



# Intercultural MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY

*Integrating Culture and Management in Global Organizations*

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## The Unconscious Culture Gap

by Corey Flintoff

Before the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, it was easy for Americans to feel that our similarities were far greater than our differences with our foreign allies, trading partners and even our opponents. We were united by the language and practices of international business and diplomacy. Different as we might appear, we all wanted very much the same things: peace, prosperity, a better life for our children.

After the terrorist attacks, after the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, it became clear that substantial populations perceive the world in profoundly different terms than we do. The differences run deep beneath the gloss of diplomatic discourse and far beyond the differing national customs and conventions to which a foreigner

can adapt. Some of these differences may have arisen from what were once life-and-death issues in a culture's distant past. Some, because they are religious in nature, go beyond life and death.

As a journalist, I've worked in different cultures, in places as varied as Kosovo and Mongolia. As it happens, though, my first encounter with profoundly different cultural values occurred right here in the United States, among fifth-generation Americans.

I got my start in broadcast journalism 27 years ago in southwestern Alaska. I worked for nearly seven years at a bilingual radio and TV station in a region populated mainly by Yup'ik Eskimos. Early in my career there, we had a summer visit from a television producer who was sponsored

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## Hollywood's War on "Reel" Bad Arabs

by Jack Shaheen

On September 11, 2001, 19 suicidal Arab Muslim terrorists attacked the Pentagon and destroyed the World Trade Center. The terrorists slaughtered nearly 3,000 people from more than 60 nations. Now the United States and its allies have joined force-of-arms with force-of-facts to crush the guilty.

We have launched an information war; a war to crush the myths that this conflict has anything to do with America against Islam, or Arabs against the West. Instead, this war has everything to do with the marginalized fanatics responsible. Our political and communication leaders must not attribute the actions of a few fanatics with the vast majority of peaceful Arabs and Muslims.

I have spent my adult lifetime honing my

skills as a professional observer and analyst of America's image-making factories. On a canvas far broader in terms that its title indicates, my book, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies A People*, paints the dangers of severe and repetitive stereotypes when we lump "those people" together indiscriminately. I document and discuss nearly, 1000 pre-9/11 Hollywood feature films that abused Arab Muslims, showing them as one the most maligned group in the history of Hollywood.

For more than a century, Hollywood has bombarded audiences worldwide with motion pictures and TV programs that portray Arabs, Muslims, and their descendants as quite literally the scum of the earth: lechers, terrorists by definition, subhuman to the last man, woman and

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# IMQ Update

## Editor's Welcomes

Welcome to the Winter 2004 edition of the Intercultural Management Quarterly. We are pleased to bring you this special edition released in conjunction with the Intercultural Management Institute's 2004 Conference "The Global Diversity Advantage: A Forum for Business, Education and Training Professionals."

During the last few years we have directly experienced the interconnectedness of the global community through incidents like terrorism, global epidemic scares, and moments like the sight of a soldier safely reunited with his or her family. These images illustrate our shared joys and despairs despite our differing cultural background. However, as our world becomes related in some sense, it also becomes more complicated too. Our shared tragedies and victories compel us to have shared approaches to these events-making it imperative that we collectively address our approach in ways that integrates our cultural nuances. By bringing business professionals, educational experts, and professional trainers with students interested in intercultural management, the Intercultural Management Institute's 2004 Conference proposes just this solution. This special issue of the Intercultural Management Quarterly provides a forum for collective brainstorming and collaboration to address some of complexities we face due to global diversity.

Whether you regard Operation Iraqi Freedom as a shared tragedy or triumph, we can agree that we are all globally judged by our actions in Iraq. Corey Flintoff in his article, "The Unconscious Culture Gap," advises us to prepare our soldiers not just for the combativeness of war but the aftermath as well.

Dr. Jack Shaheen's analysis of the U.S media in "Hollywood's War on 'Reel' Bad Arabs" warns against the overly stereotypical depictions of Arab Muslims in the U.S media. He urges that as long as the U.S media portrays Arab Muslims as clones of Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden, then Arab Muslims will be less reluctant to see the United States as their ally.

While there are many studies on the role of cross-cultural communication in human resource hiring, education and other fields, little attention has been paid to development. What role does intercultural communication play in development efforts? Dr. J.P.Singh's article "The Dynamics Between Intercultural Communication and Development" addresses this important issue.

Also in this issue, John Robert Kelley eloquently reviews the book "Unrooted Childhoods: Memoirs of Growing Up Global," which is based on third culture childrens' memoirs. Ray S. Leki, discusses some of our vulnerabilities when traveling in a global age and presents the TravelSafe approach as an alternative model for addressing them. And Dr. Kristin Hibler, questions whether Diversity Training programs are anti-American.

Thank you for your interest in the IMQ.

Sincerely,  
Sherry Zarabi

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## EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Intercultural Management Quarterly (IMQ)* is published by the Intercultural Management Institute at American University. *IMQ* combines original research conducted in the field of intercultural management with the applied perspectives of industry experts, professors and students.

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Professionals, scholars and students are invited to submit articles of no less than 1,000 words and no more than 1,500 on issues related to the contemporary study and practice of intercultural management. Submissions could consider aspects of training, research and any other scholarship that relates to the area of intercultural management.

Articles must be innovative and contribute to the knowledge in this field and yet authors should avoid overly academic jargon. Footnotes or endnotes are discouraged except for direct quotes, paraphrasing or citing the research of others.

Each submission is refereed by members of the IMQ editorial review board and accepted pieces are subject to editing to conform with the writing style appropriate to IMQ.

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# Personal and Organizational Security in a Global Age

by Ray S. Leki

A few years now into the first truly global century we are confronted with the disheartening reality that we are, seemingly, no more secure than during the primitive times of the last century. We can travel reasonably quickly almost anywhere in the world. We can communicate instantly with vast legions of people on every corner of the earth with whom we have never met. We can transfer ideas and images at light speed. And yet we find ourselves in stocking feet, our pockets inverted, our laptops booted up, our loose change and keys and belt buckles in a plastic tray when we attempt to partake of this Global Age. We become the targets of criminals and terrorists and – yes – sometimes Mother Nature, based on our place of birth, gender, economic class, profession, or travel destination. But we have assets, too, as well as liabilities, and that is the focus of some work that I started a decade ago with my longtime interculturalist colleague Lee Lacy. We both continue to be intensely concerned with the safety and security of Americans overseas.

From a series of revolving professional perches, we watched thousands of Americans go overseas and, mostly, return. What could we learn of a prescriptive, diagnostic, predictive, developmental nature that would allow us to improve the chances of success for these sojourners? How could we identify who would become the easy “marks”, and how could we get them to put on some behavioral, cultural, or personal body armor to help them protect themselves? We realized early on that we needed to come to understand the range, scope, prevalence, and patterns of the external threats present for individuals and organizations. We then came to recognize a yet more powerful determinant of threat – the internal profile of each individual, and collectively, the organizations they represented.

The relationships between the external and internal threats, the security of the individual and the organization, became clearer after parsing the decades of our combined experience with scores of thousands of travelers and experimenting with different conceptual models. First, though, it is useful to state a few assumptions and caveats. The individuals we dealt with wanted to live and travel and work overseas, albeit to varying degrees. While we worked with both adults and children, the focus of our work has been on adults – normally functioning adults who understood and accepted that they were responsible, in the end, for their own security. Finally, the available data on instances of crime against Americans overseas is notoriously suspect. Non-reporting, under-reporting, non-collection, and political and financial considerations all skew the data in troubling ways.

## Basic Factors

The security experiences of individuals and organizations run parallel and interrelated courses. The basic factors at play for individuals are reflected at a higher level for organizations, and the lessons learned from the personal profile translate into compe-

tence for the organization. Fundamental to any risk analysis is a weighing of benefit against the threat – why is the individual – or the organization – there in the first place? What is the goal for the individual and what is it worth? What is the mission for the organization? In clarifying the value of the expatriation experience, and comparing that value to an assessment of the threats posed, individual and organizational risk profiles can be usefully analyzed.

**Personal Profile:** Security skill, knowledge, and attitude that will minimize the impact of threats posed.

**Organizational Profile:** The sum of an organization’s mission clarity, policies, practices, and work force competence. work force.

Both the individual and the organization have inherent risk factors that form the underpinnings of their respective risk profiles. For the individual, for example, immaturity, inexperience, poor decision making skills, and poor or non-existent planning and organizational skills can sabotage any traveler. Similarly, a corporation, academic exchange program, or NGO that is unaware of or has not developed its security and survival capabilities is stacking the cards against itself.

The assets that an individual or an organization can bring into the expatriation experience are reflected in the risk profile as well. Specifically, the energy and focus that the individual brings to the on-going challenge of intelligence gathering on the external threats posed play a critical role in developing effective responsive behavior. Knowing and understanding the specific threats within a particular context – from pick-pockets, earthquakes, infectious disease, terrorists, traffic madness to ineffectual police and tainted water supplies – defines boundaries for the traveler’s reasonable and rational behavior. On an organizational level, knowing and understanding the way business gets done, including the tricky culture-based lines around what constitutes corruption, entitlement, the legal boundaries and the psychological contract between organization, employee, regulator, and host community, form the parallel guidance for rational organizational behavior.

Finally, a person, or organization, desperately needs a Plan B, and a Plan C, and adequate resources and insurance to deal with what is an unpredictable business. In the most extreme case, going overseas without a legal and valid will and estate plan is courting disaster. It is irresponsible behavior that will be paid for by

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# The Dynamics Between Intercultural Communication and Development

by J.P. Singh

For over three billion people in Africa, Latin America and Asia, the lack of material comforts and the stresses of everyday living are hardly ever conceptualized as problems of intercultural communication.

The role of cultural communication in development is barely addressed by development communication. The Intercultural and Development Communication chapter of the *International Communication Association* is an umbrella for two separate subfields where the two will unlikely converge in the near future. It is also highly unlikely that you will meet more than a handful of cross-cultural or intercultural communication specialists working in the world's prominent development agencies. However, as international development efforts are concerned with understanding and restoring the dignity and basic needs of people, finding ways to communicate effectively across cultures would seem to be an indispensable task.

## The need for cultural communication

Understanding the role of cultural communication in aiding development is foremost about conceptualizing development in more human and interpersonal terms. This has several implications for the development practitioner.

*Development, as intercultural communication, is about us, not them.* It is fundamental for development practitioner to understand that development is the practitioner's problem, not the developing society's. It is not about a group of people who are too traditional or backward to develop, rather the solutions lie with the practitioners, who may not know how to understand the aspirations of the people they affect or are not able to communicate their strategies.

*Development, as intercultural communication, is about human dignity and not about the implementation of a pre-fabricated magic formula.* Practitioners should balance the developing society's cultural values with the goals of the overall development efforts. While development practitioners are committed to ending human suffering, they are all too often focused on the right combination of resources and incentives that will deliver a predetermined goal. Practitioners need to go a step further by listening, and not dictating, to the individuals most affected by their solutions. As cultural communication specialists, we would be better disposed to find out what people value in their lives and the kinds of everyday habits – conceived broadly as culture – that inform such values.

*Development, as intercultural communication, is about dialogue.* Development practitioners are often portrayed as elite workers with specialized information who are to be given access to local resources and populations. As practitioners in a dialogue, it means recognizing our humanity as well as those of people affected by our interventions. Development as cultural communication involves thinking about communication among equals, not hierarchies.

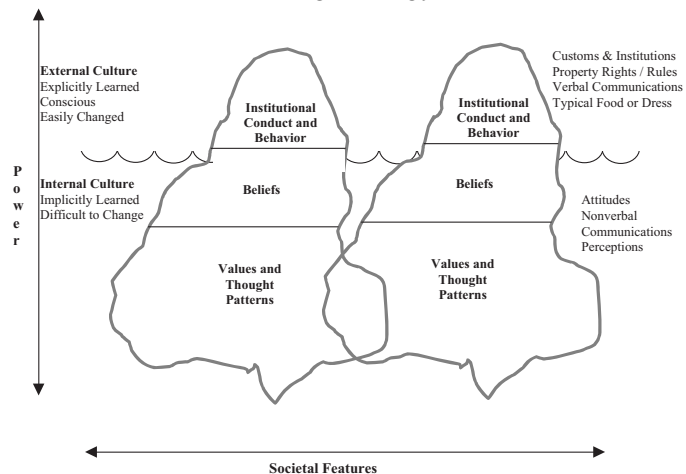
## What needs to be done?

Development involves re-configuring or modifying the socio-economic rules and institutions that govern the daily lives of people. The iceberg model of culture presents the rules and institutions that govern society. These societal rules and institutions are placed at the tip of the culture iceberg above the cognitive maps and the learning processes of societies – what Gary Weaver and others call the beliefs and values of cultures. Given this context, development as cultural communication can proceed in two ways, not mutually exclusive.

*By understand a society's culture, practitioners can modify the existing development rules and institutions that are hindering the overall development effort.* Here we start from the top of the iceberg with the task of building trust and relationships. Take a very simple example of elite multilateral development agencies that are often perceived in a negative fashion by the very people they are trying to help.

*By understanding culture, practitioners can empathize with the society's values and beliefs – the cognitive maps.* Here the task is to understand what types of institutions and rules are even possible,

The Iceberg Analogy of Cultures



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## Personal and Organizational...

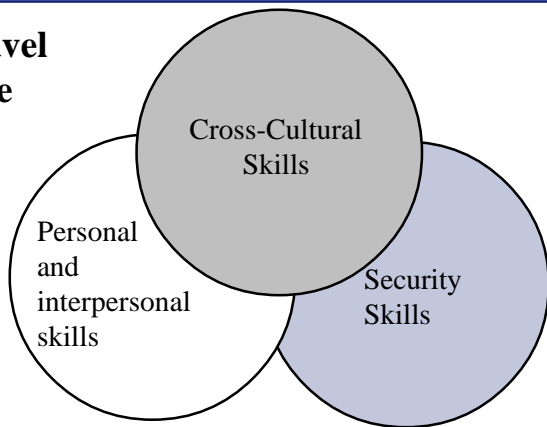
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grieving survivors at a time when they need those legal and logistical hassles least.

If clarity of purpose, self-awareness, external awareness, and contingency planning are the basics, what are the personal, and by extension, organizational attributes for the “hardened” traveler?

Security professionals, interculturalists, and human resource practitioners all have valid, but incomplete measures of a “hardened” traveler. Security professionals are likely to come up with lists of security-savvy behavior and protective measures to employ. Interculturalists will likely highlight language and both culture-generic and culture-specific cross-cultural skills as being crucial to survival. Human resource practitioners will focus on the personal and interpersonal attributes of the expatriate. In a model Lacy and I developed called TravelSafe, these three domains of competence are integrated into an overlapping whole that comes closest to the prescriptive, predictive, diagnostic, developmental model that we had pursued.

### Travel Safe



Each domain empowers, or in its absence, sabotages the others. Cultural awareness empowers safety and security competence by providing context for observed and perceived threats; personal awareness and interpersonal skills add value to the decision process around appropriate behavior against the backdrop of the threat by creating effective means for generating and receiving honest information and feedback from cultural informants within a specific context. Security competence provides the Maslovian bedrock of human needs upon which cultural and interpersonal interaction can develop without peril.

That the domains interact is intuitive in essence, but in practice, the power of the interaction is astonishing. Whether the experience of the traveler spirals upwards towards new learning about self and the world, and greater personal actualization and fulfillment, or spirals downward towards disillusionment, an inability to meet basic needs, and danger/disaster is largely a function of the competency matrix an

individual is able to bring to bear during a sojourn. The table below lists some sample competencies and attributes within the three interactive domains.

Cross-cultural	Personal & Interpersonal	Safety/Security
Cultural awareness	Self awareness	Personal safety/security skills & attitude
Target culture interest	Candor	Fire safety
Tries target culture behavior	Assertiveness	Surveillance detection
Language	Solicits, offers, uses feedback	Health/medical
Non-verbal language	Affect perception & clarification	Threat identification & perception
Attitude values target culture	Language skills	Street smarts
	Humor	Self confidence
		Crisis management

This model’s value for travelers is limited by the accuracy and candor they can bring towards identifying improvement areas. Even marginal improvements might bring on quantum leaps in their personal competency profiles. Several tools exist to assist travelers in making better self-assessments, including cross-cultural inventories and preference instruments. However, on an organizational level, the TravelSafe model provides a rational and useful platform for international HR professionals, their consultants, and corporate security experts. It allows them to have synergistic dialogues that enhance and value their respective department’s contributions to their organization’s mission.

The TravelSafe model makes the interculturalist’s case for more language and cross-cultural training. The often heard, and somewhat overstated, risk/benefit equation that a failed overseas assignment can cost a quarter to three quarters of a million dollars is beside the point. If organizations understand the centrality of their missions, that half a million takes on a meaning – either as chump change or time to pull up stakes. Without the mission context, it remains a questionable and ultimately un-actionable number.

In the ten years of developing and deploying this model, a number of axioms and extensions have been developed that go beyond this article’s scope. However, at a time when Americans traveling overseas are threatened by rampant violent crime driven by increasing economic disparity in the developing world, anti-Americanism, pandemic health risks, terrorism specifically directed against U.S citizens, and the mundane, but no less deadly threats of commercial transportation accidents and natural disasters, an integrated approach to understanding and responding to threats is presented to use for those who want to take control of their overseas experience.

*Ray S. Leki is an Adjunct Professorial Lecturer at American University.*

## *The Unconscious...*

*Continued from page 1*

by the state's artist-in-residence program. His job was to work with local schoolchildren to produce a series of half-hour television specials about life in our region.

I admired the way this man worked. He didn't just barge into the area and begin filming. He hung out for weeks, getting acquainted, asking questions and getting a feel for the community. When he began work on the skits, dances and songs that made up his TV programs, I was impressed with how well he had managed to avoid the Eskimo stereotypes that are common even today. There were no jokes about igloos or iceboxes, polar bears or penguins. Instead, he seemed to have an eye for the real idiosyncrasies of life in our little town.

He had a particular genius for wordless comedy. Many of his segments featured local animals, fish and birds. One of my favorites was his mini-ballet "Ptarmigan Lake." The ptarmigan is a pigeon-like bird that lives in big flocks on the open tundra. It turns a protective white in winter. It is widely hunted in the spring, when it provides a welcome addition to the local diet after the people have spent months eating dried salmon and walrus meat. Using the music from "Swan Lake," our producer created a charming and – I thought – extremely funny dance sequence. It was performed by fourth graders who waddled around in puffy white ptarmigan costumes that made them look like huge marshmallows with wings and beaks.

We promoted the first broadcast heavily, and we aired it with great fanfare. Keep in mind that this was a small, remote town where you didn't need Arbitrons or Nielsen ratings to find out how people felt about your programming. You could be sure to hear their opinions when you met them the next day at the post office or the grocery store. We expected high praise.

We had barely gotten to the "Ptarmigan Lake" sequence when the phones began to ring – caller after angry caller – each one more vehement than the last. A typical viewer response went something like this: "What is this (expletive deleted)? Get this (expletive deleted) off my (expletive deleted) TV!" None of our callers were really clear about what they didn't like. The closest I got to a real answer came from a man who said "It's crap, that's all. It's stupid, white-man crap!"

We put off airing the other two programs while we tried to find out what was wrong. That's where we encoun-

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*".. as the occupation goes  
on...we need to achieve  
cultural harmony with the  
people"*

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tered the cultural divide.

The Yup'ik staffers at the station, some of whom had worked on the program, essentially refused to talk about it. I could see from the hurt and frustration on their faces that they were hearing plenty from people in town.

Finally, one night, after a long silence, my best Yup'ik friend blurted out an answer. He looked me in the eye, and for the first time, I could feel his deeply suppressed anger. "You don't joke about food," he said. "You don't joke about the animals." Suddenly, it dawned on me. This was and still is, to a great extent, a hunting culture. Success in the hunt depends on the relationship between the hunter and his prey.

Yup'ik elders teach that animals yield themselves up to the hunter who treats them with proper respect. If they are treated disrespectfully – that is, hunted carelessly, killed with cruelty, or if any part of them is wasted – they will no longer allow themselves to be taken. In a hunter culture, a food animal is more than a factor in life or death; it's a measure of human identity in balance with

the rest of nature. You don't joke about the animals. That's an outlook that is so profoundly ingrained in Yup'ik culture that no missionary religion, no western-style hunting gear, no Saturday morning cartoon animal show has been able to change it. It is true that it's no longer overt in most Yup'ik people. In fact, many of the viewers who disliked our TV show didn't fully understand what offended them so – they just knew it was wrong.

I'm often reminded of that incident when I hear about the difficulties that U.S troops are experiencing in Iraq. If most Iraqi people are glad to be liberated from a cruel and implacable dictator – and I believe they are – then why don't they like their liberators better? Clearly, any occupying force is an irritant to the population, and just as clearly, our troops were trained for combat, not cultural sensitivity. But as the occupation goes on – and it will go on, long beyond the return of Iraqi sovereignty – we need to achieve cultural harmony with the people.

Some ways of dealing successfully with other people can be taught, such as respectful terms of address, or the customs and taboos associated with relations between the sexes. Sometimes it can be as simple as learning not to touch food with the wrong hand. But other, more complex cultural knowledge can't be published in a pamphlet for the troops or conveyed in a weekend workshop.

It has to be acquired by observation, by assimilation, by gaining the trust of the people and learning to ask them the proper questions about themselves and their lives. That's the only way to avoid trespassing against taboos that are so deeply embedded in the culture that neither we, nor our hosts, are fully aware of what it is that causes the offense.

Yup'ik people have a way of getting to know a stranger in their community. It involves visiting that person at home and sitting quietly as the person goes about his or her daily business. Yup'iks believe that, to get to know someone, you have to observe their behavior.

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# Is Diversity Training Anti-American?

by Kristin Hibler

“You either are an American or you aren’t an American. You are either part of this society or you are not part of this society!” An elderly white man cried out at a diversity training workshop for county employees. His reaction illustrates how some U.S. diversity training participants struggle learning about issues such as discrimination, unequal opportunity and group dynamics.

In my experiences conducting diversity training and teaching intercultural communication classes, I have witnessed how the material may be perceived by some as contradicting U.S. values of individualism and egalitarianism—or even appearing anti-American. In other words, diversity training challenges the worldview of U.S. American participants, particularly those who do not consider themselves a member of any minority group. As diversity training becomes more global in nature, it must keep pace by recognizing the ways that different national values influence training participants. To do this, diversity trainers in the United States must become more aware of U.S. national values held by their training participants.

Let me offer some examples. Diversity training that presents the idea that certain groups have a better chance for success than others can challenge those with an extremely individualistic worldview. They believe that anyone can make it if they work hard enough. Training participants might comment, “I think poor people should just pull themselves up by their boot straps like my family did. It doesn’t matter what minority group they belong to.” I even had a student who commented that poor, urban African Americans “can move out of the ghetto if they want to.” These comments indicate a belief in a highly individualistic worldview, where institutionalized discrimination does not exist.

An individualistic worldview can also make it uncomfortable for participants to talk about groups, a necessary step in most diversity training programs. This is evidenced by statement such as, “I’m not comfortable putting people into groups, I prefer to talk about individuals,” or, “I don’t love or hate all Japanese; for instance—I love some and hate others—it’s individual.”

Diversity training may also challenge individualistic training participants because they see the individual—not the group—as the core unit of society. As a result, individualistic training participants perceive change as occurring at an individual, not a group level. They believe that discrimination can only be eliminated when individuals treat other individuals better, not by improving the ways groups interact with other groups in society. As one training participant phrased it, “Racism is not as much of a problem since the 1960s. Racism is more of an individual problem today.” The main assumption here is that the primary means of reducing racism is for individuals to work on their own prejudices and that societal-level cures such as affirmative action or civil rights legislation are less effective. In addition, because individualistic training participants view change as occurring at an individual level, some participants will feel personally attacked when discussing—what has formed the core of much of diversity training—race and race relations. For instance, I often hear comments like, “I didn’t own slaves, my grandparents didn’t own slaves,” or “I feel like I have done something wrong because I was born a white male.” It is often difficult for individualistic participants to shift from an individual to a group orientation. It may be even more difficult for them to learn that far from a phenomenon of the past, structural power inequalities continue today.

Egalitarianism is deeply rooted in

U.S. history. Early European immigrants came to the New World to pursue religious and economic freedom. For many, their journeys were fueled by a belief that all individuals (defined at this time as white and male) have the right to succeed—that power stems not from a king or god, but from the self. They came to build what they saw as a more just society—one that would grow progressively egalitarian. As the Declaration of Independence frames it, a society where “. . . all men are created equal” and are endowed with the rights of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” This value of egalitarianism, entrenched in U.S. American culture, can make it difficult for participants who don’t see themselves as belonging to any minority group to believe that discrimination exists. Diversity training can confront them with the fact that power inequalities do still indeed exist in U.S. society.

The film, *Color of Fear* directed by Lee Mun Wah, provides an apt example. In the film, a multiracial and multicultural group of men meet once a week for several months to discuss issues of race. David, an upper class white man, does not believe the stories of racism relayed to him by the black, Latino, and Asian American men in his group. One of the most poignant moments in the film occurs when David finally admits that the experiences of oppression described to him by men of color were actually true. When asked, what if these stories were true, he responds with tears in his eyes, “Well that would be a travesty of life. You have something that shouldn’t exist. That’s very saddening. You don’t want to believe that man can be so cruel to himself or his own kind.” Society had taught David that all individuals have the freedom to succeed, regardless of status. He struggled for weeks to learn that, due to group membership and un-

## *The Dynamics between..*

*Continued from page 4*

given the values and beliefs in a particular culture. The cultural communication specialist must reach her audience here much like an anthropologist in order to determine the set of development alternatives that are feasible in any society. Participatory development programs thus cannot go into the field with a predetermined set of goals seeking input from people. Instead they should seek the goals from the people themselves.

One of the most successful slum dwellers program in Mumbai, India, asked groups of slum dwellers to design their own housing rather than providing them with blue-prints. The boundaries between the NGO working with the slum-dwellers and the latter themselves was seamless, making this a development project in which acts of intervention are hard to define. The eminent anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, who writes of this project, calls such acts “deep democracy.” Here, cultural communication starts from the bottom of the iceberg.

### *Issues of power*

Socio-economic development is continually stifled by the oppression and dehumanization of marginalized groups. Race, class, gender, caste, nationalism, ethnicity, and colonialism are but a few of the dimensions of this oppression. Cultural communication is about recognizing the humanity of people. Intercultural communication is a humble, but important, start in two important ways.

*Cultural communication can provide important clues on the feasibility of a development intervention. For example, what good would it be to think of women’s*

empowerment project in an area where women presence is in any kind of an interpersonal network might be limited? Before assuming such participation, enough trust among local networks, the public sphere, must be established even to carry out a needs assessment.

*It can empower the community.* By approaching people as equals and engaging them in a dialogue, the development practitioner not only establishes trust but also restores dignity to people who have been dehumanized over centuries by oppression. It is in this sense that the great educator Paulo Freire thinks of development problems almost as a spiritual quest, or in his own words as *conscientização* or consciousness awakening.

In conclusion, from needs assessment to post implementation evaluation, cultural communication understands development as a qualitative, human, interpersonal, trust-building, and a spiritual problem. It tries to veer away from viewing development as a problem of highly specialized elite workers to that of realizing how and why people act in their everyday lives. Effective cultural communication, to borrow Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen’s words, is about development as freedom. It enables both the development specialists and developing societies to find an appropriate cultural voice.

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*Dr. J.P Singh is an Assistant Professor in the Communication, Culture and Technology program at Georgetown University.*

## *The Unconscious...*

*Continued from page 6*

Then, you can begin to talk.

Perhaps the way to achieve cultural sensitivity between our troops and the Iraqis is to adopt the Yup’ik method – to allow time for each side to observe and understand the other in the most “natural” settings possible. That’s not going to be easy as long as our troops are beset by terrorists and guerrilla fighters – as long as our soldiers make “home visits” at gunpoint after kicking in doors. I’m told that even Saddam Hussein’s feared secret police avoided entering homes to seize their victims, because of a deep-seated taboo against violating a person’s home or gazing at the women there. If the safety of our troops really demands that homes be searched by force, then so be it. But in the long run, our troops will be safer if they learn to avoid transgressing against the unconscious or *less-conscious* taboos of Iraqi culture.

That kind of learning takes time. It can’t take place if all the troops in a unit are rotated out of the country at the same time, leaving replacement units to start over again from scratch. Some soldiers are going to have to stay to provide continuity. The military will need to provide on-site instruction on Arabic and Iraqi culture for some troops in every unit. It will have to keep balancing “force protection” with the need for American troops to have day-to-day contact with Iraqi people. It will have to permit some degree of fraternization, for the kind of personal interaction that builds trust and allows for the small revelations that help us learn about other cultures.

Military organizations are usually geared up to expend resources and manpower to achieve quick, decisive results; the biggest expenses here will be time and patience. If the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are ever to be truly over, though, if the war against terrorism is ever to be truly won, if the United States is ever to achieve a working harmony with the nations of the Middle East, then we have to find ways to build cultural understanding.

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## Book Review

Review by John Robert Kelley

### *Unrooted Childhoods: Memoirs of Growing Up Global*

Edited by Faith Eidese and Nina Sichel  
Nicholas Brealey Publishing/Intercultural Press  
2004, 318 pp.

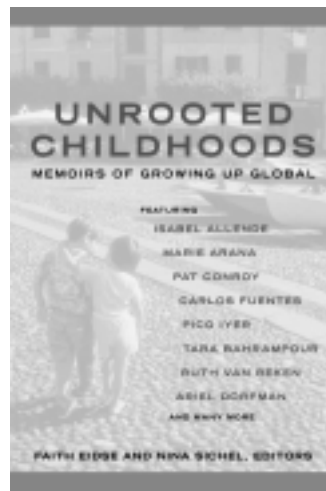
In the twilight of his life, Rudyard Kipling recounted in his memoir *Something of Myself* the stark contrast of his rich experience in India against an unwelcome move at age six to England, without his parents, for schooling. "My first impression is of daybreak, light and color and golden and purple fruits at the level of my shoulder," he wrote of his early childhood in Bombay. "Then came a new small house smelling of aridity and emptiness, and a parting in the dawn with Father and Mother..."

From Kipling's early childhood memories, one can conjure images of his youth in India through the sharpness of his senses, only then to be interrupted by sudden changes in place and people. The changes are indelible for Kipling as his shared affiliation between colonial India and England becomes the bedrock of an extraordinary career. In truth his unique voice owes to being neither Indian nor British from childhood, but to some unidentifiable middle ground. His is a "third culture." Lying beyond existing taxonomies, third culture by definition involves living one's life across hemispheres, sustaining a range of emotion born of such uniqueness.

We leave it to the articulators of this experience, like Kipling, to make us understand what it must feel like. More recently, we are educated by an assemblage of accomplished writers fitting this very profile. The product, *Unrooted Childhoods: Memoirs of Growing Up Global*, succeeds in conveying the fundamental experience of the "third culture kid" (TCK) to a broad audience.

Edited by seasoned authors Faith Eidese and Nina Sichel, *Unrooted Child-*

*hoods* offers nineteen deeply personal chronicles of the TCK experience in all its breadth. Each of these authors, the sons and daughters of diplomats, mis-



sionaries, teachers, or military officers, explore the patchwork features of their youth through a spectrum of emotion. The book has divided these emotional themes four ways: Enrichment, Estrangement, Rootlessness, and Identity. Like Kipling, the prototypical TCK-turned-author, these writers develop a voice throughout their formative years in the slipstream, sharing with almost confession-like quality the ironic wonder and estrangement of being permanently foreign.

Some writers accentuate the romantic: Rather than harping on the sterility and isolation of airports in "Living in the Transit Lounge," travel writer Pico Iyer proudly seizes upon his sense of place in a riddle of metaphors. "Perpetual foreigners in the transit lounge," he writes, "we enjoy a kind of diplomatic immunity... we are never obliged to grow up, or even, really, to be ourselves." Indeed, the narratives in the Enrichment section capitalize on the thrill of being

anything but ordinary. As a child in "Rain Light", Sara Mansfield Taber soaks up Holland "with the romantic openness of my heart," and revels in her brief exposure to Dutch culture. Novelist Isabel Allende follows her diplomat uncle through La Paz and Beirut, recalling in "Arabian Nights" her amazement at the Bolivian starscape and the magic of fantastic Arab tales.

For others, however, it would seem the ever-present state of foreignness couldn't suppress certain questions weighing on young minds. Seeking answers for "Where am I from?" and "Who am I?" mired these authors in a lifelong search for familiarity, roots, and self-identification, which comprise the overlapping themes of discussion throughout the remainder of the collection. Here, these writers are not romantic in their reverie, instead swallowed by the paradox that has defined their entire lives. Faith Eidese gives us in her memoir titled, "Embers", a most profound insight, "the freedom of the nomad is the loneliness of disconnection." She explains how being set alight during her transient youth has made her an adult "afraid of losing myself in community."

This proves also to be the demon with which writer Pat Conroy must wrestle while growing up a "military brat", moving over twenty times during his boyhood from base to base. His is not a time of enrichment, but a lengthy penance to the U.S. Marine Corps, rupturing the very heart of his own family and inspiring his haunting best-seller, *The Great Santini*. In the moving "Undiscovered Nation," Conroy goes on to describe the personal toll of not knowing himself or his place in the world. "I come from a country that has no name,"

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## Book Review: *Unrooted Childhoods...*

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he writes.

The reader will sense the disconnection imbued in these writers from a young age and witness as it manifests itself in adulthood. Anora Egan's "Breath Roots" weaves haltingly, in and out of time, through her failed attempts at building family and community, made real in the divorce of her first husband and later her restlessness as a Buddhist nun. "We have to know how to root again, or we will not survive," she concludes. The TCK experience, for these writers, planted simple questions for which there were no simple answers, and life after childhood took on a complex search for resolution.

As TCKs themselves, Eidse and Sichel are well positioned to identify a poignant set of accounts such as those presented in *Unrooted Childhoods*. The deft selection of these pieces is compounded by the way each one resonates with the other, revealing, oddly enough, the existence of a group who can share their distinctive experiences brilliantly.

On the outside looking in, one cannot help but feel satisfied that these floating souls have found each other, and that they would have much to talk about if ever they should all be in one place. For the TCK who reads this collection as an adult, perhaps one may relate to the strange contrast in worldviews as seen by Kathleen Anderson, or hear themselves in Ruth Van Reken's powerful "Letters Never Sent."

But the authors may have foreseen the need for *Unrooted Childhoods* among the coming generations of expatriate parents of their soon-to-be TCKs. Aside from being armed with the quick-reference language guides, remedial cultural etiquette, and local emergency contacts, expatriate parents would do well to add *Unrooted Childhoods* to their list of required reading before departure.

*Unrooted Childhoods* asks for acknowledgment that the expatriate experience affects and transforms the family as a whole. And in TCKs, we find compelling proof that their experiences in the "third culture" will only become magnified by hindsight along the inevitable path to adulthood. There is tremendous value in understanding the impressions that a third culture kid will take in, as they will undoubtedly shape his or her sense of place and concept of self for years to come.

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## Hollywood's War...

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child. Inherent in this barrage of images is this message: We Americans despise you and your religion.

Think about it. When was the last time you saw a movie depicting an Arab or an Arab American as a regular guy? Such images are as sparse as geysers in the Sahara. This stereotype has haunted us for decades. Its permanence results, I believe, from several inventive factors: indolence, indifference, silence, and of course, greed is also an incentive. Hollywood knows that evil and fear of evil is a mix that sells. It leads some producers to exploit the Arab stereotype for profit by feeding movie goers a steady diet of Arab Muslim primitives infiltrating the USA and threatening to massacre our loved ones in their own back yards.

The stereotypes prevail for another reason: politics. It's no surprise to me that the stereotype began to intensify in the early 1950s soon after the state of Israel was established. Dozens of Arab-bashing movies that were filmed in Israel feature Israeli actors portraying Arabs as terrorists. U.S. Media systems emulate and expand on the film image. Moreover, in their portrayal of extreme anti-American Arab Muslim leaders, newscasters equate 1.2 billion Muslims as clones of Ayatollah Khomeini, Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. Violent news reports that focus on extremists chanting "Death to America!" as they burn Uncle Sam in effigy, reinforce and exacerbate the already prevalent myth: Muslims are evil.

As Hollywood is the world's foremost industry for molding public opinion, which helps shape public policy, some image-makers eagerly exploit the stereotype. West Wing creator Aaron Sorkin, for example, said at a recent Writer's Guild symposium titled *We Hate You*: "I'm going to bring [Arab Muslim] characters onto the show and

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## Hollywood's War on...

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you're not going to like them." Sorkin's a man of his word. Since 9/11, he and other producers have saturated viewers' psyches with hateful Arab characters.

Weekly, ever since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, viewers have been bombarded with vicious Arab Muslims; the villains surface in dozens of movie reruns (e.g. *True Lies*, *Executive Decision* and *Rules of Engagement*). And, Arab characters prowl about in scores of law enforcement, intelligence agency, and courtroom dramas. To name a few: *Threat Matrix*, *West Wing*,<sup>24</sup> *The Agency*, *Sue Thomas F. B. Eye*, *Law and Order*, *Family Law*, *Judging Amy*, *JAG*, *The Practice*, *The District*, *The Shield*, and TV movies – *The President's Man: A Line In the Sand*. These shows falsely imply that we are a threat to our nation by labeling American of Arab heritage as clones of Al Qaeda-disloyal thugs and terrorist waging a Holy War against our next-door neighbors. We use mosques as hideouts, shoot dead our fellow Americans, and use dirty bombs to nuke Washington D.C., Los Angeles, and Texas.

These images ignore the fact that Americans of Arab heritage and American Muslims — all nine million of us — are as courageous, as patriotic as our neighbors, and every bit as intent on wiping out terrorism. My analysis of TV programs has revealed that from the beginning TV programmers have practiced exclusion, not inclusion, banning us from the television landscape. Only two antiquated TV series have ever displayed Arab American characters. Once upon four decades ago Danny Thomas revealed his roots in the popular 1960s series, *Make Room for Daddy*. And, during the 1970s, *MASH*'s Cpl. Klingler, played by Jamie Farr, noted his Arab heritage.

Why should we care about these dehumanizing images? Because history has taught us that when any ethnic group is demonized, innocent people suffer:

More than 100,000 Japanese-Americans were interred in camps; blacks were denied basic civil rights and lynched; American Indians were displaced and slaughtered, and in Europe six million Jews perished in the Holocaust.

In general, Hollywood's movies and TV shows give prejudice a free pass. These movies and TV shows are

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*"history has taught us that when any ethnic group is demonized, innocent people suffer;"*

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being screened at a time when hate crimes and attacks on mosques are on the rise, when Americans of Arab heritage and American Muslims are being harassed in schools, physically attacked, fired from their jobs, rudely profiled at airports, and even arrested and imprisoned on the weak grounds.

U.S government officials have attempted to down play U.S media's stereotypical images by challenging the stereotypes abroad. Intent on reinventing America in the eyes of 1.2 billion Muslims, President Bush appointed a former ad executive, Charlotte Beers, (who resigned last year) as undersecretary of state to lead a \$15 million public diplomacy campaign designed to win the hearts and minds of the Muslim world. But experts believed Beers' government-sponsored TV campaigns not only flopped, but helped advance anti-Americanism in the Arab street. Muslims, I believe, did not fall for the PR ploy because they are confronted daily with images of American movie stars, such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, invading Arab countries, and blowing them to smithereens.

What should be done to curtail such prejudicial behavior and twisted portraits? Ethnic stereotypes do not easily vanish. Hollywood's image-makers should understand that Arab Muslims, their beliefs and lifestyles, are worth the same respect that other nationalities receive. The time is long overdue for producers to embrace a spirit of fairness, and to project Arab Muslim images on silver screens as they display other peoples, no better, no worse, with a fair balance of villains and heroes.

Peace cannot happen when TV shows and motion pictures relentlessly denigrate an entire people. Xenophobia and prejudice are the flip sides of harmony and togetherness. We need films about Americans and Muslim Arabs that elevate the human spirit. Producers need to shift gears and begin churning out movies that help advance tolerance and unify people. After all, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are religions of peace, advocating that all humankind is one family in the care of God.

During this period of global conflict, I suggest President Bush host a White House Conference on Humankind. Its purpose: To help advance diplomacy, and spell out the role Hollywood can and should play in eradicating age-old stereotypes. Invited guests could usefully include members of Hollywood's 9/11 Coalition, notably government officials and media moguls, I'd be happy to begin a dialogue on how to portray real Arabs. By working together we can help shatter injurious stereotypes.

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## *Is Diversity Training...*

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equal power relations, the odds for economic success are better for some individuals than for others. I recall a similar situation in an intercultural communication class when a student said, "Something that really hit me hard was hearing that a black friend of mine is scared that he could be hurt, beaten or killed when he gets pulled over. He is scared for his life every time a cop picks him up! As a white person, that's something I don't have to worry about." Like the character David, she too had never experienced discrimination and, as a consequence, was shocked to learn it still exists in American society.

In addition to the disbelief that prejudice still exists in American society, participants with a highly egalitarian worldview may also believe that cultural differences have no bearing on success, and should not be discussed. Thus, I hear comments such as, "I don't want to talk about differences. I like to talk about how we are all the same." Or, "I dislike separation. I dislike the word diversity. I prefer a word that indicates we are all woven together." I even witnessed a student in a multicultural education class argue that, "Learning to show differences is teaching hate." Because such individuals believe that society is becoming progressively egalitarian, drawing attention to differences might indicate inequality. Therefore, a sign of a liberated, educated individual is one who does not talk about cultural difference, and better still, one who does not even notice it.

"We should all just be American, not all these labels—they're too confusing." Another consequence of an egalitarian world view expressed in this quote is unease with discussing labels. One city diversity training participant expressed this discomfort clearly when she said, "I don't really think of myself as having a racial or ethnic identity. We should all just be American, not all these labels—they're too confusing." Similarly, during my office hours, a student in an intercultural communication class also struggled to label a classmate: "I'm not sure what her

name was, I think she said . . . I don't know if I should say this it sounds so bad . . ." at this point he lowered his voice, looked me in the eyes, and continued, ". . . but I think she said she was Jewish." Students and diversity training participants express confusion over which labels to use or why certain labels sound inappropriate. They have been socialized to believe that society is a place where everyone has the same opportunities regardless of group membership, and therefore, it is inappropriate to notice, or discuss cultural labels.

At the beginning of this article, I quoted a gentleman who exclaimed, "You either are an American or you aren't an American. You are either part of this society or you are not part of this society!" His worldview was under attack. He reacted to a training simulation that brought out issues of structural-level inequalities and group dynamics. In his worldview, there are no groups, only individuals, and they are Americans; and there is no inequality, we are all equal—all Americans. His reaction is similar to many U.S. American training participants who have highly individualistic and egalitarian worldviews. They may

even perceive the training as anti-American; but it is not. Their extreme view of individualism and egalitarianism mitigates other equally compelling U.S. values such as pluralism. He implies that the ideal of equality has been realized in the U.S., a fact contradicted by the many voices in this article.

As organizations continue to "go global," diversity training will continue to take on a more international flavor. Leaders of diversity programs must recognize how the national values of participants influence reactions to training. Individualism and Egalitarianism are just two examples of national values that may influence U.S. Americans' responses to diversity training.

To reach international participants, diversity trainers have to explore national cultural values and be aware of their impact on diversity training. Perhaps this calls for more dialogue between diversity specialists—who have traditionally focused on issues of race, class, and gender—and interculturalists—who have a long history of exploring national values.

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