SOME PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

I. INTRODUCTION

- The Elusiveness of "Culture"

A FEW DISTINCTIONS

Enlightenment vs. Romantic Notions of Culture
Cartesian vs. Heideggerian Models of Knowledge

- Classic Modern vs. Postmodern Conceptions of Subjectivity

APPLICATIONS

Practical Consequences
Comparison to Common Descriptions of Culture in Business Theory
skilled   unskilled
variable invariable
group   individual
transmittable limited
integrated fragmented
system   lack of order
associated mere behavior
with values
background explicitly
knowledge formulated
beliefs
generally consciously adopted
unexamined
## ENLIGHTENMENT vs. ROMANTIC MODELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Kant (Cicero, Tylor)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Herder (Dilthey, Boas)</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>culture as a skill</td>
<td>culture as expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practices</td>
<td>values and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learned</td>
<td>evolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>either individual or shared</td>
<td>inherently communal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may be integrated</td>
<td>necessarily integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potentially accessible to anyone</td>
<td>appropriate for members of the ethnic people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standard is effectiveness</td>
<td>standard is authenticity</td>
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Cultural Competence: What Is It? Is is a kind of knowledge? What is knowledge?

The classic view of knowledge:

Knowledge is representational (about the world), proposition (knowledge that...), has the form of a predicative judgment, is originally explicit, and -- if rational -- follows rules.

Also: Rules are thought of as exceptionless laws. Concepts are rules, they are governed by a logic of necessary and sufficient conditions. They hold or don't.

What are the alternative models and what consequences do they have for the idea of cultural competence?
Martin Heidegger  
(1889 - 1976)  
Major Work: *Being and Time* (1927)

Themes:

Knowledge as Practical Understanding of How To Do Things as Opposed to Theoretical “Knowledge That...”

Emphasis on Prepredicative Grasp instead of Propositional Assertions

Stresses Implicit instead of Explicit Knowledge

Science and Theory as Rooted in Everyday Practices

Objects Organized According to Practical Relevance for Human concerns

Humans (Dasein) as Ultimate Sources of Value

Historicality as a Basic Feature of Human Life

All “Facts” Context-Dependent
"World" for Heidegger

World is an interrelated set of practical possibilities.
Worlds have significance for Dasein (people)
The significance of worlds bestow relevance on objects within the world
Worlds are necessarily inconspicuous
Worlds are generally socially performed and accepted
Each world, as inconspicuous tends to function as if it were the only one
Dreyfus, Hubert and Dreyfus, Stewart

*What Computers Can’t Do* (Harper & Row, 1972)


*Universalism and Communitarianism* (MIT 1990)

Major Themes

- Expert Knowledge as Knowing How..., not Knowing That...
- Experts Do Not Follow Rules, but Simply See What To Do

- Rules Are Only For Learners, Not For Competent Experts
- Practical Expertise Will Always Escape Rules
Major Themes:

Cognitive Processing Precedes Propositional thinking

Cognitive Processing is Rule-Governed Representation

Patterns Are More Like Types (Paradigms) Than Concepts

Good Decision-Making Does not Follow Exceptionless Rules. It Handles Multiple Soft-Constraints Effectively

Psychological Regularities are "Soft Laws" (ceteris paribus), {but ceteris never is paribus}
## MODERN vs. POSTMODERN AGENCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modern</th>
<th>Postmodern</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Descartes, Dilthey</td>
<td>Foucault, Lyotard, Baudrillard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subjects</td>
<td>subject-positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● unities</td>
<td>pluralities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● integrated</td>
<td>contextualized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;deep structures&quot;</td>
<td>overt practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>search for identity</td>
<td>flexible adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one standard</td>
<td>standards context-dependent</td>
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SOME CONCLUSIONS

Cultures are Learnable Skills
Cultural Knowledge Is a Competency: knowing How To Do Something
Cultural Competency May conform To Rules, But is Not Necessarily Following Rules

- Therefore, Cultures Must Be Appropriated Through Familiarity and Practice, Not Just By Memorizing

- Cultural Competency Is A Tool, Not A New Identity

- Learning New Cultural Skills Does Not Involve Loss of Self-Identity

- It Enhances the Self By Expanding the Ability to Respond Appropriately a Wider Range of Contexts (Analogy with Language)
I. DEFINITION (H&M12) - Culture is a distinctly human capacity for adapting to circumstances and transmitting this coping skill and knowledge to subsequent generations.

II Description (ibid.) - Culture gives people a sense of who they are, of belonging, of how they should behave, and of what they should be doing.

III Other Descriptions (23) - Having a sense of culture and its related skills are unique human attributes. Culture is fundamentally a group problem-solving tool for daily coping in a particular environment.

   Additional Note (23) - Culture can be analyzed in a macrocontext, such as in terms of national groups, or in a microsense, such as within a system or organization.

Recommendation (13) - Even when there are apparent similarities of people in geographic regions, cultural differences may require alteration of strategic marketing planning (HM later mention alterations in communication style, planning, work organization, and personnel evaluation and supervision.
HARRIS & MORAN ON THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING COSMOPOLITAN

COSMOPOLITAN MANAGERS

Can operate in a wider range of contexts

Can operate across contexts

Thereby gain flexibility that is important in any context, allows them to adjust more quickly to changed circumstances

Cosmopolitan then refers not only to a set of skills, but to a kind of person that cross-cultural experience can help create.