PREFACE

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THEORETICAL REFLECTION

This volume by Stephen Croucher is presented in the series Communication, Comparative Cultures and Civilizations. This series is offered by Hampton Press to explore common ground that may enable new knowledge about and meaningful comparisons of different times, places, civilizations and linguistic communities. Just as colors are enhanced when set side-by-side so too the appreciation of a culture can be enhanced by noting how it differs from others, how it complements and contrasts. This book series presents interdisciplinary research about cultures and comparative civilizations. Although the comparative process is quite natural for even the most casual traveler, comparative studies seek to bring a more systematic and objective lens to the experience of difference between and among cultures.

Before moving to specifically discuss Dr. Croucher's research, it is important to briefly synopsize the ideological doctrine of assimilationism and the major academic expression of it these days as it is precisely this that Dr. Croucher sets out to empirically test. As the reader shall see, he did not structure his respondents' interviews so as to encourage a certain response. He did not seek to disambiguate reality by pre-structuring the possible stories his interviewees deemed important to tell about being Muslim in France. He encouraged them to elaborate and clarify in their own terms what they experience. This book is a discursive space where French voices, both Muslim and non-Muslim, are allowed to speak without restriction.

Dr. Croucher was not looking for an answer to a problem. He did not set out to offer a solution for a better world. Such an approach presumes that the researcher already knows what is important and imposes that personal judgment on the respondent limiting their voice to what the researcher already expects. It also presumes a reality where everything is "problema-
tized” and has a “solution.” Science does not study the universe in order to “solve” it, but instead to discover how it works and understand it.

In Dr. Croucher’s interviews the answer was not already inscribed as a limited option on a survey instrument. Rather he tested the idea that assimilation as promoted in the theory of intercultural adaptation (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003) is possible at all, is desirable from the social agent’s point-of-view even if possible, and whether such a transformation of the self leads to well-adjusted happiness and social harmony. He also wanted the French to tell him what they believe are the important issues. Along with Irving Goffman (1961) and Eric Kramer (2003), Dr. Croucher is doubtful of the assimilationist claim that “unlearning” one’s native identity by somehow dissociating from one’s self or splitting in two and actively working to “deculturize” one’s self in accord with external values is possible or as desirable or realistically inevitable as claimed in the doctrine of intercultural adaptation (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Dr. Croucher decided to question the basic assumptions behind intercultural adaptation theory by examining the current Muslim immigrant situation in France as a real-world case study.

In this volume Dr. Croucher tests the theory of intercultural adaptation and other neoconservative ideological justifications for widespread and systematic attempts at social engineering via all possible means including the mass media and public educational curricula in the service of status quo. However, this effort was complicated by the profound confusion offered by the theory of intercultural adaptation itself. The pre-established goal set out by the ideology of intercultural adaptation is clearly stated yet self-contradicting. It is to generate a new better kind of person. As is documented below, the doctrine claims that if the precepts of intercultural adaptation engineering are followed two utterly different kinds of better person will result. One is a totally “evolved” assimilated person and the other is a person who has been “liberated,” moving beyond the limits of humanity itself, beyond culture and differences and apparently language too (as language functions primarily by creating binary oppositions).

As globalization continues to develop, modernist notions of national and ethnic boundaries are becoming obsolete. So too are neoconservative ideas of assimilation to what assimilationists frankly call the “dominant power” of host mainstream national cultures (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 358-360). And for the largest colonies on Earth such as the United States and Canada, which have been destinations for millions of people of multiple cultures for centuries and continue to be so, the application of concepts such as “mainstream” “central” culture versus “subcultures” has never been an accurate description but rather has been used mostly in political/ideological efforts to ghettoize and subjugate minorities. The world is multicultural. The designation of some cultures as “mainstream” and others as “sub-” is an unwarranted value judgment, a political statement, a metaphysical prejudice; a declaration of ideological perspective.
As migration, immigration, and exchange accelerate and increase in volume around the globe a process of co-evolution is the norm whereby cultures are being exposed to each other and influencing each other (Kramer, 2003, forthcoming). Sojourners, visitors, and immigrants (both forced, such as political refugees and self-selected such as exchange students) are not merely adopting the ways of their new homes, but also changing the sociocultural atmosphere, economics, and milieu of their new homes. As this process continues, as "host cultures" are modified by the addition of new cultural elements, any measures of host culture receptivity also continually change. For instance, California has so many first-generation immigrant residents, including Governor Schwarzenegger, that its polyglot of cultural churning, and fiscal burdens make host cultural receptivity very complex and constantly varying. At this writing the Democratic Presidential nominee's father was an exchange student from Kenya.

("Mainstream") culture is a continually negotiated phenomenon. Unlike instinct, culture must be passed on through symbol systems that are themselves contingent artifacts. Culture, "mainstream" or "sub-", is not a simple destination for an immigrant to aspire toward or, as the new assimilation rhetoric of psychological and mystical terminology puts it, to "psychically evolve" in an "upward-forward progression accompanying an increased level of functional fitness (greater adaptation) and of psychological health (less adaptive stress)" (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 382). According to Gudykunst and Kim (2003), upward-forward psychic evolution is in the direction of the central "mainstream" culture which is exerting its coercive forces in a dualistic (metaphysical) fashion upon its members to conform. The members of society are not society. In the doctrine of intercultural adaptation, culture and society are presumptively postulated as somehow metaphysically separate from people. In the doctrine of intercultural adaptation theory (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003), political ideology is completely conflated with metaphysics as the mainstream culture; the "dominant power" with its "coercive pressure" (pp. 359-360) is postulated as being identical with "objective reality" (pp. 369, 378) which is different from the minority reality of its members. This is close to the doctrine of intelligent design, where there is a cultural mind that is super-human. As we shall see, this is exactly where the doctrine of intercultural adaptation leads.

So "upward" and "forward" are politically loaded value judgments in the service of an "objective" "external" social power sui generis (somewhat like a divine imperial center) we might call status quo. According to the doctrine of intercultural adaptation, striving to "evolve" upward-forward toward the dominating culture also means to be "realistic," by definition, which leads to the next obvious step, according to Gudykunst and Kim (2003). The next step dictates that those who do not conform are not in step with reality, or to put it another way, they exhibit "behavioral impairment" (p. 372), are "functionally unfit" (p. 376), or "maladjusted" (p. 377), all of
which are symptoms of “mental illness” (p. 372). This is what the authors of the intercultural adaptation doctrine call being “realistic” and “objective.”

Gudykunst and Kim (2003) offer a solution. The solution is to be “realistic” and mentally healthy. They argue that the way to achieve this is to willfully “unlearn” oneself in an effort to evolve upward-forward toward objective reality, namely, the mainstream culture with its central authority (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 380). In a nutshell, this is the advice of the social engineering authors of the intercultural adaptation doctrine. According to this morally and politically relevant program for reengineering society, the way to “intercultural personhood” with its well-balanced mental health and functional fitness is through being reprogrammed (p. 376) via “psychotherapy” (p. 382), presuming of course that psychoanalysis somehow transcends culture and has none of the “ethnocentric” (p. 376) biases that unbalanced immigrants suffer from.

What Gudykunst and Kim (2003) say is that the central authority’s version of reality is more powerfully enforced (“coercive”) and so it is more desirable for the immigrant to conform than to resist. But assimilationists often attempt to avoid appearing overtly ideological and judgmental, and to avoid the fact that one of the most political aspects of life involves whose version of reality will prevail. In classic positivist style, Gudykunst and Kim (2003) attempt to avoid this by using the language of innocent realism (pure metaphysics), claiming to be merely pragmatic and simply stating the facts of reality: “objective circumstances” (p. 378). They postulate that only an insane person with the wrong kind of psychological makeup and/or an incompetent person would argue with objective reality. They equate “objective” reality with the norms of the dominant most popular version of reality.

For Gudykunst and Kim (2003) “dominant” culture is simply a matter of quantity. From quantity comes cultural coercive force. Now they also confuse conformity with adaptation, for adaptation is a new, usually random form of living. It is creative and novel, not merely conforming to what already is the case. A viable mutation or adumbration must be unique to even be identifiable. What they describe is conformity not adaptation.

Clearly, a reason for the essentially one-sided change [conformity toward mainstream values and reality] is the difference between the size of the population sharing a given stranger’s original culture and that of the population sharing the host culture. To the extent the dominant power of the host culture controls the daily survival and function of strangers, it presents a coercive pressure on them to adapt. (p. 359)

As noted earlier, what they mean to say is conform, not adapt, for adaptation is not a reactionary process but a life-affirming, creative process involving the emergence of a new and unique way of living.

Confident in their values and beliefs, the ultimate goal of William Gudykunst and Young Yun Kim’s work is to advise individuals and policy
makers how to engineer the most assimilable/competent/flexible person possible. The means of engineering the new “intercultural person” as suggested by the Gudykunst and Kim (2003), is by changing the content of primary socialization in school curricula and mass media, and by psychotherapy and psychological counseling that encourages the “stranger” to be more open-minded and willing to conform to the central coercive authority of mainstream culture (p. 382).

As Gudykunst and Kim (2003) implore, “The propagation of the goal [of assimilation] must go beyond the educational process directly to the political processes and the mass media. Media, in particular, can play a pivotal role in the spread of interculturalness as a human social value and thus produce a gradual change in the mindset of the general public” (p. 388). The emphasis on using schools to promote assimilation ideology is clearly stated by Kim (1985): “the school seems to be the most appropriate setting for intercultural education efforts. A school is often the first institution of the dominant culture which children from a minority group encounter. Their experiences in this setting are, therefore, critical to their subsequent attitudes and feelings about the dominant society” (p. 394). And furthermore, “Intercultural education is necessary not only for students from diverse ethnic groups, but also for their teachers” (p. 393). But elsewhere when they argue that innate personality traits are so causally linked to the adaptability of a person as to make them predicative, and given their stated values and goals, they get dangerously close to the conclusion drawn by earlier promoters of eugenics such as Francis Galton in the service of promoting social harmony and wealth.

First, the idea of getting to the kids to control a society is hardly new or novel. Second, what is unstated here is that Kim already has in mind what would be a good dominant culture. You don’t have to teach that what you are learning in school is the dominant culture. That is self-evident. Her explicit and grand ambition is to change the dominant culture itself, around the world no less, by changing the contents of primary socialization. She does not want the already existing dominant cultures to prevail. This is a sort of hypercritical cultural theory, which as we shall see, even promotes the elimination of culture categorically as a “defilement.”

Diversity and difference, according to this global assimilationism, is an obstacle to global communication competence and efficiency. In other words, Gudykunst and Kim (2003) want their ideology to become dominant. They explicitly lay out methods for teaching their new improved culture including how to instill better values, motives, beliefs, and behavior patterns. This is pure social engineering based on a conservative form of critical cultural studies. However, this is very confused in their writing, as we shall see, because a major tenet of their doctrine is to assimilate, which would mean to teach that one should unquestioningly conform to the already extant dominant culture on finds oneself in. The doctrine of inter-
cultural adaptation vacillates wildly between absolute relativism, in which the immigrant is advised to assimilate as completely as possible to whatever mainstream culture she finds herself in, and absolute absolutism, in which the doctrine purports to offer a way to “emancipate” and “liberate” oneself from all cultural limitations.

We are reminded of the effort to civilize native American children at the end of the 19th century by removing them from their parents and original cultural surroundings to immerse them in White Anglo-American culture, a process that was very heavy-handed for central government, to say the least, and one that in some ways had only limited success at assimilating the young native Americans because at the end of the day that same dominant culture defined them, racially, as not mainstream Americans so that the more the Indian children genuinely internalized the dominant culture the more they were forced to see themselves as not worthy of becoming an integral part of that culture. This dilemma is what W. E. B. Du Bois called “double-consciousness” in his critique of assimilation ideology back in 1903 (Du Bois, 1903/1995; Karola & Lujan, 2003). But of course their story is very much integral to the American experience.

Despite neoconservative claims, everyone here, including illegal immigrants, are always already a functional part of the system. In fact people not here, but in places like China and Saudi Arabia, are also a part of the American system as producers of many of the goods we consume and as investors in U.S. assets and government bonds. To claim to know what constitutes the central mainstream culture and to then prioritize that coercive power as more real than the rest of the system, which Gudykunst and Kim do, is an unwarranted ideological and metaphysical prejudice. The hinge to their notion of assimilation is the central dominant “mainstream” culture with its coercive “conformity pressure.” They define this as “the commonly accepted modes of experience” (2003, p. 378). The problem is that this fundamental axiom of their doctrine is a myth. No such monolithic culture exists, by definition and demonstrably, in the diverse multicultural world that we actually inhabit. Their theory of assimilation (2003, pp. 360, 373) may be applicable to a closed institutional culture or corporate subculture. But even then, under such limited conditions, as Irving Goffman (1961) observed in prisons and asylums, and as high recidivism rates indicate, it is doubtful that true resocialization occurs even in the minds of people constrained to such highly institutionalized environments. Rather cultural exchange, cultural churning, and cultural fusion are the dominant dynamics of the world today (Kramer, 2000, 2003).

Beyond this neoconservative rejection of reasonable and just criteria for responsible agency and participation, Gudykunst and Kim contradict themselves as they conclude the presentation of their theory by categorically rejecting the importance and value of culture itself, calling it a “defilement” that blocks individuals from achieving absolute liberation and access
to universal truth, beauty and value "higher" than any one cultural perspective (pp. 385, 402). Because their new culture is "higher" than all others, it is not a culture to them but the universal truth.

The rhetoric and confusion of concepts used by Gudykunst and Kim (2003) is of fundamental importance for our understanding of the ideological thrust of intercultural adaptation theory. They confuse "external objective reality" with "commonly accepted modes of experience." As they put it, "At the heart of [culture] 'shock' phenomena is the lack of fitness between strangers' subjective experiences and the commonly accepted modes of experience in the unfamiliar surroundings . . . the split between internal, subjective experiences and external, objective circumstances" (p. 378).

The rhetorical and metaphysical slight-of-hand is obvious. The "central" "common" reality is exchanged with disinterested objective truth. In the doctrine of intercultural adaptation a particular and contingent set of interests is exchanged with "objective" reality. Such is the typical rhetorical appeal to "realism" and being "realistic" as a persuasive tactic used against those who disagree or have a different experience of the world. This appeal to realism is, in the final analysis, anathema to intercultural tolerance and in denial of the reality of multicultural societies. In the process their ideology and apologetics favoring central power is exposed. They define anyone who deviates from the common reality to be mentally "unbalanced," "functionally unfit," and "immature." So much for the likes of artists, scientists, and visionaries such as the Galileo, Brunelleschi, Luther, Beethoven, Rousseau, Jefferson, Marx, Susan B. Anthony, Einstein, Picasso, Gehry, and so on.

Chaos theory demonstrates that even the most "insignificant" part of a system is not only worthy of consideration but can produce very consequential change within the system. All parts are . . . parts of the system and always already integral to the overall process of system. Even if one eliminates randomness (which can only happen theoretically under controlled, closed conditions) and all future states of a system are fully defined and predicted by initial conditions (determinism), the fact is that dynamical systems, even "simple" ones, exhibit an increase in adumbrations and perturbations at an exponential rate over time so that prediction of future states becomes increasingly impossible (Lorenz, 1996). Even Pascal's demon cannot defeat nonlinear potential. Furthermore, any complex system, such as American society, as Georg Hegel (1807 Ger./1977 Eng.), the first great systems thinker stated, has within its own processual dynamism conflicting and competing forces.

All systems, as Hegel (1807 Ger./1977 Eng.) observed nearly 200 years ago, harbor within themselves internal conflicts. Indeed every individual experiences internal conflicts, ambiguity, dissonance, hesitation, thoughtful indecisiveness, stress. But those stresses are necessary for dynamism and change, including what might be evaluated as "progress." Cooperation and
compromise have no meaning without implying at least the ever-present possibility of conflict.

The same is true for internal cohesion. If one eliminates conflict, one has eliminated community (as well as politics) and a major need for communication, because all relationships, all communities involve internal disputes and negotiations. This seems to be exactly what Gudykunst and Kim (2003) argue for as all differences are bad and with complete assimilation communication shall become telepathy. The conjoined doctrines of intercultural adaptation and intercultural personhood constitute a strategy for creating a better world, and as such they very much resemble an attempt to establish a new religion, promoting values and idealistic oughs derived from mystical sources rather than explaining what is. At one point Gudykunst and Kim (2003) even argue that as one becomes more and more communicatively competent/assimilated the immigrant’s "internal" psychic system becomes so synchronized with the "external" system that they become "telepathic" (p. 273).

Even individuals negotiate their own sense of self. Holding as an ideal a final solution of absolute equilibrium, which is the stated ultimate goal of personal growth in the doctrine of intercultural adaptation, is fanciful, and it is a curious ideal to promote as it spells the end of growth. But for a Zen master, maybe, emancipation from all thinking, meaning, difference; to have no mind so that there can be no culture, no communication, no possibility of conflict or growth, absolute zero—might make sense (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 384-385). Their solution for the evil of intercultural communication with its unavoidable differences, misunderstandings, and conflicts is to eliminate culture and the self as a cultured being and to achieve an "absolute point-of-view," "beyond the parameters of any single culture" (pp. 385, 389). This seems utterly fantastic. The "solution" is apocalyptic, involving the "disintegration" of the self, as indicated by the work of the social psychologist Robert Jay Lifton in his books *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* (1989) and *Destroying the World to Save It* (2000). Learning is not a zero-sum process. We each do not have to invent calculus luckily. That is the essence of culture, namely, the accumulation and passing on of knowledge via symbol systems.

The explicit valuation put forth in intercultural adaptation doctrine is that equilibrium, a zero-energy state, is good and desirable above all else, and that relationships and personalities should be engineered to achieve such a state. To do so one must first "disintegrate" cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally, so that learning new habits can take place. There is no evidence in psychology that this is what learning or "adapting" is. Quite to the contrary, the integration of new information involves old skills and modes of understanding. A zero-sum process or the maintenance of equilibrium contradicts the very notion of growth as adding additional skills to what one already has.
This is an assumption that does not square with reality. If people truly wanted equilibrium, they would not change. Life would not constantly spin off new forms and despite the fact that old forms such as single-celled protozoa remain very viable. Stimulating cities, for instance, would not have come into existence if humans did not crave stress, difference, novelty, stimulation. There is no evidence that people truly want the absolute peace and harmony of silence. The moralizing and often mystical and universally categorical critical assessment of culture itself by the authors of the doctrine of “intercultural personhood” may offer the kind of comfort that retreat into fiction often does, but it has little to do with the scientific understanding of human experience as it actually is. Perhaps that is why they not only draw their inspiration from mysticism including Taoism, Zen, the New Age interpretation of Jean Gebser’s (1949 Ger./1984 Eng.) comparative civilizations research by Georg Feurstein and the phony New Age physics of Fritjof Capra, but also suggest that their plan of action will “liberate” and “emancipate” humans from culture itself and all differences helping us to “evolve,” if we so choose, which to them means to strive our “utmost” to “rise above the hidden forces of culture . . . approaching the limit of cultures and ultimately of humanity itself” (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 385). How? By “unlearning” and “deculturizing” ourselves in a spiral of “upward-forward psychic evolutionary” progress toward complete “realism,” “competence,” “maturity,” “balance,” and “mental health,” in short, adaptation/assimilation (pp. 358-364, 381-382).

The dream of a utopian harmony, where all uncertainty is eliminated, has no basis in empirical fact, and it is not the job of a scientist to pontificate dreams. All systems exhibit turbulence. Evolution is a consequence of just such dynamism as well as total randomness (a property of systems that Hegel did not understand).

Dr. Croucher’s research in France concerning immigrant Muslim populations demonstrates that reality is not simple. Although neoconservatives may fear the uncertainty of the future for French society, the fact is that France is alive and well and its dynamism is not a sign of end times but rather its enduring vitality as a desirable destination for millions of sojourners. Politics is not a dirty word. It is the clearest sign of a vibrant public sphere. Harmony in a dynamic progressive system is built on the clashes and compromises of competition and debate. Harmony is not the same as stagnation, which is based on the eternal same. Equilibrium, the lowest energy state in a system, is stagnation.

The ideology of assimilationism presented as a virtue and political-economic value of merit held in great esteem by conservative interests, who even define it as “progress” in itself, is a child of colonial political systems. It is not a social scientific theory but rather an expression of imperialistic interest in having marginal populations conform to central authority; chiefly as a matter of self-perpetuation of the system, its own security, cer-
tainty, and efficiency of reproduction. The system is to be internalized, and this is the good in itself according to assimilation ideology.

However, in the current postcolonial state of globalization, global commerce and free competition is expanding and old imperial structures have fragmented, allowing emerging markets and "exotic" cultures to elbow their way to the fore. As a consequence, assimilationism as a modern nationalistic virtue has limited descriptive and explanatory value. In fact, as Friedrich Nietzsche (1887 Ger./1967 Eng.) would suggest, it violates human interest and aesthetics at the most basic level because it is boring; quite the opposite of progress, which requires deviance and change. Predictable and certain as it may be, replication of the same leads nowhere. But assimilation ideology remains the primary reactionary posture of conservative interests.

The nation-state with its presumptive tradition of local "mainstream" culture, which very often presupposed a national religion and the sacredness of eternal national traditionalism founded in mythic origins, is fast becoming an anachronism. Such modernist political entities such as nation-states are increasingly permeable. People, ideas, and cultural artifacts are crossing boundaries and taking up permanent residence everywhere. What used to define and identify one "in-group" or one "inside" from "out-groups" and outsiders, is now smeared across boundaries erasing their power to separate and define in-group from out-group. The modernist notion of space in general and sides specifically is no longer the exclusive mode of thinking and being on the planet. This is the time of postcolonial and postimperial markets which are in constant flux. Difference and novelty are exploding across the planet. The world has become restless. What only 20 years ago were stagnant communist monoliths are today dynamic economic powers.

The very concepts of space, time, identity, and power are shifting as travel and communications are allowing an unprecedented number of voices and interests to engage in a rapidly expanding public sphere. As minds engage each other, the very form of knowledge, identity, and morality, and how they disseminate and transform is changing. So too are expectations and motivations. As networks grow and bundles become more and more dense with information, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's (1955 Fr./1959 Eng.) notion of the noosphere, a planetary shift in knowledge formation and global consciousness, is unfolding.

The atmosphere of human ecology is changing. A global or spherical awareness is emergent (Gebser, 1949 Ger./1984 Eng.). The universe a child of today lives in is totally different from the universe his great great grandparents inhabited only 100 years ago. The very notion of the possible as well as motives and ambitions are changing. As one elderly person told me, he worked as a boy on a chuck wagon on the Chisholm Trail driving longhorn cattle from Texas across Oklahoma up to the railhead initially at
Abilene, Kansas (later as the railroad reached further south, Wichita). Half a century later he retired from a job as a security guard in a nuclear power plant. He saw his first car at age 16 and men walk on the moon. He saw parts of the Chisholm Trail turn into US Highway 81.

Time and relativism including time-zones that characterize a turning orb erupted into the popular consciousness of the most industrial nations only in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Today it is sweeping across the globe, creating the phenomenon of generation gap everywhere. The increasing salience of the phenomenon of time erupting in science, art, commerce, war, and daily lifestyle brought with it, as Henri Bergson (1907 Fr./1911 Eng.) observed, an emphasis on futurism. Less and less is sacred including sacred traditionalism and identity, which are losing their grips on entire populations. What is happening is the continuing wave, the enormous movement of revolutionary attitude sweeping the globe.

Hope and change are the principle aspects of the modern revolutionary spirit culminating in the postmodern hyper-disengagement from the old virtue of permanence. As Alfred North Whitehead (1929/1979) observed, flux is the essential quality of the new universe. Time, relativism, difference and their value deconstructed class identities and continue to disrupt social hierarchies around the globe. Discontinuities and disequilibria mark the world system. A breach in awareness that required tremendous courage took place. This first occurred with the Renaissance and accelerated through the European revolutions and is now diffusing throughout populations everywhere.

Progress (some might call it evolution) is essentially linked to the ability to challenge old truths, realities, expectations, lifestyles, and so forth. It is not submission to the coercive power of an established mainstream culture. Democratic comportment is based on valuing difference not as a structure to establish and maintain inequality based on sacred blood or eternal laws, but as a process, a process manifested in the liberation of science and other democratic accelerants. No book goes out-of-date faster than a science book. Politics, the art of openly negotiating differences, is the mark of the New World. In France, differences are churning as politics permeates all aspects of life moving from the halls of power into the streets and encompassing everything from political-economy to identity and personal freedom.

Today, integration is happening everywhere but integration does not have a final goal of “absolute adaptation” or assimilative convergence into a final single self-identical true culture, which is the teleology of assimilationists. They personify a 17th-century notion of positivist ideology that promotes the notion of a single reality sui generis and the notion that sanity, reason, and true culture conform thereto. This is not integration but conformism. But like all systems, positivism contained within itself its own demise as time erupted as progress.
Integration, unlike assimilation, requires difference to operate. The idea that peace and harmony will emerge one day and that it will do so only with the elimination of all cultural differences as promoted by Gudykunst and Kim (2003, p. 385) is a dream super-imperialists with ambitions of global conquest have harbored before, with self-evident disastrous results; a crisis for humanity rather than a utopia. It is not new. Perhaps the best modern expression is given in the political metaphysics of Thomas Hobbes’ 1651 treatise Leviathan. The ideal of “intercultural personhood” as presented by Gudykunst and Kim, and their version of integration meaning submission to a dominant central culture, is not what Chardin, Bergson, or Gebser meant by global awareness nor is it supported by Dr. Croucher’s empirical evidence concerning the political and personal struggles in France today.

Curiosity, freedom, ambition, and possibility, the potential for change itself, is no longer a dream or an abstract virtue but the modus operandi of increasing masses of people across the globe. They expect to experience mobility. Difference and change, in a word uncertainty, tends to spawn anxiety for conservatives. But in the postmodern world, these are catalysts for meaning and hope. The old sacred limits and boundaries are evaporating. Lifestyles, motives, values, and expectations are changing faster than ever before. An endless dynamic of cultural fusion that never settles into a final integration (the word used as a noun rather than a verb) is the reality in today’s world (Kramer, 2000, 2003).

Conforming to the established rules is described by Spencerians as “upward-forward” evolutionary progress (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 382). Not only is this an oxymoronic claim but the neoconservative adaptation doctrine also fails to appreciate that the stranger is also already a part of the system and may survive by bringing something new to the system and not by merely conforming to old behaviors and striving to fit into pre-established niches. In the natural world there are no metaphysical niches. A new organism is its niche. When it is gone the “niche” is gone too. There is no metaphysical dualism. No ideal function waiting for organized protoplasm to “fill” it. That is Platonic formal idealism, not science. This is especially true and recognized by even smart conservative writers such as Thomas Sowell, who has exhaustively documented how the most economically successful immigrants succeed not by merely conforming to what they find in a host economy, but by bringing unique, foreign skills with them making their talents scarce such as violin maker, martial arts instructor, diamond cutter, stone cutter, and the like (Sowell, 1995; 1996).

As immigrants arrive they expand the economy, introducing elements that were previously nonexistent within that system. But it is offered not as a random accident, which evolution is, but as an act of will or learning. The term “evolution” is thus co-opted and turned to rhetorical purposes to
sound scientific and innocent and justify the demand by power for conformity. The system thus evolves and not merely its parts. Thus the dualistic metaphysic of internal versus external realities is exposed as a myth. Dr. Croucher's data in this book show how immigrant Muslims are surviving in France not by conforming but on the basis of their own competencies and that they are changing the face of France which, to conservatives there, is a frightening thing, even portrayed as radical, hostile, and aggressive, when in fact they are merely different even as they tolerate to some extent second-class citizenship.

Borrowing ideas from cultural fusion theory as written by Kramer (2000), and developing new explanations based on empirical data presented for the first time in this volume, Dr. Croucher offers an informed interpretation and explanation of the ethnic conflict in France, which falls across four active fault lines: economic class, race, immigration, and religion. Whereas the theory of intercultural adaptation theory would simply prescribe as a cure for the ills of multiculturalism that the French Muslim "unlearn" and "deculturize" herself in order to become economically functionally fit, emotionally balanced, and to grow in cognitive complexity or evolve in an "upward-forward" direction toward genuine French identity, Dr. Croucher demonstrates that the very identity of what is Frenchness is changing as millions of North African Muslims assert their identity as also being genuinely French yet not Christian.

For instance, Dr. Croucher performs a semiotic analysis of women who wear the French flag as their hijab (traditional Muslim head veil) to assert that they are both Muslim and French. He also performs a hermeneutic analysis of two traditional icons of French identity; liberty and identity symbolized by Marianne and the red cap (bonnet phrygien) which she wears, a red cap made famous by protestors in Brittany in 1675 against the taxes imposed by Colbert. Herein he also presents the results of scores of in-depth interviews conducted in France from 2004 to 2006 with French Muslims and non-Muslims, workers, protestors, political leaders, educators, students, and others from all perspectives.

In this complex cultural, political, and historical context, the hijab is not merely a traditional Muslim head covering for women but a radical statement of Muslim identity and a transforming symbol of a new French identity. Functioning within a self-imposed ignorance of such contexts, a sort of social scientific autism, the theory of intercultural adaptation/assimilation cannot begin to offer a meaningful understanding and explanation of the ethnic immigrant unrest in France or even an understanding of the symbols used to communicate the trajectory of change. Muslim women wearing the French flag as a hijab is penultimately a French form of radical expression. To be French is to challenge French social arrangements and, at the same time, to assert difference.
Competent efficiency and “well-adjusted happiness” are the values presumed by neoconservative social engineers. That one might resist conformity and find satisfaction in that, or that one might find satisfaction in maintaining one’s uniqueness and sharing it with others at a potluck dinner for instance, is rejected a priori by neoconservative assimilationist ideology. Instead assimilationists argue that personal psychological “equilibrium” and “happiness” is found only to the extent to which one conforms to the demands of the mainstream culture. No doubt when one begins with the axiom that uncertainty and risk only lead to anxiety and not also at times play, drama, and pleasure, then it makes sense that dissolving into the herd, becoming the “invisible man” as Ralph Ellison (1947) so eloquently put it, may be the safe path. But to claim that is the only way to happiness and success is simply not true. Already by 1887, Nietzsche warned against the social Darwinians and their prescription for pragmatic efficiency by surrendering to penance, self-sacrifice, and self-abnegation, a sort of “administrative nihilism” born of “adaptation” . . . that is to say, an activity of the second rank, a mere reactivity; indeed, life itself has been defined as a more and more efficient inner adaptation to external conditions [by] Herbert Spencer” (Nietzsche, 1887 Ger./1967 Eng., p. 79). Such is the Spencerian and social Darwinian reduction of the good and valuable in itself, to what is “practical” and “valuable.” The good and valuable in themselves are thus defined. Value is reduced to exploitation (Nietzsche, 1887 Ger./1967 Eng., p. 27). That which cannot be exploited has no value (Kramer, 2000). According to assimilationists, the only good immigrant or migrant is a “profoundly plastic” “valuable” one that can be efficiently, competently exploited.

Croucher’s work, abstract theories by plunging them into the world of cultural, linguistic, religious, and racial differences, finding that they are nice idealistic edifices unfit for human habitation. This volume constitutes a beginning for presenting empirical data that tests theories that are in profound need of rigorous cross-examination. It sets the standard for the new series Communications, Comparative Cultures and Civilizations, a series that is dedicated to the rigorous empirical testing of theories of culture and civilization by means of direct field studies including ethnography, interview technique, comparative art and literary analytics, and more abstract questionnaire procedures employing statistical manipulation.

At any rate, Gudykunst and Kim attempt to inoculate those who control essential resources, and who use those resources to force conformity, from critical assessment. They do so by deploying the rhetoric of quantification, by reducing such political-economic choice, power, and decision-making to simple, accidental, innocent majority. Any attempt at assessment of the behavior of the powerful is attacked by them as baseless “critical cultural studies.” The individual is thus totally disenfranchised from the system of which she is an integral part.
According to this doctrine, the founder of psychotherapy himself, Freud, was "unbalanced" for resisting the popular Nazi movement. He was not being realistic or pragmatic, pragmatic opportunism being the operant philosophy expressed in the explicit valuation of all theory, according to Gudykunst and Kim (2003, p. ix), including their own. Besides, what could be more practical than applying rationality to policies regardless of how many support them? Their version of pragmatism is more like quantitative fatalism. Minority experience and worldview, by their definition, can never be practical or realistic. Reason has no place in their sense of social engineering.

THE NEW HUMAN

Whatever "dominant" "mainstream" "central" culture one finds oneself in, is, according to Gudykunst and Kim (2003) the most realistic and evolved one. And any resistance to conforming to it is defined by them as mental instability, immaturity, and being unrealistic. I am reminded of Dr. Pangloss. This is extreme relativism as no transcending sense of reason or justice is applicable, yet it is presumed without any critical reflection. This is simpler than Machiavellianism or even some versions of social Darwinism. It is simple "push-pull" opportunism, well below the threshold of human culture or cognition, let alone moral judgment. But yet the doctrines of communication competence, intercultural adaptation and the concept of intercultural personhood are based on unexamined, quite ethnocentric, notions of good and bad in terms no less of an "absolute point of view" which strives "to maintain a dynamic balance between good and bad" (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 385). This is simply not very sophisticated psychology or philosophy. Yet it forms the explicit foundation of their work.

If any force has true coercive power to compel conformity, as suggested by cultural assimilationists, it is market ideology and technology, for nearly everyone everywhere are converging on and conforming to things like the institutions of credit and stock trading, petroleum-based transportation, satellite television, cellular telephones, and the Internet. There is an emergent global culture and it is centered on economic institutions and common technological infrastructures and usages, not yet, on common religious convictions, a common language, or a common political ideology or cultural identity.

For instance, Muslims living in France today may use the same cellular telephone system as non-Muslims, use the same highway system, share the same Internet and even the French language, yet they still have pro-
found differences from their non-Muslim countrymen. Any attempt to understand intercultural communication including, and often especially conflict that does not make the effort to understand the foundation of fundamental beliefs, attitudes, and values, namely religion, is bound to offer pitifully banal and virtual explanations. The strength of Dr. Croucher’s approach to understanding the conflict in France today is that he does not attempt to avoid the issue of religion by reducing conflict and cultural tolerance and assimilation to “personality attributes” (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 368-369) or to a structural functional version of efficient communicative competence.

To simply equate communication with culture, or to reduce conflict to a form of talk, for instance, fails utterly to deal with any understanding of actual conflicts. One can be a very competent communicator even as he or she is in the midst of a heated argument. Indeed, the more communicatively and culturally competent a person is the more caustically eviscerating their word-choice can be and the more cunning may be their ability to manipulate laws, rules, and bureaucracy as a weapon. The idea, as put forth by Gudykunst (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003) that if one is a “competent communicator” one is, by definition, assimilated and all will be “smooth” and “efficient” sailing (pp. 360, 372-373), that “competent communication” is by his definition identical with harmonious “smooth and effective” intercultural interaction, is demonstrably false. Arguably the most competent communicators, sophists and attorneys, make their livings arguing.

The doctrine of intercultural adaptation based on Gudykunst’s notion of “competent communication” presupposes an extreme form of metaphysical relativism. It claims that reality can be altered by just talking differently. The argument goes like this: the more competent immigrants become in their ability to communicate, the more adapted they are to the host mainstream culture and thus the more they “achieve psychological health reflected in strangers’ [immigrants and newcomers] smooth and effective dealings with the host environment” (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 373). As an aside we note that the direction of causation is confused because Gudykunst and Kim (2003) argue both that a person has a preexisting “adaptive predisposition” rooted in innate “psychological attributes” and that the more a person adapts the better their psychological state (pp. 368-373). That rather major problem regarding internal validity and logical consistency aside, the story continues. The more communicatively competent the more “functionally fit” newcomers are said to be. This argument is similar to the linguistic theory, long ago discredited, that if we didn’t have the word “brown” we could not see that color. It fails utterly to be realistic or to understand the limits of communication, and that harmony and conflict both have efficient and deficient forms.

The Muslim protestors in France are competent communicators. The problem is not communication or a failure to adapt and understand how
the "mainstream" culture works. The problem is rooted in real differences and mature choices, often regarding very real and quantifiable economic injustices. To simply say that they lack the requisite and innate "psychological attributes" (which sounds utterly fatalistic to me) that would allow them to become communicatively competent and adapt "appropriately" (p. 364) to mainstream French society is, to say the least, condescending. It suggests that everything will be okay if the Muslims will just be "flexible" and "open minded" and have "strong," "hardy," "self-confident personalities" instead of exhibiting weak personalities and insisting on being unrealistic (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 369-370). According to the doctrine of intercultural adaptation and competence, the Muslims in France need to just stop being "ethnocentric" (p. 376), lacking in resourcefulness (p. 369), being simple minded (p. 362), and immature (p. 381).

This is classical colonial rhetoric once in vogue in the centers of European empires around a century ago. And yet here we have it in a popular theory of intercultural communication published in 2003; a rehash of Herbert Spencer’s mid-1800s work. Strangely, to be less "ethnocentric" to Gudykunst and Kim (2003) is to be more modern and westernized, more individualistic as if individualism separates one from one’s culture rather than manifesting a particular cultural prejudice. As they put it, "the intercultural person [the ultimate goal of total adaptation/competence] manifests a mindset that is less stereotypical, less ethnocentric, and more individualized... able to maintain a dynamic balance between good and bad" (p. 384). The cultural prejudices in this doctrine are too numerous to list. For instance, the idea that being ethnocentric is bad is itself a culture-specific belief and value judgment. Also, the values of "competence" and "efficiency" are quite modern, even in the West. Finally, the doctrine explicitly promotes as a fundamental good the notion that the individual can and should maintain something so fundamental as a balance between good and bad. The very use of the spatial metaphor of "balance" also underscores the irony of the claim that the "intercultural person" is beyond ethnocentrism and cultural boundedness.

Likewise the reductionistic claim made by Kim (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003), that having an identical culture with others, by her definition, being "well adapted," eliminates conflict and aggression, is demonstrably and easily falsified. Just visit one’s local police precinct or a family counselor. Furthermore, the doctrine of intercultural adaptation, which Dr. Croucher tests against the case study of Muslims living in France, presents a major contradiction.

The contradiction is this: the doctrine of intercultural adaptation equates willing submission to and identification with the coercive force of the "mainstream" culture one finds oneself in to "emancipation" (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 382). Absurdly, this drive to conform to the local mainstream culture, according to Gudykunst and Kim (2003), ulti-
mately leads one even beyond emancipation to total “liberation” from all the hidden forces of culture and even of being a cultured human categorically (p. 385). According to the doctrines of intercultural adaptation and intercultural personhood, striving one’s “utmost” to submit to “external” mainstream cultural forces and being willing to undergo “psychic disintegration” of the cultural self equals emancipation. Total submission equals liberation. Quite ethnocentrically, they confuse liberation with psychological equilibrium. And they correlate cognitive uncertainty only with affective anxiety. But without uncertainty there could be no hope, discovery, surprise, wit, and so on. This exclusive, highly limited emotional response to uncertainty is very ethnocentric, tending to manifest much more with product-oriented manufacturing peoples than with process-oriented people.

According to Gudykunst and Kim (2003), the immigrant who dares to question the host system, who exhibits “dissatisfaction” (p. 372), or who remains proud of his or her heritage and is not willing to attempt to disintegrate her core cultural identity and “unlearn” her original self is a whiner, a person who only sees herself as a “victim” (p. 372), exhibiting relatively low “cognitive complexity” (being simple minded) (pp. 362, 382), filled with “self-deception” (p. 380), who is “immature” (p. 381), “cynical” (p. 380), who harbors irrational “hostility toward the host society” (p. 372), lacking “clarity, depth, balance” (p. 383) and the “self-reflexive capacity of the human mind” (p. 380), who is weak and inflexible, and in need of psychotherapy (p. 382).

Gudykunst and Kim (2003) continue as they argue that immigrants who do not choose to “unlearn” themselves, do not have “appropriate” “responses to reality” to “what is true, what is right, what is beautiful, and what is good” (pp. 363-369, 376). Such failures to assimilate indicate a particular type of troublesome personality who is “unfit to live in the company of others” (p. 358), who lacks “adaptive predisposition” (p. 370), and who irrationally resists being “deculterized” and “reprogrammed” (pp. 358-360, 380).

There is internal to the theoretical claims made incoherency here too. Gudykunst and Kim (2003) claim that cultural adaptation occurs through communication. At one point they wholeheartedly quote Lee Thayer, who equates competent communication with adaptation. “Successful communication therefore becomes synonymous with adaptation and life” (Thayer, quoted in Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 372). But in the very next sentence they misinterpret him and thus the confusion arises. “Effective communication with members of the host culture, therefore, is critical to adaptation” (p. 372). In one sentence adaption and competent communication are identical. In the very next sentence competent communication is the way to becoming well adapted.

According to Gudykunst and Kim (2003), adaptation/assimilation means the ability of the newcomer to “operate” or “function” in “accor-
dance with host cultural patterns” according to host cultural codes. Hence, for an immigrant to achieve adaptation/assimilation her mind (her way of thinking, feeling, and behaving) must “disintegrate” and “reintegrate,” or simply put, she must be reprogrammed, and reprogramming can occur only to the extent that she is erased. She must “unlearn” her self. She must be “deculturized” (pp. 358-364). But to be reprogrammed one must already be able to communicate. The problem here is that the immigrant cannot rely on her old cultural capabilities for Gudykunst and Kim (2003) argue that learning new codes only occurs to the extent that one can “unlearn” or erase the old ones (p. 380).

We have a chicken and egg problem here in the doctrine. At some points in the doctrine communicative competence enables adaptation/assimilation, and at other points they are equated, with the suggestion even that communication competence could be a measure of adaptation/assimilation but with no true operationalization offered. And attempting to resolve this contradiction with a primitive version of dialectics that does not take into account cultural fusion (Kramer, 1997, 2000, 2003), which retains the integrative function of synthesis that manifestly includes the old as well as the new, makes no sense.

An alternative explanation for how cultures interact is cultural fusion (Kramer, 1997, 2000, 2003). Dr. Croucher applies the theory of cultural fusion in a limited fashion herein. Cultural fusion is based on systems theory with its emphasis on systasis or temporality, not a static structural-functionalist notion of mainstream culture which is the basis of Gudykunst and Kim’s work (Kramer, 1997, 2000, 2003). Cultural fusion is a process that does not involve “unlearning” or “deculturizing” at all, but quite the contrary; it is a process that involves the integration of new information with the old, in short, addition, learning, compilation and growth. Old information and new information co-evolve. It is not a mechanical “push-pull” process as Gudykunst and Kim (2003) characterize assimilation, for pushing and pulling toward a fixed pre-establishment yields nothing new. The reason they characterize integration as a push/pull process is because they presume a dualistic metaphysics of internal subjective reality at war with external objective reality (p. 378), which itself is a quite ethnocentric metaphysical doctrine. Their language of domination and power is instructive.

But instead of a push-pull struggle toward final conformity with a fixed mainstream culture, integration is a synthesis, not a zero-sum battle for which reality will prevail as the real reality (metaphysics gone virulent in the doctrine of intercultural adaptation). Worldviews converse and evolve. The world is a conversation (Kramer, 2009). The “assimilated” immigrant is never identical to a native. Rather, a newly synthesized worldview (actually not a noun but a process of consciousness, a way of seeing or worldviewing) emerges with the long-term immigrant that is neither what they were before arriving in the host culture nor the same as a native.
Immigrants need not and cannot unlearn themselves. They will always have an accent in their way of speaking, behaving, thinking, and feeling. And this is neither good nor bad, as Gudykunst and Kim (2003) suggest. It simply is the case.

And very importantly, according to Kramer’s theory of cultural fusion (2000, 2003), as immigrants endure, this new worldview increasingly integrates with and alters the old mainstream culture. If we stick with the old metaphor of a “mainstream” culture then we might better remind ourselves that it is fed by many tributaries, and if each is a different color of water, then the mainstream will be a blending. Its color and flavor is dependent on the tributaries. Take the tributaries away and there is no mainstream. Because of their metaphysical inside versus outside dualism, Gudykunst and Kim (2003) do not see the mainstream culture as an integration. For them, the mainstream culture is not a constantly varying product, dependent on the tributaries. Gudykunst and Kim (2003) see the mainstream as the “objective” “external reality.” They have it backwards. To stick with the metaphor, all tributaries must conform to the color of water in the mainstream. The flow of influence is backwards. Kramer (2000, 2003) argues instead that, the mainstream is a verb and that it is a mixture of all the different accents that contribute to the whole system. Minorities are always already an integral part of the system. Their reality is real too, in fact, vitally integral to sociocultural and economic reality.

According to cultural fusion (Kramer, 2000, 2003), the new is received and interpreted from the perspective of the old. In the process the old information becomes old as such and is reinterpreted. The new is always integrated in accord with the old stance but what constitutes the “old” is constantly changing too, being reinterpreted, “updated.”

According to Gudykunst and Kim (2003), the more adapted the person, the more communicatively competent they are. These two things, like so many other concepts such as adaptive predisposition and conformity pressure, are immeasurable. Nevertheless, the real problem is that adaptation and communicative competence are at times equated but at other times one, communicative competence, is held up as a sort of measure of adaptation, yet it is also said to be the very means by which people learn the cultural “codes” by which they should be reprogrammed. Successful reprogramming (adaptation/assimilation) is necessary for competent communication or functional fit and successful, practical behaving, feeling, and thinking. But the reprogramming presumes competent communication.

Adaptation, assimilation, training, reconditioning, resocialization, acculturation, and being reprogrammed according to the hidden cultural codes of the newly adopted host culture are all equated in the doctrine of intercultural adaptation (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 359-365). And they are achievable only to the extent that the immigrant has communication competence, meaning “the capability to communicate in ways that are com-
compatibl and consistent with the communication codes and rules operating in
the host culture . . . communication competence should reflect their overall
adaptation level, while the lack of such competence manifests itself in vari-
ous forms of ‘miscommunication’ on the part of strangers’ (p. 361).

According to the doctrine of intercultural adaptation/assimilation,
“integration” means to willfully accept reconditioning, reprogramming. To
have a “strong” personality means to be malleable, willing to accept domi-
nant beliefs and values without hesitation, to be “profundely plastic”
(Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 369, 380). “Strength” here is clearly a judg-
ment from the perspective and interests of the status quo. The flexible
worker is the good worker, the strong and adaptable worker. According
to the doctrine, the nonconformist immigrant has a weak personality (p. 373),
is unrealistically “invalid,” an incompetent invalid. They are functionally
unfit and confused. And hanging with one’s ethnic group, community-
building is not good for assimilation as it “tends to discourage the
strangers’ development of host communication competence” (p. 372).

The doctrine of intercultural adaptation as put forth by Gudykunst and
Kim (2003) advises the newcomer to go far beyond the old adage of when
in Rome do as the Romans do, to arguing that true adjustment and mental
stability are achieved only to the degree that one act, think, and even feel as
the Romans do, and that such “psychic evolution” can occur only to the
degree that one can “unlearn” and “deculturize” or abandon one’s original
identity. They never explain how one can willingly choose to unlearn their
own identity except to say be “open-minded” and “flexible” (pp. 369, 387-
388). Anything less is maladaptation measured as a “hostile” and “aggres-
sive” attitude toward host cultural coercion, a rebellious attitude that they
equate with “mental illness” and “communicative incompetence” (pp. 361,
372). “Competence” is “viewed in terms of the host” culture (p. 361).

A more straightforward definition of adaptation/assimilation/competen-
tce can be given using Gudykunst and Kim’s (2003) own description.
Adaptation is the process by which immigrants are reprogrammed through
“conformity pressure” (p. 371), “coercion,” to feel, think, and behave like a
native, to be “appropriate” (p. 364). Personality “strength” is defined as
mental disintegration or breakdown, followed by conformity (p. 369).
Failure to assimilate is a sign of weakness and leads to a failure to be satis-
fied (minimally), and ultimately to be mentally healthy and survive (p. 360).
This is Gudykunst and Kim’s definition of “realism” (p. 369). To be assim-
ilated is to be real.

A major problem here is the effort to oversimplify, or even utterly
avoid the issue of culture by means of reductionism. Gudykunst and Kim
(2003) reduce cultural harmony to competent communication and assim-
ilative identification with a mainstream culture. But in-group members
have conflict and hostility toward each other, too. Part of the problem is
the prescriptive posture taken by these authors. Culture is neither psychol-
ogy nor morality. It effects psychology and vice versa, but they are not identical. Two people with very similar psychological predispositions may live in vastly different cultures and been socialized with and have internalized very different beliefs, values, motives, and follow very different behavior patterns.

Seeing conflict and difference as evil, as a “defilement” that kills the possibility of community, which Gudykunst and Kim do (2003, p. 385), is to harbor a self-contradictory and idealistic notion of what actual communities (self-identifying and emergent groupings) are like. Community is based on shared language, values, beliefs, coordinated behavior patterns; in short, culture. So to claim that community is possible only when the “defilements” of cultural differences are eliminated, as Gudykunst and Kim (2003) argue, makes no sense. And, furthermore, to judge stress and conflict as evil is unrealistic. Every community, every friendship, every marriage, has conflict in it. To suggest that the best way to eliminate intercultural miscommunication and conflict by eliminating culture itself is like solving conflicts in a relationship by eliminating the relationship. This is throwing the baby out with the bathwater. It is not a solution but an elimination or avoidance of the entire process. And on the globe today, intercultural contact cannot be avoided as easily as simply moving away from or divorcing a partner in a dyad. Isolationism is not a very workable solution.

Attempts to reduce intercultural conflict to correlations between behavior and innate personality traits also fails as an explanation. Reducing one phenomenon to a second one, giving hierarchical privilege to the more “basic” cause, does not explain the first phenomenon but avoids explaining it. Even if statistically significant correlations can be established between personality attributes and adaptability, correlations are not explanations. And equating personality traits with adaptability is not predictability but reductionism in a tautological fashion. Anyone can be right by definition, especially when they are doing the defining. Reductionism is a rhetoric of bait and switch.

People who have no conflict with other in-group members may have profound conflict with out-group members, and vice versa. Their personalities are not the issue. They are not schizophrenic. It is not a matter of personality but inter-group dynamics and real differences of values, beliefs, motivations, ambitions, prejudices, and worldviews. To fix such conflict by simply eliminating values, beliefs, motivations, perspectives—in a word culture—is not a realistic doctrine, which is doubly ironic as being “realistic” is the stated goal of the intercultural adaptation doctrine.

Even in the case of 19th-century colonial centers, assimilationism was only marginally valid. Even under the conditions of classical colonialism, a simple model of one-way conformity based on the overwhelming coercive force of a large host culture does not explain the reality of colonial centers; how they were dramatically altered by the contact they had with
different cultures in their expectations, motivations, cuisine, entertainment, pharmacology, even spiritual beliefs, and so on. Nor does it account for the profound influence a minority of colonizers had on huge host populations such as the Aztec, the Inca, Asian-Indians, and the Chinese, to name but a few. The competent colonizer, though a minority, had so much influence on indigenous populations around the world that it made colonialism and imperialism into a nefarious process that threatened to wipe out entire cultures.

Co-evolution is the actual process that occurs when cultures meet, mix, and fuse, but not into a final synthetic equilibrium. Rather fusion and co-evolution are ongoing dynamic systems of continuously churning differences that spawn new meanings, innovative outlooks, styles, artifacts, and yes, competition and conflicts (Kramer, 2003). Not every invention is deemed by popular demand worthwhile. And not all conversations are friendly. The value judgment that states that such ineffective and disharmonious outcomes should be eliminated is a form of moralizing and much more a form of social engineering rather than science.

As for the impact of the colonized on colonial power centers, examples are infinite. Take, for instance, the impact Japanese woodblock prints had on French art, prompting the development of Impressionism. Another example from the heyday of European colonial power is Gandhi's use of the Indian philosophy of Satyagraha, which is based on the older concept of Ahimsa (a central tenet of Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism), stressing nonviolence including an effort to avoid even resistance so that Satyagraha is not exactly the same as passive or nonviolent resistance. It is instead a firm or stubborn adherence to the truth. Consequently, Gandhi asked his countrymen not to openly resist the British but to ignore them utterly as if they were invisible, even when the British were talking to them or beating them.

Satyagraha, a quite alien notion to colonial powers, had a profound impact on their thinking, emotional reactions, motivations, expectations, values, and even self-images. It became a central tenet of organized civil disobedience in the West, a practice that assimilationists define as mental illness and even, very ironically, as "hostile" and "aggressive" to the host culture. Gandhi refused to conform or assimilate but to charge him therefore with being mentally unbalanced or aggressive is nonsense. The point here is that even at the height of colonial power, the colonized often had profound and lasting influences on the colonizer.

Co-evolution involves interaction and exchange, not just a one-way push to conformity. At the same time Gandhi was teaching the West the theory and practice of Satyagraha, the minority British community in India had a profound impact on the host Indian culture for Gandhi was trained in British law and Christian tenets, which he used with great effect to expose the hypocrisy of brutal colonialism. And many institutions, such as politi-
cal processes and mass education, as well as scientific and engineering importations transferred from England to India, are now an integral part of the Indian experience, culture, and identity.

Co-evolution, a quite old and accepted principle in biology, which takes into account the systemic process of mutual influence and complementarity of one organism on another (symbiosis being one example) is a far better theoretical explanation of what happens when two or more cultures come into contact and influence each other than unidirectional assimilation (Kramer, 2003). In a system, all parts influence each other. Connections and effects are not simply unilinear. And the consequences are interesting and exciting because they are not predictable. Artists working in galleries in Paris noticed that wrapping paper wadded up and used to cushion ceramics being shipped from Japan to France was covered with woodblock prints that captured light in an exciting, foreign way. Those aspiring artists working in galleries in the centers of European colonial powers, including Monet, Degas, and Van Gogh, began collecting the Japanese wrapping paper and studying it. Just as chaos theory predicts, cultural influences are often quite unintentional and unpredictable yet no less profound.

The point here is that as a “theory” of integration, a one-sided conformation of the newcomer to the host culture is utterly inadequate to explain what actually happens during such interaction. Such a hopelessly oversimplified notion of how host culture and sojourner interact also functions as a neoconservative ideology, as an intellectual justification for intolerance and abuse of newcomers under the aegis of natural host cultural coercive force; a force that is identified as inevitable and therefore demanding of compulsory conformation of all individuals lest they be labeled maladjusted, functionally unfit, immature, mentally ill, and harboring inappropriate ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.

More aspects of intercultural adaptation as presented by Gudykunst and Kim (2003) need to be addressed. In parts of the doctrine the authors clearly state the goal to be the generation of a completely submissive human who strives to “unlearn” and “deculturize” themselves and identify with whatever mainstream culture is at hand. Total “assimilation” to the local mainstream culture is the “highest degree of adaptation conceivable” (p. 360). But then a few pages later these authors argue that by following their precepts and striving one’s “utmost” to be “flexible” and “open-minded,” eventually “universal” principles of community as identified by them will lead the ethnocentric, “enculturated” (or more appropriately socialized) person, via “upward-forward” “psychic evolution,” to “universal personhood” or “transcultural identity” (pp. 382-385). This post-human state principally involves rejecting any central mainstream culture and establishing a “true community” without cultural or linguistic perspective
(pp. 392-396). This new type of community then should be embraced and sustained with “loyalty” and “piety” (p. 396), which sounds very ethnocentric to this reader. Their advice for engineering utopia is utterly self-contradicting and quite strange in the face of mountains of research into community, identity, and language.

A not inconsequential confusion arises here. Is “adaptability” a choice the immigrant makes or not? Kim contradicts herself on this saying, “Should strangers choose to become successfully adapted, they must, above all, be prepared and willing to face the stressful experiences of coping” (1994, p. 401), and elsewhere says, “Thus adaptation occurs naturally regardless of the intentions of immigrants as long as they are functionally dependent on, and interacting with, the host sociocultural system for survival and self-fulfillment” (1987/1992, p. 349).

Finally, there is another not small problem with the doctrine. Gudykunst and Kim (2003) also do not seem to differentiate between being intercultural and being cross- or transcultural. They argue that the final utopian state of pure assimilation leads to “transcultural identity,” of being a “universal person” who has become liberated from the “defilements” of contingent cultural differences, but they also call this post-human state “intercultural personhood” (pp. 384-385). But the meaning of the term intercultural is not the same thing as “transcultural” or “cross-cultural” or, I might suggest, postcultural. Throughout their works they use the terms interchangeably.

The threat to nonconformists in the rhetoric of assimilation is dire. Assimilationists clearly argue that failure to conform will result in the newcomer’s inability to survive. But the more one conforms the more successful they will be. The host culture is thus characterized as benevolent even as it oppresses. This is classic colonial apologetics. Gudykunst and Kim (2003) put it bluntly as a simple and inevitable “realism”: “Clearly, a reason for the essentially one-sided change is . . . the extent the dominant power of the host culture controls the daily survival and functions of strangers, it is present as coercive pressure on them to adapt” (p. 360).

However, the truth is, as Sowell (1995; 1996) and countless sociologists and economists have empirically demonstrated time and again, newcomers are part of reality. Moreover, they help the host culture to survive as much as the other way around. Newcomers rarely live off the state or handouts but survive by using skills and competencies they import with them such as violin making, hard rock and coal mining, beer manufacturing, stone cutting, financing, law enforcement traditions, arts, food preparation skills, martial arts instructing, and so on. Immigrants have value well beyond how much they conform to the economic and cultural status quo. They populate our university professorships. They helped launch the first rockets in the United States and Russia. Their impact in academe and outside in both
design and implementation is enormous, especially to largely immigrant nations such as the United States and Australia. But the importance of the stranger, the Other, is also true of nations with less immigration but much cultural importation such as Japan and China.

With telecommuting, a rapper does not have to physically go to China to have a cultural impact. Immigration and migration of cultural forms is increasingly dissociated from physical transportation. Rather than cultural adaptation/assimilation, today’s societies are better characterized by their dynamic, innovative cultural fusion and churning (Kramer, 2003). The goal, the “good,” may not be conservative equilibrium and status quo but rather people demanding change and innovation. Isolationism has proven to be more of a threat to cultural systems than exchange from foreign goods, services, and ideas.

Assimilationism is as much or more critical of society than, and just as utopian as, any critical theory. It also is not shy in making explicit proposals in manifesto form on how to change society and culture for the better, even striving to generate a professional consulting industry where its “theory” can be implemented to prove its “practical” value in changing behavior. This is pure policy intervention. This is not a scientific ambition but rather a social engineering and ideological ambition. Neither Galileo nor Hubble or Einstein set out to reengineer space, time, galaxies, or to improve on stars but rather to understand them. That is the role of science.

Engineering a better world involves having a preconceived notion of what would be better, given a particular agenda of interests (better being an obvious value judgment with a particular perspective), and its practical application manifestly strives to intervene to change (improve) current conditions to make it so. This implies a critical, negative evaluation of what is the current case and an arrogant confidence that one knows better. Gudykunst and Kim (2003) do this but unlike the critical cultural studies scholars they reject, they neglect to explicitly lay out their criteria for evaluating the current social milieu. There is nothing inherently wrong with engineering of course. However, given the profound ambitions of the authors of the intercultural adaptation/assimilation doctrine, when it comes to engineering personality traits, cultural preferences, and entire societies, then examination of the goals, ways, and means of the imagined utopian culture is called for. Proposing to change people and entire societies is a moral issue.

As one might well expect, central, mainstream cultural coercion only encourages resistance—both violent and nonviolent—from the coerced. So the theory of intercultural adaptation/assimilation, as put forth by Gudykunst and Kim (2003) and which Dr. Croucher tests in this book, offers a model of the integration process which is worth rigorous examination as it may not be so wise a path to a harmonious society as it claims.
METHODOLOGICAL GOALS

It is the stance of the series editor that multiple methods are most useful in research. Also, nothing can take the place of first-hand travel and observation to inform, enlighten, and expand a person’s knowledge and worldview. Although surveying the opinions of random samples of people is the current vogue in market research and has value, the value is limited to generating a measure of the most popular beliefs regardless of their referential truth-value. Such information has some scientific value if one is interested in the most common or average opinion at any given time (for data spoils quickly) as a topic of research, but for greater understanding of our world a more direct approach to research is necessary, including direct observation of behavior in a naturalistic setting and the questioning of relevant participants in a social movement.

Can you imagine how much interest there would be if but one camera, yielding only one perspective could be sent back through time to give humanity a first-hand look at events such as the Battle of Waterloo, the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, the building of the great pyramid of Cheops, the construction of the Easter Island monoliths, the life of the court of the first Emperor of China, the great flood that occurred when the Glacial Lake Missoula broke through into the Columbia River Valley 13,000 years ago, or a battle between an ocean going Mauisaurus (the largest Plesiosaur known) and a Sarcosuchus (the extinct “super-croc”)? This desire for direct meaning personal observation is why, when the United States was preparing to land men on the moon, many nations rushed to build television infrastructures so that they too could see history made for themselves and, therefore, in a way, be a part of it. Other nations made such efforts to observe the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the 1968 Mexico City Olympics.

It is one thing to survey thousands about their opinions concerning the World War II battle for Okinawa, the monastery-topped stone megalithic towers of Meteora, or the art of Jackson Pollock, it is quite another to talk to an eyewitness participant or to view the events, places, and art for yourself. It is one thing to gather the opinions of random people about the nature of gravity, evolution, or global warming and quite another to study the phenomena directly for oneself, or at least through rigorous refereed hearsay offered by direct eyewitnesses, listening to what the “elitist intellectual” community of scientists and scholars who have investigated such phenomena personally believe. Who cares to get an accurate measure of popular nonsense? Mass marketing professionals, of course, which makes sense, and unfortunately, more and more practitioners of the social “sciences.” It seems that because of laziness and, ironically, an increasing
demand for research productivity, rigor is waning and control over data-gathering processes are being loosened with the consequence being more data gathered by students from students, researchers purchasing data generated for irrelevant purposes, and surveys being done virtually on-line with little care about who is really filling them out or how seriously they are about filling them out.

Direct, empirical observation is personal. But research is not casual observation. It is important to be present and control data-gathering processes to assure rigor and validity. Reliability comes with repeated direct observations. Solid research must be methodical, rigorous, disciplined, falsifiable, and cross-examined. Hence, Nietzsche’s (1882 Ger./1974 Eng.) and Michael Polanyi’s (1958) contentions that all knowledge begins with personal experience, and that if it is in error and guided by illusion, dogma, and/or ignorance, the sample size does not matter because simply compounding error cannot lead to truth. Instead, one simply has the average illusion or erroneous belief, the stuff of opinion pollsters. Although the level of general ignorance and illiteracy may be and in fact, is an important thing to study, in order to do so one must first know what is true and literate for comparison to the average opinion. Such work is the primary focus of this book series. The books in this series attempt to establish this baseline.

CONCLUSION

In this book Dr. Croucher presents his observations and analyses of conditions on the ground in France and of face-to-face interviews he conducted there just before and after the nation-wide riots of October and November 2005. He was interested in how assimilation is working in France, and after the fact, the part ethnic tensions played in the civil unrest that began in poor housing projects in French cities and spread throughout the country; the largest civil unrest in France since 1968. The information and analyses offered herein are the result of multiple trips he made to France and the help of several French contacts who aided him.

Because the first, more traditional assimilationist aspects of the doctrine of intercultural adaptation are much more clearly linked to claims about the “psychodynamics” of personality transformation or “evolution,” Dr. Croucher focused on testing that part of the doctrine. While the fanciful utopian ramblings about becoming a posthuman, postcultural being are virtually untestable, Dr. Croucher focused on the assimilationist claims made in the doctrine—namely, what is the case about how newcomers fit in, and avoided the pontificating about what ought to be.
The first part of the doctrine clearly makes the claim that by identifying certain personality traits and attitudes one can predict which "strangers" (migrants and immigrants) will be most adaptable. And as being adaptable, assimilatable, is good—is, in fact, the goal of life according to the authors of the intercultural adaptation doctrine—they implore policymakers (as if they need such encouragement) to use every power at their central command to create in children the personalities that will be most "predisposed" to being assimilatable, adaptable, to being "competent" meaning "functionally fit" (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, pp. 368-370). In fact, this practical application of psychodynamics is what the authors claim makes their "theory" valuable. This part also makes clear claims about how to help older, less adaptable immigrants and migrants erase their identities and "etch" new cognitive, affective, and behavioral patterns into the immigrant’s "nervous system" (p. 370). And for Gudykunst and Kim (2003), reculturation or resocialization, that is "integration," occurs only to the extent that one willfully undergoes "psychic disintegration," meaning to "unlearn" and "deculturize" old ways of feeling, thinking, and behaving and in the process undergoing basically a psychological breakdown of previous assumptions including those about one’s own values, beliefs, and sense of self (p. 381). It is a variable analytical, zero-sum mental process. The more one unlearns the old self the more the new self can emerge.

Although they use the rhetoric of traditional positivistic ideology, in terms of evolution and progress, according to their description of the intercultural adaptation process, no additional cultural skills can be merely added to the repertoire of old ones. There is no growth in a zero-sum game. Instead they claim that psychic evolution occurs through the displacement of one skill, feeling, or way to thinking with another. According to Gudykunst and Kim (2003), the old must be erased for the new to exist. They mistakenly equate integration, which requires that differences be preserved so that they can integrate, with simple assimilation.

Adaptation/assimilation in the final analysis means to Gudykunst and Kim (2003) the ability to "enact appropriate and effective technical and social behaviors" the "basic practical skills, such as job skills essential to performing one’s particular social role" as defined by the coercive mainstream culture (pp. 363-364). Being able to do a job well, as for instance a temporary migrant worker may well do, does not mean they are integrated into the social system, because a major part of being an integrated participant involves having the power of voice and franchise.

Gudykunst and Kim (2003) are confident in the value of adaptation/assimilation and its mass appeal: "For most people, even for natives, complete adaptation is a lifetime goal" (p. 360). The goal, as they repeatedly state, is to be operationally functional—"communicatively competent" (p. 361). Thus "competence," "assimilation," and "adaptation" are
used interchangeably in the doctrine of intercultural adaptation. According to the doctrine, adaptation/assimilation is achieved only to the extent to which the newcomer unlearns their old ways and learns the new ways. And failure to do so is defined as being "unproductive," "maladjusted," "immature," and "mentally ill," quite possibly in need of psychotherapy (p. 381).

Dr. Croucher presents here empirical evidence that societies churning with multicultural diversity are dynamic, exciting, sometimes characterized by factionalism, miscommunication, and violence. But the fusion process also generates healthy competition and new cultural fashions that keep life fresh. The Mona Lisa is a wonderful painting, but a gallery filled with simply exact reproductions of it would be very boring.

REFERENCES