

Interpersonal relations : The challenge of the 80's

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Introduction

I trust that you, like me, are thrilled to be living in what must be considered the most exciting, dynamic and challenging era of this century.

But like you, I am not that naïve to realise that it is an easy one free of problems. Never before in the lifetime of man has the need for a better understanding of communication and culture and their effect on interpersonal relations been so essential.

Intercultural relations hinges on effective intercultural communication and for this to happen it is essential to understand the terms culture and communication.

Culture can be defined as learned behaviours of a group living in a geographical area - i.e., behaviours related to knowledge, values and beliefs, attitudes, religions, concepts of self and the universe, hierarchies of status, spatial relations, time concepts, ethnicity, language, etc. Culture is variable, everchanging, gradually but continuously, and to further complicate understanding, there are individual differences within any given culture. Communication is, of course, the act of communicating — the act of understanding and being understood.

Intercultural communication, therefore, is the act of communication when the message sender is from one culture and the message receiver is from another culture. Successful intercultural communication is the establishment and sharing of common meanings in the sender-receiver. (Meanings are in people, not in messages). This process is obviously complicated and influenced by cultural factors, such as those mentioned above, not to mention language differences and patterns of thinking.

Cultural factor awareness

For successful communication across cultures, there should be an awareness of cultural factors which affect communication in both our own culture and the culture of others. Cultural factors should be looked at for similarities and differences. The differences, thus isolated, would no doubt define problem areas in communicating, and the similarities should aid the successful intercultural communications. Absolute

values — right/wrong, good/bad, moral/immoral, etc. — is a concept that must be understood as culturally derived and, consequently, subject to cultural variation.

In this complex society in which we live the average individual is subjected to a great deal of pressure and is constantly attempting to identify his rôle in the community let alone really try to understand his fellow citizens.

But what of the decade ahead of us for the businessman, the politician, the labourer of just the man on the street?

Will it be a decade in which we will have a repeat of the highs and lows in the economic sense. Will it be a decade of any greater confrontation between white and black — or white and yellow or for that matter, black and black. Will we see a change in the political areas and can technology advance that much further?

In the civilisation of the closing 20th century and on the eve of the third millenium, we see frequent attacks on the basic rights of human beings. As a consequence it is today that we must fight in order that our civilisation should remain based on the personality of each individual, assisted by performing but servile machines.

All this should reinforce the rôle of man in an economy which has gone from survival to production, sales and exchanges and, today, to information/communication.

The economy, specially in free countries, has become an information economy. Indeed, in those countries since the beginning of the century, human labour has changed with agriculture falling from more than 50% to around 5% with industry levelling around 33%, with services moving up from 5% to 50%. Furthermore, one can say that within services and other activities, the share of cerebral activities (such as information) or call it communication, has become greater than that of material activities. Some even go as far as asserting that information accounts in the world for 45% of the total labour force.

In the three short decades between now and the twenty-first century, millions of ordinary, psychologically normal people will face an abrupt collision with the future. Citizens of the world's richest and most technologically advanced nations, many of them, will find it increasingly painful to keep up with the incessant demand for change that characterizes our time. For them, the future will have arrived too soon.

The parallel term "culture shock" has already begun to creep into the popular vocabulary. Culture shock is the effect that immersion in a strange culture has on the unprepared visitor. The American Peace Corps volunteers, suffer from it in Borneo or Brazil. Marco Polo probably suffered from it in Cathay. Culture shock is what happens when a traveller suddenly finds himself in a place where yes may mean no,

where a "fixed price" is negotiable, where to be kept waiting in an outer office is no cause for insult, where laughter may signify anger. It is what happens when the familiar psychological cues that help an individual to function in society are changed.

The culture shock phenomenon accounts for much of the bewilderment, frustration and disorientation that plagues South Africans in their dealings with other societies. It causes a breakdown in communication, a misreading of reality, an inability to cope.

It has been observed, for example, that if the last 50 000 years of man's existence were divided into lifetimes of approximately sixty two years each, there have been about 800 such lifetimes. Of these 800, 650 were spent in caves.

Only during the last seventy lifetimes has it been possible to communicate effectively from one lifetime to another — as writing made it possible to do. Only during the last six lifetimes did masses of men ever see a printed word. Only during the last four has it been possible to measure time with any precision. Only in the last two has anyone anywhere used an electric motor. And the overwhelming majority of all the material goods we use in daily life today have been developed within the present, the 800th lifetime.

Within a single lifetime, agriculture, the original basis of civilisation has lost its dominance in nation after nation. Today in a dozen major countries agriculture employs fewer than 15 percent on the economically active population. In the United States, whose farms feed 200 000 000 Americans plus the equivalent of another 160 000 000 people around the world, this figure is already below 6 percent and it still shrinking rapidly.

Moreover, if agriculture is the first stage of economic development and industrialism the second, we can now see that still another stage — the third — has suddenly been reached. In about 1956 the United States became the first major power in which more than 50 percent of the non-farm labour force ceased to wear the blue collar of factory or manual labour. Blue collars workers were outnumbered by those in the so-called white collar occupations — in retail trade, administration, communications, research, education, and other service categories. Within the same lifetime a society for the first time in human history not only threw off the yoke of agriculture, but managed within a few brief decades to throw off the yoke of manual labour as well. The world's first service economy had been born.

The cultural barrier

Some people will deny that cultural barriers exist, still more that they are themselves affected by them. Not only do these barriers exist, but they affect every human being to a greater or lesser extent, and those least

aware of them are often those most affected. Those who deny them do so because they do not perceive them. By a cultural barrier is meant everything that the individual derives from the community in which he is brought up, and which he does not share with individuals brought up in other communities with different ways. What is not innate, but acquired, is in principle cultural; but it may be acquired in the case of different individuals from outside sources, perhaps from other cultures. What an individual picks up from another culture may prove to be a link between his own culture and that one; but everything part of the furniture of his mind and will that belongs to the community to which he belongs, and is not shared with another community, is a cultural barrier. Language is often a part of the cultural barrier, and within a single linguistic group, accent and dialect may be culturally divisive. Anyone who lives abroad, and is at all sensitive to the society of the country in which he lives, will slowly and over the years notice new little differences, and later blush for early errors of behaviour of which at the time he was quite unaware.

People usually hate to have to overcome the cultural barrier. This is why national clubs are so very popular overseas. South Africans like to relax together, so do Americans, so do French, they do not really like it if any stranger is invited in. If an Englishman cannot relax only with English people, or a Frenchman with Frenchmen, and the alternative to mixing with each other is to mix with people still more different, the chances are that English and French will prefer to relax with each other. Englishmen and Americans, with no real language problem between them, will manage even more easily to relax together, though there are a number of social and political ways in which the Englishman is closer to another European than to an American. This is probably because of a combination of the language factor and of a certain similarity in kinds of relaxation. There seem to be occasions on which a white American will feel more relaxed with an Englishman than with a black American, but in fact the two Americans obviously have much more in common than either have with the Englishman; the behaviour of the white American must surely here be the effect of a doctrine about race. Race itself is really cultural.

Colour and prejudice

'Colour' is a subject that must be considered when evaluating interpersonal relations as a cultural barrier, colour prejudice is just one kind of cultural prejudice that has accidentally got latched on to the pigmentation of the skin. Prejudice in England against West Indians or Pakistanis is called colour prejudice, because the unwilling host culture denominates alien groups it dislikes by their most obvious and recognisable characteristic. If we compare the feelings of English 'racialists' towards Irishmen, especially forty or fifty years ago, and towards West Indians today, there is little difference in the degree of feeling, and none in its

quality. The cultural dislike is made up of the usual elements: pure xenophobia, that is, 'these people are different, they are not our people, so fear and hate them'; and applied xenophobia, the dislike of the actual customs of the newcomers. For example, they may have emigrated because they were poor, and they may be forced to live in overcrowded conditions, and the consequences of poverty and overcrowding are then attributed to the culture (or 'race'); nearly always also there will be real cultural differences, such as different degrees of attachment to music and dancing, which may result in one side seeming noisy, and the other unfriendly because less addicted to parties. All groups (including the Irish) are often accused of being too profile.

And I must hasten to add, that this attitude exists today in South Africa to an even greater or lesser degree — but fortunately amongst a small group of whites as an attitude that is changing — and must change if not on humanistic grounds then straight economics.

Suspicion of the West

The great issue of the modern world, as seen from outside Europe and America, has been imperialism. The most powerful idea in the mind of the overseas academic, teacher or student, at home in his own country or abroad in ours, has been his anti-imperialism. Anti-imperialism means suspicion of the motives and intentions of the West, and this suspicion is the background of all cultural interchange today. Beyond it lies another conflict. The anti-imperialist suspects the West of trying to prevent his enjoying the benefits of material progress, but sometimes he is suspicious of concomitants of progress because they are concomitants of Western culture. His dilemma is, and has been since the beginning of the nineteenth century, to discover how to modernise without Westernising; to equal or surpass the West in its own technological field, without accepting its culture.

Why is there a resistance to Western influence?

The great champion of the theory of neo-colonialism was Kwame Nkrumah, who believed it to be the final and most dangerous stage of imperialism. He said that State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside. Nkrumah saw this neo-colonialism as much worse than direct colonialism, and it is true that it shares some of the qualities of indirect rule. Neo-colonialism means for the neo-colonisers 'power without responsibility' and for the neo-colonised 'exploitation without redress'.

Is this attitude very different to the one of 20 years ago in South Africa?

A great deal of tension, and of the positive disagreement, between the poorer part of the world and the richer part, between the dominated and

the dominant, between the 'developing' world and the 'West', is about just this transmission of an aggressive Western culture.

The rejection of Western capitalism or socialism is at least equally characteristic of African criticism of the European social attitude. The disruptive impact of European cultures, quite distinct from the effects of urbanisation, is a frequent theme of African novels, themselves the use of a Eastern technique to express African cultural ideas. The only well-known Ghanaian novel: 'as the drum says:

the path was cut to meet the stream
the stream is there from long, long ago.'

In the first half of this century we read about the reaction of the people in India to the West.

Much of the Indian reaction against the West was particularly and even virulently against Christianity. The missionaries were hated also by Muslims, and there were special reasons for hating them in China, but for the moment let us just glance at the Indian attitude. It may well be that Christianity was hated during the Imperial period because it was felt to be a total cultural assault on local cultures, a summing up of the aggression, in a way that technical progress was not. No one rejects technical advantages, and no one admits that the modern is not as suited to his culture as to any other. A culture that is relegated to a reservation is finished, and the Christian missions attacked the cultures themselves, in a way that military conquest attributable to technological superiority did not. The Indians (and many others) knew that they were inferior in military fire-power, and even in organisation, that is why they were beaten in battle and reduced to political subjection, but they had no reason to admit to any further inferiority, and so the religious attack was the one that was most resented.

Is this not a challenge to our Western culture!

Labour and society

The Capitalist System in South Africa which hinges on two important pillars — the "Entrepreneur" on the one hand and the "Trade Union" on the other hand cannot survive unless our non-white employees move into the risk-taking classes.

The recent detailed proposals of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions and the Government's reaction to them have given rise to some controversy. These proposals are not clearly understood and not exactly what was expected.

Nevertheless, the proposals that the Government have accepted do indicate an important departure from the dogma and human indifference that characterised the 1950's and 1960's. Full trade union rights

will be extended to all Black South African workers, including those from independent Black states formerly part of the Republic of South Africa — a most significant development.

In addition, it is expected that exemption will be granted from the provisions of existing legislation disallowing the registration of mixed unions. With regard to job reservation, all but five determinations have been scrapped and the remainder are to be phased out. Various other provisions relating to the extension of training facilities and opportunities to apprenticeships previously denied to Blacks, and to influx control and labour relations generally, further indicate the intention to remove statutory discrimination from the economic sphere.

Since the 1960's rising income, skills and education have increased the economic security and confidence of white workers and many of them have more relaxed attitudes about the job colour bar (failure of mine workers strike in March 1979). However, complacency or total disregard for an employment code either statutory or reflecting a genuine interest, by management could result in the factory floor becoming a political battleground in the 1980's. Creating expectancies of change but failure to fulfill or to liberalise in the economic field and not in the political field are likely to trigger discontent, confrontation and ultimately violence.

The all-important human element in industry must not be underestimated. We cannot humanise society without humanising work. Work for most people is foremost a source of income. It also fulfills a social function.

The extent to which workers find a measure of satisfaction in their work and social contacts with their fellow workers in agreeable and healthy surroundings may determine to a large extent their attitudes and behaviour towards society. It could also be as significant factor in their job performance.

Management cannot afford to ignore the aspirations, aptitudes and preferences expressed by its employees. It has much to gain by a satisfied labour force, working at jobs for which they are best suited.

The most successful management recognises that it has a social as well as an economic function to perform in society. It can respond to this challenge by establishing a harmonious psychological climate within the company.

To create this climate, the manager should look at three communication objectives.

- help the employee understand his job and his company
- help him realise his personal success is inseparable from the company's success
- help him realise his job is worth doing because his company's products are essential to society

The migrant labourer

Migrants are defined as people who in order to work leave their homes and often families for periods ranging from a few weeks to several years.

The Governments of this country unlike the Western — and most developing countries — have long exercised legal and administrative control in an attempt to keep down the numbers of Blacks in White areas, and encourage the Black to retain close links with his native reserves also known as Bantustans.

In 1976 there were close to 1.4 million (legal) Black migrants in White areas of which about 400,000 were considered foreign (Swaziland, Malawi, etc.)

Taking into account the daily commuters there are 1.8 million Blacks comprising 42% of the work force.

A host of laws and regulations, many too complex to discuss, govern the rights of Blacks and Whites to live together.

During the past decade we have seen changes in security of tenure and mobility. Leasehold rights were re-introduced, authorisation to change jobs within a board area and permission to maintain the family unit provided housing was available and certain recommendations contained in the Riekert report referring to migrants which are still a little hazy.

The relationship between White and Black is further affected, as whites (Ex UK or the Portuguese colonies) are exempt from these laws and the Black is classified a foreigner. This is further complicated by the fact that the truly foreign Black is treated rather unfavourably as compared to the Turkish Gastarbeiter in Germany. Between 1886 — 1970 the basic economics for profitable gold mining called for a plentiful supply of cheap labour and the importation on a limited fixed term contract of foreign Blacks (80% of labour force) made mining a profitable venture. In 1980 the foreign Black accounts for only 44% of the total mine labour force of 414 092.

The challenge to industry to limit the effects and costs of migrancy is:

- stabilisation of work force : introduction of call-in card system
- mechanisation : lower turnover in stabilised work force.

Global relations

The last few years have shown conclusively that we are at a time of transition in history — transition from a world of political power and economic dominance to a world more mindful of the limits of power and the dangers of the disparity, that is the hand-maiden of dependency. It is a transition induced and made inevitable by the reality of interdependence. In such areas as food, energy, raw materials, population and the

environment, it is now obvious that peoples and states are dependent on each other — everyone, in some area, needs another; no one is immune, sanitised, sanctuarised from acts or omissions anywhere on earth. And the inter-relationship of these areas of material dependency with such other issues and areas as disarmament, science and technology, the exploration of the sea-bed and outer space, have made us at once each other's guardians and each other's wards.

It is with that response to interdependence that our generation must be essentially concerned — responsive to a changed world environment through change in the structure of human relationships and the global systems that determine them. It is the management of that change — from a world rooted in an adversary system of winners and losers to an interdependent world committed to the harmonising of human interests — that is the true challenge of our changing world — and it is a massive challenge.

Previously dormant people have become active, demanding, and assertive. Under the impact of literacy and modern communications hundreds of millions of people are becoming aware, both of new ideas and of global inequity *If we try to create artificial obstacles to change for the sake of the status quo, we will only isolate ourselves – and, eventually, threaten and undermine our own national security.*

The multi-national South African

As the social, economic, ethnic, religious, cultural and travel barriers which tend to separate human beings from one another continue to crumble South Africans need to learn the skill of dealing with differences, especially in people. Apart from the humanitarian consideration of providing such training to lessen culture and future shock (I refer to Alvin Toffler's Future Shock), there are pragmatic reasons why organisations should undertake "cross-cultural education" for their employees, especially those in management. The term cross-cultural education, as used here, refers to the study of factors and influences which give a people identity and make them distinctive; it includes the analysis of what an individual outside the group should understand and do in order to facilitate that person's communication with those of that other culture.

This type of learning experience has a dual value. For South Africans going abroad on foreign assignment, for a short or long term period, such information and insight can not only facilitate adjustment, but fosters client relations and promotes international goodwill. It can cut costs of operating overseas, increase productivity, and improve organisational relations. Domestically, similar arguments can be adapted to justify cross-cultural training for supervisors of within this country in harmony with affirmative action goals. As more and more Blacks,

Europeans (Germany, England) and other ethnic groups are brought into the mainstream of the work force and provided with equal employment opportunities, management requires more knowledge and sophistication regarding these peoples and how to interact more effectively with them.

Cross-cultural, transcultural, intercultural communications . . . the jargon is not important. What is extremely important to individuals, national and international and multi-national organisations, and to other organisations with multi-national populations is understanding the essence of the jargon and understanding the need for such training for those moving from one culture to another so that individuals may live and work effectively in a completely new cultural environment. Another often over-looked dimension of the need for intercultural training is re-entry into one's home country — after that society has changed, however imperceptibly, and the individual has been changed by living in a culture other than his or her own.

Intercultural communications training attempts to lower barriers to communication by imparting knowledge and understanding of cultural factors.

One barrier to intercultural communications that is usually addressed in intercultural communications training is ethnocentrism — that is, any culture's view of other people using their own group and customs as a standard by which to judge all people. This results in a "my country right or wrong" attitude, an attitude which is particularly strong in this country. *Ethnocentrism prevents us from looking at people from other cultures objectively.*

The objectives of an orientation or training programme should be:

- to encourage greater sensitivity and more astute observations in areas and situations which are culturally different
- to foster greater understanding in dealing with representatives of microcultures within the participant's own country
- to improve customer and employee relations by creating awareness of cultural differences and their influence on behaviour
- to develop a more cosmopolitan business representative or manager who not only understands the concepts of culture, but can apply these learnings in interpersonal relations and to the organisation's culture

Electronic communication media

A concern for the effects of satellite television has been growing steadily since this mode of communication became possible with the launching of Sputnik 1. Technical communication advances in the areas of satellite telecommunications systems, laser tubes, and wave guides in recent

years have prompted a focusing of world attention on the subject. The most publicity has been given to these technological advances in terms of their projected contribution to world peace and understanding and the advancement of the Third World through literacy and educational programmes. The pessimists, who view the issues in a sociological context, foresee new levels of information access generating mass discontent, with universal rising frustration growing out of the rising expectation. Particularly do the spokesmen for the Third World espouse this point of view. The debates over issues such as the direct broadcast satellite, the free flow of information between nations, national sovereignty, and cultural imperialism reveal the intensity with which the advocates of the two camps hold their respective points of view.

A recent report summarised the optimistic and pessimistic viewpoints regarding the potential of the new communications technology for the developing world:

Some people believe that the development of new and effective systems for education, making use of satellites and related technology, could result in substantial improvements in the educational capability of nations as well as better methods of international co-operation . . . Others feel that the rapid spread of new communications technology could result in the squandering of precious foreign exchange by less-developed countries, social upheaval, and the extension of centralised political control by repressive governments.

The American intercultural authority has suggested that both formal and informal segregation practices in the southern states of America were manifestations of this acute awareness of the disruptive influence of uncontrolled information. The rapid acceleration of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950's has been connected to the influence of network news.

The rebellion of American Blacks against the racial caste system, though rooted in deep social and economic trends, was profoundly influenced by a novel medium of communication whose newness was important to its impact. The mobilisation of the Negro's rejection of their three-hundred-year status, and the comprehension of this by the white majority, is attributable in significant part to the failure of traditional social controls over new media that used to be typical of the American South.

Communication and change

Communication is a prime dynamic force that determines the kind and rate of change in society. Mass communication and its technology is one factor contributing to the acceleration in the rate of change. Communication involves the establishing of relationships, while change causes an altering of such relationships. Communication is an energy exchange, whereas change requires the shifting of energy priorities. *Change*

challenges leadership to deal more effectively with differences, which occur when the status quo has been unfrozen because of new inventions, new insights, new attitudes, new people.

When a computer is introduced into a corporation, there is a change in rôle relationships. When a management information system is introduced into an office, the data available for decision-making affects relationships. When a local company moves beyond its borders into the international marketplace, there is not only a transformation of attitudes, but policies, procedures, and even structures may change. When minority people are brought into the workforce in greater numbers, there is an altering of relationships with the majority personnel. When women are promoted into a management made up largely of males, female relationships with male supervisors are subtly influenced. All such actions provoke change in organisational culture. So too, when managers, sales persons or technicians, as well as their families, are deployed overseas for a lengthy assignment, there is a profound transposition in their relationships to their "world" and the "foreigners" in it. The paradox of change, as Benjamin Disraeli reminded us, is that it is inevitable and constant. Furthermore, it is an event and a process. It also forces others to view it either as a problem or an opportunity.

Because people are usually disturbed by the unknown, it has been natural for people to fear change, and even to panic in times of unprecedented change. When that fear is so overwhelming as to paralyze individuals or institutions into inaction, then chaos may reign. Generally, we are comfortable with the status quo, but building change into life and work styles may soon become the norm rather than the exception. Organisations are already starting to reward innovation over conformity. Perhaps the point is best illustrated by Gail Sheehy in her best seller, *Passages*, when she reminds us that our lives run in cycles that typically involve a pattern of continuous changes or developmental stages. Personal or career crises can be the mechanisms for constructive or destructive changes, depending on how we respond to the turning point. Was the sage right who observed that to live is to change, but to grow is to change often? Yet, that is a Western view of change — those in the East have a different perspective.

The fast pace of modern life, the demise of traditional values and supports intensify emotional stress and strain of change for human beings and their systems. Change can involve pain, whether it be the divorce of marital or business partners, the loss of job or loved one, a transfer within our outside one's country, the merger of two departments or two corporations.

Some cultural systems are more open and accepting of change, while others can only integrate it in a very gradual manner, to avoid violent reaction. Furthermore, the process of innovation differs by culture. The complexities of Western cultural living would appear to stimulate

creativity without inordinate attention to details. On the other hand, change in Eastern culture, as in Third World nations, is often accompanied by painstaking concern for its effect on relationships, so there is a preference for bending the cultural bonds within the existing system to avoid radical alterations.

Cosmopolitan managers must function in the midst of paradoxes involved in social and cultural change. Despite the acceleration in the change rate in the last half of this century, the pace of change varies enormously in different cultures. Yet, no tribe or group is today too remote not to experience its influence.

Job turnover is not merely a direct consequence of technological changes. It also reflects the mergers and acquisitions that occur as industries everywhere frantically organise and reorganise themselves to adapt to the fast-changing environment, to keep up with myriad shifts in consumer preferences. Many other complex pressures also combine to stir the occupational mix incessantly. Thus a recent survey by the US Department of Labour revealed that the 71 000 000 persons in the American labour force had held their current jobs an average of 4.2 years. This compared with 4.6 years only three years earlier, a decline in duration of nearly 9 percent.

The high rate of job turnover now evident in the United States is also increasingly characteristic of Western European countries. In England, turnover in manufacturing industries runs an estimated 30 to 40 percent per year. In France about 20 percent of the total labour force is involved in job changes each year and in South Africa 12 percent.

Whether or not the statistically measurable rate of job turnover is rising, however, makes little difference, for the measurable changes are not only part of the story. The statistics take no account of changes of job within the same company or plant, or shifts from one department to another. A.K. Rice of the Tavistock Institute in London asserts that "Transfers from one department to another would appear to have the effect of the beginning of a new life within the factory". The overall statistics on job turnover, by failing to take such changes into account, seriously underestimate the amount of shifting around that is actually taking place — each shift bringing with it the termination of old, and the initiation of new, human relationships.

Summary

Good academic relations between peoples of different cultures, like other relations between them, are constantly spoiled by interference, misunderstandings, and suspicion.

To reiterate: Cultural differences mean that different groups of people do things in different ways, or do different things or think about things differently. *National differences, regional differences, racial differen-*

ces, class differences, even those social differences which are based on the sexes, all the differences that groups of people gradually develop through circumstances (and often through the exploitation of the weaker group) are cultural differences.

The different habits of mind that individuals have acquired constantly prevent useful co-operation and even communication. People who have no language problems at all still cannot understand each other, or, understanding in part, they misinterpret.

People find it difficult to live in a strange culture; it imposes an emotional strain. If any inclination to emotional unbalance already exists, it is quickly laid bare. This too, applies both to those who go to teach and to those who come to learn.

We can separate the cultures. Modernisation need not be Westernisation. Our own cultural situation is not the only conceivable product of our technology. It does not help us to control or use our techniques, and so in fact fails to provide what we ourselves need. Other cultures would be rash to take our cultural solutions without first scrutinising their value — to them or to us, we might even retrace a few steps of our own to recover our cultural losses, or borrow techniques of living from those whose cultures are technologically so much less successful than our own.

There is no superiority of one culture over another, in any case there is no one in a position from which it is possible to judge. Technological superiority has no cultural significance, and is transferable from culture to culture. Every man should be proud of his own culture, but should not believe it must be better than others. If he does think it is better, it only wants that he should develop a missionary spirit, and then he will start to impose it on others. We must learn to accept, or, better, to welcome, that something is different, without thinking it either better or worse than what we have ourselves.

To learn nothing from history is to learn nothing from the experience of other people, and it is the same negative attitude, whether it is applied to other people today or to other people of the past. Many who are proud to forget their forefathers are equally glad to ignore their contemporaries, to the undifferentiating, there is nowhere beyond the horizon and no time before today.

There is no superiority of one culture over another. Several times I have referred to the advantages of being different, and to that extent, the barrier is no bad thing. It is bad when we cannot see or speak across it, but that happens most often when we are unaware even that it exists. The actual differences between cultures, when they are seen, most people do in fact accept. We know that even those who expect that there will be one world culture want at least to ensure that all the different ecumenes that survive into the present world should contribute to this

solitary culture of the future. It would be easy to reduplicate examples of this sentiment. To think as much immediately concedes the value of past differences, and, if these differences have been valuable in the past, we must think that they would be equally valuable in the future, until someone disproves it. Those who want all cultures to contribute to the monster future culture have just given up the hope of the separate survival of cultures, not the wish that they should survive. *Those who really do welcome the monster must realise that there is only one alternative to wanting a variety of cultures to survive and that is to say that what we and no one else think, here and now, is alone valid, and will remain valid forever.*

For the developed countries, all interchange with countries economically weaker is a question of long-term, not short-term, self-advantage. Educational interchange, of its nature, would in any case be only of long-term advantage. Our Western interest is to derive the advantage of equal exchanges with different societies that serve as stimuli. The road may yet be a long one, because first the others must achieve the technological equality that constantly recedes and that must come before a true cultural exchange. It will always remain true that for those who believe in communication between cultures there must be separate cultures to communicate with each other.

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