

MARTIN: There's a lot of talk of the utopian possibilities opened up by the Internet, of creating a sort of new kind of global community in which people can freely communicate with each other – you can choose what you want to talk about, when you want to talk about it, identities become much more flexible. How do you see all that?

STUART: ... Let's talk about those two things separately. Obviously the technology does enable linkages to be made across a whole number of barriers and frontiers of language and distance and experience and differences between standards of life and expectations and so on. It allows conversations, sharing of experience across the confines of space. What it does is to transcend space and that's an interesting conception of community because our older conception of community is very, I think, tied to the notion of localities, people living in face-to-face contact with one another. That's what we mean by communities all huddled together as it were. Actually, of course, there have always been communities which are much wider than that. One's always shared things with people with whom one doesn't live face to face – one shares musical taste with people on the other side of the world –and increasingly because of the media anyway it seems to me, those communities of choice, communities of taste, communities of interest have been growing. What you call symbolic communities have been growing alongside the communities of space and residence and I think the Internet and all that's associated with the new information technology sort of expands in a multiple way the possibilities of sharing the conversations across these different divides.

DECONSTRUCTION: In the past, most of the communities were 'space communities' (people living in the same area). Wider communities (ex. People sharing the same type of music)

Symbolic communities thrive on the internet.

I think a second element of community does have to do with the degree of the knowledge base or information base. My own feeling at the moment is that the Internet is much more useful in terms of information than it is in terms of ideas. My e-mail contains hardly any ideas at all, but it contains lots of information, some of which is useful. So that is empowering for communities, communities that you know have been locked into their own histories, their own economies, their own cultures and can only reach out . . . where they have access to alternative models... I know exciting things that are going on in which people in inner cities in Los Angeles are talking to people in inner cities in Johannesburg, and sharing what is common about living in inner cities now. Of course, these two peoples are not the

same but they have a common background, some cultural and historical background which they've never spoken about to one another cos they've never had access to a technology which enables them to communicate in that way ... but I don't think one should assume just because one's talking in a rather informal and familiar and open way to a lot of different people that one is getting at the deeper complexities of experience which, you know, may have historical roots or unconscious roots or symbolic roots etc., which would take a long time to explore...

The internet helps us share information, but not a lot of ideas.

We don't get very often into 'complex conversation'

When one talks about sharing a culture, nine-tenths of that is shared unconsciously, it's how you know how to speak the language with somebody, it's not because you know the rules of the grammar. I think the Internet may or may not lead us to be able to share in depth in that way but I don't think it necessarily does and I don't think a lot of the conversations that are being talked about now are really of that quality.

In this type of conversations, we convey culture 'unconsciously', not because we reflect on it.

MARTIN: What do you see as the relationship over time between the traditional sense of a community that you were describing earlier and the community of choice – for example, the Internet? STUART: . . . We are moving more towards belonging to multiple communities, symbolic communities, communities of choice, and further and further away from belonging to communities of traditional location . . . what I think we are going to see is . . . many fewer traditional communities existing of the kind that we've had before, much less closure, much less homogenous identification. What I mean by that is where all your identities overlap; your identity as a parent, as a worker, in your leisure time, in your love life, in your intellectual interests, are all found in the same community, and I think increasingly we'll belong to a variety of communities and we'll learn to manipulate ourselves, reflexively, very differently, the different parts of ourselves for these different conversations. The Internet is in a way, a kind of mirror in cyberspace of the multiplicity of identity, the weakening of homogenous identities, and the multiplicity of identities which we are able to live in and inhabit...

Communities of choice are becoming more relevant than local communities. Our identities are starting to blend.

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TaskB1.5.4



Stuart Hall expresses his belief that the Internet is 'much more useful in terms of information than it is in terms of ideas', and that it is not yet able to really help people to get at 'the deeper complexities of experience' and to 'share in depth'.

- > What do you think Hall means?
- > Do you share his views?

Commentary

In Text B1.5.2 Stuart Hall cautions against jumping to too hasty conclusions about the changes the Internet can bring in terms of 'community'. Jones and Kucker (2001:221) believe that the very word 'community' is not an appropriate word to apply to the Internet, since the 'speed with which we move from place to place online renders any traditional notions of community obsolete' and 'it is increasingly difficult, in a medium built (and continuously imagined) for movement, to develop . . . relatively stable communities'.

SECTION

B

Theme 2 Otherization

In *Orientalism* (1978:4) Said states his belief that 'the Orient' is a social construct:

Edgar, A. and Sedgwick, P. (1999) *Key concepts in cultural theory*, London: Routledge p.266

The Other . . . In the context of theories of culture, perhaps the most prominent contemporary use of this notion has been made by Said. In these terms, the Other may be designated as a form of cultural projection of concepts. This projection constructs the identities of cultural subjects through a relationship of power in which the Other is the subjugated element. In claiming knowledge about 'orientals' what Orientalism did was construct them as its own (European) Other. Though describing purportedly 'oriental' characteristics (irrational, uncivilised etc.) Orientalism provided a definition not of the real 'oriental' identity, but of European identity in terms of the oppositions which structured its account. Hence, 'irrational' Other presupposes (and is also presupposed by) 'rational' self. The construction of the Other in Orientalist discourse, then, is a matter of asserting self-identity: and the issue of the European account of the Oriental Other is thereby rendered a question of power.

DECONSTRUCTION: Oriental 'other': this image was built up by Europeans in a European-centre way = power. (ethnocentrism)

Boye/Lafayette De Mente 'Beware of Using Logic in Japan!' (accessed online at www.executiveplanet.com/community/items/970695928954_en.asp?section=Japan)(extracts)

TOKYO—The cultural canyons between Japan and many Western countries – the United States in particular – remain broad and deep, despite more than half a century of massive interaction on every social, economic and political level.

From an American viewpoint, one of the most irrational and frustrating of these

Cultural chasms is the difference between the Japanese and American view and use of logic – *ronri* (roan-ree) in Japanese – a difference that has an especially profound effect on political as well as economic relations between the two countries.

As is well known, Americans and other Westerners pride themselves on thinking and behaving in a logical manner...

Still today, few things turn older Japanese off more rapidly and more completely than for someone to take a purely logical approach to personal, business and political relations. They regard positions and presentations that are based on logic as being cold and calculating, as failing to take into consideration the human and spiritual element.

Japan vs US. People from the US consider Japanese people as not following logic.

On innumerable occasions, I have sat in on presentations by visiting American business (sic) that were perfect examples of logical reasoning only to see the Japanese side become increasingly uncomfortable and withdrawn, unable to reconcile their own values with the rationale of the Americans.

Japanese logic is based on cultural imperatives that have to do with creating and sustaining the kind of cooperative, harmonious relationships on which their society was based for many centuries...

The main point of difference in Western logic and Japanese *ronri* is that in its Japanese context logic does not necessarily equate with rationalism. It can, in fact, fly in the face of reason so long as it satisfies a human or spiritual element that the Japanese hold dear.

Ronri vs American logic. For the Japanese, logic is not always=rational.
Ronri= logic + human, spiritual element.

In Japanese dialogue it is perfectly logical to conceal one's real thoughts and intentions (*honne/hoan-nay*) behind a public facade (*tatemaie/tah-tay-my*) by using words and phrases that are so abstract they are meaningless, or that give a false impression. In such cases, which are the rule rather than the exception in most formal situations, it is left up to the listener to divine the true meaning or intentions of the speaker – a process that requires comprehensive knowledge of the Japanese language

and culture; a skill that the Japanese refer to as haragei (hah-rah-gay-ee) or 'the art of the stomach,' which could be translated into English as reading the other person's mind. Public façade- hiding your true thoughts and intention.

Interprete- Haragei. 'reading the other person's mind'.

It is also logical in the Japanese concept of things for responsibility to be diffused among a group rather than placed on an individual. When serious mistakes or criminal activity do occur in a Japanese company or government organization, it is Japanese logic for the head of the group to take responsibility and resign as a symbolic gesture that makes it possible to maintain the facade of harmony in the organization. Misrepresenting things, telling lies, and engaging in other cover-up activities are logical in the traditional Japanese environment – logical when their purpose is to protect the group and the system.... The two main sanctions used by the Japanese system to enforce conformity to Japanese logic are bullying and ostracizing. The bullying by coworkers and superiors can be sadistic and continuous. The ultimate tactic is to completely ostracize the guilty party..

When there is a problem in the community, one person takes on all the responsibility.

Preservation of logic: bully, ostracize.

Of course, most Japanese are perfectly capable of logical thinking in the Western mold, but their attitudes and behavior are controlled by the groups they belong to, and with rare exceptions they are not brave enough, strong enough or foolhardy enough to break the codes that bind them.

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Public façade- hiding your true thoughts and intention.

Interprete- Haragei. 'reading the other person's mind'.

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TaskB2.1.1



- Do you believe that TextB2.1.2 is an example of ‘Otherization’ as described by Edgar and Sedgwick inTextB2.1.1?