Intercultural Communication. A Southern View on The Way Head: culture, terrorism and spirituality

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Abstract

Intercultural communication is discussed from the perspectives of different paradigms, applied at different times, to different purposes. This discussion is framed within a Global South perspective, and how people who come under the gaze of the North West adopt, adapt and change received theories, and how they sometimes totally invert them to address ends for which they were never intended. The overview also examines why the different paradigms exist in isolation of each other and discusses where cultural studies fits into the matrix of approaches. The paper concludes with an appeal for intercultural communication to incorporate non-material aspects of ontology, the spiritual and belief to account for the rise of fundamentalism, not currently included in its conceptual frameworks.

Keywords: Intercultural communication, culture, terrorism, Global South

Recent years have integrated me into a number of intercultural communication conferences, all held in China (including Macau and Hong Kong). My insertion was occasioned as editor of *Critical Arts* which had published a special issue on cultural globalization from a Chinese perspective (Wu and Sihui, 2011). The outcome was my exposure to a widely different set of approaches to the general idea of intercultural communication (IC) than I had previously encountered in South Africa and America. IC was in South Africa during apartheid (1948-1990) a solidly positivist affair, based on how to 'model' inter-racial boss/labour interactions. Apartheid had uniquely enforced the separation of racial geographical routes, historical ethnical roots and spaces (group areas, homelands) linked to identity (tribe).

Conversely, in the era of global modernism, the mixture of different cultures was referred to as multiculturalism, involving sedimentation of cultural layering over time. But with

> globalization such a definition of multiculturalism no longer holds. People are transported *en masse* in new cultures where they become hybrid citizens. In the old

country, the present was embedded in the past. In the new host country, however, the cultural past is different. This means that their cultural identity has been compromised. They want to be participants in the new culture and yet remain favorable to their cultural past. This problem is resolved by transporting components of the cultural past and relocating it in the new home land (St Clair and Williams, 2018: 10).

This article will discuss these differences in IC studies from a South African perspective, within a Global South orientation. Specifically, my aim is to offer a brief historical overview of different IC paradigms and to explain how IC has been used and misused in different contexts. My conclusion is that the dissimilar IC paradigms account for only part of the picture, in that they largely ignore non-material dimensions of life, religion and the immaterial.

The Early History

Two issues of *Communication Research Trends* (CRT, 1986, 1995) report that the field arose during the 1960s within the domains of diplomacy and peace studies. Yet, images of the 'ugly' American abounded and the Western academic enterprise operated in terms of the idea that minorities anywhere "were fodder for a national melting pot" (CRT 1986: 1). Rooted in explorer, trader, soldier, missionary and adventurer tales of the exotic, anthropologists responded by developing systematic forms of knowledge to the training of colonial administrators. World War II and its aftermath was a wakeup call for the need for intercultural understanding as a new world order was reconstructed from its ashes across the Soviet Union Europe, China, the Koreas and Japan. CRT (1995:3) observed that the demand for intercultural communication was worldwide: "Japanese business people were just as puzzled about the strange ways of Americans and Germans as were Westerners about the ways of the Orient. And, their interests were no longer academic, but had price tags in the billions of yen, dollars and Deutchmarks".

Later, a much more nuanced Edward Hall (e.g., 1959, 1976, 1963), amongst others, trained businessmen and development agents in how to work cross-culturally between different nations. His much more nuanced models included ritual, non-verbal, less rational and poetic dimensions of life and living that needed to be understood in any intercultural encounter. The mechanistic sender-receiver modelling that had typified early intercultural communication was

not for Hall a prime method or theory. For Hall, grammar and vocabulary interrelate with gesture, proxemics, emotions, tone of voice, rhythms of time, facial expression and so on – all these are components of primary level culture.

Another seminal scholar who came onto the scene during the later Hall era is Geert Hofstede (2001) whose cultural dimensions theory – using the metaphor of "software of the mind" – describes the effects of a society's cultures and values of its subjects, and **how** these values relate to behavior. Hofstede's model, which is very influential within the IAICS, resulted from the application of factor analysis that analyzed an international survey of IBM employee values IBM between 1967 and 1973.

Hofstede's original theory proposed four dimensions along which cultural values could be analyzed: individualism-collectivism; uncertainty avoidance; power distance (i.e., strength of social hierarchy) and masculinity-femininity (i.e., task orientation versus person-orientation). A fifth dimension, long-term orientation, followed to account for values not discussed in the original paradigm. A sixth dimension, indulgence versus self-restraint, was finally added. Hofstede established a major research tradition in cross-cultural psychology that has been also drawn upon by researchers and consultants in many fields relating to international business and communication (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005). Yet, for all Hofstede's ubiquity as Paul Schutte (2009: 2) points out in a throw-away line, Hofstede's (2001: 189) omnibus IBM study involved only white South Africans, thus creating the perception that all South Africans have the same 'software of the mind'". That such a basic sampling error that excluded cultural and ethnic difference could be made is puzzling.

Another key scholar is Robert St Claire (2015; see also Vaagen 2016), founding director of the Institute for Intercultural Communication, University of Louiseville, who offers a systems framework for cultural theory and cultural metaphors that transcend social network analysis. In systems theory everything interlinks with a larger networks of connections. Cultural studies, however, eschews accept systems theory. St Clair observes that such scholars are unaware of the fact that a human system differs substantially from nonhuman systems and that in business and advertising and mass media, that these two kinds of systems are conflated. Cultural network theory, he argues, views culture as a system and describes interactions of components

within that system. In addition, some systems are creative and proliferate into new systems. This is true of both human and non-human systems (the second generation of systems theory). St Clair, a transdisciplinary linguist, learned to speak 29 languages and he has resided and worked all over the world. He is something of a cross-over artist, in that he is as comfortable in both the conventional intercultural communication and the cultural studies paradigms (see Hofstede 2005), especially as he has actually lived his intercultural encounters in his daily life in many places amongst many different communities, in many different ontological worlds. Intercultural communication, thus, is not for him a text book experience, but an intensively experiential one. In the formal academic arena, he was Executive Director of the International Association of Intercultural Communication Studies (IAICS) for 10 years, was instrumental in the establishment of the China Association for Intercultural Communication (CAFIC). In an interview with Meng-yu Li, St Clair observed:

> Westerners love to think of themselves as individuals ... They think that they are self-made. This is a form of mental blindness in Western thinking. The fact is that for every successful person there are six or seven layers of people who played an important role in making that person successful. In Asia, this view of life is obvious. People live in a society in which there is a strong social self and one must take others into consideration while doing things ... One has a social self and the individual self is involved in a matrix of relationships with others. Harmony has to do with the role that the individual self plays in a larger social context. The Chicago school of sociology is something unique to American scholarship. It provided a model of the social self in American culture. Irving Goffman provided wonderful models of the dramaturgical self (the egocentrical self) while his colleagues went on to further articulate the role that the social self plays in modern society. Related to this research was the model taken by the New School for Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany, in which it was argued that the self is socially constructed … What I find missing in this model, however, is a lack of detailed social structures. It is not enough to know how reality is socially constructed and distributed I want to know how these structures relate to other kinds of social and linguistic patterns.

It is not my objective to critique these approaches here but to signpost them in the history that spans the explorer age, colonialism, post-colonialism and globality. St Claire's cultural

networks and systems approach is far more historicized and transdisciplinary than is conventional intercultural communication, drawing as he does on Foucault, and a whole swathe of social theories that are usually missing from technical IC training and statistical applications. His analysis also implicitly admits that communitarianism is a characteristic of many societies, and is not exceptional to Africa. Linguistics and language is in his approach crucial, as are biological impulses and physiological ways of reading signs.

Early History

In 1974, the Speech Communication Association started publishing an annual review by its Commission on International and Intercultural Communication, and from 1976 the *Yearbook* of the ICA included research reviews of the topic. The early field in communication studies was characterised by two approaches: cross-cultural and intercultural research. The former examines typical styles of communication within different cultures, while the latter studies cultures interacting and communicating together (CRT 1986: 3), embracing the inter-individual, organisational and international. IC aims to detect Euro-American ethocentricism and open up to a dialogical convergence model that includes non-Western and supra-Cartesian frameworks that eschew transmission models of communication. This IC convergence model examines the "live intercultural interaction process" (Saral, cited in CRT 1985: 4) and in a rapidly globalizing and ethnically integrating world IC is now "a matter for the survival of our species" (Young 1996: 10).

A third variant is found in psychology. Intercultural relations is a practical, multi-field discipline used in training individuals to understand, communicate, and accomplish specific goals outside their own cultures. Intercultural relations incorporates learning how to see oneself and the world through the eyes of another. This is the emphasis of the Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research.

A different trajectory is cultural criticism that assumes conflict and difference and which studies the tensions resulting. This approach is argued to be useful to development communication and competitive relationships. Cultural dialogue, however, argues that human nature is basically the same anywhere and therefore similarities, differences and mutual agreements can be enhanced (Asante 1979), a conclusion that Schutte (2009) arrived at when

he applied Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework to the study of 1 374 black and white university students in South Africa.

Most intercultural and interethnic contacts occur within organisations, themselves understood by intercultural communication as specific subcultures. Conflict management is high on the agenda in this approach. This was the prime factor that was adopted by early South African cross-cultural and intercultural scholars who focused mainly on the capital-labour contradiction in attempts to smooth apartheid relations of production in primary industries like mining and agriculture and later as the economy matured, in secondary industry. This focus emphasised difference, cultural, ethnic and racial incompatibility and the need for abstract modelling to facilitate efficient interracial communication. Intercultural, interracial and interethnic encounters were regulated in the workplace and separated in living and leisure spaces. The possibility of 'third culture' whereby different interacting ethnic groups could feel 'at home' was thereby structurally eliminated through legislation.

Later, from the early 1980s, some influential state-aligned intercultural communication scholars looking for more sophisticated frameworks did reconfigure Hall's high context (blacks)-low context (whites) schema, but in a form that he could not recognise (see Author 1999). South African IC was not primarily concerned until the mid-1980s with sharing communication. Command was rather its objective; and thereafter workplace intergroup accommodation of sorts.

The case study below explains how early theories and methods had been re-articulated in South Africa to argue for the opposite of the field's intentions. Thereafter, a brief and eclectic tour of how it has been adopted and adapted in other contexts is my objective. IC will be briefly also examined in how it has been very differently elaborated and elevated through the work of Jacques Derrida and British cultural studies to address global issues.

Geographies of Command

Apartheid was a race-based modernist project whose special and class legacy lives on the in post-apartheid transition. Much of the IC research done during this period (1948-1989) was based on instrumentalist concepts related to culture and intercultural theory that mistook

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stereotypes and myth as intercultural regulatory concepts, and which substituted prejudice for theory. This research also insisted on fastening upon differences rather than on commonalities.

Communication academics had responded in four ways to the crisis sparked by the 1976 Soweto black student uprising that marked the death knell of apartheid after 1990. First, the conservative Afrikaans-speaking practitioners of administrative research and communication science actively assisted the state with its attempts to justify the racially-based Tricameral Parliamentary system installed in 1983. This Parliament provided separate chambers for whites, coloureds and South African Indians, but excluded the 'tribalized' black majority who were spatially allocated and ethnically separated in to what was termed 'a constellation of states'. These were the bantustans (called 'homelands') that were stratified and separated by the central white government's constructions of spatial history, ethnicity, language, culture and geography.

Second, the liberal, mostly English-speaking administrative researchers kept their distance from both the state's communication programs and the anti-apartheid socialist supporting alternative media. This group was suspicious of intercultural and cross-cultural theory that was seen to work in the dominant corporate and apartheid interest.

Third, some academics, especially on Afrikaans-language campuses, withdrew into an ivory-tower idealism, thereby avoiding the issue. Or, they dabbled with *ubuntu*, a code of conduct supposedly encoded – and uniquely so - into the very fabric of African languages and ontologies (Kamwangamulu 1999; see also Broodryk 2007). *Ubuntu* is a form of communitarianism that translates as 'we are people through other people'. Proponents applied *ubuntu* also as a way of evading intercultural- and cross-cultural concepts, and as a means also to perhaps explore a more humane – if highly essentialized and ethnicized social practice that very soon was propositioned as a full-blown but frustratingly illusive theory (unlike the case of Confucianism and related Chinese concepts).

South African scholars developed models, instruction manuals, and theories on how interactions with people of different colors could best be managed, and some compared *ubuntu* to the much more elaborated Confucianism (Metz 2012). However, there are indications,

though the known evidence has since disappeared, that the idea of African *ubuntu* was one of the concepts appropriated for 'domestication' purposes as apartheid began to unravel during the 1980s. Language planning and relexification of indigenous African terms into apartheid discourse was certainly a feature of vernacular and semantic engineering (Author, Author and Author 1990). Moreover, where intercultural and cross-cultural communication were originated to enable wider and better communication and interaction, *ubuntu* tends to be popularly understood in ethnocentric terms (Gade 2012, 2011), and thus its adherents tend to exclude rather than include those who don't fit black African racial and language profiles (Author 2016).

The South African orientation of intercultural communication during the 1980s negotiated three overarching primary paradigms that were influential within communication studies: the positivist, interpretive, and critical. These broadly corresponded to three sociological paradigms namely: the positivist, idealist, and realist (Wilson 1983).

Different departments combined elements of the three approaches in varying proportions and combinations. At Afrikaans-language institutions, conservative readings of the European interpretive tradition (phenomenology, hermeneutics, reception theory, and existentialism) was common. This interpretive strand ran parallel to academics using positivism, influenced by both the European humanists and positivists, was described by Arnold De Beer as "the cross point between Western Europe and the USA as far as mass communication is concerned" (cited in Author and Author, 1993: 293). The interpretive and positivist schools tended to collapse critical theory, neo-Marxist theorizing, and praxis research into a single approach (Author and Author, 1993: 301). At liberal universities, work fell within the realist paradigm of Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Nicos Poulantzas and Antonio Gramsci who were read through contemporary cultural studies after early 1980s (ibid., 1993: 283).

Across Anglophone Africa, a technicism was derived from an underlying positivist functionalism during the 1950s and 1960s. This view of communication was based on a Shannon and Weaver-type model in which communication was reduced to a stimulus-effect understanding of the phenomenon, tied to the practice of "administrative research" labelled as organisational communication and communication science in South Africa. The intention of technical perfection was to make it 'function' more smoothly within a given established order – whether political, commercial or civil. Administrative research in the form of positivism, media effects studies, functionalism, and qualitative methods, exerted significant influence. These approaches complemented coursework designed to train students to project a positive image of the country, both domestically and internationally, thus recognizing – in a backhanded way – IC's original diplomatic and peace imperatives.

Intercultural communication that complemented the cross-cultural paradigm underpinned the "reformed apartheid" notion of finding ways to 'improve' communication between supposedly racially distinct groups in developing a 'third culture' in the form of the Tricameral Parliament, (1984-1994) but still rejecting black participation. This was a race-class-space strategy as blacks – apart from the nascent Bantustan interior bourgeoisies that administered geographical apartheid in an alliance with the central, white, apartheid government - provided the bulk of cheap labour in primary and secondary industries. This three-tiered Parliament aimed to manage intercultural dialogue at the personal and group levels, in the context of legislated racial segregation that assumed cross-cultural differences as inevitable, always incompatible and therefore to be kept apart, but assisted by a beguiling and benign official definition of apartheid

expressed as 'good neighbourliness'. Even as apartheid was unravelling in the early 1980s, the state held onto the 'group' notion as in its 'Intergroup Relations Research Project' (Main Committee, 1985) which eschewed the terms 'intercultural communication' and 'cross-cultural communication'. The term, intergroup relations, was preferred and refers to interactions between individuals in different groups, and to interactions taking place between the groups themselves as legislated racial collectives.

As ICA defines the term, intergroup communication concerns the ways in which communication within and between groups affects social relations. Intergroup encounters occur when social, rather than personal, identity forms the basis for communication. Where the South African orientation assumed intergroup communication to be benign and operating from an even playing field, the ICA approach acknowledges power inequality, bias, competition and conflict. These troubling aspects of intergroup communication have been realized in scholarship on prejudice and discrimination (e.g., ageism, racism, sexism), aggression, violence, and genocide, but not usually in the earlier South African applications.

The South African and international approaches have since moved on, now recognizing problems associated with its early history. That is to say, some trajectories of these approaches now are directly addressing the colonial and post-colonial contexts that generated the field in the first place. Similarly, elsewhere:

> … the link between colonialism and present-day relations between cultural majorities and minorities has been constantly and repeatedly overlooked, ignored, or denied. This historical amnesia often serves the aims of majority groups to legitimize the existing post-colonial social order that has persisted even after decolonization (Bobowik *et al* 2018: 2).

Collective memories hinder or enhance contemporary intergroup relations, depending on how the past is remembered or framed (Bobowik, et al 2018 p. 3). This special journal issue on colonial pasts and intercultural relations is a shot across the bow of the field at large. The dimension of history and how it is remembered and read though class, ethic, language, gender and spiritual frames, is not usually part of intercultural, cross-cultural or intergroup relations. Yet, these often invisible discourses are crucial in making sense of ontologies that are not white, Western and Cartesian. And, memory is complicated because all cultures contain concepts of past, present and future, but that not all languages possess grammatical markers for tense (St

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Clair and Wei Song, 2008: 227).

In psychology, work by Mark Nielsen *et al* (2017) is similarly assertive, but from a methodological perspective. They argue that in child psychology that research subjects are often unrepresentative of the global population, that the discipline is over-reliant on on a narrow participant pool. They reveal that high impact-factor developmental journals are heavily skewed towards publishing papers with data from WEIRD populations (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic) (see also Henrich et al, 2010; Author and Author 2013). Astonishingly, despite widespread awareness of this problem, there is a habitual dependence on convenience sampling, such as conducted by Hofstede in South Africa. Nielsen and his colleagues conclude that failure to confront the possibility that culturally-specific findings are being misattributed as universal traits has broad implications for the construction of scientifically defensible theories and for the reliable public dissemination of study findings.

The Post

To succeed in intercultural interaction it is necessary to develop an understanding and appreciation of perceptual differences between individuals, groups and nations also. Universities that supported apartheid affirmed the prevailing hegemony by applying linear, top-down, communication models pegged on what immobile signifieds and legally-fixed meaning. However Dick Hebdige (1979), to address the issue of hegemony, employs a semiotics which has polysemy as its goal, whereby each text is seen to generate a potentially infinite range of interpretations. Meaning is thus constructed as a process that allows interpreters to contest and negotiate meanings. Ethnic group affiliations were used as a rationalisation for apartheid (Biko, 1978: 81-86, in Steyn, 1997: 67). The concept of culture was manipulated from the advantaged position of the dominant white minority operating in often testy relationships with the black bantustan elites or interior bourgeoisies whose job it was to regulate the flow of labour to white areas and industries.

Post-apartheid approaches remain similarly instrumentalist, but where 'difference' was previously identified, now commonality and communitarianism are searched for and humanitarian African concepts like *ubuntu* are currently invoked to do similar work as earlier intercultural communication. The methods are the same, the theories are similar, if more nuanced, and the assumptions about the field (in South Africa) remain functionalist.

In one of the most highly cited linguistic studies on *ubuntu*, Nkonko Kamwangamalu (1999:27) presents *ubuntu* is a pan-African value system. However, the values filtered through *ubuntu* are not innate. They are acquired and transmitted from one generation to another by means of oral genres. "[F]or a society where *Ubuntu* has been eroded as a result of Apartheid, what is needed is a revival rather than commercialization of the virtues of *Ubuntu*" (Kamwangamalu 1999: 25). Ubuntu lends itself to such exploitation as it has been adapted by business: "*Ubuntu* must be understood within the context of a feudal socio-economic system in which the (members of the clan) … were allocators of wealth and ethics" (Maluleke; 1998). Maluleke's caution is that the 'true' form of *ubuntu*, originating as it does from pre-modern class relations, cannot be unproblematically transplanted without reconstitution from that context to a capitalist relations of production. Ubuntu stresses caring and community, solidarity and sharing, being in interpersonal, communal and societal partnerships. *Ubuntu, as are all concepts and practices, is a contested symbolic terrain.*

Ubuntu has been put to the use by economies that do not reflect the original orientation that is universal brotherhood for Africans, sharing, treating and respecting other people as human beings (Bhengu; 1996:5). Maluleke argues that *ubuntu* is anti- capitalist. It is also presented as race-based: something only black people have and practice – and that this is also popularly claimed by blacks. He appears to question the strategy of using these concepts as a means to build African pride and solidarity because in this world, the principles of *ubuntu* are not adhered to. It is for this reason that Maluleke believes that the term should be contested and its meanings and effects debated rather than just adopted, applied and automatically assumed to work in the modernist context.

The dearth of empirical and critical scholarship on *ubuntu* is striking. A key work, however, is Ngcoya (2009) who argues that most studies employ the same instrumentalist markings and apply them to the business environment. Business, state, academics and NGOs largely draw on indigenous cultural practices in efforts to advance the management of companies and speed up the post-apartheid transition (Mbigi and Maree 1995). But, as Bhengu (1996:33) argues, for firms to make most effective use of *ubuntu*, they need to institute collaborative and team-based working relationships. This is rare indeed.

Despite the use of appealing phrases (solidarity, sustainability, transformation) more often than not, the valuation of indigenous knowledge is based on its potential international use value that

underestimates the uses ascribed to it by indigenous populations (McAfee 1999). The same problem clouds Mbigi's *ubuntu* management approach that accepts that the ultimate goal is the competitiveness of business organizations, not necessarily the improvement of the workers' lot (Ngcoya 2009).

Since 1994 a new class of black, wealthy professionals is emerging from the Black Economic Empowerment initiative that requires the transfer of corporate wealth to black shareholders. These few individuals have adopted capitalist principles and have become a consumptive class fraction (Mbeki 2009) as opposed to adopting the principles of *ubuntu* that the media and academics construct all Africans as possessing.

Elsewhere in the Global South

Where in parts of Africa, *ubuntu* is touted as the 'African solution', though it too, often, genuflects to ethnic interests and even racial determinations (Gade 2012). In China, discourse analysis complements conventional disciplinary IC based approaches within sections of the IAICS and beyond, framed as intercultural communication, cross-cultural communication and more noticeably as 'translation studies'. This approach aims to understand texts in relation to production, markets and consumption. It does not deal with individual, class, social or intercultural conflict, but rather offers means towards sign stability and interpellation of Chinese subjects as consumers as equivalent to (passive) citizenry that sees the autocratic polity as benign (see Kelen 2009).

At a national identity level, Derrida's concept of *difference* is applied to leverage Stuart Hall's (1980) theory of identity, to simultaneously claim a fixed Chinese identity while also acknowledging *difference* in China's interactions with the West, and specifically the USA. Some kinds of Chinese comparative literature and IC curricula are academic responses to the era of China 'going abroad' or what Dai Jinhua (2001:170) refers to as "encountering the world", following the nation's rescue from the ravages of the Cultural Revolution. National image-building is indicated by China's hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games, the 2010 World Expo and simultaneously developing intercultural academic strategies to enable this continued opening of both economy and inter-cultural negotiation. This 'going abroad' discourse signifies Chinese attempts at the positioning of Self in different and unfamiliar cultural contexts as they shift between them and promote globalization.

Hall's (1980) dual model permits a framework that moves between a fixed and self-referential notion of reassured identity but which recognizes difference in intercultural and international encounters. Derrida criticized Saussure's distinction between "signified" and "signifier", because such a distinction would easily lead to a misunderstanding that the former precedes the latter. In this sense, he proposed the idea of "*differance*" – the signifier is in permanent shift. Hall additionally argued that meaning (for example, identity), though in permanent mobility, can only be represented when there is an arbitrary closure, or, when the shift momentarily pauses. Semiosis must terminate to make meaning possible, which is true also of identity construction. Hall argues that ideology only provides temporary ways of connecting signified and signifier, and such connection is only part of the permanent shift. In short, Hall has been mindful of extremes of slipping into an endless emptiness when using Derrida's approach to meaning and seeing ideology as a finished work in an Althusserian (1971) manner.

Identity is key to Chinese discussions, a new emphasis which is indicative of China's new global role and foreign policy where it needs to negotiate and manage international relations via the prism of intercultural differences, when negotiating with other nations, be it trade, tariffs, spheres of influence, development and so on. This would appear to offer Chinese foreign policy a strategy to engage with different ways of making sense, to argue the merit of difference, but also to enable dialogue, as a way of keeping the peace. As phrased by Vaagen (2016: 8):

> Huntington's broad characterizations of the post Cold War international order attributed cultural or civilizational lines a fundamental and divisive role that he argued would determine global politics. Minimizing conflict according to Huntington means accepting the facts of civilizing difference, abandoning attempts to promote Western liberal values globally and, in consequence, returning to a pluralist world order based not on balanced power but on hegemonic self-restraint (Hurrell 2007).

This approach thus applies an affirmative dimension to the ways that CS is studied in China (and Australia) but not anywhere else, where CS remains in opposition to prevailing national hegemonies. As Young (1996:3) observes:

> each culture must change to the extent necessary for it to recognize differences, to acknowledge the prima facie validity of other cultures, to incorporate some degree of tolerance of cultural diversity, and to discover some common ground in the new intercultural space thus created, ground upon which a conversation about intercultural

understanding and cooperation can be built.

But there are issues with this Chinese Derridian approach:

> When Derrida discusses intercultural communication, which he does largely under the rubric of translation (Graham 1985), his exaggerations of the ways in which language escapes context and history, lead to a thinning out of the possibility of any understanding between interlocutors … Derrida's own speaking position is relentlessly abstract and appears at times to address all texts and all cultures indifferently (Young 1996: 101).

A philosophically-led British cultural studies is overlaid in some Chinese appropriations by the intense study of Western philosophers as a way of making sense of the West, especially the USA, and in how to discursively maneuver as a rising military power in the East, heretofore the preserve of America. Inserted into this discourse are Chinese philosophies like Confucianism that have been intricately elaborated on by intercultural scholars like Gao Ming Cheng which elevate harmony over conflict. As an ideal, harmony is to be supported, but such approaches cannot account for class struggle, competition, or conflict.

The workings of power (whether interpersonal, intergroup, class or national) rarely figure in discussions on *ubuntu*. Two scholars do break with this benign emphasis, Tavenaro-Haidarian (2018) draws systematically on Ngaire Blankenberg's (1999) critique where she ponders the power relations that apply between in the individual and the collective, and between individual agency and the group, and in my analysis, this extends to the (Chinese Communist) party, and the national (as in national interest) which may not be coincident.

Where discourse analysis is applied to understand other cultures through linguistic and media analysis, the pragmatic Chinese approach wants to understand 'the West', markets, ways of making sense, as China 'goes abroad'. The traditional Chinese philosophies draw on finely tuned historical written elaborations (Chen 2004), while *ubuntu* remains largely a set of essentialised and often very vague and all-encompassing assertions, claiming 'African values', in the face of the other – the latter *a priori* assumed to lack such communitarian virtues. Few studies of *ubuntu* are historicized, problematized or critical, however. The basic contradictions imposed by '*ubuntu* philosophy', apart from its ethnocentricsm, is the suppression of individualism in the service of the community, and the resultant loss of personal freedom

(Blankenberg 1999). Studies of *ubuntu* rarely historicize the practice (alluded to by Maluleke), nor do they problematize or periodise it historically and with regard to modes and relations of production; and they do not question its uses and misuses (as my work has done with the application of IC and cross-cultural communication in apartheid South Africa.) Effective participation requires "a commitment to freedom of expression; people must feel as if they are able to speak out and represent their interests without fear of repercussions even if their voices are dissenting" (Blankenberg; 1999:46). Communitarian imperatives often deny this value and associated freedoms.

Conventional IC continues within a modeling framework trying to describe interpersonal relations, usually ahistorically and uncritically. Explanation is not a prime element of this set of approaches. Helping to make intercultural and interpersonal relations work better is, however a laudable goal. But much of this work is still ensconced in a 1950s Edward Hall training framework when the societies were much more mono-cultural, mono-racial, mono-ethnic and mono-linguistic than they are today (with some exceptions still as in Japan, North Korea and parts of China).

The 1950s was a modernist period when functionalist assumptions that drive conventional IC high-context - low context theory crudely agglomerated cultures in terms of entire continents or imagined regions. African', 'Chinese' or more broadly, "Western' [i.e. American] were and continue to stand also for Europe, Australasia, Scandinavia etc.). While some Asian cultures do remain relatively mono-cultural, there is little sense within some IC approaches that populations within these vast swathes of territory on different continents are now part of the digital age with its impact on individualist/consumerist subjectivity construction that is beginning to dismantle the social values of 'the collective', and which modify the nature of interpersonal relations, responding to the ways in which social media are reconstituting our subjectivities and digital-spatial-global interactions. 'Culture' is still assumed to be race- and ethnic-based, space/land-based, language-based and historically static, bounded and occurring between clearly identifiable ahistorical subjects in terms of these assumed attributes and values, stratified by Confucianism, Daodism, Christianity, Islam, *ubuntu*, capitalism, collectivism and so on.

Such closed-off analyses develop complicated tables and graphics, designing intricate organograms and flow charts that offer boxes, arrows and feedback loops, to describe

difference and commonalities, but usually without taking into account the problematics of power, gender, class, modes and relations of production, or geopolitics, that prescribe social roles and associated ideologies in enviably stable and static societies. Models – descriptions of behavior and function – are often presented as 'theory' (explanation) and these diagrams are then claimed to enhance inter-cultural awareness (reciprocal understanding), quite often in the absence of empirical testing and close ethnographic observation and/or autoethnographic immersion. While all these graphic representations of interacting but situationally fixed cultures are certainly useful in an idealist sense and in mapping their inter-relations, sweeping assumptions are nevertheless made about unifying values and harmony-inducing collective discourses like Confucianism in China and *ubuntu* in Africa, as if these are benign, egalitarian, gender-neutral and inevitably communitarian. Such discussions usually exclude similar Western discourses and their associated Enlightenment practices such as humanism. They also usually exclude critical studies of these same phenomena that are inconvenient to these idealist schemas.

Transculturation is a better concept to explain the merging and converging of cultures that results in assimilation, hybridization and paradigm shift (Ortiz 1947). Most of the world is now living in an epoch of mediated transculturality in which media products are manufactured and consumed across the world (Hepp 2015), though some scholars argue that "while we in the past lived our lives *with* the media, today we seem to live *in and through* the media, at least in those parts of the world where Internet penetration is the highest" (Vaagen 2015: 15)

Notwithstanding this new era, there is a whole industry now devoted to identifying similarities and differences between Confucianism and *ubuntu*, nearly always without reference to history, media, conflict and struggle and what actually occurs on massive scales in the real world (poverty, human and animal trafficking, war, genocide, refugees and enforced mass migrations, exploitation, environmental destruction, over-consumption, corruption and banking and national economic melt-downs, and so on.) This is not to argue that such studies are wrong, or that they are irrelevant, but I must ask why they usually ignore material conditions and historical processes. Idealist and utopian approaches are of course valid in searching for benign alternative futures, but they tend to bracket out the mess of the real world in searching for such elegant simplicity. This is helpful at the level of theory formulation, however. And, religion – the spiritual – is entirely absent from discussions of 'Western culture'. Religion and struggle are the blind spots of much academic discussion relating to IC. This kind of IC subsists on

discussing reified academic claims rather than assessing these in relation to daily reality on vast swathes of the earth's population.

Where IC once (in South Africa at least) was largely instrumentalist, implicitly located within the nexus of realizing class power, now (again in South Africa), in its *ubuntu* variant, it is located within an idealist frame that is oblivious of class relations, power and the operating principles of history: conflict, struggle and economy. These are efforts geared to cultural containment, stripping encounters of history, and analyzing and sanitizing them within specific synchronic boundaries, forgetting that cultures are moving targets continually mutating, changing and hybridizing.

The discontinuities in the broader field are stark. They tend to fall into specific schools (St Claire, Hofstede, Edward Hall, for example), while a cultural studies approach offered by Robert Young (1966) curiously makes no reference whatsoever to the longer-standing, more scientifically conventional approaches that emerged from business studies, let alone St Clair's much more historically nuanced, textured and social theory-led transdisciplinary contribution.

Also, I want to answer a question that has come up in writing my IC overview from a Southern Perspective: the lack of citations to St Clair in much IC work, and specifically in Robert Young's (1996) book, when both draw on Foucault. My untested conclusion is that St Clair places some fidelity still in systems theory, but also that his work is so extraordinarily multilingual and transdisciplinary, crossing so many cultures, and the field so fractured between different disciplines, that his intensive fieldwork-led approach does not fit any clear paradigmatic categories because he transgresses them all. Also, it seems that a rather restricted list of journals and presses in which to publish may have been a constraining factor.

Young's book is an extraordinary analysis and should have been a game-changer, but this does not appear to have occurred in approaches that do not call on British cultural studies due to the different conceptual silos in which each school operates. Young offers a pragmatic, but simultaneously critical approach; his educational theory background locates his analysis within postmodernism, and he is not afraid to critique the high priests of the broader field of translation such as Derrida, Foucault, and Habermas. In this critical engagement, Young stands out by questioning the citation-rich grand narratives that have attached themselves to these scholars where their adherents (especially of Derrida and Foucault) are concerned. Perhaps the different

paradigms that constitute different approaches to IC studies need to try to converse with each other more than they do? Otherwise, they will simply indicate lack of engagement, lack of inter-paradigmatic discussion and lack of use-value, a pragmatism that is also a strong argument offered by Young. The problem is that there is an intercultural dissonance between the different paradigms that actually inhibit discussion, that sometimes ignore different approaches, or which simply cannot talk to each other. One indicator of this is to not cite key scholars or works from different paradigms, to ignore the terrains from which different approaches have developed, and to focus solely on particular sets of writers, while ignoring others. Young's approach describes a set of complementary methods for the use of critical intercultural professionals operating within postmodernism, post-structuralism and hermeneutics. My question, however, is that by eliding the very conventional IC approaches with which hard-nosed empirical practitioners may be familiar, this constituency might well make heavy weather of the lack of a bridging discourse between IC paradigms. Thereby is division replicated.

In addition to the above approaches is the 'cultural synergy' strand that interweaves African and European concepts as a way of escaping monolithic frameworks and enabling cultures to be simultaneously part of one and part of many (Steyn and Motshabi 1996:8), for example as in the impressionistic *The African Way* where Mike Boon (1996) "marries the soul of Africa to modern business" (Credo Mutwa, back cover). Nguyen Nguyen-Phuong-Mai's (2017) critical analyses of cultural metaphors, examined through cultural neuroscience and evolutionary biology, generate new, more useful metaphors, she argues, than do those of the static paradigms such as 'software of the mind', the 'iceberg' and the 'onion'. IC theorists have played with many metaphors, few of them holistic. Perhaps the most intriguing is the tree metaphor embedded in a circle of context offered by Mai (2017a; 2017b). She argues, as do cultural studies scholars, that cultures are both routed and rooted, moving, changing, even as the roots often create the essentialist impression of fixedness:

> Depending on the circumstances (the age of the tree, the water, the seasons, etc.), the tree grows and changes over time, gaining different attributes, expanding, creating new trees, being transplanted, even uprooted, or disintegrated, and dies. Using the insight from evolutionary biology [she argues] that the tree represents a human's fundamental concerns such as religion, language, politics, power and the arts (Mai 2017a).

In Africa, the common sense understanding of culture is the rooted and fixed one, ahistorical, past orientated, always having been there. Constant change and hybridization is of course experienced by everyone, but this dynamism is not always recognized as such. Even though trees do have roots, they still grow, travel and re-germinate elsewhere. While people have cultural roots, they also have legs, and move all over the place, changing all the time in response to new ideas, experiences and encounters. Our culture and even our brains are 're-wired' Mai concludes: "Brain plasticity is a strong evidence that we are built to adapt, as a Chinese proverb goes: "Uproot a tree, it will die; Uproot a person, (s)he will survive" (Guo, 2017). Sedimentation theory (history of cultural spatialization) – is ignored by most IC approaches except St Clair.

The epistemic discontinuities within and between intercultural communication paradigms are simply not intercultural enough to talk to each other. Such is the curse of paradigm fundamentalism. While not much has changed since a similar conclusion was reached over 20 years ago by Guo-Ming Chen and William J Starosta (1996:370), what I hope my own assessment has achieved is to have identified some missing links in many approaches: history, power, class, modes and relations of production and the lack of indigenization of theories and methods into Southern contexts.

The Corporeal and Beyond

No matter the above lacunae and disjunctures, the post millennium world has very violently thrust upon humankind a new set of issues that takes analysis way beyond the corporeal where most intercultural communication approaches, no matter their paradigms, are restricted to the dimension of the material. Communication is assumed to occur solely through observable bodies, languages and symbolic expressions thereof. The role of the spiritual world is hived off to religion studies on the one hand or terrorism studies on the other, de-linking this immaterial realm from intercultural concerns, and thereby muting what might be termed intercultural competence. Making sense of the sacred and the profane, the living and the dead, Subject in relation to Object, is not part of contemporary IC paradigms. Yet, to a significant degree, these are the drivers of post-Cold War civilizational clashes. Think Al Qaeda, ISIS, Al Shabab, Boko Haram and all the rogue splinter groups claiming Islamic affiliation. These movements represent the flip-side of globalization, and their terrorism is considered by them as restorative acts and as engaging in ethical annihilation.   The predicate, 'culture' is not benign. It can be mobilized for any and every situation and exert many consequences, from development to

destruction (Author and Author 2003). IC studies do not normatively assume a malign intention or outcome, they assume communication-as-sharing, as appropriate interaction, and as doing something useful. But the broader global conflictual context framed by Huntington suggests that IC must also understand these broader issues and frames of reference.

Salafi-jihadi ideology is, for example, characterized by a particular association between political virtue and visceral violence. This association directs its aesthetic and cultural universe. The common sense view suggests that Salafi-jihadi thought represents for its adherents an ethical project in response to military occupations and that its philosophy privileges a specifically theological notion of sacrifice.

Instead, Chetan Bhatt (2014b) argues that Salafi-jihadi ideology is characterized by doublets of ideas that include oppositional sets about the temporal world and the afterlife, authoritarian law and violent chaos, loyalty and enmity, defilement and plenitude, tangible lands and imagined spaces. These are oppositions that infiltrate daily life and which need to be accounted for in post 9/11 intercultural communication studies (plural).

The age old examples repeated ad infinitum in textbooks deriving from Western contexts cannot apply everywhere. Conflict, class, gender and global struggles cannot be elided in IC anymore. Even at the level of the personal, world views other than industrial material ones do exist even within this particular formation, however. Extending this, here is a game-changing example:

> When I worked with the Yakima Tribal Nation, I met their shaman. She said that she liked my blue lights. I knew that she was looking at the third level of my aura. I was born with the blue light. I turned around and said to her: I like your blue light. We became instant friends. She taught me much about her metaphysical world. When she died, many people reported talking to her for around three days after her death. I never published this kind of information in the 73 books that I have written as it as part of our agreement (St Clair, email, 5 April 2018).

Similarly, while I have never seen anyone's aura, my field experiences as both a documentary film maker and as a researcher have witnessed similar situations (Author 2007; 2014; see also Stoller 1992). Generating theories to describe, let also explain, such para-normal phenomena, not only is incredibly challenging, but to also draw forth scorn from our more Cartesian-minded colleagues.

Science is basically one kind of discourse which, in the era of industrial positivism, became dominant over non-scientific discourses and their ways of organising production practices, social understandings and interpretations of 'reality'. Materialist frameworks presume the separation of Subject and Object; they are blind to the nature of non-Western ontologies, not to mention personal, social and spiritual experiences. There is no single rationality, normativity or world view. As 9/11, and the years 2007 and 2015/16 indicated when the Middle East imploded with different Islamic variants fighting each other and the 'West', the world fractured between nations, fragmented some nations themselves, and destroyed them along with their ancient heritages. The virtual idiosyncrasy that is the Islamic State (ISIS) wants to destroy all earthly authority and replace it with an eternal order that saves souls while massacring corporeal existence by substituting the profane with a spiritual virtual existence in a supratemporal world (Bhatt, 2014). Yet, this same group proved adept in manipulating the new media and weapons and technologies of modernity and postmodernity, to challenge Enlightenment values and secure as martyrs the hedonistic pleasures they claim to deny their corporeal selves on earth. This is *langue* of a whole new symbolic and spiritual magnitude of order that collapses the divide between the living and the dead.

In such brutally contested fields of meaning making, new IC approaches sometimes need to negotiate *langue*, the so-called 'paradigm of structure', and find ways of making sense of nations, groups, classes, identities and individuals engaging in intercultural encounters, whether peaceful and/or conflictual. Instead, IC sees conflict and its 'aberrant' manifestations as *parole* (accents, incidents: terrorism, but not imperialism; assassination, but not capital punishment; command, but not resistance). These broader issues need urgent IC attention: one person or one group's ethics is another person's terrorism. How can IC deal with this conundrum? A new anthology, just published, enables a "clear contemporary indigennous voice … reminding us of non-dominant ways of being in the world (Rinehart, Kidd and Quiroga 2018). I thus end this essay on a potential shift enabled by the Southern view articulated in this book which was published just before the deadline for this article.

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