

### Cultural Fusion Theory

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### Summary and Keywords

Cultural fusion is the process of integrating new information and generating new cultural forms. Cultural fusion theory recognizes the world as a churning information environment of cultural legacies, competing and complementing one another, forming novel cultural expressions in all aspects of life, including music, cuisine, pedagogy, legal systems, governance, economic behavior, spirituality, healthcare, norms of personal and interpersonal style, family structures, and so forth. This is a process of pan-evolution, involving countless channels, not merely two cultures coming together to form a third, hybrid culture. During this process the traditional pace and form of change is itself changing. Cultures are also transformed as a result of the churning process of an emergent global semantic field generated by countless networked exchanges.

Keywords: cultural fusion, pan-evolution, integration, boundary maintenance conditions, immigration, globalization, semantic field, systems theory, cultural adaptation, acculturation, terror management theory

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## Introduction

Cultural fusion theory describes the process of integrating new information and generating new cultural forms. Although cultural fusion is ubiquitous in all intercultural encounters, in recent human history it has become vastly diversified and amplified by new global systems of telecommunications and travel interconnecting and traversing cultures, languages, generations, political systems, religions, and ethnic groups. Cultural fusion theory recognizes the world as a churning information environment of multiple cultural legacies, competing with and complementing one another. In the process, cultural evolution is diversifying and expanding, leading to pan-evolution facilitated by a dramatic increase in interconnectivity and interactivity. This process is leading to greater variance and complexity. It can be perceived as information overload, but also as presenting a multiplicity of solutions to problems. The resultant uncertainty tends to be seen by conservative forces as a cause of anxiety, but it is also a necessary condition for creative innovation and hope. In environmental terms, monocultures are susceptible to collapse, whereas environments filled with diverse forms express alternative means of enduring change from both indigenous and exogenous sources. Everything is changing simultaneously, including

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alteration of traditional hierarchies of messaging and source dominance. For nearly all humans, access to foreign ways has increased dramatically, and interactive processing is displacing passive message dominance. Reciprocity has increased. Participation has increased dramatically. Everyone is now simultaneously a receiver, a sender, and a fusional node where information is interpreted. Cultural fusion is ubiquitous. Influences are countless and vary in effect, depending on many factors such as cultural proximity, linguistic community membership, gender identity, religious affinity, and so forth. Fusion is a process of integrating alterity, including in the form of foreign cultural influences resulting in novel cultural expressions in all aspects of life, including music, cuisine, pedagogy, legal systems, governance, and economic behavior such as spreading consumerism, spirituality, healthcare, norms of personal and interpersonal style, organizational cultures, family structures, and so forth. Integration does not mean assimilation whereby one component disappears via conformity pressure. Integration recontextualizes and preserves cultural elements that remain salient as they are transferred, adopted, rejected, mimicked, and so forth. Foreign elements are finding their expression intentionally and unintentionally within new forms of fusional music, cuisine, art, politics, pedagogy, fashion, language, lifestyles, and such. Cultural fusion theory describes the process of pan-evolution observed locally, glocally, and globally, which involves countless channels, not merely two cultures, two individuals coming together to form a third, hybrid culture. The cultural environment is made up of countless streams of information that include face-to-face interaction, computer-mediated interpersonal communication, and accessing and adding to massive databases of cultural information. Cultural fusion theory describes the evolutionary interactivity among streams of information as taking many forms, including but not limited to mutuality, co-dependence, commensalism, and parasitism. The fusion process also involves reciprocal yet not necessarily symmetrical interactive effects and synergies. Globally, everyone is directly or indirectly affected by the massive and diversely churning flows of information. During this process the traditional pace and form of change is itself changing. The meaning of culture is changing. Culture is no longer seen as being “in peoples’ heads,” behavior patterns, and artifacts. Massive archives, databases, and artificial memory of countless cultural forms and artifacts are increasingly accessible to millions acting as a dynamic infosphere enabling bricolage achievements that are redistributed and made readily accessible in virtual public spaces. Recording and transmission has advanced from orality to writing, to electronic forms, with the latter compressing time and space, vastly increasing interactivity. Interaction with rapidly expanding archives of information is changing how cultures evolve. Expansive troves of all forms of information and greatly enhanced access for global populations are resulting in tremendous innovation. The fusional process is one of culturing, of generating new forms at an accelerated pace and across populations. Particularly, cultures are also transformed as a result of the churning process of an emergent global semantic field generated by countless networked exchanges. Culture is a verb, a process with conventions shifting as new information is continually integrated. Culture is increasingly a dynamic process of churning information that challenges traditionalism and nationalism. People no longer need to physically move to be exposed to countless foreign values, beliefs, ideas, modes of expression, arts, sciences, philosophies, mythologies, expectations, behavior patterns, and motivations. Glob-

alization itself is both a fluxing polysemantic consequence of this change and an expression of the spread of this process itself. Telecommunication systems spread ideas that generate appetites for more access and more expansive and diverse delivery systems. Platforms are proliferating. In the face of an insatiable appetite for information, creativity, and newness, cultural fusion is ubiquitous. Demand for more access is a result of exposure to countless streaming channels of culture. Evolution of cultures and individuals does not mean progress toward monocultural assimilation or an ideal and final “adaptation.” Evolution posits no final goal. Instead, like biological evolution, cultural and personal evolution are endless processes of experimentation and expanding diversity. Conservative forces tend to react to this process by promoting retraction and conformity to established modes of thinking and behaving. Despite reactionary tendencies, change is increasingly governed not by established authoritative hierarchies, but by self-organization leading to moments of stasis within an ongoing process of churning. This is systasis, or a movement from semi-stable mutation to semi-stable mutation in an endless flow of change. Cultural fusion theory is an explanation that contributes to our understanding and predictions about this global process of information formation and sharing, and the diversification of cultural expressions, identities, and boundary conditions. Globalization is globalizing. The initially simple idea that nothing is static, that animals evolve, that even the Earth rotates, morphed into the larger trope that revolution is not just physical but sociocultural and political. What some see as dangerous, revolutionary ideas, including change, exploration, and curiosity, are spreading across the globe leading to expanding diversity and demand for more access and reciprocity of communicative interaction. Everyone is now a global citizen, whether they know it or not, or wish to be. Their identities are based on a constantly evolving semantic environment churning with differences.

## Primary Hermeneutic/Communication Principles Assumed by CFT

What follows are first principles of hermeneutic theory and general communication theory upon which CFT relies and from which the theory is partially derived. As discussed herein, other influences originate in Gestalt theory and more recent evolution theory, including notions of co- and pan-evolutionary processes operant within and between communicating cultural systems.

1. Interaction is the catalyst for the evolution of a person’s worldview, or “hermeneutic horizon.”
2. “Evolution” does not mean progress toward a final goal. It merely means change in formal composition, including expansion of complexity.
3. People can integrate new information, making sense of it only from their hermeneutic horizon, which includes all their predispositions—capabilities and limitations—their inherent limiting and enabling “prejudices” (Gadamer, 2004).
4. People’s perspectives are mutable with experience over time. Capabilities and limitations (predispositions) change over time.

5. Interaction cannot be avoided. Experience means stimulation from exogenous sources. This process ceases only in death.
6. Life/interaction is continually challenged. Turbulence and disequilibrating forces are ubiquitous.
7. Disequilibria are necessary for change or diversification, including what might be judged as desirable variance offering stimulation, choice, growth, and progress. Deviance is the source of “progress.”
8. We influence one another despite our intentions—one cannot *not* communicate (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967).<sup>1</sup>
9. The more exposure to difference, the faster a person changes.
10. CFT does not make value judgments about change; therefore, it is not postulated as “growth” or “progress” toward some implied final goal.
11. The more exposed to differences, the more complex a person is cognitively and affectively, and the greater a person’s repertoire of behavioral, cognitive, and affective choices.
12. CFT does not associate complexity with being “better.”
13. However, systems that harbor greater diversity demonstrate a higher chance of surviving change as they have more choices, strategies, and resources to draw from than monocultures.
14. Uncertainty corresponds not only to anxiety but also to hope, discovery, surprise, excitation, and other “positive” affects.
15. Coerced compliance and conformity lead to psychological instability in the form of cognitive dissonance and, often, behavioral resistance and negative opinion formation (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959).
16. Attendance to foreign innovations, experimentation, and other forms of deviation from received views, styles, and ways is necessary to originate new forms of life, art, literature, science, and lifestyles.
17. Risk aversion and attachment to received views and ways suppress experimentation and self-exposure to difference, including foreign views and ways. This attitude is manifested in ideology positions such as nativism and traditionalism.
18. Defense of monoculture represses evolution and diversification, and weakens systems.

Together, these basic assumptions form the foundation of the theory of cultural fusion as a communicative process. Although the theory evolves with testing, examination of first principles continues (Croucher & Kramer, 2017). Human ecology and field theory, including boundary conditions between “bounded fields” (Campbell & Moyer, 1991; Kramer, 1992A, 1995, 1997, 2000B, 2016A, 2016B; Mickunas, 1994, 2011) and their mutability via interaction constitute the domain of investigation for cultural fusion.

Both individuals and societies are information systems. Both are dynamic mutable systems or bounded but permeable fields that integrate new information on the bases of perspectives, and both affect their environments. CFT accepts the axioms that one cannot *not* communicate (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967) and that all understanding is perspectival (Gadamer, 2004), and agrees with Alfred North Whitehead (1978) and Jean Geb-

ser (1985) that one's perspective—perceptual schema or horizon—is in flux. CFT argues that the only way a person can communicate is from a perspective that is made up of blind and enabling prejudices that constitute what hermeneutic theory calls pre-understanding (Gadamer, 2004; Heidegger, 2002).

## A New Paradigm

CFT marks a paradigm shift from a predominantly Parsonian 1960s mechanistic structural functionalism that has dominated intercultural communication studies. CFT also clearly demarcates adaptation, integration, and assimilation as distinctly different processes. **Adaptation** is in no particular preconceived “direction” and has no final goal. **Evolution** means the proliferation of forms to expand the “footprint” of life or culture. Evolution has no final goal. **Integration** is not assimilation. The process of integrating has no final goal. Integration is not homogenization. Integration is a continual process of adding and mingling differences in an ongoing process of forming and reforming identities and meanings. Results of integration are identical to neither participating source of information (more than two parent sources may be involved in integration), but instead are uniquely new formations. Integration leads to the proliferation of innovation and new meanings.

Integration presumes differences to be integrated. Integration of differences is an essential property of communication. Integration ends if difference has been eliminated via total homogenization. This also marks the end of communication, as there is nothing different to exchange. Even when talking to oneself, a dialectical structure exists whereby different positions are operant within an intrapersonal dialogue. The speaker and hearer may seem to be the same person, but instead each occupies a different position within a discourse.

Very different from integration, **assimilation** involves one pole in a communication process progressively losing its uniqueness as it merges with another dominant pole until the uniqueness of the first is completely eliminated. The disappearance of difference marks the end of both integration and communication (including intercultural communication) as such.

Despite the fact that conversing always involves tension and uncertainty, ending cultural differences and eliminating intercultural communication in favor of total homogenization into a single static state is not a goal of CFT. By contrast, in the interest of achieving minimal uncertainty and stress, structural functionalism postulates a final utopian goal of permanent equilibrium as a pragmatic agenda emphasizing stability and efficiency over change and innovation.

The mechanical-hierarchical view of structural functionalism tends to see people as parts that may join or leave a separate organization and that may or may not be “functional.” This is combined with social Darwinist ideology of functional fit and survival of the fittest first fully articulated by the most influential Victorian Era sociologist, Herbert Spencer

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(1851), and revived by Talcott Parsons (1951). What was presumed by Spencer was who determines “fit.” For him it was obviously British imperial interests.

The judgment of efficient and effective operationalization depends on interests and perspective. Functionality is not the same as consequentiality. CFT holds that immigrants and other newcomers are always already a part of the social system wherein they reside. It is self-evident that investment in a group or organization, ownership, and membership evolve. But less obvious is the fact that being cognitively, affectively, and/or behaviorally invested in an information system does not require self-awareness or intent as a “member.” For the rulers of the British Empire (like other empires from ancient China and Rome), colonial peoples were not so much members in full and equitable standing, but did belong to the Empire—as property, resources to be martialled and commanded. Hence the use of the British soldiering term “subaltern” as applied to voiceless peoples. It was clear to colonial powers that progress for any and all peoples was measured by adoption of the imperial perspective, even as people in subject nations could never hope to be full-fledged citizens.

From first contact (directly or indirectly), a person is part of the organization or social group understood as an information system even if, and including their being recognized as a “newcomer” or “rookie” as compared with an “old-timer.” Reciprocal consequences, welcoming or forcefully inhospitable, are unavoidable. Ritualistic behavior such as shunning or hazing may be elicited by their presence. Established elements may seek to expend a unique effort to “orient” the newcomer. In fact, establishment interests demonstrate more concern for the presence of newcomers than presumed members. A single modification of norms, or the appearance of a single stranger—in short, that which is not “ordinary,” encountered by a tribe or other organization—elicits extraordinary curiosity and perhaps anxiety that established members do not. The encounter is communication, and at that instant the newcomer is always already (Gadamer, 2004) a part of the information system, in fact quite possibly a part that elicits disproportional attention and influence.

Newness manifestly enables (empowers) choice. A necessary condition for choice and novelty, and also identity, is alterity (Levinas, 1987, 1999, 2005; Merleau-Ponty, 2012). Difference calls attention to itself as something that is not “us,” and therefore difference is the origin of identity, including our own as established members. Elimination of difference also means the elimination of identity. The newcomer makes possible the identity and status of established member. Desires to eliminate difference wittingly or unwittingly include destruction of meaning and self-identity. It is a path to nihilism.

Being a stranger or newcomer is a state dependent on interaction with a group. That interaction makes the newcomer part of the overall information system. Appearance provokes a judgment concerning belonging and appropriateness. It stimulates a myriad of identity factors including what constitutes a member, as well as pride and prejudice of membership. Newcomers cannot help but induce reaction, and at that instant they are al-

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ready a part of the information system. They are definitive of identities as such, including those of established members. I owe my identity to you because you are not me.

The presence of immigrants demands response from the “host society,” even if that response is to ignore them, exploit them, or take measures to criminalize and deport them. Denial of the Other is an act (Levinas, 1999, 2005). Even the act of willfully denying the existence of another is an act that involves will and responsibility. Nationalism and nativism tend to see newcomers as not part of “their” system, perhaps even as interlopers threatening the privileged sense of sovereignty. Problems of communication arise from the fracturing of community into in-group and out-group dichotomies. Conservative perspectives tend to resist innovation. Intentionally or not, the presence of a newcomer or exposure to foreign ideas and styles results in differences to the semantic environment. Unwittingly or not, being “conservative” (risk averse) or “liberal” (trusting) is a consequence of how one reacts to difference. Difference is always already defining who we are.

Contact can be indirect and unintentional. Influence can exist unbeknownst to those doing the influencing and those being influenced. Fusional entanglement occurs without intent. For instance, with the globalization of systems such as labor, workers in China can have essential consequences for workers in the United States, even though they do not share a common geography or have direct communications.

Community is a network with systemic patterns of information flow. Increasingly, we are all interactive with one another, whether we know it or not. Change is pan-evolutionary. We are influencing one another’s futures and identities. The idea of avoiding change by conforming to a monolithic permanent and dominant “mainstream culture” is a fiction.

### **Beyond Dualism: The Parts Are the System**

The structural functional paradigm defines inefficient interaction that requires cognitive expenditure as dysfunctional. The structural functional approach to international and intercultural communication presumes a dualistic metaphysics that measures “competent communication” as how much a participant assimilates. This involves how accurately the receiver replicates the sender’s intent, behavior, norms, beliefs, and values. Communication and “coercive force” are conceived as one-way command and control. “Mainstream culture” was not seen as being in flux. Culture was conceptualized as a finished object/noun. But according to CFT, “culture” is a verb. Culture is “a” social construction that is being constantly negotiated and performed. Stresses are endemic to fluxing processes. One does not conform to culture so much as participate in its performance.

Master or slave, willing or coerced, intentional or not, participation in a system makes one integral in terms of consequence. In societies with the institution of slavery, the institution is very consequential and part of the nature of the society, requiring the “master class” to continually monitor and react to slaves. If slavery ends, the master class is greatly impacted. Masters must work to manage and control slaves. In short, they must conform to the demands of the social role as a set of responses to the presence of slavery. Indeed, their very identity, master, depends on the existence of slaves. Even slaves and

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immigrants are part of the system and change various patterns endemic to the system, such as economic, legal, familial, educational, and other patterns of resource allocation and communication. And quantity is not determinative of effect size. Just one missionary or anthropologist can have a profound impact on a tribe. Immigrants are integral parts of the system wherein they reside. But the implied immigrant may have communicative influence and prompt changes in a society simply based on the potential that he or she might migrate. The point is, for “good” or “ill” (value judgments dependent on perspective), host cultures and potential host cultures are impacted by actual and imagined immigration. Hence the preemptive reaction (an oxymoron) to potential cross-border flows of immigrants, refugees, and workers, by building walls or preparing welcoming shelters for refugees.

To avoid stress is to avoid communication as converse involving multiple and vested voices. Ironically, in the field of communication the idea of systemic feedback did not gain currency in intercultural and international communications until cybernetic and critical approaches that examined information flows, barriers, and power structures gained currency. CFT presumes principles of systems theory, including feedback and reciprocity, as essential qualities of communication. As a reflection of cultural elitism, earlier academic writing either ignored the subaltern (Ardener, 1975A, 1975B; Chilisa, 2012; Gone & Kir-mayer, 2010; Gower & Mack, 2002; Kleinman, 1987) or offered prescriptions for how to manage and assimilate or eliminate the subaltern in the interest of efficient achievement of the dominant culture’s goal of self-preservation and instituting processes that would maintain the status quo (Bhabha, 2004; Fannon, 2004; Said, 1994A, 1994B; Tomlinson, 1991). An example of academic writing that categorized people without their participation is the invention of Africa by Europeans while the people living there had no input in how they would be conceptualized, no idea what “Africa” or “a continent” was (Mudimbe, 1994). To categorize an entire collection of people “strangers” exposes a profound bias and judgment about who is a member and who is an outsider (Simmel, 1950). Simmel was not talking about competent communication being equated with assimilation. Quite the contrary, he was reflecting on the ability of Jews to maintain their identities and cultures for millennia while also succeeding in various European cultures as a minority—of being both physically close yet socially distant at the same time while also being economically and culturally integral to a community—even exceptionally successful by its standards.

Total assimilation is not necessary to be “competent” or successful. Indeed, the unique skill often proves more valuable than a redundant skill. Rewards, including esteem and status are typically inversely related to abundance. The scarcity of a skill, such as the ability to do high-level mathematics or play a musical instrument at the level of a virtuoso, is typically “in demand” and “commands” higher status and economic reward. The immigrant who can teach violin, or practice medicine in a community of coal miners who cannot, may well have a viable occupation with little competition. Being unique and original is an essential quality of producing art and science.



### A New Paradigm Recognizing Co-Integration and Conversing

According to the older structural functional paradigm, a functionally fit person is a person who listens and accurately replicates or conforms to the dominant referent defined as the “objective reality” that is “mainstream culture” (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 369, 378). He or she is discouraged from introducing novelty to the system for fear of being stimulating (“threatening” equilibrium—dogmatic slumbers). This approach conceives of interaction as more a process of downloading and conforming than integrating and conversing. If a person perceived to be subaltern, such as an immigrant or laborer, exercises voice or exhibits his or her ethnic identity, such a person is accused of being “maladjusted” (p. 377), “unrealistic” (p. 369), “ethnocentric” (p. 376), unbalanced or mentally ill (pp. 365, 372–373, 382), and ultimately “not fit to live in the company of others” (p. 358) (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Fitness presumes a dualism whereby the newcomer must pliantly fit into the expectations of a dominant group. Such an attitude toward the “stranger” is conceptualized in muted group theory as an oppressive process (Houston & Kramarae, 1991; Orbe, 1995).

By definition, structural functionalism presents the perspective of the established structure and its definition of a highly functional person. Functional fit does not involve negotiating the architecture of the established structure, but rather addresses how well a thing or person complies and conforms when faced with an organization that presents itself as “reality,” as a *fait accompli*. Under such discursive control, only an insane person defies “reality” identified as the way things are. This is inherently unwelcoming. The immigrant confronts a social system that he or she is not allowed to participate in building. Agency is discouraged in favor of passive conformity. Consequently the system cannot benefit from any contribution the newcomer may bring, and conversely the newcomer is encouraged to “unlearn” him- or herself. According to structural functionalism, contributions presented by the newcomer are not appreciated. Only reinforcement of the already existing structure is welcome, usually in the form of labor defined, controlled, and organized by established interests.

According to this old structural functional paradigm, influence was assumed to be unidirectional. This presumption led to the idea that assimilation, namely conformity and homogeneity of thinking and believing, equaled good relations and “effective,” “competent” communications (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 360, 372–373). From the perspective of those who presume the sovereign right of ownership and to dominate, deviance from attempts to achieve “maximum convergence” (p. 360) with “accepted modes of experience” (not just behavior, but “appropriate” modes of thinking and even feeling) and/or resistance to “coercive pressure” to conform, are perceived as lacking cognitive complexity (pp. 362, 382) and lacking “clarity, depth, balance” (p. 383), and the “self-reflexive capacity of the human mind” (p. 380), while also exhibiting irrational “hostility” (p. 372) (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). They are said to be in need of psychotherapy (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 382).

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CFT does not follow this assimilationist paradigm, but it does recognize this mentality to be dominant through much of the colonial period, up through Rostow's (1960) "take-off stage theory of national development," and even enduring in neocolonial academic writing.

This traditional mode of hierarchical thinking worked both ways. Colonial masters wanted their subjects to follow commands, and "host societies" demanded conformity from immigrants to the point of some writers arguing that the best immigrant was the one who would totally "de-culturize" and "unlearn" his or her original identity while equating integration and adaptation with assimilation (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Kim, 2008). This dualistic approach to explaining intercultural and international relations also included the notion of the diffusion of colonial innovations to the colonized as diffusion worked through a two-step flow managed by opinion leaders and elites (Rogers, 1962). But with new communication systems, this is no longer accurate. Previously unimagined access global communications networks filled with ideas from all locations simultaneously is eliminating traditional gatekeepers. Membership and participation in global information systems is more equitable than ever.

CFT is an ecological approach to intercultural and international communication and argues that communication is a multisided affair that involves simultaneous adjustments on all "sides," including between a host culture and an immigrant. This is coevolution, a long-standing concept in biology, which recognizes mutualism, sometimes even co-dependence as exemplified by the relationship between species (Kramer, 1995, 2000B, 2008, 2011, 2017). A famous example is the co-dependence between Darwin's orchid (*Angraecum sesquipedale*), with its long spurs that are pollinated only by the long proboscis of the Morgan's sphinx moth (*Xanthopan morganii praedicta*).

But in the case of global communications, simple two-sided co-evolution is replaced by pan-evolution and pan-integration. Increasing international and intercultural communication is increasing the complexity webs of entanglement. This entanglement is creating complex vectors of mutual dependency, including fluxing differences establishing mutable identities. This is the essence of churning and fusing in the dynamic semantic field of global communication. My identity is becoming more complex as I encounter more and varied forms of difference.

According to systems theory, emergent structures in a self-organizing system, which human society is, involve pan-evolutionary processes whereby different stakeholders exert their needs and their abilities on one another, affecting one another's evolution; qua change through communication (Kramer, 1992A, 1992B, 1997, 2000B, 2000C, 2003A). These networks of forces include mutuality, co-dependence, commensalism, parasitism, and other forms of interaction between unlike individuals and groups. It is the communicative processes that also characterize how individuals and groups interact with the larger climate (including, for instance, sociocultural and political-economic climatic structures).

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A basic tenet of hermeneutics is that text and context share a common boundary that determines the shape of each one. One wall erected in a structure creates two rooms. The new common wall also determines each side's characteristics such as size, shape, access to windows and doors, and so forth. Immigrants change their neighborhoods just as they adopt some features of their new home. In simplest terms, the arrival of an immigrant family changes a neighborhood from a monoculture to a multicultural environment. This systems approach is fundamentally different from assimilationist theories that, in the interest of security and stability, call for the immigrant to disintegrate and disappear into total identification with the "host culture."

CFT is built on the insights of hermeneutics (a form of systems theory) and the model of communication that sees the receiver as always doing something with (interpreting and appropriating) the sender's message. The old sender-arrow-receiver model is obsolete. Communication is reciprocal, and integration is an entanglement of messaging (semantic field) such that the outcome is co-integration as each "side" understands the other and negotiates meanings together. Interaction is not the same thing as one side passively taking dictation.

Integration is not the same thing as one-sided assimilation. Integration and communication, meaning the exchange of unique perspectives requires difference. If all difference disappears into assimilative conformity so that everyone is identical, communication becomes redundant—meaningless.

CFT recognizes the fundamental truth that "you are what you eat." Integration means that as a society "takes in," "consumes" immigrants and foreign products and ideas, that "host" society is fundamentally changed even as immigrants and foreign ideas are also affected ("digested"). The integration of foreign ways does not mean they disappear under the coercive force of de-culturization and assimilation. Rather, it means that the host society becomes more complex as it manifests an increasing repertoire of forms of music, cuisine, sports, entertainments, spiritual systems, fashions, beliefs, values, traditions, and so forth. And not everything we eat "agrees" with us.

CFT does not aspire to postulate a perfect state of agreement-equilibrium or to offer means on how to manufacture utopia. Communication is dialectical. Difference is a necessary condition for conversing. Communication is not a disease for which conformity "adaptation" is the "cure" (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 379). CFT does not aspire to eliminate difference and therefore communication, and to replace it with such an extremely degree of homogeneity that discussion is replaced with pure presumptive implication or "telepathic intuition" (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 273). Sacrificing communication for the goal of equilibrium (a silent zero-energy state) and the elimination of uncertainty is not the target of CFT. As a social scientific theory, CFT has no political or cultural goal other than understanding behavior. It is not a set of guidelines for social engineering.

CFT does not presume to project what proper human character should be, and therefore, unlike popular Parsonian theories, it does not argue that "the educational system has a monumental task of projecting and cultivating a new direction for human character for-

mation," the engineering of the new "intercultural person," the *non plus ultra* of human evolution, the model minority (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 388; Kramer, 2003A, 2016A, 2016B). Civic worth comes from innovation, not stagnation.

The individual exposed to multiple cultures and the host society that receives people from all over the world form nodes of fusional churning among multiple strands of cultural traditions. For instance, just as sushi has permeated U.S. cuisine culture, so too has Christmas become an integral part of Japanese tradition. In each case the receiving country exhibits a range of modifications (sushi with Mexican-style salsa; Christmas seen as less a spiritual period and more as *the* time for marriage engagements and launching new consumer products).

## Perspective: Horizon as Perceptual Schema

*The principle of hermeneutic horizon; the perspective the receiver brings to messages enables her to make sense of them. At the same time, horizon also embodies limitations.*

Regard, our posture toward the world, is not only constantly changing but also manifests cultural, social, historical, and biological structures that constitute the hermeneutic horizon of the individual (Makreel & Rodi, 2002). Although some may see this as relativism, this description of human consciousness is presented as a universal truth about human awareness and sense-making. Hermeneutic horizon includes both the structure of consciousness and the perspective it generates. The structural variance in personal horizons also accounts for discrepancies in experience. Cultural fusion involves an interplay between new experiences and established behavior patterns and memories.

Cultural differences impact how people receive and process information. This is a basic assumption of CFT (Kramer, 1992A, 2000B, 2000C, 2003A, 2003B, 2003D, 2012, 2014). Individuals and social groups integrate new information and newcomers the only way they can, from their unique perspectives. **Schema (hermeneutic horizons)** are mutable, meaning that, with experience, how a person or group integrates future information including newcomers, such as immigrants, changes with experience. Such accumulated experience may be called "growth." But prejudices may be reinforced as much as challenged by accruing experiences. In either case, CFT contends that exposure, intentional or not, always generates a change in schema. Confirmation bias can occur as much as having one's world expanded by exposure to difference. Selective exposure is a part of personal agency, and selective perception or interpretation may be, like communication itself, unintentional and unavoidable.

Unavoidable prejudices on the part of the individual newcomer and the host milieu constitute the **boundary conditions** that influence integration and assimilation (Campbell & Moyers, 1991). "Both sides" constitute "bounded fields" (Campbell & Moyers, 1991, p. 22) that we embody as our personal perspective. We are creatures of our time and place. The newcomer and the "host society" each manifest horizons (biases) that both differenti-

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ate them *but also enable exchange* involving learning, disagreeing, agreeing, and the reflection the Other affords. I am never so “American” as when I am among non-Americans. That part of my identity becomes increasingly salient via the perception of difference.

The host society and its receptivity, and the newcomer, each present perspectives that affect how the interaction will unfold. Communication has a dimension of reciprocity (Buber, 1971). And over time initial perspectives change. People learn with experience. What this means is that immigrants affect change in the host culture. Immigrants are always already a part of the social system they inhabit, and they cannot help but have an effect on the so-called “dominant mainstream” culture. This may be seen by older members of the “host society” as a threat or as an opportunity or as both. Those who see newcomers as a threat to their culture tend to promote the need for newcomers to assimilate, to undergo “de-culturation” and “psychic disintegration” so that they can be remolded to the expectations of the host society (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 359, 380). CFT recognizes the mutability of both the host society and newcomers but also recognizes that integrating new information and experience always occurs from the perspective a person brings to the experience. There is no other way to integrate new experience except from one’s personal perspective. Therefore, to suggest that newcomers somehow “unlearn” or otherwise erase their own perspective as a means toward integration (or even assimilation) is a fallacious proposition.

### Perspective as Entry Valence and Entry Trajectory

CFT also introduces the notion of **entry valence**, which takes into account how a person fuses with a social environment—the interplay of prejudices. The process, in hermeneutic terms, involves more than the level of receptivity or “interaction potential” of a host environment. Different people manifest differing valences or trajectories of fusion. Entry valence has to do with the process of fusion and typical factors such as cultural proximity and linguistic commonality, but also the identity of the newcomer as a social construct at the moment of entry.

Entry valence also involves the motivation for migration or immigration.

Some argue that maintenance of one’s home cultural identity while immersed in a host culture retards assimilation (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). It does limit total loss of identity. However, and to the contrary, research has shown that it (perspective) aids in reducing culture shock, adjustment stress, and the formation of a multicultural identity (Croucher, Oommen, Borton, Anarbaeva, & Turner, 2010; Lee, 2004; Ye, 2006).

CFT argues that this is the case for several reasons.

1. Enclaving allows the minority some control over voice (why, when, to whom, how, and what to talk about). Without such reciprocity, communication, including asking questions, is impossible. This is also why it is widely recognized that linguistic proficiency is essential to success.

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2. Enclaving preserves the validity and viability of peoples' culture, which provides them with a sense of self-esteem and confidence necessary to engage productively with the host culture.
3. Continued participation in intra-cultural communication for immigrants gives them access to the others in their situation who have already navigated the challenges they will face, so that they can profit from prior experience.
4. Staying in contact with one's original cultural identity also mitigates the initial tsunami of information immigrants face, enabling them to withdrawal into a familiar semantic field. The time and space for withdrawal back into the familiar *enables* the individual to assimilate the new information presented by the experience of immigration. Even a lone missionary in a village has ways to retreat into the familiar, accessing a secure modality that is necessary for processing and integrating his or her experiences (Croucher & Kramer, 2017).

## Fusion

*The blending of differences that leads to outcomes that are different from composite ingredients (synergistic results). With regards to cultural fusion, this process involves multiple information flows, not just two cultures meeting and forming a third, "hybrid" culture.*

**Fusion** is not an object or behavior. Rather, it is a process of churning experience involving a constant integration of incoming information that has profound consequences for understanding, sense-making, and behavior. Sense and meaning are two different things. **Meaning** is specific and involves disambiguation. Meaning tends to be intimately associated with linguistic articulation and cultural norms. **Sense** is more amorphous—atmospheric. I may have a feeling or mood, for example, about a room, a person, a city, that is hard to define and specify and which I may not share with others. Sense often does impact expectations, motivations, and behaviors. It can influence communication, but unlike the effort to share meanings, sense is often unshared. Fusion involves both sense and meaning. Both require difference to exist. Fusion presumes two or more different participants in generative contact.

## Hybrid Duality

Although values and beliefs vary, what they have in common is that exposure to each other is increasing gaps in personal experiences of cultural distances. At the same time, some global homogenization is occurring (Kramer, 1992A, 2000B, 2000C, 2014, 2016A, 2016B; Kramer, Adkins, Kim, & Miller, 2014; Kramer et al., 2012; Kramer & Ikeda, 2001). But the common features emerging do not exclusively belong to any single cultural participant. Like mixing cola syrup with water, the fusional result is new, irreversible, and different from both ingredients, even as it has some characteristics of each. Kraidy (2005), in his discussion of hybridity, explained how elements of culture, race, language, and ethnicity fuse together to form new hybrid spaces (for both the newcomers and the dominant

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culture). These hybrid spaces incorporate elements of various cultures, including the original (typically minority) and the dominant or surrounding cultural milieu.

CFT takes into account the fact that the number of sources of information is more than one. In the notion that two people come together and form a third culture, which some characterized as “hybrid” culture, CFT recognizes that we are influenced by far more than just one source of cultural information and that the interaction between and among the different sources is far more complex and offers far more potential variance and opportunity for innovation than a simple dyadic relationship. Due to the countless sources of change-inducing information and the fact that within systems all parts are in flux, Kramer (1995, 1997, 2000A, 2008) refers to the process as “pan-evolutionary.” Building upon Gadamer (2004), Kramer description of fusion theory (2000A, 2000B, 2000C, 2008, 2011, 2014; Croucher & Kramer, 2017) asserts that newcomers to a culture continually build upon their knowledge base or repertoire and fuse or integrate their previous cultural knowledge with newly acquired cultural knowledge. Different from two-valued hybridity, CFT recognizes the existence of multiple channels with countless sources, many originating from distant cultural origins and mediated via global telecommunications networks.

### Boundary Conditions

The process of contact usually includes both rejection and acceptance of difference. In any case, exposure has consequences for both the newcomer and the host milieu.

Fusion involves boundary conditions and states of relative non-equilibrium. It involves phase transitions between relative equilibrium and non-equilibrium states. As long as asymmetry in certainty/uncertainty and novelty/stale convention among multiple information sources exists, fusional churning and innovation are almost certain to occur. This includes non-indigenous rules that constitute challenges to indigenous representational frameworks. What this entails is the importation not only of new ways and ideas but of new ways to interpret the world, including encounters with future ways and ideas. We literally learn how to learn, and how we integrate new information changes with experience.

Principles of CFT and pan-evolution theory explicate the cultural churning of multiple cultural horizons operant in globalized channels of exchange and influence (Kramer, 1993, 1995, 2000A, 2000B, 2000C, 2008; Kramer et al., 2014; Kramer et al., 2012). Operant principles grounding the conceptual framework include mutual influence of exchange, alterity, reversibility, fusional processes of cultural contact, and the growing multiplicity of channels. We are exposed to a rapidly expanding amount of information from countless and varied cultural sources. For individuals the churning synthetic process constitutes the nexus of new cultural forms emergent from multiple sources, resulting in an unfixed, polysemic environment provocative of innovation. Change is difference or deviance. Axiomatic propositions founded in social psychology and hermeneutics include learning as a process of accrual (not a zero-sum closed system), willful unlearning as impossible, and rejection as an unwarranted value judgment of the proposition that deviance is destruc-

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tive to social and psychological stability. CFT and pan-evolution theory argue that foreign ideas and behaviors are integrated by cultural systems adding them to already existing repertoires and making sense of them from interlocutors' relative perspectives. The "host group" and the newcomer are each changed by interaction in an integral process. The old mechanistic social Darwinian metaphor of "functional fitness" belies the organic nature of mutual influence and learning while falsely characterizing host societies as presumptively supplying indigenous and inflexible "niches," thus defining diversity as a corruption, if not impossible.

## Boundary Maintenance

High host receptivity means that the host is welcoming and tolerant of the "other." Low receptivity means the host community is less tolerant of difference manifested by the "other," and the more the host community coerces conformity. Receptivity is a synthesis of various boundary maintenance conditions such as coercion of newcomers to conform or leave.

Host cultural receptivity involves suspicion and fear of the newcomer, seen as a threat (Stephan & Stephan, 1993, 1996). As long as the host culture insists that newcomers offer nothing of value and does not appreciate their contributions, pressure to assimilate or conform to host cultural expectations will continue. Research has shown that increased compliance pressure yields less cooperation, not more. Croucher and Cronn-Mills (2011) found that Muslims in England and France were less amenable to conformity as assimilative pressure increased and host receptivity decreased.

## Other Essential Terms

A major reason for the need to develop CFT is that terminology within the discipline has been ill defined and inconsistent, often confusing terms such as "evolution," "adaptation," "assimilation," "integration," and so forth. An essential part of CFT is the rigorous definition of and coherent and consistent use of terminology foundational to the theory and to understanding intercultural and international communications.

**Evolution** does not "progress." "Progress" is a measure of distance from a pre-established final goal. But life has no final goal. Evolution and adaptation are not the same as assimilation.

**Adaptation** also does not mean conformity. It is the opposite. Adaptation is the purposeful or random emergence of different, new forms of life or cultural from previous forms. Thus single-cell life has endured for billions of years on Earth, but despite such success, it mutated into a fantastic plurality of forms. Evolution does not mean restricting expression to a single "mainstream" culture. Quite the opposite, it involves constant deviation, some which self-replicates and proliferates, and other forms that fail. Culture, like life, constantly experiments with a diversity of solutions to challenges. The more diverse a so-



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ciety, the more likely it is to endure. This is the definition of adaptability used in CFT, not conformity to a single popular style.

**Integration** means the combination of *distinct differences that do not disappear, but instead endure and complement one another, enriching the larger whole and making it more resilient to challenges*. Be it in agriculture, as in the Irish potato famine (Kramer, 2003A, 2016A, 2016B), or in societies, monoculture, compared with a milieu of churning diversity, presents a limited set of options and solutions when facing difficulties. Having limited solutions, monocultures are susceptible to deficiency, meaning that they are less likely to endure in the face of changing conditions. A healthy forest is one filled with diverse life forms.

To be integral means to be a vital, valuable, unique asset to a larger whole.

**Reciprocity** is a vital characteristic of communication (Buber, 1971). CFT maintains that while newcomers are fusing elements of the dominant culture into their knowledge base or repertoire, the dominant culture is also influenced and enriched by the arrival of newcomers. The uncertainties they represent do not generate only anxiety but also diversity of choices in cuisine, ideas, religious practices, clothing styles, musical genre, and so forth. This fusion or integration is different from Kim's (2001, 2008) description of de-culturation, acculturation, and intercultural personhood, where newcomers are strongly encouraged to abandon cultural knowledge while learning new cultural knowledge.

## Fusion Versus Assimilation

Scholars have produced an extensive body of research on how information including intercultural integration takes place, identified positive and negative effects of the process (e.g., Berry, 1990; Berry & Epstein, 1999; Chun & Choi, 2003; Croucher, 2011; Croucher & Rahmani, 2015; De La Garza & Ono, 2015; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Kim, 1988, 2012; Kraidy, 2005; Kramer, 2003A; Lee, 1991; Murphy & Choi, 1997; Ye, 2006). Kramer (2000A, 2000B, 2003A, 2016A, 2016B) asserts that fusion is less of a binary process, as the one proposed by Kim (2001, 2008, 2012), in that newcomers have more cognitive, affective, and operational flexibility. De La Garza and Ono (2015) further add that migrants may adapt in a variety of ways that do not always mean they have to acculturate. The authors suggest that during the communicative process of migrants adapting, the larger culture (De La Garza and Ono prefer not to use the word "host") may also be changed, a process they call differential adaptation.

Also, it has been demonstrated that newcomers to a culture may not be accepted by the dominant culture, may not be able to completely assimilate, and/or may not want to completely assimilate (Croucher, 2008, 2009; De La Garza & Ono, 2015; Hargreaves, 1995; Kim, 2001, 2012; Isa & Kramer, 2003; Kramer, 2003A, 2003B, 2003C; Oh, Koeske, & Sales, 2002; Smolicz & Secombe, 2003).

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Kramer (2000B, 2000C, 2003A, 2016A, 2016B) has noted Dubois' work on double consciousness and how attempts to coerce people to conform when they cannot (e.g., being unable to change their race, gender, ethnic background, or sexual preference, etc.) are untenable. And especially in cases where the subaltern does attempt to assimilate cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively, as Gudykunst and Kim (2003) advise, he or she may be at even greater risk. This would be the case if the dominant group's perspective that the subaltern earnestly attempts to assume includes seeing him- or herself as having little value. This leads to self-hate. It does not lead to mental stability or "psychic equilibrium," as Gudykunst and Kim (2003) claim. In such cases, the more subalterns internalize the perspective of the dominant group, the more they come to devalue themselves. For instance, to the extent that a little black girl takes to heart the aesthetic of Caucasian beauty, the more she will come to see herself as ugly. This is unsustainable, alienating, and violates Kramer's (2003A, Kramer & Hsieh, 2012; Kramer & Isa, 2003; Rainwater-McClure & Reed, 2003) notion of a functional culture (based on Ernest Becker's work), namely, that the fundamental function of a culture is to provide avenues for its members to have a sense of purpose and self-esteem. Cultures and organizations that fail to do this are deficient (Kramer & Hsieh, 2012). Consistently, these theories argue, and research demonstrates, a more multicultural approach to cultural adaptation is more realistic and for that reason more ethical.

Kim (2001) defines cultural adaptation as "the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish (or reestablish) and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with those environments" (p. 31). This process is described as a linear "upward-forward" spiral, involving movement away from one cultured self toward another by means of de-culturation and acculturation, where the ultimate lifelong goal is total abandonment of the previous self in direct proportion to assimilation into the new self and culture (Kim, 2001, 2012). CFT maintains that total abandonment of the previous self is impossible and, even if possible, would not be an effective approach to integration, as integration presumes a perspective from which to make sense of new information (Kramer, 2003A).

Cultural fusion is a process of mixing and accrual, the process of a person and society gaining in complexity by adding new repertoires of arts, styles, and practices accumulated via exposure to "others" (Kramer, 2000B, 2000C, 2003A, 2008, 2011). Differently, Gudykunst and Kim (2003) describe a zero-sum process that promotes converging toward a single common culture that represses diversity and growth. Gudykunst and Kim (2003) argue that acculturation can occur only to the extent that newcomers "unlearn" and "de-culturate" themselves (p. 380). Cross-cultural adaptation theory misconceives adaptation as identical with assimilation and integration as "a continuous interplay of de-culturation and acculturation that brings about change in strangers in the direction of *assimilation*, the highest degree of adaptation theoretically conceivable . . . complete adaptation is a lifetime goal . . ." (p. 360). It is a goal Gudykunst and Kim deem to be so valuable that they argue, "The propagation of the goal must go beyond the educational process directly to the political processes and the mass media. Media, in particular, can play a pivotal role in the spread of inter-culturalness as a human social value and thus produce a gradual

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change in the mindset of the general public” (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 389). Kim (1985) similarly argued, “The school seems to be the most appropriate setting for intercultural education efforts. A school is often the first institution of the dominant culture which children from a minority group encounter. Their experiences in this setting are, therefore, critical to their subsequent attitudes and feeling about the dominant society” (p. 394). And furthermore, “Intercultural education is necessary not only for students from diverse ethnic groups, but also for their teachers” (Kim, 1985, p. 393).

This critical assessment of society that is in need of producing a “gradual change in the mindset of the general public” manifests an ambition toward social engineering on a mass scale that CFT, as a social scientific theory, does not share. Furthermore, this picture of immigration presumes that people are inserted into different cultures via physical mobility. Although this happens, it is also the case that we are all already immersed in an increasingly dense atmosphere of information originating from countless cultural sources. Increasingly, even very conservative societies and individuals cannot avoid difference in the form of foreign voices and “ethnic media,” as Gudykunst and Kim (2003) refer to immigrant media, which they argue immigrants should avoid in order to facilitate assimilation (pp. 367, 368). In the past it may have been the case that transfer workers, exchange students, tourists, immigrants, refugees, and others crossing borders knew little about the world generally or about their destination. This is no longer the case. In the past quarter century, access to a vast quantity of information enables people to form expectations about their destination and to begin learning the languages and customs long before arriving.

Contrary to the notion that immigrants should cut off all contact with their home culture, including avoiding “ethnic media” (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 367, 368), several researchers have found continued contact with one’s native culture to be helpful in the process of cultural integration (Croucher, 2008; Durham, 2004; Hargreaves & Mahdjoub, 1997; Lee, 2004). This is in line with what CFT, based on its hermeneutic propositions, predicts. Interpersonal and mass communication within ethnic communities not only helps them to stay connected to family and events in their homelands but also to understand their adopted homes (Croucher et al., 2010; Zhang & Xiaoming, 1999; Zhou & Cai, 2002).

### The Value of Perspective for Integration

Many scholars have pointed out that complete assimilation is impossible. But even if it were possible, it would be an imprudent path if one was attempting to facilitate enduring success of either the individual or the community, as monocultures are less adaptable than multicultural environments (Croucher & Kramer, 2017; Kramer, 2003A). Furthermore, if it were possible to erase the self, it would preclude the ability to learn anything new because all experience is integrated based on preexisting understanding. Additionally, such an aspiration, to “go native,” is often seen as a strange, if not unsettling, by the host group.

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For instance, foreigners who try to be Japanese are called *henna gaijin*, or “weird foreigner who does not seem to understand that she can never be Japanese and that being who you are is normal, natural, okay, even enriching.” Japanese expect foreigners to be different (Kramer, 2003B, 2003C). If one is trying to match their expectations, then being different synchronizes. From universities to corporations, diversity is often purposefully recruited by organizations in the effort to promote innovation and expand their experiential base (cognitive resources and responsive repertoire) to help meet challenges and achieve their goals. Therefore, the more one tries to fit the expectations of the mainstream host culture while oppressing and suppressing one’s own memories and identity, the more one may well actually violate the host culture’s expectations while also minimizing one’s value to the group.

## Uncertainty as the Source of a Positive Mindset

Receptivity is a form of communication. It articulates a regard or approach to the Other—that is how one regards the Other, as a threat, as a banal presence, or as a welcome source of innovation (Stephan & Stephan, 1993, 1996; Croucher & Kramer, 2017). Although uncertainty often fosters anxiety, it is also the origin of hope (Kramer, 1997, 2003A), and newcomers must attempt to remain hopeful in order to endure the profound transition immigration and migration involve. Their hope is in the tolerance and aid the host community extends to them. This will prime them to be more or less enthusiastic and confident in their efforts to integrally fuse with their new home community (Croucher, 2008; Searle & Ward, 1990). It is essential for newcomers to maintain a positive attitude to aid in the process of cultural fusion and adjustment (Kimbrow et al., 2012; Oberg, 1960). At the same time, they must remain realistic in their expectations. As the host community has a great advantage and therefore responsibility in the power differential with the newcomer, it is incumbent on the host community to help the newcomer remain positive. Such expectations are often based on assumptions newcomers have about the host culture that, prior to moving, they have learned from various sources such as the mass media and personal contact with members of the host culture, and from formal preparation such as classes transfer workers may attend (Kramer, 2016A, 2016B; Kramer et al., 2012; Croucher & Kramer, 2017).

## Pan-Evolution

A journalist once asked John Lennon what had influenced him, and he responded, “Everything” (Wenner, 1971). There are many ways constituents of a system interact. The word “symbiosis” was originally coined to describe how people interrelate within a dynamic community. Later it was applied to other organic communities. Fusional integration and interactive influence can be described as a churning process of effects resulting from communication among various sources. Our world is filled with messages from innumerable sources, biotic and abiotic. Plants respond to the path the sun takes during the day across the sky via phototropism. Humans also react to abiotic seasonal changes that impact cultural solutions to survival needs as well as reacting to other biotic cultures they encounter. The co-existence of unlike organisms or people from differing cultural back-

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grounds constitutes a community with diverse perspectives, competencies, needs, and resources. The modes of interrelating can be identified by vectors of dependency and co- and pan-evolutionary mutualism.

### Modes of Fusional Integration

The nature of the vectors of cultural churning, dependency, and influence can be defined as **mutualistic**, **commensalistic**, or **parasitic**. Some writers tend to see newcomers as parasitic. This theory understands evolution as being driven by competition. But researchers into evolutionary processes increasingly see symbiosis as a driving force behind such change and recognize histories of mutualism leading to interdependent co-evolution. “Life did not take over the globe by combat, but by networking” (Sagan & Margulis, 1986); this means communication, reciprocity, and mutual growth (Buber, 1971).

A relationship can take several forms. An **obligate symbiotic** relationship means that both symbionts depend fundamentally on each other for survival. Rice farmers must have the water that engineers can deliver, and engineers must have the rice to eat. Another form is **facultative**, which means a partnership that is optional, one in which symbionts can survive independent of each other but find value in partnering. An example is a petroleum-based industrial production system and petroleum-producing countries. They work together, both profiting from the relationship, but if necessary, they can survive without each other.

Both obligate and facultative relationships involve **mutualism**, or reciprocal altruism. If a U.S. community wants to make Chinese language instruction available to its children, it must seek out and support a native Chinese-speaking teacher. And the teacher must compromise aspects of his or her lifestyle and endure a different cultural and geographical climate. The relationship has mutual benefits and compromises. The school district may be forced to abandon an alternative, instruction in Latin, to redirect scarce resources to the Chinese teacher.

Communities can only exist as a result of mutualisms between members who are interacting symbiotically and who share the environment **endosymbiotically**, meaning as essential members of the community. When parts of a community die or leave, the community changes, and in some cases the member may be so vital that its disappearance leads to the demise of the community. An example could be the closing of a major manufacturing operation or mine that supported the community. The mining operation needs the surrounding community of laborers, and the laborers need the mine. One cannot exist without the other. Each provides something the other lacks.

**Commensalism**, or antipathetic symbiosis, is another form of symbiosis whereby one symbiont benefits while the other is neither harmed nor helped by the relationship. Commensalism literally means “to share a table.” At a food court I might “possess” a table by being the first person to sit there, but as others bring their trays of food over and join me, I am neither harmed nor benefitted by their presence.

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**Parasitism** means that one member benefits from the relationship while the other is harmed or must share limited resources it generates and/or controls. A majority of all animals in the world have a parasitic phase in their lifecycles. This is also the case with humans, as infants must rely on others for their food, shelter, and other survival needs. It may seem that immigrants uniquely depend on extant cultural, economic, educational, social, legal, medical, and other structures they encounter. They do. However, so do all members of the community, native and immigrant.

Community membership means, by definition, mutual and commensal sharing of resources by various channels, including taxation and subsidization. In all modern societies one finds variants of mutual and commensal partnerships between individuals and collectives, and private and public sectors. An example is the legal status of a utility whereby government assures a healthy profit that will sustain a corporation, while the private corporation assures the dependability and affordability of an essential product or service such as electricity.

**Pan-evolution** means the mode of fusional change that occurs when multiple cultural sources, including mediated messages and texts, churn. Entanglement of cultural forms leads to innovative byproducts. The direction of influence is not unilinear. One black student enters an all-white high school. That one student will be changed by the experience, but so too will the entire school and all its members. Influence is multidirectional and varies in intensity. An historical example is the enrollment of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi in 1962. It disturbed the status quo, challenging and changing an entire culture, meaning values, beliefs, motivations, expectations, and behavior patterns. Minimally, it forced all locals to assume an identity relative to his presence of being supportive, indifferent, or oppositional. This is no small issue. Some who participated in violent riots against his enrollment felt shame and denied their behavior for the rest of their lives (Doyle, 2003).

Contact creates **cultural turbulence**. It is the experience of difference and experiments in integration. It results from movement. As one component moves, others react. Sometimes it takes the form of overt efforts to change things; sometimes it is simply locals observing and adopting behaviors and styles immigrants manifest, such as new cuisine, music, sports and games, and faiths.

### A Necessary Condition for Progress and Identity is Deviance

The example of James Meredith desegregating the University of Mississippi illustrates two vital points. First, change, including what might be defined as “progress,” requires deviance, which almost always starts small. Second, a single different kind of person can have an influence on a cultural environment that is far out of proportion to population. The presumption that communication competence and psychological health are reflected in one’s willingness and ability to conform to some monolithic “mainstream” culture that manifests the way of life of a simple majority is false.

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Change—influence—is discontinuous, mutational, and omnidirectional. For every action there is a reaction. Evolution in both life and culture is an endless experimentation of forms. To be adaptable does not mean to conform to previous forms, but to innovate.

### Importance of the Self

There are two kinds of characteristics that constitute the self, which in turn signifies in-group and out-group membership. They are **primary** and **secondary characteristics**. Primary characteristics are ones that cannot be changed or transferred, such as race, (in most cases) sex, and age. Secondary characteristics are ones that can be changed, such as (in most cases) religion or nationality.

Multicultural understanding begins with an understanding of the self (horizon or schema). The ability to perceive (including cultural perception) all starts with and is dependent on the self. The **self** is distinguished from **identity** and **consciousness**. None of these aspects of a person is regarded as a fixed object among other fixed objects. Instead, each is in constant flux. Primarily an exterior phenomenon, **identity** emerges as dependent on how others see us. It is the most superficial of the three and the most easily changed. **Self** is much more complex. It is not as “social” as identity. Nonetheless, self is a cultural construct. The self is the domain of beliefs, values, attitudes, wants, and needs.

The self has a core of beliefs and attitudes that are very unlikely to change after adulthood. Although these terms will be defined further on, it may help to begin with basic definitions. **Beliefs** describe what each individual holds to be “true,” from the most mundane (e.g., “It’s Tuesday”) to the most sublime (e.g., “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah”). **Values** describe what is held to be right (e.g., “Self-sacrifice for one’s country is noble,” and wrong (e.g., “Thou shalt not lie”). **Attitudes** describe sets of preconceived notions toward or against some object (e.g., “I like rollercoasters”). **Wants** describe the states of being or material things desired by a person, but not required for survival. Those things one must have in order to survive are **needs**. **Consciousness** is the ability to have awareness.

The claim that a person has a set of core values and many superficial beliefs that are constantly changing is an essential concept to the overall theory of cultural fusion.

### Core of the Self

“I am . . .” is a statement of identity, and it can also signify the self. But the statement “I am. . .” involves beliefs, attitudes, emotions, values, and needs. A **belief** is an assertion that is perceived to be true. Beliefs are not necessarily facts in the objective sense, because we often believe things that are not objectively true. An attitude is a more generalized cognition. **Attitudes** are different from beliefs in that attitudes have three dimensions, which are (a) an evaluative component (good versus evil); (b) a belief component (true versus false); and (c) a behavioral component. Attitudes are typically learned and are therefore relatively enduring. Attitudes are usually learned from watching the reactions of others to situations and events. **Values** are generalized evaluations of right and

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wrong and are usually learned from our culture and used to judge the behavior of ourselves and others. One may have an overall good attitude regarding a friend, and that can create a “halo effect,” or attribution that makes you see even her “bad behavior” as not so bad as it would seem if done by a stranger or a person with a negative halo.

### Values

Values go beyond human interrelations and include the land and animals. For instance, the Maori of New Zealand hold very strong feelings about the inheritance of land. Among the Navaho, matrilineal kinship rules give women their own plots of land (Dodd, 1998). For many plains natives of North America, the land is conceived as the Earth Mother. With regards to the relationship between humans and animals, again cultural values, which are also personal values, vary greatly. The Kwakuutl of Vancouver Island claim animals to be their ancestors, but the Balinese do not regard animals as being at all human-like and are repulsed by “animal-like” behavior.

As a value, friendship is valued in every culture but differs in many respects from one culture to another. For instance, among Euro-Americans in North America, friends are quickly made and abandoned. The level of personal obligation between friends is relatively low. But among Native Americans such as the Kiowa, it takes a long time to move from the status of an acquaintance to that of a friend; friendship is a lifelong relationship, and it means sharing at a very intimate level with much obligation.

### Attitudes

An attitude is a generalized favorable or unfavorable evaluation of some object or behavior. Attitudes are relatively enduring because we seek cognitive consistency. That is why it is hard for us to see friends as doing bad things or as being bad people. A friend, for whom we have a positive attitude, is seen as a good person who did a bad thing. A belief is an assertion that we perceive to be true. Beliefs differ from attitudes in that beliefs are more specific. Attitudes are closely related to beliefs. For instance, a positive attitude about someone or something will lead to the belief that that thing or person is truly good. Attitudes are the foundations upon which specific beliefs rest. For instance, if I have a negative attitude toward racism, then it is likely that I will not support specific behaviors like racial segregation or slavery. Knowing a person’s beliefs can be clues to their more general attitudes.

### Beliefs

Milton Rokeach (1968) argues that our belief systems have five different levels. He uses an onion as a metaphor for explaining belief systems. This metaphor has two important implications for integral change in individuals and groups. First, some beliefs, the ones on the outer skin of the onion, are easily changed, whereas the deeper layers at the core of the onion constitute our most powerfully held beliefs. Second, the outer layer beliefs are dependent on the deeper ones. If a core belief changes, like belief in a god, all the outer-layer beliefs will be affected. But if a weakly held belief on the outer skin changes—for ex-



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ample, if I decide that my favorite color is not red, but blue—this has no effect on the deeper structures of beliefs.

Rokeach (1968) outlines the five layers of the onion, stating that the outer-most layer is the one of “inconsequential beliefs.” **Inconsequential beliefs** concern personal tastes such as “I hate pizza” or “I like sushi.” The next layer into the onion is that of “**derived beliefs**.” Derived beliefs come from authorities in one’s life such as the news media, teachers, and/or religious leaders. Derived beliefs come to us more subtly and are much longer lasting than inconsequential beliefs. The next layer is called “**authority beliefs**.” These are more specific and concern whom you can and cannot trust. Authority beliefs dictate that I should trust my parents more than a stranger.

The two layers that comprise the inner core of beliefs are the “**primitive without consensus beliefs**” and the “**primitive with consensus beliefs**.” These two together constitute the core values of your *cultural self*.

Primitive without consensus beliefs are often called “ideological.” They are doctrines that guide your life, but you realize that there are some people who do not share them with you. This would involve your religious faith, your political party allegiance, and so forth. The absolute core of your belief system, the primitive with consensus beliefs, is constituted of beliefs that are indisputable to you, such as “I am a student” or “I need air to live.”

Values and needs also form hierarchies of importance and help to identify who we are (Maslow, 1968). They are transmitted to us by authority figures from our childhood, such as parents, teachers, and religious leaders. Our most deeply held values are generally those of our culture. Values are expressed as evaluations of people, things, and events. An example would be that Japanese are better than Nigerians. Or that Thai food is not as good as Italian food. Evaluations of right and wrong, good and bad, are at the core of cultural selves and are also the source of ethnocentrism. **Ethnocentrism** is more than just the recognition of difference. It is the evaluation of that difference first into normal and abnormal, which often becomes good and bad or right and wrong, and then more disputable beliefs and judgments. It is true that many people from Africa have dark skin. This is a widely shared belief. But to then say that dark skin is abnormal or bad is a value judgment.

In this sense the self and culture cannot be separated. The core beliefs and values of a person come from their culture via socialization from childhood (Brislin, 1993). Becoming a member of a society and culture involves the formation of self. Bronislaw Malinowski (1961) studied the Trobriand islanders. From this experience, Malinowski concluded that cultural systems, including values, are organized around three categories of underlying needs. **Basic needs** are those related to survival, such as food and water. **Derived needs** are those associated with social coordination, such as divisions of labor and resource distribution. Finally, **integrative needs** are those needs for social harmony and security, which give rise to cultural expressions like magic, myth, and art (Nanda, 1980).

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However, not all cultures conceive of the self in the same way. For instance, according to Rom Harré (1983), for the Inuit (Eskimos) the self is seen as a part of a social network. Although Inuit people, like everyone else, have private feelings and opinions, these are generally considered unimportant. Important issues regarding the self are discussed in terms of qualities of relationships with others. For the Inuit, emotions are regarded as public displays instead of private feelings. Emotions are expressed as a group, so they all laugh together and cry together. Inuit virtues are all social in nature. Probably due to the harsh environmental climate within which they live, survival of the individual depends on survival of the group, which requires a great deal of social cooperation. Furthermore, Inuit do not have a sense of individual creativity. In Inuit art, artists believe that they are not creating something that does not already exist, but instead that they are merely releasing that which is already present in the wood or ivory they carve.

According to Harré (1983), the intensity and force of one's personal powers depends on one's self-concept. In Western and Westernized modern industrial culture, people see themselves as individual units, as singular and independent wholes. By contrast, the Japanese perceive and conceive themselves as having two distinct parts, an inside of feelings and an outside of observed behaviors. Moroccans have a different self-concept. They tend to see themselves and others as embodiments of places and situations. For Moroccans the identity of an individual is always a manifestation of situation; the self is a situational product.

### Emotions

Some cultures allow one to express emotions more than others. People of Anglo-Saxon descent tend to treat emotions as if they just happen to them and are internal phenomena. For such people, emotions are privately manifested and individually realized. Emotions are seen as passive (i.e., the "stiff upper lip"). But many persons of Southern European culture see emotions as public, collective, and active. Emotions for Southern Europeans—for people from Spain, Italy, and Greece—are frequently believed or assumed to be created by the group and are displayed in social situations.

Whereas Harré (1983) has suggested that emotions are constructed concepts, James Averill (1980) has argued that in fact emotions are social constructs that express cultural variance. For Averill emotions are belief systems that define situations for group members. Emotions consist of internalized norms that are the result of enculturation. For Averill emotions are syndromes.

According to Averill (1980), there are four kinds of learned rules that govern emotional behavior. First are **rules of appraisal**. These rules guide the person as to what an emotion is, whether it is positive or negative, and how it is directed. Second are **rules of behavior**, which determine how to respond to a feeling. Third are **rules of prognosis**. These rules define the progression and course of emotions. Finally, **rules of attribution** dictate how or if an emotion needs to be explained or justified.

### AVERILL'S FOUR EMOTIONAL RULES

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Appraisal	Guides to what an emotion is
Behavioral	Guides how to respond to a feeling
Prognosis	Defines progression and course of emotions
Attribution	Defines if and how an emotion should be explained or justified

For instance, each culture teaches its members how to appraise anger. We are taught what we are feeling and how to target or direct anger. We are taught how to define whether the anger experienced is positive, like righteous indignation, or negative, like destructive and unfounded rage. **Behavioral rules** tell us how to express anger, whether it is appropriate to lash out or to keep quiet; to confront the target of our anger and aggress; or to avoid them, to retreat. **Prognosis rules** dictate how long it is socially appropriate to be angry and for which kinds of offense. Finally, **attribution rules** guide what excuses or reasons are adequate for provoking acceptable anger and whether these reasons need to be publicly explained (e.g., “He stole my favorite hunting knife, which made me mad”).

## Competent Communication

“Competence” as a value is too often reduced to the ethnocentric prejudice that favors economy as minimalistic effort for output indicative of late-industrial societies and their chronic sense of urgency. Conservatism is risk averse and seeks to avoid uncertainty. Conversely, profit in life measured as an enrichment of meaning can be had from elaboration and spending time with complexity and the unfamiliar. Automobile companies and fashion houses are compelled by their customers to constantly redesign their products and launch the next season’s models and styles. Humans thrive on difference. This fact is a challenge for conservatives, who prefer the status quo and often find themselves at odds with their own children in an increasingly global world churning with innovations and increasingly infused with the value of inventiveness itself. Under such conditions, accurate duplication of norms and satisfactory compliance is adjudged “competent.” This is a prejudice.

The “stranger” need not be seen as someone who needs to conform to me, to become me. Identity—my identity—means that I am not you.

Also, competent communication does not mean the simplest way to gain the compliance and conformity of another. Argumentation and debate, besides being the very operative generator of new knowledge via dialectics, may seem inefficient and unpleasant, but argumentation is not a form of incompetent communication. Quite the contrary. Contestation, deliberation, and disagreement are not measures of incompetent communication.

Access to different beliefs, values, expectations, and behavioral norms provokes both individuals and social groups to cope. Coping is a creative process. Innovation comes from

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stimulation and challenges. Assimilation and accommodation are fundamental processes involved in both personal learning and societal change.

### Functional Fit and Enclaving

A host community that expects and encourages the newcomer to disintegrate into total conformity, creating no “disturbance” in the community, is expecting not only the impossible, for no one can “unlearn” or “de-culturize” themselves, but also depresses the positivity the newcomer needs to integrate. Such intolerance presumes that the newcomer has nothing of value to add to the host cultural or economic environment, and in so doing such intolerance sets up conditions that will prompt the immigrant to lose any positive hope and to retreat further from interaction or communication; the immigrant will enclave (Kramer, 2011, 2016A, 2016B). This creates a relational dynamic that results in mutual suspicion, mutual fear—hence community fragmentation.

This dynamic involves what some structural functionalists call “functional fit” and a duality between the “content” and the structural “niche” it is supposed to “fill” (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). But the notion of conformity to pre-established form—“fit”—has been misunderstood at the metaphysical level and therefore confuses the issue (Kramer, 2000B, 2000C, 2008, 2003A). This sets up a line of argument logically concluding that nonconformists are “unfit to live with” (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 358). However, this faith in an abstract set of finished niches waiting to be filled with real, “flexible” people is unwarranted and perhaps unethical. It is an old rhetorical strategy, a pseudo-scientific justification for cultural domination (Spencer, 1851; Kramer, 2003A). The narrative explains that what is real, objective, natural is to assimilate, to go along with the coercion of a dominant group. To not assimilate is therefore to be unrealistic, subjective, and unnatural, perhaps manifesting “mental illness” (“imbalance”) and/or criminal-hostile intent (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 365, 368, 372). This claim is rejected by the observation that fusion leads neither to homogenization nor to mental instability or sociopathic attitudes and behavior (Kramer, 2000A, 2000B, 2000C, 2003A). It involves either the unwillingness or inability of a person or thing to fulfill a functional role assigned to it (identification). The assignment power is the essence of imperial administrative process. This is as old as imperialism itself; only in modern society can such instrumental rationalization assume the patina of academic authority, making the rhetoric in the service of establishment interests all that more persuasive even as it describes the “appropriate” functional use of things and people (Foucault, 1970).

### CFT and the Ideology of Nicheism

This is a form of metaphysical mysticism that postulates that a set of niches exist within some pre-established supernatural plan that awaits material content. There is no pre-established set of parking spaces or “niches” demanding that life ought to conform. This presents the perspective of an intolerant host appealing to mysticism to justify the demand for assimilation. Rather, the new lifeform and the newcomer presents a new set of competencies that prove to be either durable or fail to reproduce themselves. There is no

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pre-established fit for the immigrant (Kramer, 2000B, 2003A; Kramer et al., 2012). The content has its own form. The person or species is the niche, and when they leave, there is no empty parking space. Their competencies and value may be missed, but only within a strict corporate structure is “the good” achieved by finding an exact duplicate person to replace them. Beyond the most mundane physical acts, even corporate organizations need unique newcomers to infuse innovation. Insofar as culture is far more than servicing base survival needs, innovation is a sign of social-cognitive and emotional complexity and resilience.

The operational activity of the new lifeform or the immigrant constitutes its “niche”: the qualities, competencies, and characteristics of the immigrant. *The immigrant is the niche, and when and if the immigrant disappears, so too do those qualities, competencies, and characteristics he or she manifested for the community.* Only if the host community adopts the immigrant as a member and adopts some of his or her styles, cuisine, and ways will the community be enriched. In other words, when the T-Rex went extinct, it did not leave an “empty” yet extant “niche” to be refilled by another animal. There is no such duality. The “content” forms part of the context.

In accordance with systems theory, CFT maintains that the environment (physical or cultural) is altered by the existence of its content membership. The content does not merely conform to what the environment offers. Rather, the content is the environment, and the overall ecology is a synergistic phenomenon. The process is more complex than either conforming or deviating. Nor is it merely the summation of members, but the fusing of differences leading to original formations—many quite unforeseen, even given knowledge of precursor states (the consequence of randomness). As Stephen Hawking (1988) noted about the three-body problem: “We cannot even solve exactly for the motion of three bodies in Newton’s theory of gravity, and the difficulty increases with the number of bodies and the complexity of the theory . . . we have, as yet, had little success in predicting human behavior from mathematical equations!” (p. 168). In the global semantic field, the number of messages churning and fusing is far more than three. And it may be good; otherwise, we could end up having no future because all future states would be already known, making life utterly meaningless (Kramer, 1997, 2003A). The uncertainty of the future horizon is the ultimate “use value”; otherwise, if one knows all outcomes, then what is the use of trying?

Crucially, as life (natural and cultural) evolves, it does not merely fit the preestablished environment, but because it always already is an integral part of the environment, it changes it. The impact of a new form—rock and roll, for example—can be literally global on scale. Another example is the evolutionary appearance of prokaryotic and eukaryotic organisms that gave off oxygen as a metabolic byproduct of photosynthesis; the atmosphere of the Earth was changed, causing the extinction of an entire world of obligate anaerobic microorganisms that had colonized the Earth and that experienced oxygen as a fatal toxin. Free oxygen oxidized atmospheric methane to carbon dioxide and water, thus cooling the planet and triggering the Huronian glaciation. Also, concentrations of oxygen led to vast changes in chemical interactions within the geological substrates of the

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Earth's air and surface waters. It also led to a breakthrough in metabolic evolution as mitochondria evolved, giving organisms the energy to exploit new morphologies, increasing dramatically in diversity, and thus increasing the complexity of ecosystems. The accumulation of free oxygen even led to the formation of hundreds of minerals, changing the composition of the Earth's inorganic surface, which in turn created new environments for new lifeforms.

Evolution leads to new worlds, not the endless repetition of the same status quo.

## Cultural Evolution and Personal Growth

One cannot un-see or un-hear what has been seen and heard. Exposure provokes the process of integration. People cannot willfully “unlearn” who they are. As access to other cultures increases, the world itself increasingly becomes a milieu of churning diversity—all societies and individuals are increasingly multicultural. Wyndham Lewis referred to this as an emergent world with its own structure and logic—“vorticism” (Lewis, 2010). Global communication and transportation networks have created what the paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin (2008) prophetically called a global “noosphere,” a semantic field forming a layer of information on the planet, facilitating a level of intercultural exchanges and innovations unprecedented in human history. Likewise, Lewis (2010) coined the phrase “global village” to describe a new cosmology, and human as “cosmic man,” which Lewis Mumford (2010) expanded upon, pointing out that what is happening with the historically sudden explosion in communication on a global level is leading to qualitative differences involving the emergence of a new cosmopolitanism or “planetary human”—a new mindset and self-identity; a change that is greatly surpassing the impact of older but also profound mutations in worldview, generated by the expansion of literacy and networks of roads, as many have proposed (Carpenter & McLuhan, 1966; Havelock, 1963; Innis, 1950; McLuhan, 1962; Ong, 1982).

The process of cultural fusion as a personal and social process is impacted by the massive expansion of communications globally (especially the invention of hypertext markup, making information easily accessible), the decentralization of the system, the eventual emergence of ownership patterns of providers (Anderson & Wolff, 2010; Galloway, 2018), and the promise of blockchain to “re-decentralize” the system again (Gilder, 2018; Zittrain, 2009). The latter is a development Berners-Lee and others believe necessary because the global communication system has been organized by a handful of corporations with commercial interests. This outcome was predicted by mass communication scholars while interpersonal scholars focused on the psychological effects of social media usage by applying old theories such as face-work theory to the new communications reality, in some ways missing the most profound changes, the message that is the system itself and the interests it embodies (Gray, 2018; Kramer, 1997, 2011, 2016A, 2016B).

### Change Is Changing

Culture traditionally changes very slowly, but according to CFT, the process of cultural evolution has itself changed—accelerated profoundly—churning. With growing access to countless sources of information, acculturation has become an endless process and one without traditional hierarchies of authority. A necessary condition of change or evolution is deviance, which is manifestly a state of disequilibrium. Life constantly experiments, testing new formations and altering ecological systems. Cultures are mixing and evolving rapidly, leading to reactionary anxiety as well as progressive demands to accelerate ever-more communication and reformation. Tempo, the speed of life and norms of patience and expectations, is fundamental to each culture (Fraser, 1987; Gebser, 1985; Hall, 1984; Kramer, 1992A, 1992B; Kramer & Ikeda, 2001; Levine, 1998; Mumford, 2010). Tempo is changing globally.

Across and transcending cultures, new global communication technologies are impacting our sense of time and duration, our expectations, values, beliefs, and behaviors. Dramatic increases in transit and transmission speeds have shrunk the globe, quantitatively and qualitatively changing change itself. Exposure to the Other has become as easy as turning on a laptop. Who should do the assimilating? Who should unlearn and de-culturize themselves? Who dominates whom? In the global churning of the noosphere, people are more equal than ever. Kings and prime ministers depend on their cellular devices just as do the janitors who clean their buildings and the teenagers in the street. Age and social status have been deconstructed. New communication technologies that are presenting countless voices to one another are converging and diverging on discontinuous threads of narration. For instance, chatrooms dedicated to Aristotle *as a topic of current attention and application* (collapsing historical temporic distance) are occupied by people from multiple cultural traditions (collapsing spatial and cultural distances even as they are also exposed). Contact with other cultures is no longer an issue of the physical insertion of an individual “into” a group. And exposure to the Other, before physical contact, is also confounding old dualistic notions of insider/outsider.

By the billions, the world is having a new form of conversation. Confucian scholars, Thomist theologians, and students and laypersons from around the world are all chiming in about the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Confucius has met Plato on the Internet; Lao Tzu converses with Heraclitus. Japanese authors like Banana Yoshimoto and Haruki Murakami are influenced as much by Truman Capote and Stephen King as by Natsume Sōseki or Kenzaburo Ōe, authors from a generation ago in their own country, who in turn were influenced by Chinese literature, Dante, and Shakespeare. Meanwhile, Manga and Japanese anime fuses Japanese culture, including woodblock printed serials with Western cartoons and cinema graphic techniques emphasizing action and close-ups and superhero science fiction content. Online gaming has merged everything, including notions of team sports, bringing participants together from all corners of the Earth. Transcending cultures, empire imposed a single notion of time on all the world’s inhabitants. Modern empire established zero hour at Greenwich, England, and converted the entire globe into a

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giant clock, collapsing time and space as measure of hours, minutes, and seconds east or west of the prime meridian (Kramer, 2017).

Spatialized time is time reduced to a measure as speed of transit, calculation, transmission—in a word, rate of change—and is an essential and defining characteristic of modernity that is having a profound impact on human society. The word “future” emerged about the same time as the first mechanical clocks. The new modern view prompted H. G. Wells (1932) to propose a new field that would study the future to rival history: futurology. Mannheim (1952), recognizing a new phenomenon emerging as a result of fragmenting perspectives and the increased rate of change, labeled it the “problem of generations,” the “generation gap.” And as media spread around the globe, it is a message of rising modernization even as it propagates messages. An example is the spread of this cultural phenomenon, a growing gap between generations inhabiting the same dwellings, diffused and impacting “traditional cultures” and leading to conservative backlashes that are still occurring (Lerner, 1958). Traditional collectivism (community) was dissolving into increased individualism (modern society) (Toennies, 1957). Globalization and the modern notion of progress were celebrated in events such as the World Exhibitions and World Fairs. Ancient desires for prophecy were surpassed by statistical prediction and actuarial reckoning. Increasingly, mobility (spatial and social) characterized the new world. Everything that once seemed permanent became contingent, and absolutes dissolved into probabilities (Kramer, 1992A, 1992B, 1997, 2017). CFT focuses on the postmodern aspects of recombinant narratives, of the bricolage of global information streams and how they are forming new patterns that violate traditional notions of hierarchy, validity, value, space, and time. The chaos has patterns.

CFT presumes the validity of some propositions taken from the classic notion of the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1962). Not all foreign ideas and ways are positively perceived as “innovative” (Kramer, 2000A). And as Rogers (1962) appreciated, diffusion is also facilitated by opinion leaders and early adopters. The relationship between modernization and Westernization is complex. Kramer (1992A, 1995, 1997, 2013, 2017) has explored the question whether it is even possible to modernize without Westernizing.

Several scholars have discussed the negative consequences of cultural domination or imperialism (Fannon, 2004; Said, 1994A, 1994B; Bhabha, 2004; Tomlinson, 1991). In many ways, modernity continues to dominate other civilizational structures and is facilitated by “tele-colonialism” (Kramer, 2003A). Some scholars have argued that colonialism has positive aspects regarding development (Ferguson, 2004). One such development is, ironically, decentralizing egalitarianism. Increasingly, the telecommunication networks that once enabled tele-colonialism are now enabling interactivity and omnidirectional feedback. Cultural churning is dynamic and unpredictable. Some foreign ways are received as mere nuisances; others as causing profound fractures between genders and generations; and others yet as existential threats to the survival of indigenous cultures. The Internet, cinema, television (the proliferation of consolidating digital platforms), travel, immigration, migration, cultural exchanges, tourism, mobile workforces—all are vectors for cultural churning and the fusional generation of countless new forms and variations, from Chi-



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nese rap music and depictions of Mary the Madonna as Japanese, to stand-up comedy in Nigeria and shifts toward “Asian styling” in automobiles.

Regarding immigration and migration, both those moving and those receiving newcomers into their communities are affected by mobility. Once-isolated communities are now finding themselves penetrated by foreign people and ideas via human migration of various forms and media such as the Internet. Often such contact is seen as unwanted interference in internal affairs, threatening the presumption of sovereignty. At other times the contact is welcome, even enabled by the community seeking foreign investment in various forms, from culinary and literary styles to financial support and human labor. Many of the most developed economies in the world today are also aging and see declining birth rates, and so they have instituted policies to facilitate the immigration and migration of foreign laborers to help stabilize their economies. They need young workers.

Typically, the communities involved presume that they should have control over the flow of information, but increasingly they do not, and this creates anxiety because individuals, groups, institutions, and entire nations can be seen as information systems, so that intercourse with channels of foreign information inherently changes the community. This has been unsettling for many. Rates and qualities of change are changing. Foreign people and ideas are . . . foreign. Immigrant workers are human beings that bring with them cultural knowledge. They are not robots that can be erased and reprogrammed to act, believe, and feel just like an ideal-type local (Kramer, 2000A, 2000B, 2003A; Ju & Sandel, 2018). When you employ a foreign worker, you are importing a repository of foreign culture. It is unrealistic to expect immigrants to unlearn their cultural identity and only offer the competencies exploitable by you. They are whole people with lives beyond the workplace. Some differences may be curious, fascinating, intriguing, even desirable, while others are frustrating, unwanted, even frightening. Human beings are complex, and fragmenting them into exploitable competencies while attempting to discard the rest of their being is not only impractical but immoral. Over time, each “side,” the receiving community and the newcomer, continue to change, sometimes converging, sometimes diverging. Multiculturalism, which involves mutual respect and acceptance of diversity, along with tolerance for inevitable fusional innovation, is the only way to avoid conflict in a shrinking world. Demands for assimilative conformity will increasingly breed what Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) called cognitive dissonance and negative opinion formation, leading to behavioral conflict. Evaluating difference as inherently negative fractures communities.

## The Power of Interactive Communication Versus Informatic One-Way Downloading

The elimination of borders and demarcations between groups continues even as new ones emerge. All ages are flocking to watch “comic-book” stories in big-budget films and are participating in video gaming and streaming on their cellular devices. And yet another demarcation is collapsing as “audience” members are also increasingly the content of messages as they “post” videos of their own performances, lectures, opinions, manifestos . . .

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The old one-way media that generated a comparatively passive mass audience has given way to participatory mediation. As Shirky (2009) succinctly put it, “Here comes everybody.” The perspectival nature of human understanding affects not only anonymous senders and receivers but also academics. Depending on one’s perspective, the uncertainty a new information order presents, whereby older hierarchies of access and participation are fading, can foster fear and anxiety and demands for compliance under coercion, or hope and innovation. CFT recognizes both reactions as common and as moments in a fluxing information environment. Personal decisions about, for instance, whether to allow one’s children access to the Internet, as well as national regulatory and global policy decisions, manifest this oscillation between fear and hope, an oscillation very much like the one between the universal impulses to compete or cooperate noted by the primatologist who studied human behavior Desmond Morris (1969).

Internet “surfing,” gliding along the surface while avoiding deeper issues, is not necessarily a “waste of time” as some argue (Turkle, 2016, 2017). The characterization of the casual perusal of content defined as “miscellaneous” (Weinberger, 2008), a behavior reduced to “distraction” (Jackson, 2009) and “shallow” (Carr, 2010) betrays a bias that fails to appreciate how bottom-up processing can trigger curiosity, reflection, and greater cognitive attention. In fact, so many have exhibited such intense focus on some content, such as video gaming, that Internet addiction is now a recognized problem.

Out of casual perusal and relaxed contemplation of the streaming world, experienced as a gigantic bricolage, unexpected new forms are emerging, producing new music, literature, art, and even financial instruments and currencies. Bottom-up processing explains how things catch our attention and lead us to “dive deeper.” Galileo was relaxing in a church when he was distracted by a swinging lantern and noticed a pattern in its oscillation. The receiver matters. One person sees something profound in a gesture; another barely notices it at all. Communication not only affects us, but we also do something with that information (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973).

## Conclusion

CFT sees the world as a churning information environment of cultural legacies competing and complementing one another and forming novel cultural expressions in all aspects of life, including music, cuisine, pedagogy, legal systems, governance, economic behavior, norms of personal and interpersonal style, family structures, and so forth. Culture is a shared pattern of beliefs, values, and behaviors, but also and increasingly in the modern world, expectations and motivations (Kramer, 1992A).

The “great” and dominating empires of Europe set sail to extract and commodify goods according to their interests and worldview. They sought out and greatly valued things not available to them in their homelands. Along with the spices, slaves, silk, and other goods they imported back into their midst, came ideas, doctrines, styles of art, cuisines, and so forth, so that today, one can reasonably argue that some of the best curry in the world is to be found in London, and some of the most beloved art influenced by Japanese wood-

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block prints is to be found in France, Belgium, and beyond. In short, CFT accepts the axiom that communication need not be intentional and that exposure to the Other, even under profoundly unequal power distribution, affects all involved.

Cultural fusion is not a unilateral process, but rather a hermeneutic process. Connectivity has consequences for all, including the origin of the system. Pluck on part of a spider's web and the whole thing vibrates, including the spider that built the web. Predicting the proportion of change experienced by interlocutors is very difficult. But change itself is unavoidable. As it goes without elaboration that colonized peoples were greatly impacted by colonization, Europe too was and continues to be profoundly impacted by its colonial ambitions.

Even when the power differential appears to be enormous, the influence of contact is not one-way. The appearance of a single immigrant family in a community can have outsized impact. They may open a restaurant with "ethnic" foreign cuisine, thus giving the entire community sudden access to difference. The town gains in complexity and diversifies. Two kinds of people appear in the town: those who prefer raw fish and those who do not. The Other defines us as we define them, via difference.

Diversity does not promise stability, but it does generate meaning and choice. This can be appreciated or rejected. Those who reject rather than appreciate immigrants, for instance, tend to call for either their exclusion or their erasure by means of assimilative deculturization—de-identification (the unlearning of the self as Other). No matter which attitude prevails, the Other creates new identities, those who appreciate immigrants as such and those who want them to disappear. Deliberation, discussion, and debate proliferate. The powerful are affected just as are the weak. According to CFT, no one escapes change. One way or another, the "mainstream" culture is challenged by the appearance of the newcomer and responds. "Host receptivity," be it welcoming or unwelcoming, is inevitable and in flux.

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### Notes:

(1.) After earning his Ph.D. in Vienna, Watzlawick attended the Carl Jung Institute in Zurich, where one of his professors was Jean Gebser. Watzlawick received a degree in analytical psychology from the Jung Institute. Cultural fusion theory has grown out of a continental European tradition of systems theory originating in hermeneutics and cultural/civilizational studies, including Gebser's work. Gestalt theory and other systems approaches also inform CFT.

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# Cultural Fusion Theory

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