

SVENSKA UNESCO RÅDETS SKRIFTSERIE: Nr. 1/1988
FN:s kulturår tionde



**TRANSNATIONAL CULTURAL FLOWS AND
NATIONAL CULTURES**

... report on a workshop

Stockholm 1988

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Booklets about the World Decade for Cultural Development

The General Assembly of the United Nations in 1987 proclaimed the period 1988 - 1997 a World Decade for Cultural Development. Unesco, the Organization of the United Nations for Education, Science and Culture, has been entrusted the responsibility to co-ordinate the activities of the UN system during the Decade.

The World Decade for Cultural Development has four main objectives:

- Acknowledgment of the Cultural Dimension of Development
- Affirmation and Enrichment of Cultural Identities
- Broadening of Participation in Culture
- Promotion of International Cultural Co-operation

The Swedish National Commission for Unesco intends to highlight interesting activities during the Decade by publishing information about them in the booklet series of the Commission.

This number on "Transnational Cultural Flows and National Cultures" is the first one of the special booklets related to the Decade.

Birgitta Ulvhammar
Chairman of the
Swedish National Commission
for Unesco

Anders Falk
Secretary-General of the
Swedish National Commission
for Unesco

PREFACE

The following document, I believe, is one of some significance. The relationship between cultural policy and cultural theory has usually been a rather remote one; a relationship of non-engagement, with perhaps an occasional outbreak of hostilities. Important differences of perspective are involved here. Policy-makers need a culture concept which defines their area of effort in a workable manner as a distinct sector; they adopt general policy goals; and they want to identify concrete projects through which the goals can be pursued, at least one at the time. Cultural theorists are often not very mindful of administrative boundaries; they may pursue questions of intellectual consistency to points where they become practically embarrassing; and they may increasingly have a tendency to see cultural policy-makers as parts of their field of inquiry (increasingly so as policy-making becomes more important). The result of such divergent perspectives may be that the theorists snipe at the policy-makers, and the latter shrug their shoulders at the useless inhabitants of the ivory towers.

In the workshop held in Stockholm in June 1987, under the aegis of the Swedish National Commission for Unesco, people involved in cultural policy agencies in the Nordic countries sat down with a group of scholars from the region to discuss a range of issues involved in an area of rapidly growing concern: the transnational influences on national cultures. It was an open and constructive discussion. Nobody did anything to hide either the complexity of the issues, or the fact that cultural theory in this area is quite underdeveloped. At the same time, it was clearly felt that more intellectual clarification, and research with a better theoretical basis, could do much to replace current rhetoric with coherent knowledge. And the scholars involved in the discussion were (as tends to be true in the Nordic countries) of the opinion that it does not hurt theory to be relevant to questions of policy.

We hope that at the beginning of the Unesco World Decade for Cultural Development, a document trying to sort out some of the issues involved in the growing interrelatedness of cultures can be a useful one, and we hope that it will reach many readers, involved with cultural poli-

cy as well as with the study of contemporary culture. The proceedings map out some of the work that ought to be done in this area in future years, and we hope that many will join hands (and minds) with us in this effort.

Finally, I want to thank the Swedish National Commission for Unesco for sponsoring the workshop; all the workshop participants for their energetic and constructive involvement; Eva Låftman for her smooth and efficient handling of administrative matters; and Stefan Molund, the author of the report, for his considerable effort in shaping a background paper as well as a lively (but not necessarily easily edited) discussion into one coherent statement.

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INTRODUCTION

A workshop on the theme of "Transnational Cultural Flows and National Cultures" was held at Rosenbad, Stockholm, on June 16-17, 1987, by the Swedish National Commission for Unesco in collaboration with the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Stockholm. The participants were specialists on issues of cultural policy and social scientists, mostly social anthropologists, from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the possibilities of generating and supporting research and international research cooperation relevant to the goals of the World Decade of Cultural Development starting in 1988. A variety of pertinent topics for research were identified in the course of the discussions. In the end it was agreed that the following three, which are discussed later on in this report, might prove particularly productive:

Media and Popular Culture
Intellectuals as Cultural Mediators
Multicentricity in World Culture

It was also agreed that a good way of stimulating research and research cooperation on such themes would be to arrange a series of small academic workshops on an international basis. On each occasion there would be 8-10 participants, recruited from the Nordic countries and from other parts of the world, not least from the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. A wide representation in terms of national background and experience would not only be consistent with the spirit of the World Decade of Cultural Development, but also highly desirable from the academic point of view. The participants would be expected to present papers, which would later be published.

CULTURAL RESEARCH AND CULTURAL POLICY

Some introductory guidelines for the Rosenbad workshop were given in Ulf Hannerz' paper "Transnationella kulturflöden och nationella kulturer" ("Transnational Flows of Culture and National Cultures" (1987a). Here Hannerz notices that while the cultural dimensions of the modern world system have not been entirely neglected by the social sciences, its economic and political dimensions have been much more thoroughly studied. Even in anthropology, where

the study of culture is probably more important than in any other social science, the contemporary transnational cultural processes have not been adequately dealt with. During the last couple of decades anthropologists have, in fact, been rather less concerned with these processes than before.

At the same time the impact of transnational cultural flows on national and local cultures has increasingly become a matter of serious concern to policy-makers, media professionals, and educated publics around the world. For obvious reasons it is in the developing countries that one tends to be most worried. Even in the small countries of the industrialized part of the world, such as Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, however, the inflow of foreign culture through the media and by other means are widely regarded as a serious threat to the integrity of national and local cultures.

These worries are certainly not without foundation. Yet it must be remembered that cultures have never grown in isolation. Much of what we regard as our indigenous culture was originally borrowed from abroad or inspired by foreign examples. This is a familiar fact, but as the positive, enriching aspects of foreign cultural influences are often forgotten or repressed in the heat of debate, it still needs to be stressed. The following statement from the Director-General's report on the World Decade of Cultural Development (p. 11) provides a useful corrective to the more xenophobic variants of cultural protectionism:

".....the preservation of the heritage should not imply the adoption of a static view of the life of societies and of their cultural identity. The desire to promote the creative transformation of cultures either through their own internal dynamics or by enriching them through the voluntary introduction of external cultural achievements selected in accordance with local needs is common to all societies. The affirmation of cultural identity does not mean that one culture should not be receptive to others; quite the opposite; any culture which isolates itself runs the risk of losing its vitality. The importance of modern scientific and technological culture and the need for any society that is concerned with progress to master that culture should be emphasized".

Thus the problem is not one of choosing between importing and not importing, preserving and not preserving, but rather of striking

a suitable balance between the two. The social sciences cannot provide a simple formula for the practical solution of this inherently political problem. Their task is rather to give policy-makers and other actors on the arenas of cultural politics the conceptual tools and the empirical information that they will require in order to articulate their interests. Their aim should be to construct a coherent model of contemporary world culture as a system of interconnected diversity in continuous flux.

QUESTIONABLE ASSUMPTIONS

Working towards such a goal, social scientists will have to scrutinize many concepts and assumptions widely taken more or less for granted. One is that the cultural world system is a mere reflection of the relations of economic and political dominance obtaining in the world. It is true that political and economic strength is often converted into a commensurate influence in the field of cultural exchange, but this is by no means always the case. For a variety of historical and other reasons, the field of international cultural exchange has its own patterns of centre-periphery relations.

One should also question an assumption that seems to underlie much of the current debate about cultural imperialism, namely that the contents of the transnational cultural flows are - if not outright manipulative - invariably of low quality, esthetically as well as intellectually. This is undeniably true of a large part of the products of the big transnational culture industries, but it is hardly a description that fits all the cultural goods that are regularly carried across national boundaries. All countries have important occupational subcultures that are vitally dependent on transnational communication, notably those of the sciences and the arts. There are likewise religious and ethnic communities for which such communication is essential. Paradoxically, the critique of the transnational cultural system is itself to a large extent part and parcel of that very system.

A related and equally questionable assumption is that foreign cultural influences are normally received in a passive mode and invariably tend to have a deadening effect on local forms of culture

and creativity. This is not always the case. In many of the developing countries, for instance, the introduction of writing and other cultural technology have made it possible not only to produce new forms of culture but also to preserve and enrich some of the traditional ones. Nor is it difficult to find examples of creative assimilation of foreign cultural impulses. South African jazz and West African pop music can hardly be described as slavish imitations of foreign models. Nor indeed can the writings of a Wole Soyinka, creating his own synthesis of cosmopolitan literary culture and Nigerian mythology.

THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL CULTURE

Among the concepts urgently needing clarification Hannerz mentions the problematic concept of national culture. As the term is generally understood among anthropologists, a culture is not a system of things but a system of meanings. Most comprehensively the term stands for the entire range of ideas, values, and codes of communication existing within a group. More narrowly it is sometimes taken to mean only those meanings that are shared by all (or most) of the adult members of a group. Also in a narrow sense it can be understood as the set of meanings that is more or less distinctive of a group, thus setting it apart from other groups of a similar kind. Combining sharing and distinctiveness into a single definition, one reduces the scope of the concept even further.

In discussions about national culture all of these and still other usages of the word culture would seem to occur, often side by side without discrimination. Since the concept of nation itself carries connotations of both cultural sharing and cultural distinctiveness, however, the concept of national culture is perhaps most often taken in a fairly narrow sense. This is clearly the case in politically oriented discussions where the creation of a common national culture, cutting across ethnic and other boundaries internal to the state, is regarded as a crucially important aspect of the process of building and maintaining a modern nation. We are all familiar with the view that countries lacking a strong national culture in this sense are not true nations at all, but merely states of more or less arbitrary construction.

There are states that do not have a strong national culture in this restricted sense. In many of these states, however, the creation of a distinctive and unitary national culture is one of the major goals of national policy, and if at present they do not qualify as nations in the narrow sense of the word, they may very well come to do so in the future. Most of the states that today appear as genuine nations were yesterday just as lacking in cultural unity as these latecomers to the process of nationbuilding. If they now seem to fit the concept of a true, "natural" nation it is only because they have had the time and the resources to create themselves in that image. As for the process itself, it is not without obstacles and contradictions. Not only is the concept of nation itself part of the transnational flow of culture, so is also much of the technical and administrative expertise required for the building of a nation. What this means is that in the process of affirming a distinctive national culture, the cultural engineers of the evolving nations will inevitably have to compromise the purity of that culture. Furthermore, the creation of a unitary national culture inevitably entails the leveling of cultural differences within the state. The common national culture can never incorporate the whole mass of preexisting traditional culture, but only certain elements selected and combined in accordance with present values, needs, and experiences. For a variety of reasons this must be so even in states devoted to a cultural policy of pluralism and preservation.

But we need not discuss national culture in these relatively narrow terms. If our aim is to understand how contemporary nations (or states) are organized as cultural entities and how they interact, with one another in a global system of cultural influence and exchange, a broader concept of national culture covering the entire range of meanings carried by the population of a nation-state would seem to be more suitable. Much like the larger world system of culture, to which it is connected in a variety of ways, a national culture in this sense is an organized diversity of culture. It includes not only what there is of a nationally shared culture, but also a whole host of varieably distinct subcultures based, for example, on region, ethnicity, class or occupation. Some of these subcultures,

like those of modern science, are national extensions of cosmopolitan cultures with branches in many countries. Others, like the modern artistic and popular cultures now emerging in most developing countries, are creative syntheses of diverse cultural forms drawn in variable proportions from local and foreign sources. Still others are predominantly local cultures preserving a precarious autonomy on the edge of the national system of culture. As the networks of transnational and national communication continue to expand cultures of the latter kind are bound to shed much of their distinctiveness, but as new bases for cultural formation may simultaneously emerge, it is not self-evident that the overall result of this process will be a drastic reduction of cultural diversity. What seems more certain is that the overarching pattern of cultural diversity will be profoundly affected. As Hannerz has suggested elsewhere (1987b), instead of the anthropologists' proverbial mosaic of cultures, we get something that looks rather more like a cultural continuum. Stretching from the most metropolitan at the one end to the most provincial or local at the other, this continuum will span a considerable diversity of culture. For the most part, however, it will be a diversity of a fluid, diffuse kind rather than one where the constituent cultures or subcultures are divided from one another by sharply marked boundaries.

MEANING ACROSS CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

In the discussion following Hannerz' introductory recapitulation of these ideas, Fredrik Barth struck a note of caution and humility. Our understanding of the processes of cultural transfer and influence is very limited, he suggested. There is no theory by which we could coherently account for these processes. As long as we are dealing with the flows of material goods between societies we have a fairly clear view of what is going on. As it is culture that we are concerned with, however, we must also try to understand the processes which occur at the level of meaning. Meanings are not entities that can be transferred in the manner of physical objects. They are rather ways of cognitively and affectively relating to objects. As such they are highly dependent on a wider situational and cultural context. Knowledge of the mere physical properties of an object does not make it possible to predict the meaning it will

acquire when it is transported from one cultural context to another, nor can we normally make such a prediction from a knowledge of its meaning in its original context of culture. What we need is a thorough knowledge of the entire system of cultural meaning existing at its point of destination, for it is in terms of this system that incoming objects are interpreted and responded to. Even if such knowledge can be acquired, however, the study of the often subtle shifts of cultural meaning occurring in the processes of cross-cultural interaction is bound to be extremely difficult. The essence of the problem, as Barth puts it, is how we are to ascertain the meaning of structures when we know that these structures have not been fully shaped by the persons whose meanings we want to understand.

Barth's argument about meaning and context would seem to be valid for all kinds of objects transferred across cultural boundaries, including those designed with a specifically communicative intent, such as written texts, pictures, and films. In dealing with the transmission of such communicative forms, one may all too easily slip into the error of assuming that their meaning at the point of reception is the same as the producers' intended meaning, which need certainly not be the case. In studies of transcultural communication, as indeed in all studies of communication, our working assumption should rather be that received meanings are normally more or less at variance with intended meanings. To this Michael Harbsmeier made the additional point that one should be attentive to the possible transformations of the meanings and uses of the media of communication themselves as they are exported from one cultural setting to another. The history of the introduction of writing in non-literate societies provides particularly striking examples of such transformations.

THE CONFLICTING OBJECTIVES OF CULTURAL POLICY

The Director-General's report on the World Decade of Cultural Development was also commented upon. While sympathizing with the general tone and direction of the report, several of the workshop participants felt that on certain points it is open to widely divergent interpretations. One question which would seem to require more discussion is how the four main objectives of the Decade should be balanced

against each other. For example, there is clearly a limit to how far one can go in the direction of affirming the distinctiveness of cultural identities without getting into conflict with the goal of promoting intercultural cooperation. Similarly, the goal of promoting broader cultural participation may easily get into conflict with the goal of affirming cultural identities. As Barth observed, in many societies certain bodies of knowledge and practice are by established tradition reserved for certain categories of people, and prohibited to others. In raising the banner of cultural democracy and attempting to make such knowledge and practice accessible to all, one will certainly not affirm the identity of the cultures in question, but rather transform them, sometimes quite drastically. In many cases such a transformation can no doubt be justified, but that is another matter.

The notion of broadening participation in culture was also regarded as problematic in its own terms. On the face of it, this notion would seem to rest on an elitist concept of culture under which culture is something that only some people (or, indeed, only some peoples) have. The assumption underlying the Director-General's report, however, is presumably not that there are people without culture, but rather that there are particularly valuable forms of culture that should be made accessible to larger numbers of people. Yet it is not made quite clear what these valuable forms of culture are. Perhaps they belong primarily to the order of expressive culture. In most societies there is a great variety of expressive forms of culture, however, and one would like to know whether all of them should be equally promoted or if some are to be regarded as deserving a broader participation than others. This is obviously an important question to raise, for given the centralized and hierarchic structure of nation-states, there is always a likelihood that elite cultures will be favoured at the expense of more popular forms of culture and that the cultures of ethnic, regional and other minorities will suffer under the pressure of dominant majority cultures. On the other hand, one must also be realistic and recognize that it may be practically impossible (and even undesirable) to promote participation in all forms of expressive culture equality. Choices

will always have to be made; the main question is who should have the authority to make them.

To see how difficult the problems are one need only look at the area of language and literature, discussed at some length in the workshop. Language is very much part of culture. It is not a neutral vehicle for conveying cultural meaning, but to a great extent the very embodiment of such meaning. To participate in a culture is largely to participate in its language, to be able to think and express oneself in its categories. Thus if one wants to support a culture one will also have to support the language (or languages) on which it is based. And this includes supporting literature, oral as well as written, for literature is not only a repository of already acquired meanings and experiences, but also an instrument for the further development and enrichment of languages and cultures. Yet very few countries are fortunate enough to have only one language to deal with. The normal situation is rather that of a labyrinth of languages. To support all languages and literatures equally is often not possible. Given the scarcity of resources in most countries, supporting all might often be the same as supporting none. Moreover, there are the hard realities of politics and administration which everywhere impose severe limits on the range of available alternatives. The language or languages that are selected for administrative purposes will inevitably be favoured, not only by the state but also by people who think it is more important that their children succeed in the world than that their cultural traditions are perpetuated. Still, it remains true that one cannot support participation in cultures without also supporting languages.

There is also the question of what is meant by participation in any particular type of expressive culture. How active, intellectually or otherwise, must the handling of cultural forms be before it deserves to be called participation? Must one be a producer of cultural forms in order to be regarded as a participant or is it enough to be part of the audience? Is there a difference in the degree of participation between, say, reading a newspaper, watching Dallas on TV, and listening to a local bard or storyteller? In other words, does the reception of some forms of expressive culture involve a higher degree of cultural participation than others?

Are some media inherently more participatory than others? Does it make any difference whether the received forms reflect specifically local conditions or not?

The answers to these queries are likely to differ significantly from one culture to another and also between different categories of people involved with the same culture, not least between cultural policy-makers and other professional cultural experts on the one hand, and the various categories of laymen under their jurisdiction on the other. As mentioned, there may be popular or minority forms of culture and cultural practice that are not even recognized as such by local cultural authorities. Some cultural practices may even be regarded as the very negation of culture. Furthermore, notions of differential value and worthwhileness in the area of culture are very much part of the transnational flows of culture and should be studied as such. For instance, what is the role of Unesco in the formation and propagation of particular normative conceptions of culture and cultural stratification? What other influential actors are there in this area of cultural ideology, nationally and internationally, and by what routes and rhetorics do they transmit their messages?

MEDIA AND POPULAR CULTURE

One of the areas of study singled out by the workshop participants for future exploration was that of media and popular culture. In the course of the discussions, it became increasingly clear that studies in this field would not only be highly relevant to the concerns of Unesco. It would also provide a fertile meeting-ground for anthropology and communication studies. As Ullamaja Kivikuru explained, in communication studies there has over the years been a gradual shift away from a predominantly quantitative approach, concerned with measuring the impact of the transnational media flows on national and local cultures in terms of hours, minutes, and seconds, to a more qualitative approach where the handling of alien media forms and contents by local communicators and audiences are brought into focus. As yet this development may not have reached very far, especially not in the area of audience studies, but it is already becoming clear that some established views will have to be revised. While the overall image of asymmetry and dependency is not likely to be discarded, it seems that

the view of the impact of the metropolitan media has been too deterministic, and that the scope for creative audience response may at times be somewhat larger than assumed. Moreover, even where it may not lead to any significant revision of the dependency model, a more qualitative approach is bound to deepen our understanding of the modes and mechanisms of dependency themselves. Kivikuru's own research on media developments in Finland is quite interesting in this regard. While the bulk of the older studies of media dependency were for the most part concerned with the importation of media technology and finished media products, Kivikuru also probes into other modes of dependency, notably those expressed in the frequent adoption of foreign models of form and content in local media production, a process which she refers to as modelling.

As scholars in communication studies move closer to the individual producers and users of the media, they will probably find it useful to enter into dialogue with the anthropologists. The anthropologists can help the communication researchers to understand some of the complexities of local culture and social structure, and may have an interest of their own in the processes of media development. It is true that anthropologists have not taken much notice of the impact of the modern media as yet. While students of communication and other social scientists have started to grapple with the cultural dimensions of the expanding world system, many anthropologists have in fact retreated further into the backwoods of the world. Yet there are anthropologists who are preoccupied with the cultural transformations occurring in the more central sectors of Third World societies, and to them questions concerning the media are bound to become increasingly important.

Modern popular culture is an area of study where the media cannot be ignored. As most people would understand the term, modern popular culture is not even thinkable without the media. Some might even say that it is a media phenomenon altogether. Adopting an anthropological approach, however, one would not locate popular culture only in its external forms, but also in the meanings attached to these forms by users and producers. The discussion summarized above in the section Meaning across cultural boundaries

is relevant to popular culture, no less than to any other type of culture. Furthermore, while the media are crucially important in the formation of popular culture, processes of direct, face-to-face communication must also be taken into account. Indeed, it is largely in the interfaces of mediated and non-mediated processes of communication that the dynamics of popular culture are to be found. And this is true amongst the professional creators of popular culture as well as amongst their audiences.

More precisely, then, modern popular culture is an expressive type of culture that is decisively but by no means exclusively shaped by media products, and other external cultural forms more or less widely relayed and advertised through the media, such as those of the circus, the carnival, the rock concert, the variety show, the sports, and the popular fashion industry. The media products include not only those designed by the creative writers, directors, artists, and performers of the media but also those of a more journalistic kind, reporting and commenting on current events and affairs in the world of popular culture and beyond. Very important are the images of the expressive styles and practices of their own audiences that the popular media regularly produce and transmit. In this way the relationship between media and audience is more interactive than it is often thought to be. It is largely through media images that we know youth styles such as the punks, the skinheads, or the rastas. It is perhaps also largely through the media images of themselves and others, or by a more or less critical reflection on those images, that these subcultural groups have developed their particularity and formed a sense of their own identity and importance. Furthermore, it is largely because they have been widely represented and commented upon in the media that rockers, skinheads and the like have multiplied across regional and national boundaries. Processes of modelling, in Kivikuru's sense of the term, occur everywhere in the world of popular culture, not only among its professional producers.

We are speaking of popular culture here in the specifically modern sense of the term. As historians sometimes define it, popular culture is simply the culture of the people or the masses as opposed to the culture of the elites. For our purposes this definition is

too wide. Applied to the developing countries it would cover not only the popular forms of culture arising as a result of the incorporation of these societies in the world system, but also the surviving forms of authentic tribal and peasant culture. Indeed, elements of traditional culture can be absorbed by modern popular culture. Broadcast through the media they may get a new lease of life and become more widely spread than ever before. As they are brought into new contexts of culture and communication, however, they are no longer elements of traditional culture pure and simple, but rather the modern transforms of such elements. As such they are very much part of the recommended field of inquiry. The study of the more or less creative combinations and syntheses of the old and the new, the foreign and the local, should indeed be one of our main preoccupations.

The historians' definition of popular culture is in a sense also too narrow. This is so not only because the star performers of popular culture are themselves nowadays part of the elites (and in most countries very prominently so), but also because many of the products of popular culture tend to have a market at all levels of society. This does not obliterate the distinction between the culture of the elites and the culture of the masses; indeed, one often finds more or less subtle distinctions of high and low, sophisticated and unsophisticated, within the field of popular culture itself. Still, the distinction between high culture and low culture is in most societies not as sharp as it may once have been. Moreover, as Hannerz (1987b) has recently pointed out, in some of the developing countries (notably those of sub-Saharan Africa, where the patterns of social and cultural stratification were never as elaborate as in Europe), the opposition between elite and popular, high and low, tends at present to be overshadowed by the rather more future-oriented and outward-looking opposition between "modern" and "backward", "civilized" and "bush".

Modern popular culture is one area where the influence of foreign cultural forms, especially those produced by large transnational culture industries, is most conspicuous. In many countries, at the same time, it is an area of considerable local creativity. Much of this creativity is found in what one could describe as the small-scale,

informal sector of the domestic popular culture industry, where creators and performers address relatively small audiences, directly in face-to-face communication or indirectly through media that can be operated with limited investments. The output of the large-scale sector is often much less innovative; while the impact of alien cultural forms is likely to be considerable in both sectors of popular culture production, it is thus here that it tends to be most overwhelming. As Kivikuru's research on the development of the mass media in Finland shows, however, there can be significant variations in the degree of dependency between different media and sectors of media, as well as between different phases in the development of a single medium. There are also national differences. Some national culture industries would seem to be more distinctively national than others.

The production of popular culture is an established research area. Yet the existing body of research appears to be unevenly spread between countries, as well as between levels of production. We know a great deal more about the production of modern popular culture in the large industrialized countries than in the smaller industrialized countries and the developing countries, and we also know more about large-scale production than about small-scale production. What we require is a more comprehensive approach, one which is truly global and which covers not only the whole variety of productive forms and processes, from the largest to the smallest, the most transnational to the most local, but also their interlinkages. The latter include the adoption and reworking of the expressive forms of small-scale producers by large-scale producers, as well as the processes of upward modelling mentioned above. In the popular music industry, such borrowings are quite common.

As comprehensive as it would be, however, a study of professional popular culture production along such lines would remain incomplete. What is further needed is research into the reception and use of the commodities of the popular culture industries by local users in different societies. The social sciences have barely started to look at this area of inquiry in a systematic fashion. There is no lack of theory. On the contrary, the literature is full of grand statements about the culturally debasing and ideologically mystifying

effects of the media on their audiences. Yet frequently these statements are not substantiated with any empirical data whatsoever. An underlying assumption of much of this theorizing seems to be that the products of the media have fixed meanings open to the inspection of any observer; consequently, research into the actual reception and use of these products could be dispensed with. This assumption we have already rejected. As for existing empirical studies, they are mostly fairly superficial survey studies. The study of media reception, the workshop suggested, should be a more probing type of inquiry. Through close observational methods one would seek to understand how cultures and subcultures are formed and transformed through media use. It should be a study of how the use of all kinds of media fits into local patterns of social relations and activities, and how media messages, collectively interpreted and elaborated upon, are gradually assimilated to local cultures.

It should be explicitly mentioned that the study of modern popular culture is not identical with the study of modern youth cultures. Among the youth the popular culture industry has one of its largest markets and inevitably much research must be concerned with the production and reception of popular culture products addressed to them. Nevertheless, other age groups are also involved in popular culture. In the workshop Pirkko Rainesalo was particularly concerned with the reception of the commodities of popular culture among children. In some of the industrialized countries children are indeed among the principal consumers of commercial popular culture. More particularly, they seem to spend a great deal of time watching TV, and they do not only look at childrens' programmes but also at programmes intended for adult audiences. Not much seems to be known about the consequences of this for their personal and cultural development. Here a comparative approach to media reception of the kind indicated would clearly be useful.

INTELLECTUALS AS CULTURAL MEDIATORS

In research on the theme of transnational cultural flows and national cultures, one category of people should receive particular attention. They are the intellectuals, the experts of ideation and symbolization. It is an obvious and indisputable fact that the intellectuals' contri-

tribution to the making of national cultures has been exceedingly important in the past, and continues to be so in the present. It is also clear that in every country the intellectuals are one of the most cosmopolitan sections of the population. Even when they are most strongly nationalist this can be so, for if they do not then have the open attitude of the true cosmopolitan, they still take a keen interest in what is going in the larger world. Often, however, there is also a streak of more genuine cosmopolitanism in them. Among the intellectuals, nationalism is frequently the response to a sense of rejection and exclusion. As such it may at times represent a desire to withdraw from a hostile world, but usually it is more accurately understood as the expression of a claim to a fuller and more equal participation in the world. Basically it is not so much a refusal of cosmopolitanism itself as of its corruption, in the hands of alien and domestic powers.

Intellectuals should be studied in their role as cultural mediators, intermediaries in the traffic of culture between and within societies. This should be understood as broadly as possible. We are not only concerned with intellectuals who engage in the business of presenting, interpreting, or critically appraising ready-made forms of alien culture to local audiences, but also with intellectuals using their knowledge of foreign culture to reinterpret and develop local cultural traditions and with intellectuals creating new composite forms of culture by combining or fusing elements of alien culture with elements of their own national culture. Writers and artists enriching their work with foreign elements of expression or content are cultural mediators as we use the term, and so are social scientists who revise imported theories in the light of local experience.

One need not be a promotor of alien culture in order to be a cultural mediator. Nor is a cultural mediator necessarily a person who is committed to the task of facilitating comprehension and understanding across cultural barriers. The concept is broad enough to cover intellectuals acting as guardians of cultural purity, intellectuals who use their influence as opinion leaders, educators, or cultural policy-makers to preserve cultures from contamination of other cultures. As intellectuals are by definition persons who

have a reflective and critical attitude towards ideas, one would not expect them to be consistent advocates of cultural isolation. Their typical attitude is rather that of the gatekeeper, welcoming certain visitors but not others. Yet they may still differ profoundly on issues concerning the inflow of alien culture, not least in the developing countries, where such issues are particularly urgent, and the debates between "modernizers" and "traditionalists" are frequently at the centre of intellectual discussion. In a study of intellectuals as cultural mediators one would carefully consider the causes and consequences of such differences.

The idea of looking at intellectuals in the perspective of cultural mediation is familiar to historians as well as to anthropologists. As Stefan Molund mentioned in the discussion, however, the intellectuals with whom the anthropologists have been mostly concerned are village priests, school-teachers, and similar figures, operating on the outer edges of the intellectual system of their countries. When they have ventured to move into the more central regions of this system, they have usually been looking for intellectuals serving as mediators of traditional culture. What we recommend here is a study that covers the representatives of modernity as well as the custodians of tradition and the intellectuals at the centre of the national intellectual system as well as those at the periphery. Sticking to the view that national cultures are open systems of culture increasingly integrated with one another in a larger world system of culture, we believe that it is particularly important to look at the intellectuals who are directly involved in the traffic of culture across national boundaries.

These intellectuals are not always to be found on their native soil. Not only do intellectuals tend to travel a lot. They often reside for long periods of time in foreign lands as expatriated or exiles. At the present time this is perhaps most common among the intellectuals of the Third World, many of whom receive their education in the metropolitan centres of intellectual culture or stay there for other reasons, but it is also common among the intellectuals of the industrialized countries. Paris and Berlin may no longer be the Meccas of Nordic writers and artists, but they have not quite lost

their attraction on them; nor have New York, London and Rome. And we should not forget the academic intellectuals, who have a very keen sense of where the action is, and are ready to travel at first opportunity. Thus if we want to study national cultures at their initial stages of formation and transformation, we must often look beyond their homelands to the capitals of world culture, where intellectuals of different cultural background exchange ideas.

And it would be equally important to look at the phenomenon of intellectual migration in the opposite perspective, of visiting and immigrant intellectuals taking part in the construction of a foreign national culture. The United States is obviously one country which has benefitted tremendously from the services of foreign intellectuals. And the same is true of many developing countries, where expatriate intellectuals have not only acted as teachers and advisors of the modern intelligentsia, but have also made other contributions to the making of a modern intellectual culture. The British orientalist scholars of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, who with the assistance of local Brahmans started the study of ancient Indian history and culture in the late 18th century, and in the process helped to prepare the ground for India's nationalist movement, are an early case in point. The work of foreign anthropologists and historians in Africa is a more recent one. As the critics of cultural imperialism would remind us, one could also find examples of visiting or immigrant intellectuals having a less beneficial influence on the formation of national cultures. The point is not so much that the influence of foreign intellectuals has always been for the good, but rather that it has often been of considerable consequence.

While emphasizing the importance of studying intellectual migration and all that goes with it, we should not forget that the intellectuals also have access to the larger world through the media. Access to media varies dramatically, however, between and within countries. A Nordic intellectual residing in a provincial town, or even in the capital of his country, may complain of the poor quality of the local libraries or the restricted offer of foreign books and periodicals in the local bookshops. Still he is in a vastly better position to keep in touch with the world than most of his colleagues in

the developing countries. And there is also the question of information spread, the question of which foreign cultures and sub-cultures are accessible through the available media. In a study of intellectuals as cultural mediators one would have to take such differences in access and exposure into account. An important question is how and to what extent the intellectuals themselves control the inflow of foreign cultural goods.

The intellectuals discussed so far are primarily those who mediate between national cultures. The study of intellectuals as cultural mediators would also embrace the more peripheral intellectuals, however, the intellectuals who are primarily nourished by local media products and, therefore, to a large extent assimilate foreign culture in an already reinterpreted form. Going one step further, one would also look at the interaction between the intellectuals and their non-professional audiences, the people who read their books and articles, visit their exhibitions, see their films and listen to their lectures. If the professional intellectuals, and we are now speaking of professional intellectuals as a group, have a wider cultural impact it is only because their non-professional audiences are interested in what they have to say, and ready to carry their ideas further afield. Reception studies would be just as relevant here as in research on popular culture.

MULTICENTRICITY IN WORLD CULTURE

Under this title hide a number of important questions concerning the sources, contents and directions of the flows of cultural goods in the world. In our most simplified rhetoric of the transnational system of culture, the entire earth is being rapidly drowned in one vast flood of uniform cultural goods produced by the multinational culture industry of the United States. This industry constitutes the core of the cultural world system and the rest of the world is one single periphery. Some of us may still be able to breathe the fresh air of our inherited cultures, but the chances that we can continue to do so in the future are slim. In a not too distant future we shall all have become mindless customers of a global cultural supermarket.

This prophecy is not to be taken lightly. Indeed, the reason why we find it credible at all is that it is not a mere prophecy. The large-scale culture industry is continuously growing at the expense of older, more localized forms of culture production. On the other hand, we should also realize that it is not yet quite as dominant as it critics sometimes say it is. Nor is its eventual victory quite as certain as some prophets of doom seem to believe.

To be able to discuss this urgent problematic in realistic terms, not too much distorted by our fears and hopes, we need a better map of the actual patterns of cultural flow in the world. Much of the knowledge that would be required for the construction of such a map may already exist, but it needs to be assembled on a single coherent chart, showing the actual patterns of centre-periphery relations existing in the cultural world system. As Ulf Hannerz mentioned in his introductory statement, it is important to recognize that the cultural world system is not merely a reflection of the relations of economic and political dependency existing in the world. The two are not unrelated, and in the long run they may even coincide, but there are still important discrepancies to take into account. While Japan and the Soviet Union are superpowers in the domain of economic and political relationships, they are at present rather less impressive as exporters of cultural goods. Britain and France, on the other hand, are tremendously important in the cultural world system, but rather less important economically and politically. While some of the reasons for these discrepancies may be obvious, we think that the problematic needs to be looked at more carefully.

Furthermore, we are dissatisfied with the common model of the cultural world system as a sharply polarized structure, consisting of one unitary core and one unitary periphery. We are even dissatisfied with the slightly more elaborate model that interposes a semiperiphery between the core and the periphery. Both models capture something of fundamental importance, but even so we find them rather misleading. Putting India, Nigeria, and Mexico in the same basket with Nepal, Somalia, and Honduras would clearly be absurd for many purposes. Nor do we find it altogether satisfactory to describe India, Nigeria, and Mexico as culturally more peripheral than the Nordic countries. As long as the distinction between core and periphery

is made in terms of balance of cultural trade, gross level of education, or something of the kind, there may be nothing wrong with such a description. If it is also meant to describe the overall cultural influence of these countries in the world, however, it is misleading.

What we recommend is a study that goes beyond the conventional divisions of centre and periphery, to cover the relations of cultural exchange and dependency within the big blocks. This would include studies of the regional and sometimes supraregional influence of countries like India, Nigeria, and Mexico. Moreover, in such studies one would not regard nations as some kind of collective individuals trading with one another, exchanging views with one another, or influencing one another. One would rather look at more specific units, such as the Indian film industry of the Mexican publishing industry. And one would be careful to differentiate between areas of cultural influence: Indian films are widely exported to Africa, but not Indian novels; the Mexican publishing industry has a large market in Latin America, but perhaps not Mexican films or Mexican handicrafts. One centre-periphery structure of particular importance in contemporary world culture is obviously that of Islam, covering a wide region, through many channels, and affecting many domains of meaning and practice.

As one turns to the regional centres of culture production in the world there is one question that cannot be avoided. This is the question of how different the products of these centres are from the corresponding products of the metropolitan centres. How Indian are Indian films? According to Ullamaija Kivikuru, there is hardly anything specifically Indian about them at all, but this is clearly an exaggeration. Indian films are indeed heavily influenced by metropolitan models, but it is also true that Indian films can be very different from American, British or French films. On the level of content, there are not only superficial differences in language or dress; as many bewildered Westerners can testify, there are deeper differences of theme as well. If one is concerned with the larger problem of the future of world culture, the question is clearly a very important one. Where there is genuine multicentricity there is a diversity of products as well as a diversity of pro-

ducers.

We would also want to look into the problematics of decentering and delinking in the cultural world system. In very general terms there would seem to be three major strategies for reducing cultural dependency. One is the strategy of domestication, i.e., replacing imports with indigenous cultural goods. A second is the strategy of counterpenetration, i.e. the strategy of trying to export one's own cultural goods to the country or countries on which one is dependent. The third, finally, is the strategy of diversification, i.e. the strategy of spreading one's dependency as widely as possible. As the Kenyan political scientist Ali Mazrui (1975:206) has put it: "reliance on one external reference group is outright dependency; reliance on a diversity of external civilizations may be the beginning of autonomy". All these strategies have their obvious problems. Yet they have all been tried and it is important to study how they have succeeded or failed. Not least are we interested in the various attempts that have been made, and are being made, to establish horizontal links of cultural cooperation and exchange among the developed as well as among the developing countries. The attempts to create common newspools on a regional or supraregional basis are an example.

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