RITES OF PASSAGE ACROSS CULTURES*

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Abstract

The transition from one culture into another is a painful and disorienting process known as **cultural shock.** After a period of acculturation, the return to one's original culture is also a traumatic experience known as **re-entry shock.** These cultural rites of passage are investigated within the theoretical framework of the sociology of knowledge and it is argued that this process has significant parallels with research of Mary Douglas on taboos, Victor Turner on cultural liminality, Leon Festinger on Cognitive Dissonance, Erving Goffman on interaction ritual, Alexander Lowen on the loss of self, and Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann on reality maintenance.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of **Culture Shock** has been frequently experienced by international travelers who have left their own metropolis only to become engulfed by their new host cultures (Bock 1970). This new experiential encounters with a substantially different culture have naturally reverberated the foundations of their own epistemological framework resulting in a state of cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1967). Whether or not they really understood the new cultures they encountered is still a matter of debate (Bock 1970: ix), however, it is patently obvious that these victims of cultural shock will never view their own country and its values in the same way. They have stepped over a boundary, a cultural liminality (Turner 1974: 231-270).[1] For those who survived the experience of culture shock, the trauma is not over. Upon their return home after a period of acculturation overseas, they are provided with a new experience known as **re-entry**

shock. They find that the country they had a few years ago is no longer the same. It has changed and so have they.

The concept of culture shock is significant for those who are involved with bicultural communities. It provides insight into the myriad of role conflicts among immigrants, emigrants, foreign students, foreign managers, migrant workers, and other travelers to foreign lands. Many authors have addressed this phenomenon tangentially, but have never really focused on the structure of culture shock itself. They have not noted the components involved in the rites of passage from one social reality to another. Hence, Melendy (1972) discusses the immigration of Chinese and Japanese to the United States, but does not provide insight into the structural conflicts which are the source of the cognitive dissonance facing the immigrants. Similarly, Petersen (1971) documents how many Japanese encounter tensions in a new culture in an unfamiliar land, but he does not demonstrate the structural basis for such conflicts. Lebra and Lebra (1974) also discuss the social and psychological reassessments and linguistic traumas which both Japanese and Americans find in each others host cultures, but they do not identify these factors in their rich categorization of the data into a cross-cultural theory of cognitive dissonance (1974). The same limitation can be found in elaborations of the Korean experience by Chung (1971), or of the Chinese experience related by Hsu (1972). Consequently, the enlightening cross cultural details of these rites of passage are not the focus of this essay, for it is concerned mainly with the structures themselves within the context of a model of the social psychology of culture.

An interesting and informative approach to culture shock can be found in the seminal work of Arnold Van Gennep (1960). In his study of the rites of passage, for example, he has noted that such changes undergo three major shifts: separation (**séparation**), transition (**marge**) and incorporation (**agrégation**). It should be noted that when Van Gennep initiated his investigation of the rites of passage, he was in no way limited to cultural shifts. His classification, for example, encompassed a wide range of related phenomena such as territorial rites, pregnancy and childbirth, initiation rites, betrothal and marriage, funerals, and a sundry of related shifts of dissonance. In the context of this essay, however, the rites of passage is concerned only with the process of separation from one's mother culture, with a transition into a host society, and the eventual acculturation and incorporation into the new host culture.

Since many scholars who investigate the rites of passage employ basic cosmological concepts drawn from classical studies which underly Western thinking, consequently it is important to note how Greeks epistemologists dealt with these concepts in their literature. Cornford (1937), for example, has noted that they were enamored of a sacrosanct and ordered reality which they called the **kosmos**. They juxtaposed this by way of contrast to a disordered reality which

they feared and knew as **chaos**. When the phenomenon of culture shock is viewed in terms of Ban Gennep's model of the rites of passage, this is tantamount to being separated from the cosmos of the old culture and being thrust into chaos during the transition. The conflict is intensified when an attempt is made to integrate and accommodate oneself into the new host cosmos. However, the situational focus for the Greeks was more teleological. They were not concerned with the separation and concentrated on the process of integration. The only cosmos was the status quo. Nothing else mattered. As a matter of fact, they were highly intolerant of anyone who did not culturally belong. Consequently, they were only interested in the status quo, in the essence of being (**ousia**) and not in the process or the transition of becoming (**genesis).** This distinction is important because some scholars, such as Victor Turner (1974) argue that the transition from one culture to another is a **social drama** which is always in the state of becoming, it is never completed and involved four stages of resolution.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

The works of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1967) provide an informative aspect of the phenomenon of cultural shift. They have argued, for example, that what a culture considers to be real is, in essence, socially constructed. Obviously, what is real to a Chinese rice farmer differs from what is real to an American teenager. This is because they live in separate cultural words, participate in disparate social roles, desire disparate teleological quests, and entertain congeries of dissonant views on the importance of everyday living. Hence, the values that a society espouses are fully incorporated into the very roles of common everyday behavior (Goffman 1967). They are tacitly incorporated into the fabric of the mass communication, and into the political socialization of cultural agenda setting. Berger and Luckmann (1967) focus on the rituals which are required to a society to maintain this social construction. They note how rituals dominate as an instrument of **reality maintenance**. It is a device, they note, for maintaining the status quo and for legitimating it within the context of role behavior. What is significant about this sociology of knowledge framework is that is provides a detailed analysis of how cultures differ both psychologically and sociologically (De Vos 1975). Hence, a more definite study of culture shock would have to include such categories as status and role behavior, social and personal values, attitudes, concepts of power, guilt, death, religion, motivation and social change, marriage, self-identity, achievement, criminality, the sociology of deviance, vertical and horizontal social strata, adolescence and delinquency, minority status, self perception, socialization, role narcissism, etiology of suicide, the culture of love and hate, group consensus and harmony, reciprocity and asymmetry in social

relations, gift giving, infant behavior, attitudes towards work, dependency (emotional, psychological, economic), co-dependency, face work (person to person interaction rituals), psychotherapy, mental illness, marginality, etc. (cf. Lebra and Lebra 1975). These categories provide the actual parameters which are the sources of conflict across disparate reality constructions. They form an intrinsic part of the cultural infrastructures which are experienced as areas of tension across cultures. They provide the many ripples of doubt and confusion which have been globally termed culture shock. Unfortunately, the shock of dealing with a disparate culture is not a discrete event. It continues to enfold as new social and psychological experiences are encountered in the host culture. Hence, those who experience culture shock never really overcome it. They are not fully accepted into the host culture and they have not fully been deprogrammed of their native culture. They are in a state of cultural **Angst**. They live in the liminalities between both worlds. They belong because of a personal commitment and loyalty and not because of a total acceptance by the host culture.

The ethnomethodology of culture also provides some insight into the phenomenon of culture shock. Mehan and Wood (1975), for example, also argue that culture is socially constructed and that knowledge within a system is culturally distributed. However, their focus is on the fragility of the construct. For them, the root metaphors of a culture operate as incorrigible propositions, i.e., they are axiomatic beliefs that are never questioned much less tacitly acknowledged (Mehan and Wood 1975: 9). They argue that language plays a major role in the conspiracy of culture. For it is by means of language that a universe of discourse is created; and it is by means of language that the information created is used to reflexively confirm the dominant world views espoused. Language as a symbol system not only creates the universe of discourse it also uses this information to confirm and legitimate the system it has created. The system of knowledge is conspiratorial because it is made to be coherent and self containing. Disparities are not allowed, deviances are not accepted, and marginality is severely discouraged. The constructed reality reflects a coherent epistemology.

For one who is bicultural, this experience of fragile shifts in reality is very obvious. These foreigners in a new land are very much aware of how their native language and cultural mores may differ rather substantially in dealing with daily matters of living and common activities of social interaction. They are fully cognizant of how their roles and behavior can change radically in the drama of cross-cultural interaction. They acknowledge the myriad of cultural scripts of their host country and how they conflict or parallel their own interaction rituals (Goffman 1967).

CHAOS AS POLLUTION AND TABOO

The state of chaos was indeed an anathema for the Greeks, but there was no lucid discussion in Cornford's account (1937) as to why this should be the case. The answer to this problem can be found in the work of Mary Douglas (1966) and in her analysis of purity and danger. She has noted that cultures tend to categorize people, things, and events into polarities. An example of this pattern and in-group vs out-group behavior in American culture can be found in St. Clair (1985):

	In-Group	**Out-group**
Value Judgment	good	bad
	intelligent	dumb, cretin
	mentally alert	retarded, stupid
	humane. civilized	savage, animal
	religious	heathen, pagan
	citizen	alien, foreigner
	adult	boy, girl, child
	male	female

What is significant about this dichotomy is that the polarities must be maintained. Consider, for example, the last category of gender. One is either male or female. But if one overlaps or confuses this dichotomy, then the new category is a taboo, it "pollutes" the distinction as Mary Douglas (1966) would say. There is only a purity of distinctions and anything which threatens the dichotomy is a danger, a threat, an anathema. Something is either wet or dry, but when it is sticky, it becomes a group in and of itself and presents a form of deviance because of its destructive power, its ability to disrupt the purity of the polar categories. Hence, there is good, bad with regard to cultural values, and what is neither good nor bad is either evil or ugly.

Now, why should this work of Mary Douglas have significance for research on culture shock? The answer should be obvious. The transition from one culture to another is a shift from one form of purity to another and the transition period from one ordered social reality to the other is one of cultural chaos. It endangers the old and threatens the new. It is a world of double alienation. Hence, when an individual is in the state of acculturation, when this person's epistemological framework is shaken and his or her life is experienced **in media res**, then what this isolated individual encounters is a constant state of danger and anxiety. From the perspective of one's culture of origin and from the perspective of the new host culture, this individual who is in transition is a threat to both societies. Such a person is taboo. He or she is considered unwhole and polluted. For such an

individual is no longer of the old world and not yet of the new. Unfortunately the victim of culture shock is doubly alienated. It is for this reason that the Greeks did not like becoming (**génesis**), they abhorred transitions. And, it is for this reason that a person in transition is treated as a non-person. He is a threat to the in-group/out-group distinction. Even when a person has mastered the appropriate role behavior and is accepted as a person in the host society, this individual may not psychologically belong. Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb (1973) describe such a situation in their work on the hidden injuries of social class. They mention the case of an Irish American who belonged to the lower economic class. He drank with boys, swore, dressed down, and was a braggadocio. Later, he worked hard to raise his social status and went to school, dressed up and eventually obtained a good job at the bank as a teller. His co-workers liked him and treated him as another middle class individual. However, he felt that he did not belong. In his own mind, he had not arrived. He was alienated from his fellow workers. Nor could he go back to his old drinking group. He had changed. They did not like the new person he had become. He was isolated from them also. He was neither the old nor the new. He was in transition. He had not arrived. Many immigrants share this experience of being **in limbo**. They feel that they do not belong. They cannot go back and they have not yet arrived.

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

Research on cognitive dissonance by Leon Festinger (1967) provides another approach to culture shock which may be of interest theoretically. He made a study of how people act when their whole world view is threatened. In his research, he noted that there are three strategies commonly employed in coping with this problem.

Avoidance Reaction
Devaluation of those threatening you
Acceptance of the new world view

The first strategy of avoidance is merely an attempt to escape the imposed conflict of a different world view and retreat into the comfort of one's own belief system. In the case of bicultural dissonance, this is tantamount to the establishment of a cultural community which is isolated from the host society and becomes an haven of the old ways. It is called the ghetto by the Jews, the barrio by the Hispanics, and "Little Tokyo" by the Japanese living in Los Angeles. But it may also emerge as the Korean church, the Japanese Buddhist society, or the Mahjong Club. These are bold attempts to recreate the experiences of the past. They are efforts to bring back social and psychological familiarity into lives that are painfully dislodged and

disoriented between the values of the old culture and the demands of the new host society. It is a necessary coping mechanism, a transitional buffer between two worlds in conflict. It is a way of bringing back order and tranquillity during the rite of passage across culture. It is an escape from chaos.

Unfortunately, social, psychological and economic avoidance cannot always be maintained. There are many who have no choice but to interact with the host society. They must deal with them commercially, in terms of social services, or in the imparting of education. At this point, the use of devaluation comes into play. By the use of ethnic value judgements, the threat of the "enemy" is lessened. The feelings of anxiety are quelled, and the sense of one's old identity remains protected. Social distancing is accomplished.

But, such structured conflict cannot always be maintained, argues Festinger. As a consequence, the pressure from the host system will prevail. One acquiesces to the new system. With the passing of time, the threats are less cacophonous. And, finally what was once a system of stark contrasts is now seen as one of acceptable differences.

Although Festinger's work has some interesting implications for the study of culture shock, it is inadequate. Not all immigrants, for example, accept the new culture. Nor do all newcomers acquiesce in the same way. The range of transitions is myriad. Upon closer examination of this transition, what once appeared to be a dichotomous break between the old and the new is now reinterpreted. It is seen to be more of a continuum of accommodation and acculturation rather than an epistemic rupture into the new world view.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD CULTURE

The research of Kübler-Ross (1970) has been positively cited in the literature because of its implications for related traumatic situations known as **life shocks**. It has been noted, for example, that the four stages outlined by Kübler-Ross not only account for her research on death and dying, but it also explains major traumas such as divorce, loss of limbs, etc. Consequently, it is only natural to ask if this model can also account for the anxiety of culture shock. Philip Bock (1970) does not concur with this claim. He differentiates between culture shock and life shock and claims that they deal with different phenomena. His claim that the Kübler-Ross model of life shock cannot adequately account for culture shock may be correct, but his conclusion is based on the wrong reasons.

What are the stages of trauma that accounts for life shock? According to Kübler-Ross, they are four:

LIFE SHOCK TRAUMA

Denial and Isolation
Anger
Bargaining
Depression

POST TRAUMA
Acceptance

The first stage of denial and isolation is comparable to the first strategy of cognitive dissonance known as the avoidance reaction. Hence, this stage functions as a buffer and represents an initial defense. It is, in essence, the first stage of shock and presents no problem in this analysis.

The second stage is one of anger and has to do with the acceptance of the inevitability of the situation, in this case death. For Kübler-Ross, this includes a wide range of related emotions such as rage, resentment, and envy. As it will be argued later, this stage is understructured. For example, it can be argued that rage follows from a suppressed anger. Furthermore, it can also be argued that when the problem of hurt is not recognized, it subsequently turns into anger. Somewhere in the midst of these emerging emotions there is depression which she holds as her fourth stage, but it appears from the psychiatric literature that this stage comes much earlier than she postulates. Hence, there are major concerns with her second stage.

The third stage is one of an attempted rationalization, a plea for reassurance. It is a non-stage and should not be included. Depression comes with the acceptance of trauma and may range from numbness to stoicism. This depression may come from the loss of an old role (reactive depression) or it may be the positive preparation for the acceptance of a new role (preparatory depression). It appears that Kübler-Ross is dealing with suppression (an overt cognitive event) rather than depression which is an unconscious deadening of the emotions (Viorst 1986).

The final stage of acceptance is described as one of despair rather than the resolution of a cognitive dissonance. As a matter of fact, it is closer to her stage of depression (suppression) in that it is an awareness that is void of feeling. Can the model of life shock account for culture shock? Evidently the first stage of avoidance or isolation is acceptable, but the other stages described by Kübler-Ross (1970) are not consistent with the literature of life shock. For example, the stage on anger needs to be further articulated and the stage of depression needs to be integrated into the etiology of pain as described in the psychiatric literature (Lowen 1983; Viscott 1977).

THE STRUCTURE OF CULTURE SHOCK

The transition from the old home culture to the new host culture is traumatic. For the transition to be truly effective, the old must die so that energy can be placed into the growth of the new self (Viorst 1986). For this reason, a culture shock has many significant parallels with life shock. However, the model of life shock which best explains the transition is not that of Kübler-Ross (1969), but that of Lowen (1983) where his discussion of narcissism in American culture as the denial of the true self also explains the trauma of the denial of the old self for the new during the process of integration. Alexander Lowen classifies mental illnesses between two polarities: psychotic and neurotic. At the neurotic end, one suppresses feelings and at the psychotic end, one has lost feelings.

NEUROTIC— — — — — — —X— — — — — — — — —>> PSYCHOTIC
Borderline Personality

As one moves from a neurosis into psychosis, there is a halfway point known as the borderline personality disorder. In American culture, this is the schizophrenic who has a higher degree of narcissism, a greater degree of grandiosity, a greater lack of feelings, a greater loss of the sense of self, and a greater lack of contact with reality. What is significant about this categorization is that these disorders all begin with a personal sense of hurt.

HURT –>> DENIAL OF HURT —>> LOSS OF SELF ->> COMPENSATION

When one is vulnerable, it is easy to feel hurt by some experience. What follows from this feeling can eventually emerge either as rage or depression. Usually, a common strategy for coping with emotional dissonance is to deny the fact that one feels deeply hurt or humiliated by some experiences in the new culture. When this is done, it is done so at the cost of the denial of self. In many cultures, it is the socially accepted thing to do. Men, in particular, are not supposed to admit to emotional pain. The problem with this coping pattern is that although an individual may appear to be socially in control, that same person may be in psychological turmoil. Many individuals, of course, are aware of the emotional traumas they are encountering. One compensating mechanism that many cultures provide to overcome this degradation of self, is the quest for power or some comparable form of image compensation.

What psychiatrists such as Lowen (1983) has noted is that many people tend to forget why they were hurt. At first, they actively try to suppress their

feelings, but sooner or later this suppression leads to a unconscious blockage of emotions known as depression.

HURT — —>> DENIAL OF HURT —>> SUPPRESSION —>> DEPRESSION

When an emotion is blocked, it does not go away. It results in a state of high stress and anxiety. For some, the resulting emotion is one of fear. For others, it is emotional exhaustion. In some individuals the anxiety may be significant enough to lead to occasional bursts of anger and even rage or terror.

HURT —>> SUPPRESSION — —>> DEPRESSION —>> ANXIETY —>> FEAR
(LOSS OF FEELINGS)

— —>> ANGER

— —>> RAGE

In addition to socially accepted mechanisms for coping with the suppression of emotions, there are also psychological ones. David Viscott (1977) notes three of them that are quite common in everyday personal interaction. These have to do with perceived emotional losses which are rather obvious to trained psychiatrists and social workers. For example, one who is feeling hurt because of **loss of love**, will consistently reject the love of another to avoid being rejected himself. This is why a relationship that is working very well may be rejected by one of the parties even though there is no logical reason. To compensate for the fear of rejection, the threatened individual openly rejects the other party. Another psychological coping mechanism has to do with a person who has a **low sense of self control**. Such a person will usually try to openly try to control others so as not to be tempted by their behavior. Certain occupational areas are a haven for the employment of this strategy and Viscott (1977) mentions policemen, the military, the judicial system, and even school teachers. Finally, Viscott (1977) mentions the copying strategy employed by one who has a perceived **low sense of self-esteem**. This type of person usually compensates for this lack of sense of self-worth by becoming an overachiever. The irony of all of this is that many highly successful people are among the most psychologically insecure.

The outlines presented here provide a richer structure to the trauma of culture shock. First one forced to suppress the old culture because it provides a sense of cognitive dissonance for the host culture. This creates just one of the many forms of bicultural trauma known as culture shock. With the death of the old culture comes the death of a part of one's self.

OLD CULTURE —>> DENIAL —>> SUPPRESSION
|
|— — — — —>> AVOIDANCE REACTION

At this point, one has not yet been integrated into the new culture and one is still in a point of transition. However, once the acceptance of the death of the old is accepted, then the hurt can turn into some form of compensatory behavior of even into such destructional patters as cultural **Angst** or anger of eventual rage.

SUPPRESSION—>> DEPRESSION—>> ANXIETY— —>> FEAR—>> ANGER
| | — —>> RAGE
|— —>> COMPENSATORY BEHAVIOR

Obviously this model differs in many ways from that of Kübler-Ross. It not only accounts for the heavy emotions characteristically associated with culture shock and re-entry shock, but it also acknowledge compensatory behaviors also associated with immigrants who excel in significant ways (financially, artistically, etc) in their host cultures. It might be noted that Asian Americans are considered to be very successful as immigrants into the United States because of their socially accepted compensatory behavior as over-achievers. Other cultural groups may compensate for their cultural Angst by turning to depression, anger, and even rage. Although their coping mechanism may differ due to the expectations set by their host culture, they are all in some form of pain, and disillusionment. All are adjusting to a continuum of acculturation, but each group has its own culturally acceptable coping strategies.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

An insightful commentary on the rites of passage across culture can be found in the work of Victor Turner (1974) who treats the process of acculturation as one of a **social drama** oscillating between harmony and dissidence. He represents these as four between harmony and dissidence. He represents these as four stages:

BREACH AS SYMBOL OF DISSIDENCE
MOUNTING CRISIS SUPERVENES
REDRESSIVE ACTION
REINTEGRATION

The breach occurs when one attempts to experience the outer parameters of the social system and thereby creates some form of dissidence. The sociology of deviance is replete with examples of how social behaviors are considered to be marginal because they are not aligned with the expectations of the mainstream value structure. Women wanting to vote in the 1890's is just one such example (Becker 1973; Davis 1975). Once this breach of social etiquette occurs, a crisis ensues leading to a confrontation of values. Since the mainstream culture sets the agenda for socialization, the individual is forced to redress the situation and capitulates. The final outcomes to reintegrate oneself into the mores of the culture.

There are several highly insightful aspects to this model of social drama espoused by Turner. First it accepts the fact that socialization is never complete, and consequently acculturation is never complete. The new member of the host society will breach a wide range of behaviors in the new culture. Many of these may be done unconsciously or unknowingly, but many will not. They will remain as areas of dissonance.

Second, this model accepts the role played by social pressure as a tool of **reality maintenance**. By creating a crisis, the individual is coerced into conformity. Whether guilt is used or shame, the results are comparable, the conflict is resolved and the new behavior is legitimated.

Third, this model envisions the integration process as a life long task. The process of adaptation and assimilation is not limited to those who are entering a host culture. It should be noted that even people born into the same culture find themselves inappropriately out of character when placed in an unfamiliar environment. What this means, in essence, is that such children undergo or share similar social and psychological problems of accommodation of acculturation. However, the problem is intensified when the subculture is substantially different from the mainstream is substantially different from their host culture. Nevertheless, the area of transition from primary socialization in the family to that of secondary socialization in the school system has numerous parallels with the problems outlined in the rites of passage. In both cases there are obvious role conflicts which lead to the adaptation of new role behavior and a further integration into the system.

Fourth, the process of integration may be wholly compensatory leading to over achievement as noted among certain Asian Americans.

Fifth, Turner's model allows the individual breaching behavior as this is a natural result when the conflict over cultures is being tested by the new immigrant. This breaching of rule governed behavior is comparable in linguistic theory to the phenomenon of the speech chain. This term was capture the finding by Jules Gilliéron in his analysis of French dialectology (Bloomfield 1933; Koo and St. Clair 1985) during the late nineteenth century (St. Clair 1971)..He noted, for

example, that the dialect of Paris was incomprehensible to the dialect of Sicily. The dialect of Paris was comprehensible to the speech community most contiguous to it, and the latter was also comprehensible to the dialect next to it, and so on. What this resulted in, he argued, is a speech chain of continuously comprehensible dialects (St. Clair 1974; Koo and St. Clair 1985). Cultures, it seems, also form a speech chain effect within families of related languages.

In addition to the social drama of acculturation as presented by Turner (1974), the model of culture shock discussed in this essay accounts for the taboo associated with liminality or the transition between cultures as noted by the work of Mary Douglas. And, it accepts the fact that old cultures die when the individual is ready to embark on a new journey of self concept. But it also notes that some individuals do not wish to leave the old world and provide great energy into a rebirthing of the old culture in their own ethnic communities. Finally, culture shock is traumatic. So is the re-entry shock. for this reason is it associated with emotions ranging from hurt to rage. It also involves the mechanisms of suppression and depression and can emerge, in some cases, as pathological coping strategies. It is for this reason that the psychiatric models of Lowen on neuroses and psychosis is valuable and it is for this reason that the coping strategies discussed under the work of Viscott are also valuable. Consequently, in the process of enculturation, one continuously projects values and emotions characteristically associated with the old culture. These projections (Halpern and Halpern 1983) are in direct conflict enhances the social drama in the theater of life symbols of cultural salience compete for center stage.

The model of culture shock outlined in this essay is merely a first appraisal of the structure of the conflict itself. The infrastructure, i.e., the resolution of conflicts within the various components of the society itself (role behavior, attitudes, etc.) is a matter for further research. The actual conflicting values depend upon cultural salience. Acculturation is always easiest when no emotional value is attached to the new behaviors and beliefs. However, when the value system of the old culture conflicts with those of the new, the result is one of trauma or culture shock. As a corollary to this premise is the fact that when cultures are historically close, the culture shock is less. But when the cultures historically disparate, the culture shock grows exponentially. This is comparable, it should be noted, to the phenomenon of linguistic distance across related languages (St. Clair 1974). Languages which are diachonically close to each other share greater comprehension (unidirectional or bidirectional) than languages which are not. Culturally related societies, it appears, also participate in the phenomenon of "cultural distance."

Notes

*Several insightful comments on this paper were noted during the conference presentation. Professor Gerhard Nickel of the Linguistics Department at the University of Stuttgart, for example, drew some significant parallels between the speech chain phenomenon and the Evergreen effect in which languages which are related via linguistic families are easier to learn. He also noted how the intermediate stages of the ritual from the home culture to the host culture parallels the emergence of interlanguage in second language acquisition. In the discussion of how bilingualism is a different phenomenon from biculturalism, he again drew a parallel between the learning of a code vs the learning of a content area in second language competency. Professor Linju Ogasawara of the Japan Ministry of Education also elaborated on the latter point with informative examples from his own multilingual experiences.

1. When Alvin Toffler (1970) envisioned the coming post-industrial societyt as a **future shock** he modeled it after the concept of culture shock. Similarly, the treatment of the generation gap between baby boom generation and their parents was called a **culture storm** by H.L. Nieburg (1973) and this was a milder metaphor for the use of culture shock in a different context.

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