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By MAGOROH MARUYAMA

# The Multilateral Mutual Causal Relationships Among the Modes of Communication, Sociometric Pattern and the Intellectual Orientation in the Danish Culture\*

TRADITIONALLY the principle of unidirectional causal relationship has become so internalized in the thinking of the natural as well as human scientists that the notion of multilateral mutual simultaneous causal relationship was inhibited, repressed and did not occur in the scientific thinking, or when it occurred, it was discarded as unscientific, illogical or circular argument.

Though multilateral mutual simultaneous causal relationships were implicit in the classical concepts of equilibrium in chemical process, mutual inductance in electricity, homeostasis in biology, oscillatory circuit in radio engineering, "vicious circle" in economy,<sup>1</sup> stability and instability in the evolution theory,<sup>2</sup> etc., it took the impact of cybernetics, automatic control engineering and servomechanism to make it explicit, amenable to rigorous mathematical treatment and respectable as a scientific principle.<sup>3</sup> Though we still see lingering traces of internalized tabu against multilateral mutual simultaneous causal relationships in many quarters of scientific disciplines,<sup>4</sup> the appropriateness and the necessity of its acceptance have been expressed on several occasions.<sup>5</sup>

In this paper we shall apply the principle of multilateral mutual simultaneous causal relationship (abbreviated MMSCR or MUSICAR) to an analysis of the Danish culture. The concept of "value system," if

\*This article has appeared in *Revue de Psychologie des Peuples* XV, No. 3 (November, 1960), 251-72 (Le Havre, France) with the title "Le 'Blufærdighed' Danois." The journal is the principal publication of L'Institut Havrais de Sociologie Economique et de Psychologie des Peuples.

<sup>1</sup> See the following works by J. Tinbergen: *An Econometric Approach to Business Cycle Problems* (Paris, 1937); *Statistical Testing of Business Cycle Theories*, II (Geneva, 1939); *Review of Economic Studies*, VII (1940), 73-90; *Business Cycles in the United Kingdom, 1870-1914* (Amsterdam, 1951). Also H. Wold, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Series A, Vol. 119 (1956), 28-61; *Revue de l'Institut International de Statistique*, XXVI (1958), 5-25; *Econometrica*, XXVIII (1960), No. 2, 417-63. Also G. Myrdal, *Economic Theory and Underdeveloped Regions* (London, 1957).

<sup>2</sup> S. Wright, "Evolution in Mendelian Population," *Genetics*, XVI, 97-159; *idem*, "Roles of Mutation," *Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Genetics*, I (1932), 356-66.

<sup>3</sup> M. Maruyama, "Morphogenesis and Morphostasis" (mimeographed, Berkeley, California; obtainable from M. Maruyama, Institute of Human Development, University of California, Berkeley).

<sup>4</sup> H. Reichenbach, *The Direction of Time* (Berkeley, 1956); J. W. M. Whiting and I. L. Child, *Child Training and Personality: A Cross-Cultural Study* (New Haven, 1953).

<sup>5</sup> L. K. Frank, in *Transactions of the Fourth Conference on Infancy and Childhood* (New York, 1950); J. Haley, "The Family of the Schizophrenic," (mimeographed, Ethnological Section, Veterans Administration Hospital, Palo Alto, California); G. Bateson, D. D. Jackson, J. Haley and J. Weakland, "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia," *Behavioral Science*, I (1956), No. 4, 251-64.

interpreted within the framework of the unidirectional causal relationship (abbreviated UCR or UCAR), has a quasi-deductive structure, i.e., certain "values" are initially assigned as an underlying core or framework, and the rest of the culture is organized around the values. On the other hand, in terms of MMSCR, the values become symptoms of the underlying intricate MMSCR between various aspects of the culture reinforcing or sustaining one another.

In the MMSCR, in contrast to UCR, there is no element with causal priority which serves as the core of the culture and around which the culture is organized. A verbal analysis, however, requires a sequential order. We shall therefore treat certain aspects of the Danish culture before certain other aspects of it. Such a sequential order does not indicate any causal priority. We shall bear this in mind throughout our analysis. Furthermore, it is not our intention to show that all aspects of the Danish culture are in MMSCR. In fact, as we shall see, many of the aspects are in UCR while others are in MMSCR. Our purpose is to show that certain aspects of the Danish culture can better be understood in terms of MMSCR than in terms of UCR. We shall indicate between which aspects MMSCR and UCR are present.

It will be convenient, though not necessary, to begin with the concept "*blufærdighed*." This concept has no equivalent in English. It is somewhat close to discretion, considerateness, reservedness, decency and even shyness. For example, expression of inner feelings, thoughts and opinions is considered aggressive, impolite, and as we later see, superficial and childish. Such an act is avoided with *blufærdighed*. Exposure of inner feelings, thoughts and opinions is horrifying both to the transmitter and to the receiver. To some extent this tendency is found in many other cultures. But the degree of this tendency in the Danish culture is considerably higher than in other cultures. As we shall see later, gratification from conversation and behavior is found not in communication of feelings, thoughts and opinions, but elsewhere. In other cultures one usually approaches a new acquaintance by showing interest in the latter's activities, hobbies, etc., and by indicating one's own activities, hobbies, experiences, etc.; a conversation should be interesting and stimulating, i.e., it should contain enough ideas, opinions, factual information, exciting experiences, etc., to keep the friendship from becoming boring. But such an approach is aggressive, impolite, superficial and childish in the Danish culture. (Exceptions and more subtle differences will become clear later in our analysis.) The observance of *blufærdighed* is found also in professional contacts. In professional clubs, exchange of opinion and information is avoided. Even on such occasions as a special party given to a visiting scientist in which one would profit most by exchanging scientific information, *blufærdighed* makes exchange of information impossible. Of the various occasions I have ex-

perienced, a typical one was a luncheon given to Professor William N. Locke of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a specialist on electronic translation of languages, by the electronic computer laboratory (Regnecentral) of Copenhagen. Though that was the only occasion for the members of the laboratory to talk with Professor Locke, they entertained themselves among themselves with their daily trivialities, leaving Professor Locke alone and bored. Only after the party was over could Professor Locke, Soren Egerod (a Danish philologist who had spent much of his lifetime in France, Asia and the United States) and I develop a scientific conversation. A few persons from the laboratory were present at this *hors de programme* conversation, but they contributed practically nothing to it.

A Danish professor comments:<sup>6</sup> "It has to be taken into consideration that the Danes show strong resistance to every 'aggressive' approach made by others. They are reluctant in exposing their thoughts. This is an old tradition. In the rural regions of Jylland it is considered to be unquestionably impolite to start with one's real business immediately. One has to begin with a series of indifferent matters. The Danes are in their real nature very *blufærdig* and . . . will not reveal their innermost thoughts to others. They conceal them under the cover of neutral and smiling expressions. Consequently one can talk with a Dane for hours without acquiring knowledge of any significance and without getting acquainted with his real thoughts. If a stranger immediately introduces substantial problems of social and cultural interest, the Dane often retreats inside himself, and cools down his interlocutor in his typically Danish way. The more intensive the effort of the stranger, the stronger will be the resistance. Similarly the Dane is reluctant to express himself unless he has a secure confidence in his opinion regarding the matter in question. Therefore it is also very difficult to get Danish students to cooperate actively in many forms of university education. This can easily result in limitedness of horizon for the Danes, who give up from the beginning the subjects which they are not sure to be able to master. The boldness with which others launch discussions of big problems seems to the Danes rather idiotic and more or less ridiculous. . . . If one begins to present his opinion or information, he is likely to be thought to be 'showing off' or 'trying to look important.' The listeners may sit politely, but let his talk go in one ear and go out the other, despising him as an unashamed exhibitionist. . . ."

In Sweden one may complain about a stomachache and everybody will worry about it. In the United States someone gives him a pill and everybody forgets about it. In Denmark one does not complain about a stomachache. A Dane seldom discloses his inner sufferings. The Danes, not only reluctant in opening their thoughts to others, are often in-

<sup>6</sup> Personal communication from a Danish professor of law who wishes to remain anonymous (1957). Translated from the Danish by the author.

capable of expressing them even when they need to do so. When in mental conflict, a Dane is often incapable of formulating his own trouble to himself, not to mention the impossibility of his communicating his sufferings to others and of seeking their assistance and advice. The inhibition is internalized but it is not necessarily a repression into the unconscious. It often reverberates on the conscious level. Soren Kierkegaard is in a sense very Danish and in another sense very un-Danish. He is Danish in his sufferings; but he is un-Danish because he has expressed himself. He is Danish in his redundancy and indirectness. But he is un-Danish in his strivings and ambition.

Most of the repressive cultures provide the members with safety devices for outlet. For example, in the Balinese culture a child learns to withdraw expressions of feeling because of the irresponsiveness of the mother; the mother arouses the child and, when he responds, she diverts her attention from the child. As he grows up, he learns to suppress the expressions of his feelings in order to avoid the frustration caused by the irresponsiveness of the mother. The Balinese thus has no social channel to express his emotions. But in the Balinese culture, the religious trance provides the emotional outlet. The theater also provides an emotional outlet; the actor discharges his repressed emotions in the play, and the audience participates in the discharge by identification.<sup>7</sup> In the Danish culture, there is no institutionalized outlet for the inner feelings, except in a restricted form of irony and insult as we shall see later. The confession system at the church as practiced in Catholic cultures and in some Protestant cultures, such as Sweden, is not in general use in Denmark.

As is well known, Denmark has the highest rate of suicide in the world. Dr. Erik Schiodt, the suicide specialist in Denmark, examined various possible explanations for the high suicide ratio in Denmark and concluded:

Life in Denmark is to some extent eventless and without excitement. The Danes have much patience and can bear much for a long time. But suddenly they may break down because of an accumulated burden. In any case it is the breakdown of the mental mechanism that we physicians see often in the suicides. . . . The long latent period and the sudden act [of suicide] are characteristic not only of Hamlet, but also of other Danes. An Irishman or a Norwegian will react much earlier in the difficulty. Therefore their reactions are seldom as drastic as suicide and find outlet in revolt or in emigration rather than in self-destruction. . . . I do not know whether the relatively numerous suicides in the Danish tales and folklore are something especially Danish. But we could mention that our old god Odin hanged himself or stuck himself.<sup>8</sup>

We have tentatively described *blufærdighed*. Its meaning and func-

<sup>7</sup> G. Bateson and M. Mead, *Balinese Character* (New York, 1942).

<sup>8</sup> E. Schiodt, "Selvmord og Dansk Folkekarater," *Perspektiv*, V (Copenhagen, 1957), 39-42 (not to be confused with *Perspektiv*, Stockholm). Translated from Danish by the author.

tion will become clearer as we examine how it influences other aspects of the Danish culture and how it is influenced by them. The overall MMSCR between the various aspects of the Danish culture are shown in Table 1.

Table I

Table of Mutual Influences

to:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
from:															
1	•	+	+	+	+										
2	•	•	+	•	+										
3	+	+	•	+	•										
4	+	•	+	•	•										
5	•	+	•	•	•										
6	•	•	•	•	•										
7	+	•	•	•	•										
8	•	•	+	•	•										
9	•	•	•	•	+										
10	+	•	•	•	+										
11	•	•	•	•	•						R	•	•	•	•
12	•	•	•	+	•						•	•	•	•	•
13	•	•	•	•	•						•	•	•	•	•
14	•	•	•	•	•						•	•	•	•	+
15	+	•	•	•	•						•	•	•	•	R

Key to the table:

+ direct influence.

• no direct influence.

R mutual reinforcement between belief and practice.

1 blufærdighed.

2 humor, situation-contextual communication.

3 low sociometric mobility, clique formation.

4 principle of non-interference, isolation.

5 indirect communication.

6 informal, non-dogmatic, flexible, unreliable, unsystematic.

7 immediately human, coziness, short-sighted.

8 sour-grape,

non-jealous, Foreigners are inhuman, unhumorous and unrefined.

9 function of insult.

10 subjectivism, introspection, projection,

interest in the state of mind.

11 Factual interest is superficial.

12 appreciation of particular and exceptional.

13 Foreigners are childish.

14 maladjusted intellectuals: neurosis, self-glorification (lack of intellectual outlet), cynicism (attack on personality, fear).

15 Discussion is antagonistic.

The aspects that are increased by *blufærdighed* are: low sociometric mobility and clique formation; humor and situation-contextual communication; indirect communication; informality, absence of dogmatism, flexibility, unreliability and lack of systematic elaboration; immediate humaneness, coziness and short-sightedness; subjectivism, introspection, projection and interest in the state of mind; the principle of non-interference and isolation; and maladjustment such as neurosis, self-glorification or cynicism forms in some individuals. *Blufærdighed* in its turn is increased by low sociometric mobility and clique formation; immediate humaneness, coziness and short-sightedness; and subjectivism, introspection, projection and interest in the state of mind.

We have mentioned that the Danes find gratification from conversation not in the communication of feelings, thoughts and opinions, but elsewhere. They find it in Danish humor. While French humor is, comparatively speaking, effective in terms of the funny logic it contains or in terms of logically elaborated funniness and can be understood in the light of contextual human background which is fairly universal and is shared by many cultures, Danish humor centers around trivial details of the daily life of the persons participating in the conversation. This type of humor is considered as cozy, and coziness is one of the most important orientations in Danish life. Adding to the humor around trivial details of the daily life of conversation participants is the situation-contextual communication. By saying "I like this," a Dane may mean "I like this" or "I do not like this." In order to decode the transmitter of this statement correctly, one has to know the situation under which the statement was made, including the transmitter's habits, background, taste, etc. It may be said that the tone of the statement is an important clue. But the situational context carries more information than the tone, and the interpretation of the tone again depends on the knowledge of the situational context. But if one knows the situational context well enough to decode the transmitter properly, it is not necessary to hear the statement. One already knows what the transmitter means before the statement is made. Thus the communication in the Danish culture is often redundant. Redundancy, here as well as in many other spheres of Danish life, is regarded as cozy.

Consequently, conversation is gratifying only if one is well acquainted with the details of the daily life of the participants in the conversation and with the situational context. Therefore conversation with strangers is frustrating, not because of hostility, but because of the lack of gratification. A Dane therefore tends to stay within a small clique, usually consisting of two to five persons. This results in a low sociometric mobility. There is very little value-homophilic selection; there is very little conscious endeavor to go around making many friends and selecting from them a definite type one has in mind. The Danish culture is

homogeneous, and almost any clique turns out to be satisfactory if one has been in it long enough. One does not select a clique, but happens to get in one and stays in it. Working in the same shop, meeting someone from one's home town, etc. bring about attachment to a clique. Even among students, who form a subculture of a relatively high sociometric mobility, clique formation is conspicuous. In large student houses, each wing and each floor tend to form a clique, and there is comparatively little traffic between the wings and between the floors. Large parties, professional or otherwise, are subdivided into cliques, and there is very little intercourse between the cliques. The cliques in large parties are not formed in the parties, but rather they existed prior to the parties; people participate in parties cliquewise and stay within their respective cliques throughout the parties. One seldom makes new acquaintances in such gatherings, and, unless one already belongs to one of the cliques, one is likely to stay lonesome in large gatherings. Summer parties for foreign tourists are exceptions; during the vacation season, cliques temporarily dissolve only to re-form in the fall. During the summer there is much sociometric freedom among young people whose steady partners are away for various reasons.

A newcomer to a clique, however, is heartily accepted. But he has to stay "green" (unoriented) for a few weeks, occasionally even for a few months, because of his insufficient knowledge about the details of the daily life of the ingroup members around which the conversation is centered. The principle of non-interference, another result of *blufærdighed* which will be explained later, contributes toward the slowness of orientation of the newcomer; the old-timers do not make efforts to orient the newcomer. Such efforts are inhibited by *blufærdighed*. The newcomer is left on his own.

In certain cultures in which vertical hierarchy structure predominates, a newcomer to a group has first to establish his peck-order in the group. In the Japanese culture, for example, there are always prestige fights between individuals whose relative peck-order is socially undefinable; one endeavors to impress others and make them feel inferior. The Danish culture is traditionally equalitarian, and there is no hierarchical pressure on the newcomer. Nor is there any hostility toward or fear of outsiders and newcomers. The greenness of the newcomer, which is often conspicuous and is recognizable even by the outsider, is a result of the communication pattern.

Now the MMSCR between *blufærdighed*, humor and situation-contextual communication, low sociometric mobility and clique formation, and the principle of non-interference can easily be seen. *Blufærdighed* inhibits communication of feelings, thoughts and opinions, and the outlet for gratification from communication is sought in humor and situation-contextual communication. Humor and contextual communication



encourage low sociometric mobility and clique formation. Low sociometric mobility and clique formation in turn facilitate humor and situation-contextual communication. *Blufærdighed* also directly contributes toward low sociometric mobility and clique formation. And low sociometric mobility and clique formation reinforce *blufærdighed*. Low sociometric mobility and clique formation encourage the principle of non-interference. The principle of non-interference certainly increases low sociometric mobility and clique formation. The principle of non-interference, on the other hand, is an expression of *blufærdighed*.

We have not yet fully explained the principle of non-interference. It is the principle of respect for individual freedom, and freedom is conceived mainly in terms of freedom from interference rather than in terms of freedom for action, choice, etc. Especially non-interference with respect to withdrawal into self is well observed. Withdrawal into self is not regarded as social maladjustment, but is considered as a normal respectable personality trait. An example will serve as an illustration. In a student house each floor-wing has a kitchen shared by twenty-two students. These students meet one another several times daily in the kitchen. There are some who are taciturn and do not say even "Good morning." They cook, sit and eat alone. But they are not regarded as abnormal or unfriendly by others. They are normal good friends. The following incident is a striking illustration: shortly after the Hungarian revolution, several Hungarian refugee students were housed in a student home with Danish students for assimilation. At the beginning of February 1957, a lady noted for her international-mindedness wrote a letter to the director of the student home inviting the refugees. The following is the director's reply to the lady:

Thank you for your kind letter of February 3 inviting our Hungarian students to your home on Sunday. I am delighted to know of course that there are still some people who are thinking of them, though interest has died out at some places.

I would suggest to you, however, to wait for some time for such an arrangement. We are concentrating on getting them completely assimilated into the Danish student life in order to minimize their feeling of being in a separate class. Every one of them should be respected as an individual with his own interests and wishes. Upon their own request they have been assigned to rooms as far apart as possible from one another in this student home. No two of them live in the same part of the building. From the point of view of the language, they are still at the stage of fumbling. Most of them have no knowledge of West-European languages. They are also uncertain in personal relationships. Inasmuch as they have not yet passed this stage, it is quite advisable to make no attempt to interfere with them. They should find their way themselves.

It is perhaps a little difficult to explain. But I really hope that they will understand me. When they have adjusted themselves to the environment, it will be entirely different. But until that time, I

believe that the right thing to do is not to invite them together, but to regard them as individuals and let them come together with the Danes they have gotten acquainted with.<sup>9</sup>

Another aspect of the Danish culture is the use of indirect locution or, in other words, connotative communication. This mode of communication is highly refined and institutionalized in the Danish culture. The rules of coding are known to those in the culture. Therefore decoding is accomplished without misunderstanding. The elaborate rules of coding and decoding are internalized, i.e., inseparable from the thinking process, to such an extent that the process of coding and decoding is automatic and unconscious, and for the Danes it is the most natural, direct mode of communication. They are unable to communicate otherwise. A Dane automatically and unconsciously (unwittingly) decodes the denotative message of foreigners according to the Danish rules of decoding, and reads meanings which do not exist.

This contrasts with the denotative communication in Sweden. As will be seen later, communication in the Swedish culture is factual-oriented, and connotative coding and decoding are almost non-existent. It may be proposed that the Danish connotative communication is close to Oriental modes of communication. There are, however, some important differences between the Danish connotative communication and some of the Oriental modes of communication. For example, while the connotative communication is decodable in the Danish culture, it is not in the Japanese culture. In the Japanese culture, different internal states may be coded into the same behavior, for example smiling. Hence the internal state is not uniquely inferrable from the observed behavior. Such coding is not connotative communication, but is rather concealment if not deception. (It is often believed by the Westerners that a Japanese would tell his company what he believes would please them, i.e., he does not tell his own opinion. This interpretation is incorrect. A Japanese identifies himself with the social institution and the social situation he is in. When he is with a superior or with a guest, he identifies himself with the latter's opinion. He even temporarily believes the latter's opinion. The Japanese has no continuous individual identity, but lives in social identity which may change from situation to situation. This does not imply that there is no deceptive communication in Japan. There is much deceptive communication in Japan, especially concealment of shortcomings in order to keep face.)

Connotative communication in the Danish culture is in a sense a result of *blufærdighed*. It makes it possible to avoid certain direct expressions by attenuating them. But the institutionalization of the connotative communication has made this attenuation ritualized, i.e., the original attenuation no longer serves as attenuation because the com-

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication from a Danish professor who wishes to remain anonymous (1957). Translated from Danish by the author.

munication is decodable and the meaning before attenuation can be inferred. On the other hand, the institutionalized connotative communication in the Danish culture covers only certain categories of feelings and thoughts. Deep feelings and articulate intellectual process can not be accommodated in the connotative communication, and are excluded from the possibility of communication.

It can easily be seen that connotative communication is facilitated by humor and situation-contextual communication, and it in turn enriches humor and situation-contextual communication.

The Danish culture is further characterized by the following: informality of interpersonal relationships; absence of dogmatism, ideals and fanaticism; flexibility in official procedures; lack of systematic elaboration and of precision; unreliableness of, for example, information given by office personnel on slightly off-the-routine questions. *Blufærdighed* favors these traits. Another group of traits, perhaps the most central orientation in the Danish culture, are immediately humane emotional sensitivity, coziness, relaxation with respect to activity drives, and shortsightedness. The considerateness in the *blufærdighed* is inseparable from the emotional sensitivity; they reinforce each other. The coziness is protected by *blufærdighed*, and contributes to it. Relaxation is necessary for coziness, and it in its turn needs coziness. Shortsightedness is another version of the same orientation. And this group of traits is in MMSCR with the previous group of characteristics of informality; absence of dogmatism, ideals and fanaticism; flexibility; lack of systematic elaboration and of precision, and consequent unreliability.

If the humanitarianism of Sweden is based on impartiality, fact-mindedness, far-sightedness and rationality, the Danish humanitarianism is founded on emotional sensitivity, warm-heartedness, feeling-mindedness, and quite often warm-headedness. This difference is particularly well exemplified in their treatment of the Hungarian refugees. When the Hungarian revolution broke out, the Danes collected their private contributions of food, clothing and blood for the victims. They sent a group of physicians and medical supplies to the troubled area. They made numerous long demonstrations in the cold weather and burned red flags in front of the embassy of the intervening power. They welcomed refugees warmly. After two weeks, the revolution still was a topic of coffee break conversation. But after several weeks practically nobody in Denmark thought about the poor refugees. Some Danes even advocated publicly that there was no reason for giving the refugees job opportunities because there was some unemployment in Denmark. Sweden, on the other hand, developed long-range programs in various forms for refugees.

The predilection for coziness and serenity of mind in the Danish culture has some protective devices. One of them is the sour-grape princi-

ple and rationalization. In many European countries, self-glorification is a conscious and systematic theorization based on clearly perceived jealousy or on clearly remembered memory of defeat. Often the theorization is artificial and one feels the need for convincing himself by reverberating it on the conscious level. Contrary to this practice, the Danish culture simply eliminates jealousy and bitterness by the sour-grape principle. Whatever is familiar becomes cozy and sweet. The emotional attachment in friendship is proportional to the length of the friendship. Redundancy is treasured. Interminable weekly gossip gatherings of relatives are cherished even by young people. For the same reason, whatever is unfamiliar is felt to be *kedelig* (untranslatable: closest translation would be boring, uninteresting, sad, soul-destroying. This is the opposite of *hyggelig* — cozy, and of *morsom* — interesting or amusing). But this is experienced on the level of feeling rather than on the level of theoretical elaboration. Many Danes feel that Denmark has the highest standard of living and the best education system in the world, that Denmark is the most comfortable country in the world, that the Danes are the hardest working people in the world, that they are more intellectual than foreigners, that Frenchmen and Americans are superficial, that Italy is poor and filthy, etc. (Many other Danes feel the opposite. But the sour-grape principle seems to be the rule rather than an exception.) But they do not make a theoretical or ideological issue out of it. Nevertheless, foreigners are readily accepted by the Danes. This is partly due to the fact that the Danes accept foreigners as individuals rather than as foreign nationals, and partly due to the absence of systematic, dogmatic and ideological prejudices. On the other hand, the intensive interest the Swedes show in foreigners and in foreign cultures is generally not found in Denmark. This is not due to ethnocentrism on the part of the Danes, but rather is due to indifference (*Jeg gider ikke* — a typically Danish attitude for effortlessness) and to sour-grape perception. One exception is the Danes' emotional prejudice against Germans and Swedes. Their feeling against Germany is understandable in the light of the last war. Their feeling toward the Swedes has historical, behavioral and linguistic reasons, and possibly also jealousy. The historical reason is that Denmark has fought with Sweden several times and lost considerable territory to Sweden in the final war. The behavioral reason is that the taciturnity and the seriousness of the Swedes look arrogant to the Danes. The linguistic reason is that, while the clear Swedish pronunciation is easily understood by the Danes, the unclear Danish pronunciation is not readily understood by the Swedes. This gives the Danes the impression of being ignored by the Swedes. The possible jealousy may be caused by the very high standard of living in Sweden and by the great industrial and intellectual ability of the Swedish people, which even the Danish sour-grape per-

ception cannot cover up. But the sour-grape perception protects the Danes at another level: they feel that they are too human to tolerate Swedes. I have often experimented to ascertain the effect of speaking Danish and Swedish to waiters aboard ships sailing between Denmark and Sweden. Some, but not all, Danish waiters react less politely when I speak Swedish than when I speak Danish. Some even tried to cheat. As a whole, foreigners who do not conform to the rules of the Danish connotative communication are considered as less human or less refined by the Danes.

In contrast, the Swedes in general have objective perception; the old Swedish jealousy is a manifestation of this characteristic. In more recent years, the Swedish jealousy has been turned into constructive incentives. The Swedes perceive the merits and faults of themselves as well as of foreign cultures. They are receptive toward foreign ideas, prompt in rectifying their shortcomings and confident in their present and future development.

The sour-grape perception facilitates the solidarity of the clique and therefore contributes toward low sociometric mobility. Low sociometric mobility, on the other hand, tends to limit the social horizon and becomes therefore a favorable condition for the development of sour-grape perception.

Closely related with the sour-grape perception is the function of insult in the Danish culture. In most cultures an insult does not accomplish its purpose unless the receiver of the insult realizes that he has been insulted. In the Danish culture, however, the insult may not have the purpose of insulting the receiver of the message. It may serve as an outlet of the transmitter's frustration. Insult, like other types of communication, is usually articulated indirectly. If for some reason the insulted does not understand the insult, the insulter nevertheless is satisfied with the feeling that the insulted does not have enough sense of humor to understand the insult and is therefore inferior to the insulter. The satisfaction of the insulter is still greater if there is a third person who understands the insult while the insulted does not understand the insult. In this manner, insults are made which would bring danger to the insulter if the insulted understood the insult. Many of the practical jokes played by the Danes on German soldiers during the German occupation of Denmark belonged to this category. The Germans could make neither head nor tail of the jokes. They did not even realize that they were insulted. The Danes delighted. There is also a classical joke of a Danish family travelling in Italy by train. Near them was sitting a dark-haired man among other Italians. For a considerable length of time the family took pleasure in discussing loudly, in Danish, how ugly the dark-haired Italian was. They enjoyed it because the Italians did not understand Danish. As the train pulled into the station in Rome, the

dark-haired man rose and introduced himself to the family in Danish: "My name is Jorgensen." He was a Dane.

Gratification from an insult transmitted but not understood by the insulted is possible because of the sour-grape principle. On the other hand, such gratification, once experienced, reinforces the sour-grape principle. The humor around daily trivialities, the situation-contextual communication and connotative communication make insults possible which may not be decoded by the insulted, especially by foreigners. An insult not understood by target foreigners not only serves as an outlet for the transmitter's frustration, but also gives positive gratification to the transmitter because he feels that the foreigners are not human enough to understand Danish humor. The Danes are infinitely more human than the others. They are so human that others look to them less human.

By presenting this particular function of insult in the Danish culture, I do not mean to imply that the humor, the situation-contextual communication and denotative communication are developed for the purpose of insulting. On the contrary, as we have seen, humor, situation-contextual communication and connotative communication are developed in MMSCR with *blufærdighed* and low sociometric mobility. Insults are not frequent in the Danish pattern of communication. But when they occur, they may acquire the particular function described above in conjunction with the sour-grape principle. For the sake of completeness in the analysis of MMSCR, we may also say that this particular function of insult may induce certain types of connotative communication. But this statement should not be taken to imply that the connotative communication in the Danish culture is developed for this particular function of insult.

We have once touched upon the feeling-orientedness of the Danish culture in contrast with the fact-orientedness of the Swedish culture. Let us now explore this aspect in more detail. One of the orientations of the Danish culture is that of subjectivism, introspection, projection and interest in the state of mind of the communicator rather than in the denotative contents of the communication. As we shall see later, this orientation is again in MMSCR with *blufærdighed*, connotative communication, humor, situation-contextual communication, etc.

In personality development in Danish culture, scientific curiosity, factual interest and zest for scientific and political discussions reach their climax in adolescence. (As we shall see later, the Danish word *diskussion* means disagreement often for the sake of disagreement, always aggressive and antagonistic, and often cynical. The English word "discussion" generally means exchange of information and opinion for mutual enlightenment or for other constructive purposes. I have used the word "discussion" in the second sense.) After this climax has

been reached, an individual grows toward maturity by increasingly becoming subjective, introspective and projective. Factual knowledge, logical articulation of thoughts and statistical reasoning are therefore considered immature, childish and superficial, while subjectivism, introspection and projection are regarded as mature and profound. There are many factors which discourage Danes from developing factual knowledge and interest. One of the factors is *blufærdighed*, which inhibits efficient intellectual communication. Another factor is that some Danes, while non-aggressive and suave in daily personal relationship, develop a type of intellectualism characterized by extremely destructive criticalness. They often occupy key posts in the intellectual machinery, and criticize whoever makes an intellectual attempt. They are shrewd and merciless. They discover existent and non-existent faults. Their fantasy is exorbitant. They draw sophistic conclusions and attack the mentality and personality of the writer or speaker rather than the contents of the statement. Unusual initiative is also likely to be ridiculed and cooled down. Intellectual ability is often measured as the ability to criticize others. In this atmosphere, one withdraws into his specialized field and never has the courage to widen his intellectual horizon. The only safe room for his intellectual outlet is in the domain of subjectivity such as art and literature. There one is free to maintain his opinions without the fear of being regarded as superficial on an absolute criterion. When one is called superficial, he can as well call his opponent superficial. The expression "You are superficial" is often equivalent to "I do not agree with you."

Introspection and projection are natural results of subjectivism. Also *blufærdighed* favors projective interpretation over direct factual information-gathering. Projection is also necessary in decoding connotative communication and situation-contextual communication. Introspection and projection in their turn are further refined in the process of connotative communication as well as refining it. *Blufærdighed* is also enhanced by introspection and projection.

Another consequence of subjectivism is the interest in the state of mind of the communicator rather than in the contents of the communication. A few examples will illustrate this point. Richard Wright once gave an evening lecture at the Student Union in Copenhagen on the problems of African and Asian people.<sup>10</sup> It was a well-prepared, highly sophisticated lecture with much new information and thought-provoking points of view. After the lecture, I carefully observed the reactions among the audience. Comments on African and Asian problems were very rare. The commonest reaction was: "Wright is suffering from a tremendous inferiority complex." Professor Charles H. Nichols of Hampton Institute lectured for a year in Denmark and wrote an

<sup>10</sup> "Psychology of Oppressed People." Lecture given at Studentforeningen of Copenhagen in December, 1956.

article in a Danish journal on the Europeans' attitude toward Negroes.<sup>11</sup> A Danish friend of mine, a brilliant medical student, reacted with only one short comment: "Why did he tell about an episode in which he is quoting Cicero in Latin in a seminar in Italy? He is trying to show off." In his eleven-page article, Professor Nichols describes various attitudes of Europeans toward Negroes which he had observed in Europe. One passage deals with the Europeans' stereotype image of American culture. It starts with his lecture series in Rome on Emerson. One day the discussion digressed from Emerson to Michelangelo and to the Italian Renaissance. "The discussion had perhaps no direct connection with Emerson. But I became so interested that I did not try to interrupt it. Later I took a walk with a few students through the ruins of Forum Romanum, and we enjoyed ourselves quoting lines from Cicero and Horatius. Suddenly one of the students stopped and exclaimed: 'I never thought that an American could read and quote Cicero in Latin, or knew anything about cinquecento!'" Judging the passage in the context of Professor Nichols' article, the comment by my Danish friend is not justified. Even if it were, the friend was missing the whole point of Professor Nichols' article. His incorrect decoding was due to either connotative decoding or projection.

Subjectivism, introspection and projection as a mature orientation in the Danish culture combine with the sour-grape perception and result in the judgment that foreign intellectuals with articulate logical reasoning and factual knowledge are childish, immature and superficial. In this process, projection is involved not only as a content of the judgment, but also as the frame of the judgment. As we have seen, in the Danish culture, scientific curiosity, factual interest and zest for scientific and political opinion exchange reach their climax in adolescence. But since they develop in adolescence, they are of an immature nature, whereas, when developed in other cultures by people of a mature age, they are mature. Therefore, when judging that articulate logical reasoning and factual knowledge among foreign intellectuals are immature, Danes are not judging the mature logical and factual thinking of the foreigners, but are projecting into the foreigners the immature logical and factual thinking of Danish adolescents (which is immature for two different reasons which have to be distinguished: immature in terms of absolute quality; and immature if "immature" is defined to be "developmentally earlier" regardless of the absolute quality).

Another consideration is of logical interest: belief and practice reinforce each other. The belief that logical and factual thinking is superficial reduces the incentive of the people to engage in logical and factual thinking. The result is that they cultivate very little logical and factual thinking, and the accidental and sporadic logical and factual

<sup>11</sup> "Calibans Spogelse; Europa og Negeren," *Det Danske Magasin*, IX (1957), No. 4, 513-23. Translated from Danish by the author.



thinking that occurs is bound to be superficial. Thus the belief induces the practice which in turn substantiates the belief. The belief and the practice are in MMSCR.

Another aspect of the Danish culture which is in MMSCR with subjectivism, introspection and projection is the appreciation of the particular and the exceptional. General rules are discarded in favor of each individual case, and a general statement is disproved by pointing to an exception. A general statement is not interpreted to cover the majority of the cases while allowing for exceptions, but to cover all cases. Therefore a general statement is a priori wrong. The Danes do not think in terms of the general trend or of the synthetical connection of the whole, but in terms of each isolated case. A Dane would say: "Why should I try to understand other persons, other cultures or even things around me? I have not yet understood my own self." This tendency discourages statistical reasoning, systematic thinking and factual knowledge, and favors subjectivism. Subjectivism, on the other hand, is an epistemological individualism and results in the appreciation of the particular and the exceptional. It can also easily be seen that the appreciation of the particular and the exceptional is in MMSCR with the lack of dogmatism, flexibility of official procedures and lack of systematic procedure in thinking and organization. Furthermore, unsystematic thinking makes logical and factual thinking difficult, and favors subjectivism. Moreover, the appreciation of the particular and the exceptional is in MMSCR with the principle of non-interference and isolation.

We have mentioned earlier neurosis, self-glorification and cynicism as forms of maladjustment to restricted intellectual communication. Every society contains individuals with different levels of communicational potential and drive. High-communicational individuals suffer in a low-communicational society, and low-communicational individuals suffer in a high-communicational society. In Denmark, it is the low-communicational majority that finds the Danish culture pleasant and gratifying. Though there are only few individuals who are congenitally low-communicational, the majority, congenitally medium-communicational, becomes environmentally low-communicational. The few high-communicational individuals, however, cannot become environmentally low-communicational, and therefore suffer from maladjustment. (It should be emphasized that the clinical population often represents the maladjusted minority rather than the well-adjusted majority. In this sense the clinical population is anti-representative of the whole population and gives a counter-indication. If one should find a high percentage of intellectual individuals in the Danish clinical population, this would not be an indication of high intellectuality of the Danish culture, but would most likely be an indication of restricted intellectual communication outlet. Similarly, in a high-mobility society, the percentage of low-mobility indi-

viduals in the clinical population may be high. This may simply mean that the high-mobility society is an unhealthy environment for the maladjusted low-mobility minority. It may well be that the high-mobility society is healthy for the well-adjusted high-mobility majority. This is again a counter-indication. Another example of counter-indication is that in Japan, where there is a considerable lack of independent thinking, people read avariciously prefabricated ideas. The number of publications per capita in Japan is one of the highest in the world. In Denmark, the number of periodicals per capita is very high. The reason is not yet clear to me.)

There are three frequent types of maladjustment found among high-intellectual persons in the Danish culture. The first is neurosis. The second is self-glorification due to inadequate communicational outlet. The persons in this category may say, with all sincerity and friendliness: "I consider myself to be a pretty good psychologist," "I know more about people than the others do," "I am an experienced type, who can handle situations that others cannot," "I do not know whether your I.Q. is higher than mine, but . . .," etc. These claims are often justifiable in the restricted sociometric mobility and social horizon in the Danish culture. But these persons often lack in the diversity of interpersonal experiences found in other cultures which allow a higher sociometric mobility. The self-glorifying type feels confident and is friendly toward others. This type employs extensive projection of self (or of someone he knows) into the personality of others and is prone to hasty generalization.

The third type is the cynical. We have seen that this type often occupies key posts of the intellectual machinery and destructively criticizes intellectual attempts and incentives by others. The cynical concentrates on devaluating others and operates with an inferiority complex caused by the fear of being devaluated by others. He defends himself by attacking everyone he meets. He criticizes the personality of others rather than the contents of their statements. His criticisms are often directed on non-existent faults of others. This is the type which is most noisy and conspicuous in the intellectual domain. It discourages healthy growth of intellectual activities. We have seen that this type drives other persons into the refuge of subjectivism. By so doing, it further stimulates growth of cynicism in other persons, and the cynicism perpetuates itself.

We have also mentioned that *diskussion* in the Danish culture is aggressive, antagonistic and often cynical rather than enlightening and constructive. This is another example of belief and practice reinforcing each other in MMSCR. The belief that a discussion is aggressive and antagonistic discourages a healthy growth of constructive discussion, and the discussions that occur tend to be aggressive and antagonistic.

This in turn creates the belief that intellectual communication is aggressive, unpleasant and impolite. Expression of feelings, thought and opinion is therefore aggressive, unpleasant, impolite and childish, and has to be avoided. This brings us back to *blufærdighed*, with which we started our analysis.

We have examined the intricate interrelationships among the various aspects of the Danish culture in terms of the concept of multilateral mutual simultaneous causal relationship, and seen how, compared with an analysis based on only unidirectional causal relationship, this examination improved our understanding of complex phenomena such as cultures.



By **TRACY THOMPSON**

## Conscience

It would be pleasant  
 To sit by the fire with your legs stretched out,  
 To live according to the great ideal  
 (Here, alas, reality)  
 And never, as you sip your drink,  
 Be compelled to think  
 About your loyalty  
 To a metaphysical reality.  
 But even the sun,  
 That pagan good,  
 Burns up the better of us,  
 Reaching to the heart,  
 And we often find ourselves  
 Struck  
 With an angel's wing or a devil's dart.  
 Better to live the simple life,  
 Better to be whole.