger of a new springtime for the intercultural field.

Reviewed by George Simons

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Book Review

Don't Think of an Elephant!

Know Your Values and Frame the Debate

George Lakoff
Chelsea Green Publishing Co, 176 pages
Euro 14.95

George Lakoff has written and now updated what is a hand-book for progressives in the political sphere seeking to regain lost influence. But it is much more than that. Reading it as an interculturalist, interested in resources for enhancing cultural competence and practical steps for addressing issues of cultural conflict and collaboration, it surfaced for me from the outset in a different frame. It applies to how language shapes culture and culture changes language, with up-to-date perspectives provided by cognitive science and neuroscience.

First, I am attracted by the potential that the concept of “framing” offers for our work. Many intercultural and diversity interventions seem mired right now in limited and accusatory terminology such as “stereotyping” and “unconscious bias”, which produce “feel bad” impact.

This is not to deny potential benefit from some of the existing approaches, but, given the perspectives that Lakoff provides, these efforts could be a lot more effective by delving beneath the labels to examine the structure that frames them and identifying the discourse that nourishes them. “Framing” seems to me to be a far more functional and inclusionary “frame” for viewing the phenomena we work with intercultural transactions.

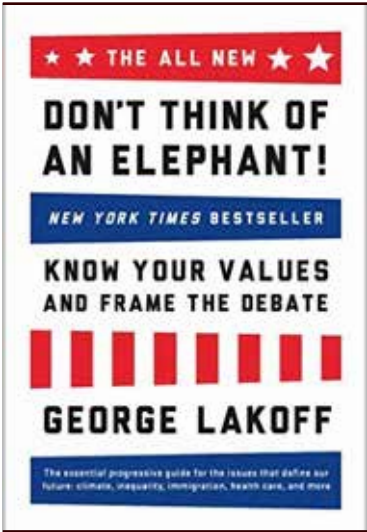
The book begins with the definition of “frames” as the “mental structures that shape the way we see the world” and the

recognition that, “What we call ‘common sense’ is made up of unconscious, automatic, effortless inferences that follow from our unconscious frames.”

The long-standing dichotomy between mind and matter, body and spirit has already been contested by many thinkers, but Lakoff is even more explicit in asserting that, “Our understanding of the world is part of the world – a physical part of the world. Our conceptual framings exist in the physical neural circuitry in our brains...” “The world reflects our understandings through our actions, and understandings reflect the world shaped by the frame-informed actions of ourselves and others.” These few lines give clear meaning to what we call culture, cultures, and acculturation, as ongoing processes shaping ourselves and our worlds. Lakoff calls this process of exchange “reflexivity”.

Language plays a key role in stimulating the frames we and others use. Perhaps hardest to swallow and digest is Lakoff’s assertion that speaking the other’s language, using their words, strengthens what we feel to be their “wrong” frames and metaphors, and it reinforces the others rigidity in their position, rather than increasing our capacity to connect in ways that reduce conflict and abet change.

Given this, Lakoff provides numerous solid approaches to productive debate and suggests productive paths for manag-



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Don't Think of...

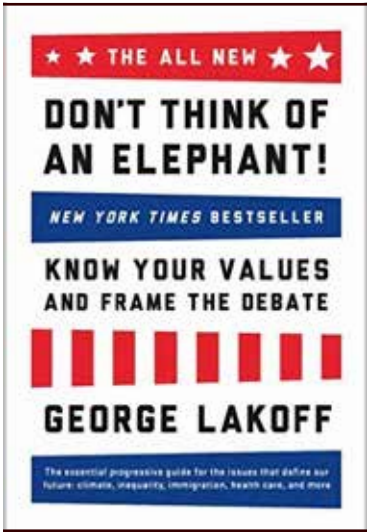
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ing what we would frame as cultural conflict. Coming to an understanding of each other's frames and speaking in ways that connect and expand, we are likely to also face the task of "framing the unframed", of recognizing and identifying the "elephants in the room" for which language, words and metaphors, are yet unshaped.

Lakoff's description of personal identity includes a moral sense, built into the neural circuitry of our brains, determining who we think we are, what we think is right, and leading to our behavioral choices. The greater part of this book is focused on examining the frames of conservatives and progressives in US national politics and its debates surrounding current flaming issues.

Yet, its process has wider applicability for how language and its adoption on either side bespeaks the frames that conflicting parties use in many other areas of life, and how influential dialogue might take place. The distances between us are easier to bridge, in many cases, if we are, or are dealing with what Lakoff describes as biconceptuals, bearing each other's frames within us, though they may not function as developed or dominant in most contexts.

The frames that we use tend to tell us "what causes what", but frequently they fail to perceive larger systemic causation, in which many elements interact to produce what we



too easily attribute to a single cause or behavior. While many interculturalists are inclined to eschew politics with a preference for conflict avoidance, Lakoff makes it clear that both morality and personal identity make some position of political engagement inevitable.

We must ask ourselves and each other about how to identify the frames we use, what they contain, and where they lead. "Frame" in my frame of reference elicits the image of a picture frame—my mind proffers not just words in response to the phenomena I experience, but images, betimes pleasing, betimes threatening, often not just a snapshot but a video.

My mind urges me to accept the sequence of events and consequences dictated by the storyboard of the frame. Future intercultural work may include ways to bring out and share what our frames contain. This poses a challenge— it asks enormous trust if we dare to share at this level with each other. It brings us, as it did in the 1970s, to the borderline between therapy and training, which may elicit the resistance that it did in the heyday of the human potential movement.

In conclusion, this book challenges me as an interculturalist to find new ways to explore and work with the frames we are shaped by and shape our world with both those we readily recognize as well as those we have yet to recognize and engage with.

Reviewed by George Simons

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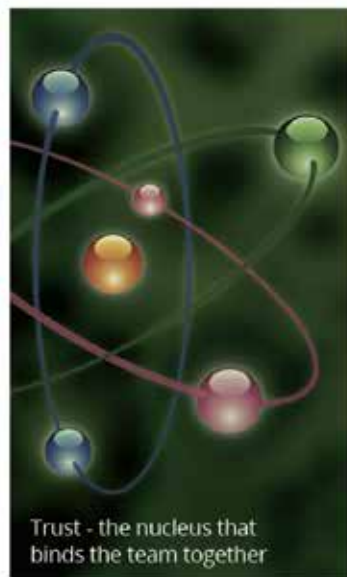
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