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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

# ADAPTATION VERSUS FUSION THEORY IN THE EXPERIENCE OF RETURNED LDS MISSIONARIES

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

L. Clark Callahan
Norman, Oklahoma
2002

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ADAPTATION VERSUS FUSION THEORY IN THE EXPERIENCE OF RETURNED LDS MISSIONARIES

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION....1
Theoretical Descriptions....3
Adaptation....3
Fusion....6
Theoretical differences....9
Research Justification....18
Outline of the Study....20

II. DESCRIPTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW....22
Defining the Phenomenon....22
Intercultural Research....27
Intercultural Communication Studies....28
International Communication....30
Culture Shock and Reentry....34
URT/AUM....38
Systems Theory....40
Fusion....42

III. METHOD....46
Application of the Method....50
Research Questions....51
Sample....52
Subjects....52
LDS Culture and Missionaries as Subjects....53
Participant Selection....58
Instrument and Analysis of Results....59

IV. RESULTS....62
Survey Results....62
Demographics of the Survey....62
Survey Findings....63
Fitting In....64
Cultural Lapses....66
Wanting to Return....67
Personal Change....68
Lasting Consequences....69
Tests of Difference....70
Deculturation....71
Acculturation....76
Reentry....78
Psychological Adjustment....80

Data Concerning Research Questions....83
Extraneous Factors....84

V. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS....87
Reentry....94
Psychological....95
Assimilation....96
Time....97
Mental Illness....99
Theoretical Comparisons....99

VI. CONCLUSION....108
Weaknesses....109
Extension for Future Research....123

VII. REFERENCES....129

VIII. APPENDIX (Survey)....149

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

This dissertation investigates the outcomes of "theory-making" in communication scholarship, as well as many underlying assumptions surrounding intercultural contact and functioning within it. This objective is challenging because of the differing views that have been ascribed to cultures and ways of studying them. Moreover, while almost every scholar would agree that culture is not a static phenomenon, there can be a temptation to make the study of cultures easier by assuming that it is unchanging, especially when investigating communication within and between cultures. Theoretical problematics such as this are noted and an identification and examination of them are at the heart of this work. This research draws upon individual actions, contacts, and experiences to test theoretical views of cultural contact. Although these contacts may be publicized through current global interaction, they are only one current example in a long line of encounters.

The movement of individuals from one cultural climate to another is nothing new, and neither is the attempt to demonstrate and explain that process. It is something that humans do naturally and has been occurring from the beginnings of recorded history. Information regarding intercultural contact can be found couched in ancient travel guides, historical missionary manuals, and historical guides for adjusting to differing cultures. The first efforts of human expression, whether writing in some form or artistic/spiritual representations, demonstrate the significant impact of contact with others. Reliefs from Neo-Assyrian sites, for example, display battles and other cultural contacts from about 1000 BC. Along with this contact were efforts

to explain differing cultures and how to function within those cultures. This type of focus can be seen, for example, in al-Biruni's 10th century *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, which offers cultural description of peoples and history.

There is a difference, however, in how contemporary scholars view cross-cultural contacts. Nietzsche identified the difference very succinctly, "Explanation is what we call it, but it is description that distinguishes us from older stages of knowledge and science. Our descriptions are better—we do not explain any more than our predecessors" (1974, p. 172). Increased technological reliance and cultural contact necessitate another look into current descriptions of intercultural contact and the way they are described.

Two of these newer, contemporary descriptions of intercultural contact are Gudykunst and Kim's Cultural Adaptation Theory and Kramer's Cultural Fusion Theory. Both theories describe the process of intercultural contact and its consequences for individuals. Both are informative and appeal to various groups of scholars. While Nietzsche may have been correct when he identified description as a major break with the past, this amount of description can also be a problem. When two theories describe the same process in differing ways, how should they be viewed or used? The following is an investigation of differences surrounding specific descriptions used in Adaptation and Fusion theories.

The purpose of this research is to critically compare Gudykunst and Kim's Cultural Adaptation Theory against Kramer's Cultural Fusion Theory. There are many ways that this can be done, as each theory can be used to bridge the span of general cultural contact. This span may include elements of the encounter such as

initial interaction, cultural learning, or exit, among others. However, this research will compare the theories based on one specific outcome of the intercultural encounter. This study will focus on what happens when individuals return "home" from living in a culture foreign to their own. It is hoped that this project will be beneficial in understanding or, in the case of theoretical application, reinforce current theoretical approaches.

## Brief Description of Both Theories

Before an analysis is undertaken, a justification of the research must be established. This necessitates a brief discussion of the two theories and a description of their main differences. From there, implications for the communication researcher can be advanced.

### Adaptation

Adaptation is a very popular topic of intercultural scholars. It is very functional and conforms to a social scientific model of communication efficiency. It is especially useful to outcome-oriented individuals, groups, organizations, and governments. In adaptation theory, a natural dichotomy exists between those who adapt and those who do not adapt, and the differences in the two can sometimes be pronounced. These differences become the backbone of the impacts of poor adaptation and the justification for the line of research. With that in mind, various researchers have investigated intercultural adaptation, with Kim probably being the foremost researcher in the area (based on published articles). The purpose in adaptation study is to describe the process of individual adaptation to a new or differing situation, explain what happens, and then control either one's own or

another's adaptation. It is a theory which advances a model of efficiency ("how best to...") in intercultural interaction. It is a prescriptive approach.

The adaptation process occurs when individuals travel from one culture to another, both in long term and short term encounters. Along with this movement, there seems to be a process adjustment and familiarization with the new situation. This adjustment has been labeled as socialization and several processes are identified as occurring (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). According to Gudykunst and Kim, these sociological processes form the foundation of communication investigations. They are enculturation, which is the learning of the culture; acculturation, which involves the process of resocialization; deculturation, which is the unlearning of the original culture; and finally assimilation, which is a state of high deculturation of the original culture and acculturation of the new culture. Communication is said to be vital to this process as adaptation occurs in and through communication.

The domain of adaptation theory is the interpersonal and intrapersonal with a focus on the psychological/sociological outcomes. This is important because adaptive experiences of individuals are faced in individual contexts, and is applicable regardless of the location of the encounter. The boundary conditions of the theory apply to those who have a primary socialization in one culture and move to another unfamiliar, different culture. The newcomer is at least minimally dependant on the new culture for meeting social and personal needs. This involves continuous, firsthand communicative interaction between the new participant and the established environment. The goals of adaptation theory are to describe the process of cross-cultural adaptation over time and to explain the structure of cross-cultural adaptation,

key factors that influence the degree in which individuals adapt to a new environment an unfamiliar culture, and cross-cultural adaptation based on the underlying assumption of linear causality.

Seven core constructs and definitions are contained in and are important to the theory. These include cross cultural adaptation (assimilation, acculturation, coping and adjustment, integration), the concept of the "stranger" (according to Kim, 1995, one of the most heuristic and parsimonious concepts for analyzing the social processes of individuals who confront a new and unfamiliar environment), the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic, communication competence, environment, individual predisposition, and intercultural transformation.

As is the case with most theories, adaptation adheres to a number of theoretical assumptions. The first is that humans have an inherent drive to adapt and grow. This drive is reflected in the human instinct to be curious and proactive in feeling efficacious. Adaptation, then, brings about a succession of changes within the individual which occur in the direction of increase in the complexity of an individual's structural and functional characteristics while maintaining his or her inner coherence and unity. Kim (1988) claims that cross-cultural adaptation occurs though communication. Adaptive changes in individuals continue as long as they are in a given sociocultural environment in which they encode and decode messages. In doing this, the communicator generates "information output" to the environment as well as generates meaning for the "information input" or internal feedback. All (non)actions and (non)events have continuous and pervasive communication influence. Finally, adaptation is a complex and dynamic process. It is a process that

consists of multiple dimensions and facets. Two of these, the internal and external facets, mutually influence each other.

Kim (1988) argues that an important outcome of stranger's adaptive transformation is psychological or mental health. An imbalance can occur between cognitive, affective, and operational communication competence. Wong-Rieger (1984) states that such an imbalance can result in maladjustment. The effect is negative self-image, low self-esteem, a feeling of alienation, and other unpleasant things. Thayer (1968, as cited by Gudykunst & Kim, 1997), believes:

> successful communication with self and others implies correction by others as well as self-correction. In such a continuous process, up-to-date information about the self, the world, and the relationship of the self to the world leads to the acquisition of appropriate techniques, and eventually increases the individual's chances of mastery of life. Successful communication therefore becomes synonymous with adaptation and life. (p. 352)

Because cross-cultural adaptation is applied to all forms of intercultural communication, it is seen as a major approach to investigating how individuals deal with others from differing backgrounds. From the above quotation, it is obvious that Gudykunst and Kim's approach to cultural adaptation is oriented to "effective" communication.

Cultural Fusion

In contrast with the above approach, Eric Kramer applies hermeneutic philosophy to the study of intercultural communication. He terms this approach fusion theory.

Fewer scholars have directly utilized this sort of approach in communication research. Most of the research regarding fusion theory involves its introduction and explanation (Kramer, 2003a, Kramer, 2003b, Isa & Kramer, 2003, Kramer, 2002a, Kramer, 2002b, Kramer, 2002c, Ikeda & Kramer, 2001, Kramer, 2000, Kramer, & Ikeda, 2000, Kramer & Ikeda, 1998). This may be in part because of its newness or perhaps methodological reasons. Whereas adaptation claims usage in interpersonal, organizational, group, and governmental contexts, fusion takes more of a philosophical approach to contact, meaning that its use may be hampered by its perceived "effectiveness." Fusion describes communication as a way of communicating a never static meaning, which can then be proven empirically. "Communication is an effort to coordinate. Agreement regarding the meaning of messages and contexts is essential to coordination and cooperation" (Kramer, 2002a, p. 11). There is no desired result or outcome in Fusion theory. Unlike the efficiency approach, the goal of the research is not "to discover the meaning of life, but to make life meaningful" (Kramer, 2002a, p. 8). What an intercultural contact or experience means to an individual constantly changes. For example, a foreign missionary's feelings toward the time spent in the foreign culture will always be linked with his or her feelings toward the religion. If sometime in the future he or she renounces that religion, the meaning of the time spent as a foreign missionary will also change for that individual. This then constitutes an integration which changes the past. From this perspective "positive facts" are hermeneutically challenged. Fusion is seen as a very complex process of making sense of cultural differences.

Fusion differs from adaptation in that it does not rely on efficiency as a goal, but instead borrows from thinkers such as Gadamer and Gebser to develop an explanation of the encounter that produces an endless integration and invention. Kramer states that, "According to the theory of cultural fusion, communication is a fundamentally creative process that generates a future that is never exactly like the past. Past communication and experience affects future communication and experience in a process of continual integration" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 15). In direct opposition to adaptation, Fusion respects the unpredictable, claiming that it is this element that makes intercultural encounters interesting.

The theory of cultural fusion attempts to express what happens in the human life-world. Again, this world is described as a complex process of invention and endless integration occurring through human interaction. Meaning for the individual is never finally agreed upon and never finished. It is constantly moving and changing with new experiences. Kramer writes, "...communication is a generative process in its own right which creates the future in unpredictable ways. Thus, discourse is creative of culture and expresses and ESTABLISHES values and beliefs that do not necessarily exist independent of communication nor prior to it" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 13). The individual in this sense also has an effect upon the environment. "One cannot read a text or inhabit an environment without having some impact: leaving traces. Even the most adapatable and passively malleable creature still constitutes part of its environment" (Kramer, 2002a, p. 23).

Fusion incorporates a number of theoretical assumptions. It argues against a Western bias. Language is viewed in a hermeneutic sense. Meaning is not found in

the labeling of a language system. It is not "coordinated or managed." Additionally, according to Gadamer, the hermeneutic horizon is never complete. "So the genesis of the foundation that enables communication is ever-present, not 'elsewhere' or 'elsewhen' as in prior cause or metaphysical imperative" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 15). Fusion deals with horizons of meaning.

Theoretical Differences

Although there are significant theoretical differences between many elements of both theories, this research will look on only one. This element is what happens when individuals return to their original culture from a foreign culture. This can be an exciting area of study. While there is a vast amount of literature discussing the process of an individual's emersion into a foreign culture, descriptions of the return are less evident. However, both of these theories have something to say about this return process.

Adaptation theory has as its tenets the concepts of acculturation and deculturation. Acculturation occurs when individuals, "become acquainted with and adopt some of the norms and values of salient reference groups of the host society. As acculturation takes place, however, some unlearning of old cultural patterns occurs as well..." (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). This unlearning of old cultural patterns is termed "deculturation." Through this process an individual has new responses that are adopted in situations that previously would have evoked different ones. According to this theory, when one adapts to a new cultural structure, there is an unlearning of original cultural habits.

Fusion theory takes a different approach to the process of reinsertion, and like adaptation theory, it is rooted in the way that one views the process of contact. Unlike adaptation, fusion recognizes that individuals can successfully navigate their experiences within the host environment and still not enjoy the process. This is a major difference between the two approaches. Kramer states, "In short, an adequate theory must disjoin 'happiness' and 'success' from brute behavior patterns" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 17). This can influence the reinsertion process. While an individual can perform naturally in a new setting and seemingly function appropriately, this does not mean that he or she has adapted, and specifically, it does not mean that he or she has lost original cultural competency. Kramer continues, "When they return 'home' at the end of the day, they reenter their original linguistic and cultural milieu with a sigh of relief" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 18). Fusion theory incorporates the concept of "plus-mutation," which claims that the past is never "extinguished, erased, exterminated, or lost. Instead, cultural change amounts to a process of addition. Wisdom grows and there is no substitute for it" (Kramer, 2002a, p. 9). "New capacities and abilities presuppose old ones" (Kramer, The 2002c, p. 27).

If the description used by adaptation theory is accurate, then the research data should show that individuals have some degree of difficulty reinserting themselves into their "home" culture upon return from successful adaptation into a host or foreign culture. This difficulty should conform to the theory's description of culture shock and the process of adaptation. However, if the fusion model is more representative, then the data should demonstrate that while there is a newness to the reinsertion, that reinsertion does not constitute a relearning of old ways/knowledge.

Previous cultural patterns should be remembered, at least as how they presented themselves upon departure (and as changed by new horizons). These patterns should be quickly recovered, perhaps nostalgically, and their meanings merged with past and present horizons. This process may or may not be a difficult one—the fusion approach is not concerned with this point. However, the process should conform to its description of integration. Cultural functioning continues from that point.

Foundational Differences

In addition to the differences mentioned above, there are a number of foundational issues concerning the two theories. These issues are not wholly based in the theories themselves, but are a part of a larger epistemological debate. Primary among these is the motivating force behind the research, or why the research is done, including the approach that they take toward the individual, the cultural environment, and the construction of meaning.

For those supporting the adaptation approach, identifying conflict in communication is the first step in the justification of the research. For there to be a value in a "how to," there must be a consequence of the "how not to." That consequence the inability to communicate efficiently—which inevitably leads to conflict and worse. Tannen (1993) has argued that "the devastating group hatreds that result in so much suffering in our own country and around the world are related in origin to the small intolerances in our everyday conversations..." (as cited by Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). Several efforts stand out. The first is the use of a control culture against which other cultures can be compared. Hence, western culture (scientific, progress, and efficiency oriented) can be seen as the dominant culture and

the one against which others can be compared. This is done by focusing on the process of the communication, not necessarily on the meanings involved in the communication. This tactic is manifested in the preponderance of research into cultural communication styles, or how the culture communicates. Once a culture has been identified as individualistic/collectivistic or high/low context communicators, for example, the process can begin on how to overcome these "problems." This approach justifies a dilemma, only to find value in its addressing the problem. A widely used example of this type of approach, one which constructs/magnifies procedural dilemmas, is the "stranger" approach ( originally developed by Simmel, 1908/1950; Wood, 1934; Schuetz, 1944; & Shack, 1979, incorporated by Gudykunst & Kim, 1997)[1], which can be seen as a hurdle over which competent intercultural exchange must leap. Other examples can be seen in the magnification of cultural characteristics (high/low context, cultural variability, value orientations, etc.).

A second logical effort is arguing that the negative consequences of inefficient communication snowball into nonproductive conflict. Once negative cultural aspects/outcomes have been identified, something must be done about them or they will continue to worsen, or at the very least inhibit "successful" intercultural communication. Some of these problems include stereotypes, anxiety, similarity assumption, cultural evaluation, and conflict management styles. Interestingly, many communication scholars have a different opinion from much of the research in language studies (including Mikhail Bahktin) who believe that for conflict to arise

[1] It is interesting to note that many of the sources used by communication scholars to justify the "strangers" approach are not specifically addressing communication problems, but are generally sociological in nature. This further strengthens the argument that researchers spend too much effort on the sociological consequences of communication. It is also where much of the need for intercultural communication study is justified.

some level of communication and understanding must be taking place. The impacts of miscommunication, where the problems are not corrected, include among others the rejection of the individual by the group. It must be noted that many of the social scientific consequences of faulty intercultural communication have interpersonal results. The collective effects will not be shouldered by the group, but will be felt by the individual alone. For adaptation theory, this includes every member of every culture, with an emphasis even upon the reader of the research. "...we become strangers ourselves and must undergo the same adaptation process ourselves as we move to an unfamiliar culture" (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 335). This is a very important point. The assumption is that if "you" do not follow these procedures (value this research), "you" will feel the effects of conflict/isolation personally, thus the negative consequences. Of course there are larger impacts as well. In justifying their approach to intercultural study, Gudykunst and Kim (1997) cite the 1979 Presidential Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies:

> ...nothing less is at issue than the nation's security. At a time when the resurgent forces of nationalism and of ethnic and linguistic consciousness so directly affect global realities, the United States requires far more reliable capacities to communicate with its allies, analyze the behavior of potential adversaries, and earn the trust and sympathies of the uncommitted. Yet there is a widening gap between these needs and the [North] American competence to understand and deal successfully with other peoples in a world in flux. (p. 4)

In this instance, the study of "efficacious process" is equated with national (possibly global) security and stability.

Regardless of the logical reasons for using it, confrontation is a dominant paradigm under which much research in intercultural communication falls. It is arguably the most widely accepted mindset of the field. This is true to the extent that work on intercultural transmission/contact is done from a perspective which values conflict management and the efficiency of communication processes (adaptation). While this may be an acceptable approach for those interested in "practical" outcomes of communication, it leaves a void in the description of the process and severely limits alternative approaches of study. Instead of working to identify the meanings and messages of communication communities, much research seeks to determine how one is best able to overcome the obstacles that face him/her in intercultural situations.

Those that view Fusion theory as the more viable alternative take a more cautious approach to simplifying the communicative process. These scholars feel adaptation theory is very nearsighted when it comes to views surrounding the individual and his/her environment. For these researchers, Gudykunst and Kim use their theory to promote western culture and they do it by stressing conformity to efficiency and production. In an effort to quantify adaptation, there has to be something to adapt to, or else no measurement. The stated goal is adapting, or becoming one with the environment/system. If everyone were to do this all would be very happy, presumably, because there would be no more cultural differences to get in the way. This is a very large presumption, but one that finds a lot of credence in Gudykunst's (Gudykunst, Nishida, & Schmidt, 1989; Gudykunst, & Hammer, 1988;

Gudykunst, Sodetani, & Sonoda, 1987; Gudykunst, & Hammer, 1987; Gudykunst, Chua, & Gray, 1987; Gudykunst, Nishida, Koike, & Nobuo, 1986; Gudykunst, 1985; Gudykunst, & Nishida, 1984, among many others) work on uncertainty reduction theory. This cultural sameness does not translate into equality (not to mention theoretical equality). Environmental power is unequally distributed. The best, if not only, way to eliminate cultural potholes is to eliminate all other thoroughfares, favoring the most efficient (such as the modern freeway). If everyone were to converge on the same freeway, efficiency would be maximized, conformity (political, economic, etc.) would be heightened, and policing would be much easier. The drawbacks are that there can be no more cultural sightseeing, problems become global, and unchanging vistas are boring (among others). The efficiency position as described by adaptation is seen as very egotistical and dangerous. It pits humans against the system, with the environmental system in control. "...instrumental rationality represents a profounder threat to human freedom than traditional class oppression" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 2). On the other hand, "Cultural fusion values the unpredictable and that which makes intercultural interaction interesting rather than redundantly nihilistic" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 16).

Sowell (1994) makes the point that environmental influences are not the shaper of groups' behavior and institutional decisions are not the arbiters of their fate. It is very easy for the social scientific approaches to favor the environment over the individual. This is because the environment is easily manipulated, much more so than the individual. Additionally, while the veneer may be shaped or polished by environmental factors (conformity only, including brute behavioral patterns in line

with Spencer) getting into the underlying meaning of cultural values, where life choices are set/made/experienced is a much more daunting task—one which purveyors of quick science are reluctant to undertake. However, it is one that is addressed through efforts to reeducate the cognitive, affective, and operational self. Additionally, Gudykunst and Kim's reliance on zero-sum environmental conformity and means-end linear rationality is not supported by many established thinkers such as Nietzsche, Weber, the Frankfurt School, Foucault and others (Kramer, 2002c).

It has been argued that for Gudykunst and Kim, the process of solving cultural problems necessitates the elimination of culture. Environmental hierarchy should be developed with the West at the top—hence a socio-cultural darwinistic structure that governs approaches to culture. And the goal is the control under the auspices of efficiency. The achievement of "THE" point of view is unencumbered by "this embodied world of emotional defilements."

What is pointed out by the critics of Gudykunst and Kim is their devaluation of the individual vis-à-vis his or her environment. Individuals do more than react, they make up/affect/shape the environment. While only focusing on an individual's process of "fitting in" Gudykunst and Kim fail to recognize his or her effect on/as the environment. When these outliers unite, their influence if amplified. There are numerous examples of individual and cultural contacts that have moved, molded, and shaped the supposedly dominant culture, and this is even true for western culture. Environments are not static, but are in a constant state of flux. U.S. culture is not the same as it was 50, 20, or even 10 years ago. Change is what makes life interesting and will continue to be a constant in human action. Cultural contact precludes

cultural adaptation, and as contact increases the viability of Gudykunst and Kim's adaptation theory decreases. Culture is always changing. "Adapt to what? The target is multifarious and continually changing because newcomers do not adapt but colonize" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 9). Thus, a critique of adaptation theory is that its misfortunate misnomer (adapt) is used by Gudykunst and Kim as a synonym for "conformity."

For Gudykunst and Kim, the (western) environment is never challenged, but it is the individual who must move to accept, regardless of personal feelings toward the environment. Each system or environment has its own way of rewarding and punishing, and it is not interested in the individual. The onus is then on the individual to accept or reject, but in so doing will harvest the outcomes of those decisions. Their view of social Darwinism assumes the highest form of evolution is the dominant (universal) culture. However, there is no empty parking lot of evolutionary niches waiting to be filled. There is not one single environment that is universal. Instead, "the organism (and its behaviors) is the niche..." (Kramer, 200b, p. 23).

The differences between the two approaches can be summed up as follows. Adaptation theory views the individual as reacting to environmental pressures. "Usually this adaptation is associated with major cultural gaps that occur as a result of strangers' relocation from one society or subsection of a society to another, as well as with changes in their social environments" (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 335). There is no questioning of the system and its control over the individual. When there is a problem in adaptation, it is not a problem of the system, only of the individual.

Individual action is then dominated by the culture/environment/system. Adaptation is efficiency based and is criticized as totalitarianism of administrative culture.

Cultural fusion theory explains "what happens in the human life-world as a complex process of endless integration and invention facilitated by human interaction" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 15). Hermeneutic horizons fuse differently with host environments. The host as well as the sojourner is altered by the contact. Additionally, individuals moving between cultures engage in cultural code switching to function in each setting. Ricoeur argues that, "every question concerning any sort of 'being' is a question about the meaning of that 'being' (Ricoeur, 1981).

Why this Research?

With a theoretical background in place, research justification can now move toward this research's approach. This research uses the experiences of foreign missionaries to test the descriptiveness of Adaptation and Fusion theories. Individuals who have experienced cultural contact firsthand appear to be the best subjects to use in such a study, especially if the subject pool includes individuals with a wide variety of cultural contacts. When an analysis of intercultural contact is confined to one cultural setting—contact between the United States and one other culture or even comparisons between two United States cultural contacts—it can be very difficult to establish which outcomes were the result of American culture and which were the results of contact with a specific outside situation. However, as the analysis shifts to an international focus, then patterns which occur in country after country can be distinguished from single examples of intercultural contact.

Sowell (1994) states that there are two ways of focusing on intercultural encounters. These include internal causation and external causation. "Both must be understood, though current tendencies in the 'social sciences' are to emphasize the external and ignore the internal or cultural characteristics of people, or even to condemn the very attention paid to internal characteristics" (p. 227-228). The real question, though, is not how much external or internal factors influence cultural communication, but how are environments and cultures conceived? While this is not the main purpose of this dissertation, it is hoped that its result will offer some insight into this question.

This research is valuable for communication studies, and especially intercultural studies, because it compares competing intercultural theories and their descriptions of intercultural contact. Necessitated by increased technological advancements and personal movements, these theories should be compared. Martin and Nakayama (2000) argue:

> As international migration increases and more and more people travel back and forth among different cultures, the lines between adaptation and reentry becomes less clear. More and more people are living on the boarder—making frequent trips between countries, or living on the border psychologically between bicultural identities. The trend calls for a new view of cultural boundaries and adaptation. (p. 225)

This study, then, should have some meaning to those interested in cultural contact, as it compares the old with the new. More importantly, however, it addresses the

underlying motivations of why intercultural research is conducted and ways in which it could be viewed in order to be most descriptive.

## Outline of the Study

This dissertation will consist of six chapters, including this introductory chapter. There are two main sections to the dissertation. The first section discusses theoretical issues, methodology, literature, and the unit of analysis. The second section attempts to offer results of the study and then uses them to compare adaptation and fusion theories.

This first chapter is an overview of the dissertation. The topic is introduced, along with the need and significance for the study. The theories are discussed in general terms and the study is organized.

The second chapter discusses the literature review and seminal studies. This chapter closely examines the contributions of these studies. Both adaptation theory and fusion theory are discussed in more detail, along with their major contributions and how they have been used. A detailed discussion is offered as to how each theory conceptualizes the process of an individual's returning into his or her original culture. The differences found between the two are identified and used in chapter three as justification and support for the research questions.

The third chapter discusses method, data, and sampling. It also argues for a hermeneutical focus. A description and discussion of hermeneutics is offered. Missionaries for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) will be advanced as a unit of analysis. An informative background will be given on what these individuals do in the foreign culture, as well as how they are taught to function

within it. A discussion of missionary cultural immersion is critical to understanding how they function as adequate research participants. Research questions are posited. Sampling and issues of method are treated.

The fourth chapter offers the data and results. Using the method described in chapter three, this chapter identifies the findings, as well as justifies and explains how they were derived. This chapter is an account of the methodological process, and the information identified here is used to respond to the proposed research questions.

The fifth chapter is an analysis of the data found in chapter four. This data is used to analyze and draw conclusions about adaptation and fusion theories. As far as the data allows, the research questions are treated and discussed in detail. Outcomes and consequences of the data are offered.

The sixth and last chapter is the concluding information to the study. It discusses what this project means to the study of cross-cultural movement, and ways in which its findings can be used or extended. Weaknesses to this study are advanced; together with ways in which these can be avoided in future research. Lastly, concluding remarks and the value of these types of investigation are offered.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Description and Literature Review

Primarily because of changes in technology, global interaction has increased, necessitating a greater focus on intercultural communication. Because of this, scholarly research into the phenomenon has and continues to increase. With a subject this broad, it is only natural that there are a myriad of directions in which researchers may go to investigate the phenomenon. As the purpose of this chapter is to discuss the literature surrounding the phenomenon, this area must first be defined. Next, ways of investigating it will be discussed, along with major research contributions. Third, adaptation and fusion theories will be placed within these contexts. Last, their conceptions of returning home will be described.

## Defining the Phenomenon

Although intercultural contact has been occurring since the beginnings of recorded history, and for all we know before that, recent developments in several areas have spurred attention to and study of the phenomenon. These changes have come in the form of technology and its effect on communication (e.g. the steam locomotive), increased opportunities (perhaps pressures) for personal mobility, global economics, and the emergence of multinational and multicultural organizations. These have combined to form a situation requiring understanding of humanity's functioning in the transformation into the global city. Hence, there is increased interest in intercultural communication.

Several ways of approaching the phenomenon have been attempted. Naturally, this begins with attempts to define communication. This is not such an

easy task. Like other manifestations of human action/consciousness, communication is difficult to pin down. Add an extra nebulous adjective "intercultural" or "cultural" and the difficulty increases. That does not mean that scholars have not made an attempt. There seems to be nearly as many definitions of culture as there are people studying it. O'Hair, Friedrick, Wiemann, and Wiemann have noted, "In 1976, Dance and Larson listed over 100 definitions of communication published in the previous 20 years. If we attempted such a list today, we would likely double that number" (1997, p. 7). Disagreements on the definition of communication stem from deviations in how the nature of communication is conceived. Because of its complexity, there are a variety of elements that can be emphasized. One researcher may privilege the receiver's response, another on the transmission of symbols, while yet others may focus on combining the receiver's response with symbols chosen by the sender, or emphasize the intentional nature of communication (Infante, Rancer, & Womack, 1997). Research that attempts to appeal to larger audiences usually has broader definitions. For example, "communication occurs when human manipulate symbols to stimulate meaning in other humans" (Infante, Rancer, & Womack, 1997, p. 8), or it is "a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed" (Carey, 1989, p. 23). In part to overcome some of the hesitancy to define communication, scholars have developed a list of characteristics of the phenomenon. Included in this list are: (1) communication is a symbolic process, (2) communication is a social process—it is learned, (3) communication occurs on an individual level—individual interpretation and culturally bound, (4) communication is transactional and involves the sharing of meaning, (5) a medium is needed, and (6)

intentionality as an approach to its study. This last element, intentionality, continues to be debated and is characterized by the question, "Can we not not communicate?" How individual researchers modify and use these characteristics is open to her or his own interpretation. It is clear, however, that each interpretation is based on one's view of the phenomenon. Scholars develop differing definitions of communication because they view the nature of communication differently. This is unavoidable, especially when one mixes methodological preference into the discussion.

Next, "culture" and "intercultural" must be defined. Both of these terms, like communication, can be very vague. These differences are not only found in communication. Various ontologies have their own view of what constitutes culture. For example, in a definition that was widely popular in anthropology (and one that has been transferred into communication), Clifford Geertz stated that culture "denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men [sic] communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (1973, p. 89). Alternately, psychological research also has it approach to culture as witnessed through its definition. Hofstede, a social psychologist, (1984) defines culture as the "interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group's response to its environment" (1984, p. 21). Here the emphasis is on human response to stimuli, facilitating the study of human action from a quantitative perspective. "They [social scientists] contend that cultural patterns of thought and meaning influence our perceptual processes, which in turn influence our behavior" (Martin & Nakayama, 2000, p. 57).

However, those who take a different a more qualitative approach to the study of human action tend to define it more broadly. Phillipsen (1992) argues that:

> Culture...refers to a socially constructed and historically transmitted pattern of symbols, meaning, premises, and rules...A cultural code of speaking, then, consists of a socially constructed and historically transmitted system of symbols and meanings pertaining to communication—for instance, symbols "Lithuanian" or "communication" and their attendant definitions; beliefs about spoken actions (that a man who uses speech to discipline boys is not a real man); and rules for using speech (that a father should not interrupt his daughter at the dinner table. (p. 7-8).

Here the meanings and rules are paramount in the understanding of the symbolic interaction.

Many definitions have cultural action and meaning at the heart of their descriptions.

> ...we define culture as the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. (Samovar & Porter, 1997, p. 12-13)

These characteristics have been grouped into three main categories by many researchers.

> ...cultures may be classified by three large categories of elements: artifacts (which include items ranging from arrowheads to hydrogen bombs, magic charms to antibiotics, torches to electric lights, and chariots to jet airplanes);

> concepts (which include such beliefs or value systems as right or wrong, God and man, ethics, and the general meaning of life); and behaviors (which refer to the actual practice of concepts or beliefs). (Almaney & Alwan, 1982, p. 5)

In this same line of thinking, Sowell (1994) emphasizes the intersubjectivity of the social experience. "A particular people usually has its own particular set of skills for dealing with the economic and social necessities of life—and also its own particular set of values as to what are the higher and lower purposes of life" (p. 1). This intersubjectivity and commonness culminate in the formation of civilization, a theme advanced by Huntington (1996):

> A civilization is thus the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species. It is defined both by common objective elements, such as language history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people. (p. 43)

Finally, Gebser (1985) uses Toynbee (1954) in describing the evolution of culture. "...cultures emerge through superimposition, and ...their effectiveness and existence correspond to the optimal demands placed upon them by the given world situation and survive as long as they are capable of responding in accordance to such demands" (p. 432). For Gebser, culture is conceived as multilayered and couched within the communication process.

The term "intercultural" naturally inherits the baggage of "culture." It too has divisions based on ontological perspective and methodological investigation, and they are fairly consistent with one's view of culture. Additionally, this term has been

broken down into subsequent categories by Gudykunst (1987). The three major categories are intercultural, cross-cultural, and international. Intercultural is defined as a covering term describing communication between people from different cultures or subcultures. Cross-cultural is a subset of intercultural and describes the specific interaction between people from different cultures. Last, international communication refers to the study of mass communication within and between different cultures. Some of the other subsets include intracultural communication, intraracial communication, developmental communication, and interethnic communication.

Quite naturally, many of the theories used in intercultural communication were first developed in anthropology. Perhaps foremost among these contributors was Hall (1959, 1966, 1976, 1983). His early work was based on the efficiency model, as it was directed toward global (Cold War, Peace Corp, government, military, and business) politics of the time. Since the early days of modern interest, this focus has been expanded in areas of language, mass media, intercultural conflict, and cultural knowledge areas.

## Research in Intercultural Communication

Based on the above definitions, there are two primary and overarching divisions of intercultural communication. They are intercultural and international communication. The following, then, is a brief history of each area's modern conception and mainstream research.

Intercultural Communication Studies

As mentioned earlier, the main focus of current intercultural scholarship is driven towards making participants interculturally competent. However, there is a differing of opinion to what this means. The compromise in most studies is to approach intercultural competence as perceived competence. As long as individuals in the process perceive the communication as effective then progress has been made. One popular approach to analyzing the nature of intercultural competence has been to break it down into its subcomponent parts. Many researchers accept that there are three component factors: motivation, knowledge, and skills (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Conflict is seen as a motivating force driving some types of communication. In typical dichotomy form, the opposite is affinity or romantic motivations, complete with its application and the grafting in of interpersonal scholarship. Again, the most widespread theoretical approach to mainstream intercultural communication research is the process of adaptation. Mainstream intercultural research focuses on the individual and the process he or she goes through in adaptating to new cultures. This process involves enculturaltion, acculturation, and deculturation (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997).

What many communication researchers have done to legitimize the study of intercultural communication is to cite the numerous examples of intercultural or intergroup conflicts that are presently prevalent around the globe, yet their analysis seems to always focus on an individual level. Condor and Brown (1988) have argued that while intergroup conflict is a collective phenomenon, it still requires a "model of man" research model. Research that does attempt an analysis of intergroup conflict

(most information is in the form of description) applies, for example, conflict styles (swiped from interpersonal literature) or the individual-collectivism dichotomy (Leung et al., 1990). Of course, the majority of the research on ethnic differences stemming from United States researchers seems to have little motivation except to reveal the procedure and its application; how can others best communicate with us, or, worst still, what do "we" need to do to best communicate with "you"—a very disingenuous process when viewed in light of the ethnocentric approaches many United States researchers take. While some may take exception to this criticism, one needs simply to recognize the amount of comparative studies that contrast world cultures to the United States. United States culture, for many researchers, has become the control group, the null hypothesis for intercultural study. There is little thought given to what Gadamer terms the "historical consciousness" of intercultural communication study. The defense to this is that the majority of intercultural research is being conducted in the United States and therefore must use, at least in quantitative research, what subjects are at hand.

In summary, current mainstream intercultural communication research focuses on the individual and the concepts and results surrounding individual association with unfamiliar cultures. The most popular theoretical application, adaptation, then, becomes the process based upon individual responses as if they were static; hence, the use of a control culture—the United States. Intercultural communication should be seen as the movement of meaning, not of individuals within and between modes of meaning.

International Communication

Similar to intercultural investigation, international communication research stresses mediated message movement among/between geopolitical states. In this light, a definition, explanation, and brief discussion of its research will be offered here.

Stevenson (1996) has noted that as an area of study, "international communication has no identifiable substance, body of theory, or specific research methods, only geography" (p. 181). Although different groups take different stances on what international communication should look like, Stevenson (1992) has discussed several important issues for the study of international communication. He has noted geographical differences in research. American communication research, he states, more often than not concentrates on the individual and group, while Europeans usually focus on national and global levels of analysis. The former focuses on data analysis and the later with little emphasis on empirical tests. Additionally, there are four subsets of international communication research (Stevenson, 1992). The first, foreign studies, focuses on single-country or culture studies and is heavy on description, light on explanation. The second, comparative studies, contrasts communicative behavior of individuals or institutions within one culture or nation with equivalent behavior in another. Third, international and intercultural studies investigate the flow of information between cultures. Again, it can be argued that while many studies give lip service to this principle, few really focus on the flow. The last, global studies, examine sweeping theories of global hegemony, seeing the planet as a unified system.

Additionally, Stevenson argues for a three dimensional approach to the study of international communication.

> These three dimensions form a cube whose sides define the field of international communication in terms of (1) a focal variable, which is some aspect of communication, (2) a unit of analysis that can range from the individual to the entire globe, and (3) the delineation of national or cultural boundaries that, in most studies, provide the basis for comparison or explanation. (1992, p. 549).

Some of the main issues that have interested the international researcher include three broad concerns: national development and social change (Rostow, 1960; Lerner, 1958; Schramm, 1964; Rogers, 1995), Western dominance and English as a global language (Hachten, 1992; Merrill, 1995), and news flow (Negrine & Papathanossopoulos, 1990; Tunston & Palmer, 1991).

According to many scholars, the four founding fathers of mass media in the international context were Harold Lasswell, Paul Lazarsfeld, Kurt Lewin, and Carl Hovland. Greenburg and Salwen (1996) have identified these four individuals and their research as setting the agenda for mass communication and international theory and research (see Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Hovland, Lumsdaime, & Sheffield, 1949; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944).

Harold Lasswell explored the influence of communication in shaping world opinion. The studies of propaganda and mass communication stemmed from his efforts (Greenberg & Salwen, 1996). Lasswell was an American inventor who established the five W's of mass communication: Who says What in Which channel

to Whom with What effect. He posited the stimulus response view. This view supposes that any powerful stimulus, such as a mass mediated message, can provoke a uniform response from a selected audience. Much of the research and many of the conclusions from this view were applied to answer questions of war participation. Specifically, this view was compared to governmental management of opinion. His first work, entitled *Propaganda Techniques in the World War* (1927) was the first representation of mass communication in the international sense. Eventually he proposed the theory that because modern society had lost its village-like relationship, it could not be united by the "war drums." "The name of this new hammer and anvil of social solidarity is propaganda." The focus on the stimulus-effects approach can be seen in this theory—consistent with early 20th century theoretical frameworks. Lasswell's work, along with others, has been the foundation for stimulus-effects theories such as hypodermic needle/magic bullet theory.

A second major influence on the theoretical approach to international communication was Paul Lazersfeld. It was Lazarsfeld who first introduced an outline of a new field of research on international communication. Based on research conducted on the 1940 Presidential election, Lazersfeld, with others (Katz, Berelson, Gaudet), concluded that there were many variables that might intervene in the mediated process, which equated to less reliability in the stimulus-effects model. Their goal was to look for intermediary elements that have a direct impact on a message's effect. This mediated effect included information that had been offered to participants in Lazarsfeld's study from others. Based on this, Lazarsfeld and Katz (*Personal Influence*, 1955) introduced the two-step flow theory. This theory claims

that information flows in two stages. First, individuals who do pay close attention to the media receive information, and second, they use their positions as opinion leaders to influence others. With this approach, the idea that there are stimuli with direct effects was replaced by certain types of communication that refer to certain types of problems, addressing certain types of people who find themselves in certain conditions, produce a certain type of effect (Berelson, 1949). This latter approach is much more flexible than Lasswell's. Other initial studies in two-step flow include Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1952; and Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1954.

Kurt Lewin was the first to coin the term "gatekeeping." He used this idea to illustrate how widespread social changes could be effectuated within a community. Each communication channel has an entrance, called a gate. Human gatekeepers determine movement from one channel to another. The key to this theory is understanding that positive and negative forces surround the gates. His main example was food distribution, but he believed it could be applied beyond.

Hoveland is noted for the development of the sleeper effect (Hovland, Lumsdaime, & Sheffeld, 1949; Hovland & Weiss, 1951). The sleeper effect asserts that over time receivers remember various parts of a message without remembering the source. Hovland has also been instrumental in the advancement of mass communication persuasion theories (Hovland, Janis, & Kelly, 1953).

Many of the above approaches to mass mediated and international messages served as a foundation for future theoretical developments. Perhaps the most important extension of these ideas for the study of international communication is found in diffusion theory. But it is not limited here. Based upon the above

information and intercultural study founded upon international media research, it is not difficult to understand the reliance that many intercultural scholars have upon the same methodologies employed in mass media research. This dependence can be extended to theoretical underpinnings (efficiency) as well. Human action is sometimes mistakenly equated with mediated message movement, efficiency, and social engineering.

Culture Shock and Reentry

The return to the original culture has been described in the same manner as initial "culture shock" with a foreign culture. Various authors have written about culture shock (Adler, 1975; Bennett, 1977, 1998; Berry, 1992; Clifford, 1992; Furnham & Bochner, 1986, 1989; Lewis & Jungman, 1986; Oberg, 1960; and Taft, 1977, among many others) and have primarily defined it as a feeling of disorientation or discomfort due to the unfamiliarity of the environment. The coiner of this term, Oberg, views this process much like a disease. It has its own symptoms and progression through the "sickness" that hopefully culminates with a full recovery into the new cultural situation and a feeling of being at home within it (Oberg, 1960). This metaphor, however, is not universally accepted.

Cultural communication scholars, including Martin and Harrell (1996), note that this adaptation[2] is even more difficult than initial culture shock because it can sometimes be very unexpected. Those who have traveled back home, including students (Martin, 1986), business people (Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992), and Native Americans returning to their tribes, have reported problems readjusting.

[2] This term is not used here in the Kim and Gudykunst sense, but in as a general explanation of the process of contact.

This is because coming home is expected to be easy (Martin & Harrell, 1996). Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) add that reentry difficulties can be more pronounced a short time after arrival than upon immediate arrival. The sojourner does not usually expect any culture shock upon returning home. Scholars have identified a W-curve process individuals go through upon reentry. They can be elated to return home, experience culture shock in finding it is not as expected, and then gradually adapt to the new situation from there (Storti, 1997). Two main reasons have been cited for reentry difficulties. First, the sojourner is changed through contact with another culture. This includes language, customs, dress, and worldview. Second, the context of the original culture has changed. Physical, linguistic, social, religious, familial, and technological changes may have occurred during the sojourner's absence. Additionally, views and responses from others toward the sojourner may have changed as well, perhaps based solely on the fact of the sojourner's perceived experience and change. Jansson (1975) explains this very succinctly:

> In most cases, there is a shift in values, a portion of "history" that is not mutually shared, and behaviors which differ from those expected within the social system. The re-entrant is in the minority and is in a sense, defined by those who remained in the group. (p. 136).

Various authors have discussed this difficulty of returning home (Adler, 1981; Austin, 1983, 1986, 1987; Brewster & Pickard, 1995; Britten, 1993; Campus Crusade for Christ, 1980, Clifford, 1992; Colburn, 1987; Conversation about Re-entry, 1994; Downie, 1976; Eakin, 1979; Hegde, 1998; & Oboler, 1995; Sorti, 1990, 1997).

The literature concerning, discussing, and applying principles of culture shock and the reentry process is quite lengthy and diversified, yet the commonality in it is a focus on intercultural interactions. To be understood in context, this varied research must be divided into categories. Steeped in the efficiency mode, much research directed toward business professionals offers suggestions for functioning well in foreign cultures. These guides can be directed toward functioning in the United States (Althen, 1988; Lanier, 1996; Wallach & Metcalf, 1995) or other cultures, such as those in Europe (Hill, 1994, 1997; Miller, 1987; Mole, 1997; Richmond, 1995), the Middle East (Nydell, 1997), and Asia (Collins, 1987, 1992; Condon, 1984; Fieg, 1989; Wenzhong & Grove, 1999). There are guides especially for women (Axtell, Briggs, Corcoran, & Lamb, 1997; Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas, 1992; Janssen, 1989). However, the majority of these works offer a general overview of business transition or an encyclopedic approach to cultures (Blohm, 1996; Copeland & Griggs, 1985; deKieffer, 1993; Kohls & Brussow, 1995; Nohria & Ghoshal, 1997; O'Hara-Devereaux & Johansen, 1994; Osland, 1990; Roman, 1993, 2001).

Closely related to business literature is other specialized research. These works can be directed toward missionaries and other religiosos or their families (Echerd & Arathoon, 1989; Niebuhr, 1951; O'Donnell, 1987; Walters, 1991, 1996), military/governmental movement and familial concerns (Eakin, 1988; Military Family Institute; U.S. Marine Corps.; Wertsch, 1991), or simply general guides for moving oneself, adolescents, or family to a foreign culture or back (Albright, 1986;

Fassler, 1973; Gerner, Perry Moselle, & Archbold, 1992; Giardini, 1993; Kalb & Welch, 1992; Roman, 1998; Shames, 1997; Storti, 1990).

A third category, while not directed specifically at professionals, offers general advice for the non-specialized sojourner. These works usually emphasize intercultural "effectiveness" (Abe & Wiseman, 1983; Adler, 1974; Barna, 1997; Bochner, 1982; Brislin, 1981, 1982, 1987, 1993; Christiansen & Young, 1996; Church, 1982; Dinges, 1984; Hall, 1959, 1976; Hall & Hall, 1990; Hess, 1994; Kluckhohn & Strodbeck, 1961; Kohls, 1984; Landis & Bhagat 1996; Lewis, 1997; Matsumoto, 1996; Ruben, 1989; Seelye & Seelye, 1996; Storti, 1994; Summerfield, 1997; Weeks, Pedersen & Brislin, 1979).

## Theories and Literature Review

While a cursory description of the theories was offered in the first chapter, it is now necessary to discuss these theories in more depth. This includes support and extension for them.

Cultural adaptation is a process through which individuals adjust to and finally feel comfortable in a new environment (Kim & Gudykunst, 1988). Kim (1997) describes intercultural adaptation as a joint, interactive venture in which the strangers and the host environment co-influence the "dynamic and fluctuating experiences of stress, adaptation, and growth" (p. 413). However, despite this co-influential process, many sojourners live in a host society as "strangers" (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, Simmel, 1950/1908). This strangeness supplies a great deal of stress and uncertainty to the individual (Gudykunst, 1995).

There are two overarching theoretical models influencing the look of adaptation theory. Not surprisingly, these models have been championed by Gudykunst and Kim individually. These models are very important in understanding the construction of adaptation theory.

URT/AUM.

William Gudykunst is the primary researcher responsible for extending Berger and Calabrese's (1977) model of uncertainty reduction theory and applying it in the intercultural setting. Seeking to explain the processes by which individuals communicate particular messages, especially in initial interactions, Berger and Calabrese (1979, 1975) introduced Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT). One of the main assumptions offered by this theory is that when strangers meet, the primary goal is to reduce uncertainty within the relationship. Additionally, these individuals will attempt to increase predictability of the behaviors of one another in order to make sense of the environment. Under this theory, humanity's primary need to reduce uncertainty accounts for much of the initial behavior in the beginning phases of interaction with strangers (Grove & Werkman, 1991). URT falls under the law-governed approach to theoretical development; seeking to explain, predict, and ultimately control those actions occurring during the beginning stages of relationships. "Our hope is that through subsequent research and theoretical extension, the model can be used to make predictions about and explain interpersonal communication phenomena which occur later in relationships" (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 99).

Uncertainty reduction theory has enjoyed most of its popularity in the realm of intercultural analysis during the 1980's. Gudykunst and others have been the major proponents of the idea, and have utilized URT to illuminate cultural phenomena in relation to initial interactions (references for this program have been supplied in chapter one). Using URT as a foundation for analyzing intercultural encounters is justified because people from different cultures are likely to have an even higher amount of uncertainty about each other than individuals from the same culture. Gudykunst labels the URT approach to intercultural communication anxiety/uncertainty management theory (AUM). He openly acknowledges the influence that URT has had in his work:

> I selected URT as a starting point for my work for several reasons. First, the theory intuitively makes sense to me. Second, URT includes concepts (e.g. similarity) that allow a relatively straightforward extension from interpersonal to intergoup contexts. Third, the focus on predictability in URT was consistent with my conceptualization of culture (i.e. our culture provides us with implicit theories that allow us to predict others' behavior). Fourth, I thought that predictability of behavior (e.g. reducing uncertainty) was an important issue in communication across cultures. Fifth, I could see direct applications of URT to improving the quality of communication. (Gudykunst, 1995, p. 1).

Anderson (1996) explains framework of uncertainty reduction theory:

> Uncertainty reduction theory falls within the same paradigmatic framework as dissonance theory. Thus, it is marked by the material criterion and its

complement in scientific realism, as well as by determinism, reductionism, the attribute model, the absence of agency, foundational empiricism, and formal logic underlying the social science genre of writing, and an expected silence on questions of value. (p. 205).

Systems Theory.

Kim is responsible for championing the systems theory in relation to intercultural interaction. A general systems framework conceives things in terms of wholes and interrelated parts; organisms, populations, ecologies, societies, etc. Fundamentally, general systems theory is a science of organizing and organization. Since communication is the means through which human organizing and organization occur, it occupies a central role in general systems thinking in human interaction. It presents a way of thinking about living things--as systems. Systems use metabolism of matter-energy and metabolism of information. There are three assumptions of systems theory in intercultural communication: (1) human communication is not a one-way process, but a multidirectional phenomena with no distinguishable beginning or end; (2) what is normally thought of as perfect or effective communication implies the control and manipulation of a receiver of messages by the sender; and (3) the individual and the reality he or she experiences are codetermining phenomena.

The use of systems theory can be traced back to Aristotle, who in his work *Politics* identified the political system as composed of smaller systems. This way of organizing our world is not old or out of date. Language is replete with examples of how we structure our world, and many examples point to a systems perspective. The modern use of systems theory as a methodology dates back only fifty years or so.

The pioneers of this view were von Bertalanffy, Wiener, Shannon, Weaver, von Neuman, and Morgenstern. Although all of these were influential in systems theory, only Bertalanffy was directly concerned with systems theory *per se* (Ruben, 1972). In 1947 Bertalanffy wrote, "there exist models, principles, and laws that apply to generalized systems or their subclasses irrespective of their particular kind, the nature of the component elements, and the relations or 'forces' between them." The postulate is a new discipline called General Systems Theory" (as cited by Ervin Laslow, Perspectives on General Systems Theory). General systems theory is meant to be a transdisciplinary approach to human study. There are two types of system approaches: (1) observation of regularities, and (2) observation of systems, and then reduction to reasonable size and optimal degree of generality. The level of analysis and one's conception of system structure are key to the definition of system structures.

There are different processes of systems. Living systems are open systems that have continual exchanges with the environment. Metabolism is the continual inflow and outflow, the building up and breaking down of systems components. Metabolism can be matter-energy or information. Much of the research in human communication focuses on information systems (see Levi-Strauss and sign systems). Closed systems function in isolation from their environments. They are predictable in that they behave according to the second law of thermodynamics. Feedback systems contain various characteristics, including feedback, input/output, goal, control, negative feedback, morphostasis, and morphogenesis.

From a communication perspective, the suprasystem and the environment of an individual can be thought of as the ecosystem. Living systems organize themselves metabolically and informationally with their environment and other living systems in it. Biological and social existence depends upon this. Comprehension, significance, and meaning are outcomes of participation in communication systems. Using communication systems, humans create reality, the mind by which they know it, and therefore themselves. Interrelatedness and codeterminancy of mind and experienced reality can be viewed as structural residues of the participation in the processes of the individual communication system. Organization in these systems occurs through interaction between individuals, whereby significances are created and maintained. These systems are mutually causal. Kim's (1977, 1995, 1997) work in this area is probably the most pronounced in intercultural communication.

Fusion

As explained in chapter one, Fusion theory views the process of adaptation differently.

Kramer (2002a) argues that:

> We are never a "blank slate." In fact, a person cannot integrate or understand new information except as it makes sense to her existentially; meaning as an embodied consciousness that is historically, culturally, sexually, economically, and so forth situated. However, the encounter with the Other can change us and thus all previous prejudices and limitations are threatened with necessary adjustment as the new is integrated. We reevaluate previous values and convictions (truths). We change. And this dialectical process

spirals on though time such that as we change from previous experience, we integrate the ever-present "new" never in the same way. (p. 9).

In direct opposition to the cultural learning approach taken by Gudykunst and Kim, fusion theory views the process of integration as a "plus-mutation" process, meaning that one need not "deculture" oneself in order to functionally "fit in." Kramer contends that unlearning, while it may be desirable to "control freaks" is demonstrated as impossible. Rather there is a fusion of horizons and the individual becomes more complex. The past is never unlearned.

Adaptation theory views the return home much in the same way as the initial encounter with a foreign culture. "Further, the concepts of culture shock and transition shock have been extended to include reentry shock, or the emotional and physiological difficulties and individual may experience on returning home overseas" (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 358).

For them, culture shock includes reactions to new situations and cultures. It is a violation represented by a challenge to one's primary socializations.

> At the heart of these "shock" phenomena is the lack of fitness between strangers' subjective experiences and the commonly accepted modes of experience in the unfamiliar surroundings. Everyone requires the ongoing validation of his or her experiences, and being unable to meet this basic human need can lead to symptoms of mental, emotional, and physical disturbance. (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 358).

The most emphasized of these disturbances seems to be psychological. Kim (1988) states that an important aspect and outcome of the adaptation process is

psychological or mental health. Gudykunst and Kim (1997) justify this approach by citing research into the area of maladjustment and mental health (Berry & Kim, 1987; Dyal & Dyal, 1981; & Hurh & Kim, 1988). When a person does not adapt properly, a variety of negative psychological effects can occur, such as negative self-image, low self-esteem, feelings of alienation, dissatisfaction with life and the host environment, and others. There is usually a small group of people who are unsuccessful adaptors and who experience these psychological challenges and others of the host environment. "Yet most people who struggle and find their way into more benign circumstances are likely to 'weather' the challenges, and achieve an increasingly healthy psychological integration" (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 352).

Because adaptation necessitates both acculturation (learning) and deculturation (unlearning), the movement of individuals in the psychological sense produces forms of stress. Even more revealing, Kim (1988, 1995a, 1995b) uses this psychological integration (reaction to cultural stresses) as the very basis for subsequent adaptation.

She argues that experiences of stress prompt adaptation because, when the environment continues to threaten internal conditions, individuals by necessity strive to meet the challenges by adding to the existing system of ideas and reconfiguring it into a new set of coping abilities (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 361). This process builds into a dynamic which Kim terms the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic. This dynamic is "fueled" by continual and cyclic tension between psychological stress and adaptation.

The key to understanding Gudykunst and Kim's adaptation theory and how it relates to reentry is understanding the stress-growth dynamic. Adaptation fails when this dynamic breaks down.

Kramer critiques this approach:

> According to Gudykunst and Kim (1997) if a person or group is not willing to do this [fit it or adapt], they will fail to achieve "functional fit" within the new world system. This is so because they do not perceive systems as mutable. They do not consider how the system is changed by the influx of immigrants, for instance. According to Gudykunst and Kim's (1997) vision, they will be "maladjusted," "immature," "unbalanced," even "mentally ill," and therefore they will not be successful and will have no future unless they conform in a strictly unidirectional fashion (pp. 355-366). Instead of "evolving" in an upward-forward progression," such uncooperative people are "retarded" or worse, going down and backwards (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 363).
>
> (Kramer, 2002b, p. 7)

# CHAPTER THREE

## Method

This dissertation uses hermeneutics as a means of analyzing participant data. According to Stewart and Mickunas (1990), hermeneutics is an application of the phenomenological approach which has been gaining in popularity and usage. Hermeneutics is the concern with speech and writing, and with the methodology of interpreting texts. Hermeneutics views texts as means for transmitting experience, beliefs, and judgments from one context to another. What will follow is a discussion of hermeneutic phenomenology and how it can be applied.

Hermeneutics as a method is a very old idea. The term "hermeneutics" stems from the Greek god Hermes, the messenger god, whose task it was to carry messages to the mortals. Palmer (1969, p. 13) notes that. "The various forms of the word suggest the process of bringing a thing or situation from unintelligibility to understanding. The Greeks credited Hermes with the discovery of language and writing—the tools which human understanding employs to grasp meaning and to convey it to others" (as cited by Stewart & Mickunas, 1990). The use of hermeneutics as a method can be traced back to Aristotle and his treatise *On Interpretation*. Aristotle used hermeneutics as a tool for interpreting texts.

The next main usage for hermeneutics was in religious contexts, primarily as a way to garner non-literal interpretations from scripture. This approach, however, did not recognize the various levels of human consciousness. The dark side of hermeneutic interpretation was described by modern thinkers such as Nietzsche,

Marx, and Freud (Hoy, 1978, p. 2). "...the surface clarity of consciousness thought masks hidden struggles at deeper levels of consciousness" (p. 2).

Hermeneutics has been identified as a way of doing phenomenology. "A theme present in phenomenological philosophy fifteen years ago that has emerged with considerable force as an application of phenomenological approaches is that of hermeneutics as a way of doing philosophy" (Stewart & Mickunas, 1990, p. 161). A hermeneutic phenomenology moves beyond a description, to a reduction to genuine elements, to an interpretation of the experience (Lanigan, 1992). This type of investigation begins by showing the basic mode of understanding and how it structures the experience of reality (Hyde & Smith, 1979). Stewart and Mickunas (1990) have noted that the word phenomenology comes from two Greek words: *phainomenon* (appearance) and *logos* (reason or reasoned inquiry). Hence, phenomenology is a reasoned inquiry that discovers the inherent essences of appearance. In his *Formale und transzendentale Logik* (1929, 1969), Husserl discussed the effort of examining essences of appearance "genetically," for example, by tracing the origins of constituted objectives and "sedimentations" of the acts from which they spring (Spiegelberg, 1994). Additionally, Spiegelberg notes that Husserl's phenomenology was not meant to offer a chronological construction of our world, but to determine the structural order according to which the constituting acts are built upon one another. Phenomenology is the study of how meanings are constructed in the course of experience. It is important to note that the culture determines consciousness structures. Husserl has demonstrated that the object and

the subject cannot be logically separated. The awareness of an object or idea cannot exist without an awaring subject and vice versa.

Bernstein (1983) has argued that an appeal to truth is absolutely necessary in order to distinguish between philosophic hermeneutics and a historicist form of relativism. Additionally, one must be historically consciousness (Gadamer) in order to achieve truth in hermeneutics. Finally, Bernstein (1983) argues that an appeal to truth that goes beyond the historical horizon and, through a fusion of horizons, is essential in the distinction between the philosophic hermeneutic and a historicist form of relativism. Deciphering communicative action in describing experiences, is both possible and advantageous for communication studies.

As stated above, this research strives to compare what is known about cultural reentry (adaptation and fusion theories) with empirical experiences. Using hermeneutics for this investigation necessitates a more philosophical approach. The purpose here is not to offer a complete philosophical explanation of cultural contact; researchers far more skilled have studied and continue to study that. This research takes a different approach. While efficiency approaches to cultural contact abound, there are a comparatively small number of mainstream cultural identification studies. Fusion theory offers a chance to compare the "how to" theories to the "how" theories. As Nietzche and those who follow him profess, "the world is not a problem to be solved, but rather a place to be explored. The goal is not to discover *the* meaning to life, but to make life meaningful (Kramer, 2002a, p. 8).. It is the process of recognizing the transparency of the phenomenon that is the goal. Gebser (1984) notes that without this recognition, humans will not be able to understand themselves. A

hermeneutic phenomenological investigation is the best way of exploring intercultural contact and applying it to current studies in intercultural communication.

Stegmuller (1977) states that hermeneutic approaches share the idea of the hermeneutic circle. This is the realization that the understanding or definition of something uses attributes which already presuppose an understanding or a definition of that thing. This is viewed as spirals or circles of understanding which arise in interpreting one's own language, a foreign language, an observed action, in confirming a theory, and in distinguishing between background knowledge and facts. The result of these circularities is the raising of questions for hermeneutics regarding the grounding and validity of understanding. Heidegger (1965, p. 194) agrees, "Any interpretation which is to contribute to understanding, must already have understood what is to be interpreted."

Anderson (1996) states that, "The place of analysis is the life world and the first task of hermeneutic methods is to enable the analyst to access meaning-producing sites. He goes on to state that, "Communication scholars employing a hermeneutic science approach seek to test their theories in the light of daily events, in commonly-placed situations, framed by the interaction of their participants" (p. 45). Gadamer argues that the purpose of hermeneutic process is not to reveal some final, unchangeable truth, but to discover one's blind prejudices. In this light, this method is perfectly positioned to illuminate the theoretical differences and acceptance of these two intercultural theories.

Application of the Method

In order to use hermeneutics as a method for culture study, the research must take steps to assure a quality investigation. Because of its phenomenological relationship, the hermeneutical investigation takes many of the same approaches as the phenomenological: learn as much as possible about the phenomenon, bracket metaphysical assumptions, use free imaginative variation, and use comparison of invariant properties.

Gadamer (2000) states, "There is undoubtedly no understanding that is free of all prejudices, however much the will of our knowledge must be directed towards escaping" (p. 446). Gadamer achieves truth through the method of "questioning and research," a truth that is revealed in the process of experience (2000, p. 447). It should be noted that Gadamer's concept of hermeneutic awareness does not supply a method for understanding (Hoy, 1978). He argues that one should acknowledge what is, rather than to start out from what one thinks should be the case or what one would like to be the case. One should then become aware of and then suspend one's personal or cultural principles in regards to the investigation. An *a priori* assumption that excludes any specific phenomenon from exploration simply because of the conflict with presumption is an unwarranted prejudice. For example, many medical researchers are beginning to recognize the benefits of prayer and humor. Until recently, however, empirical presumptions have limited recognizing their value in patient recovery. Because these metaphysical prejudices severely undermine investigation, they must be identified through self-reflection and then set aside.

Next, a comparison must be made to discover the basic invariants of any phenomenon (or text). It is the imaginative free variation of any cultural phenomena that uncovers any number of invariant properties. These invariant properties are essential in the makeup of what that phenomenon is. These invariants can then be compared to any other phenomenon and their discovered invariants. Kramer (1992) states that these types of comparison of invariants typically yield relational characteristics. The recognition and comparison can be applied across very diverse phenomena. For example, while many different types of hammers have many different shapes, they can, for the most part, all be recognized as hammers by their relationship with what they strike. The same can be true for cultural phenomena and events. The ability to identify disparate activities or experiences and find commonalities applied to their meanings is important to this second step of method. This research accomplishes this comparison by placing the data (invariant properties) discovered by analyzing individual missionary responses against the descriptions of Adaptation and Fusion.

## Research Questions

The theoretical differences between adaptation theory and fusion theory suggest research questions for this study.

RQ1: What elements are evident in reported experiences of reentry?

H1: There is a significant difference in the reported reentry experience between adaptation and fusion theories.

RQ2: If there are significant differences, which theory do they favor?

## Sample

### Subjects.

There are several different groups of people from which a sample of participants could be taken. Most intercultural research identifies various types of migrant groups. This main criteria for classification of these groups is agency in the movement. There are two types of involuntary travelers. These consist of long-term and short-term refugees. According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his [sic] nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself [sic] of the protection of that country." As of December 2001, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that there are around 22 million people who can be classified as refugees.

A second group of migrants are those who voluntarily move into another country or culture. These include sojourners, who travel across boundaries for a limited time and for a specific purpose. Immigrants also move voluntarily, and stay for lengthy periods of time in the new environment. It is important to note however, that many immigrants may feel that they have little choice in the move, as economic, political, and social reasons may play a large part in the decision. Martin and Nakayama (2000) point out that most of global movement occurs between one developed country to another, not only from developing countries to industrialized nations. According to a 1993 United Nations Fund Report, of the 100 million people

living outside their country of origin, only 20 to 30 million moved to the United States or western Europe.

In order to conduct the above comparison of theories, as well as understand/verify what happens when individuals return from a secondary culture to the one of their origin, the sample must consist of individuals with the following characteristics. First, they must have traveled to and returned from a different cultural context. Second, some sort of interest in functioning in that culture should have been evident in their stay. Third, they should have remained in that culture long enough to gain an understanding of it, but length of time is not a great concern as both theories claim to be descriptive in short term and long term encounters. Finally, these individuals will have returned to their original cultural context. Based on these criteria, several groups come to mind, including international study abroad students, business and corporate personnel, technical assistant and other professional workers, military personnel, and missionaries who travel abroad for a certain period of time. While all of these groups could be helpful in the comparison, foreign missionaries provide an intriguing study group based on the above criteria. The data source for this dissertation comes from returned LDS missionaries.

LDS Culture and Missionaries as Subjects

Established in 1830, the LDS church (or Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) has always been a missionary church. This is one reason for its dramatic growth (church membership is currently around 11 million). The purpose of the missionary is to represent the church and convert individuals to it. Over the last ten years or so, more emphasis has been given to representation. Missionaries are

required to complete a certain amount of community service hours each week. Having a lay clergy, the missionary program also serves a leadership development function. In its missionary system, self-governance is valued. There is only one "mission president" who usually has two councilors who oversee anywhere between 100 to 150 missionaries, in some cases spread over very broad geographical regions. Hence, missionaries are divided into districts, zones, and finally the mission. Missionaries fulfill governing duties themselves, reporting up the hierarchy to the mission president (e.g. district leader, zone leader, assistants to the president). Missionaries are usually held in high regard by members and leaders in the church. They are usually fed regularly by the members where the situation permits. In this way they develop strong ties with both members and perspective members.

Expectations for work and success can be very high for missionaries. A small percentage of missionaries end their missions early. While reasons for this may vary, some may include sickness, disciplinary action, unwillingness to conform to the foreign culture, or any number of personal reasons.

Foreign missionaries seem to fit smoothly into the subject criteria. These missionaries are individuals (between 19 and 25 years of age) who spend between 18 months and two years in a foreign country (this time is called a "mission"). There are a small number of missionaries that are "couple missionaries," meaning they are a married couple who wished to perform a mission. This usually occurs upon retirement. Participants in this study were selected from United States citizens traveling abroad, although there are individuals from foreign countries who have come to the United States (and other foreign countries) to fulfill their "mission." At

the end of their designated time, they return home. They are not allowed to stay in the host country unless their parents retrieve them. Secondly, these individuals are trained to be "native" and, as much as possible, to absorb the culture. Individuals who are not willing to absorb the host culture have the option of returning home, an option which few take.[3] It is assumed that the absorption of culture will lead to increased relationship/commonalities with church members and citizens of the host culture, thereby facilitating the missionary agenda. Cultural and linguistic training begins before the individual leaves the United States in a school called the Missionary Training Center (MTC). There are 15 training centers worldwide. The largest of these centers is in Provo, Utah, and houses somewhere around 2,700-3,000 missionaries at a time. Missionaries stay in the MTC anywhere from three to eight weeks, depending on language requirements. Third, missionaries continue in their positions as missionaries for either 18 months for women or two years for men.[4] They are not allowed to leave their assigned area. They cannot travel beyond geographical boundaries, making their emersion into the host culture even more intensive. Additionally, the only contact with their original culture is through letters. LDS missionaries are only allowed to call home twice a year, once at Christmas and once on Mother's Day. Reasons for this include the limiting of external distractions and the avoidance of longing for "home." They cannot watch television and are generally absconded from all mass media. Finally, upon returning to their original culture, these individuals are encouraged to resume socially appropriate activities for

[3] There is no data disclosing the number of missionaries returning home early because of culture shock reasons. It is assumed that while many of those experiencing difficulties may return home, there are others who just "stick it out."

[4] Fifteen percent of the missionary workforce is comprised of females, 85 percent are male.

those of their age, including work, school, and social activities. How the returning visitor responds to this reinsertion is a dividing point in the two theories and deserves further investigation. Returned missionaries seem to supply the appropriate ground for such study.

Missionaries are more detached from their home culture than military, business, or educational sojourners. Because of this, LDS missionaries are perhaps the best type of subjects. They (and others in similar cultural settings) are integral to testing intercultural theories.

One study that relates very much to this dissertation is Dunn and Hefelfinger's (1987) thesis on role transition and the adjustment period of returned LDS missionaries. Though sociological in scope, this work provides an excellent springboard. Using this study, reentry investigation can be focused a bit further. For example, Dunn and Heffelfinger identify three areas of concern: (1) role changes occurring upon leaving missionary work and returning to "normal" life, (2) the levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in various areas of the returned missionary's life during this transition period, and (3) the identification of factors which increase the difficulty and stress of the transition period.

Respondents in this study were asked to rate the difficulty of transitioning between missionary and returned missionary life. Forty-five percent rated the transition extremely difficult, 7.54% rated it as average, and 47.5% saw this change as easy or extremely easy.[5] Respondents identified the most troubling aspects of the change as culture shock upon returning home, career and school decisions, and

[5] It should be noted that the sample in the study consisted of 40 respondents, with only 22 percent having "served" their missions in a foreign culture. This both might explain the disparity in adjustment and provide further justification for this study.

maintaining religious activity. Most of the related problems, though, seem to be cultural in nature, indicating that the foreign missionaries had the most difficulty. Further problems indicated in the study include shock at the economic disparity between foreign (lesser developed) cultures and the United States and changes in customs, attitudes, climate, foods, and the primary language spoken. Additionally, these individuals self-reported that they had an increased understanding and tolerance for people, increased maturity, increased spirituality, and an increase in knowing how to "love people."

Perhaps the most telling element of Dunn and Heffelfinger's study, and the most appropriate here, was the identification of emotions felt upon the return home. Responses included the following: happiness, culture shock, fears, ambivalence, emptiness, loss, nervousness, relief, excitement, and missing the mission. These responses indicate that there is indeed a period of stress involved in the return home. This dissertation takes the research a step further and compares these stresses to theoretical models.

Because of their unique experiences, returned missionaries have been the focus of varied research. Some of these include returned missionaries and church activity (Card, 1978; & Madsen, 1977), the missionary experience ( Perry, 2001: Shepherd & Shepherd, 2001), missionaries and cultural change (Wilson, 2001; & Knowlton, 2001) transition into "normal" social roles (Brigham, 1978; Covey, 1970; Dunn & Heffelfinger, 1987; & Sellars, 1971; ) and even intercultural value orientation (Bradford, 1986). Knowlton (2001) has also identified a growing interest among anthropologist in looking at missions and missionizing as important social and

cultural organizations and processes (see also, Aaby & Hvalkof, 1981; Alves, 1985; Bastian, 1985; Camaroff, 1985; Camaroff & Camaroff, 1986; Flora, 1976; Harding, 1987; Knowlton, 1982, 1988; Lewellen, 1978; & Stoll, 1991).

Subject selection.

This research uses returned LDS missionaries as survey respondents. One way of identifying subjects would be to travel to every LDS meetinghouse asking for returned LDS missionaries. This, however, would be impractical for logistical reasons as well as the fact that some missionaries may not have continued to attend church service. The LDS church does not keep official lists of returned missionaries that are available to the public. Another location in which to find returned missionaries is the Internet. One website in particular is especially helpful. The site www.mission.net is a location for returned LDS missionaries to meet, stay in touch, and share information on their missions. This website contains links to all current and past mission localities, as well as alumnus information, including email addresses. The information supplied in these links is voluntary; some links do not supply email address, but offer direct emailing.

The site www.mission.net contains information on over 350 missions. Of these 350, around 300 are found in countries with dominant cultures foreign to many U.S. subcultures (including Mormon hotspots such as Utah, Idaho, and Arizona—although missionaries depart from areas all over the Unites States). Some of these missions are newer than others (for example those in Eastern Europe), meaning there are not as many alumni. Others have been around for over a century with a very large alumni database. A very conservative estimate of the pool of subjects would be

somewhere around 20 to 30 thousand individuals. While this may seem like a large participant pool, it should be noted that over the past several years alone there have been hundreds of thousands of LDS missionaries, although not all of these foreign. There are currently over 60 thousand individuals engaged as LDS missionaries worldwide.

Participant selection.

Participants were selected based on a solicitation made to bulletin boards at www.mission.net. Permission was obtained from the board administrator, and a posting made asking for subjects. Certainly, not everyone responded, but the number of respondents was 55. This offered enough of a selection for analysis. Respondents were given a survey questionnaire asking open-ended questions regarding their experiences.

Instrument and analysis of results.

The responses to the surveys were returned with the answers in narrative form. These responses can be viewed in two separate ways. First, they can be seen as manifestations of culture; as individual experiences symbolic of and expressions of culture and cultural learning. Second, participant responses can be seen as textual expressions. In either light, a hermeneutic approach seems appropriate for cultural topics. Dilthey suggested that the approach to a study of culture should be a hermeneutic one.

The instrument used to measure the phenomena was an open ended survey. The survey consisted of seven different lines of questioning (see appendix). Each was designed to reveal personal experiences in the reentry process, including major

areas of distinction between the theories. These areas included general impressions of the reentry experiences, problems identified upon reentry, self-reported strategies for "fitting in," the degree of willingness to return home, cultural lapses in the reentry process and their consequences, the degree of personal cultural change recognized by the individual, and lasting characteristics of the move. One may notice that there is psychological motivation behind many of these questions. This is necessitated by the way the two theories describe psychological health in the process. Other questions are aimed at reentry factors such as predisposition to return home and the environment upon the return.

There were two primary goals involved in testing the responses that had to be completed before the two theories could be compared. First, these responses had to be analyzed hermeneutically, identified, and placed in categories. Second, responses falling into adaptation and fusion categories were compared with each other to determine if there were significant differences between the observed frequencies for the tested variables and expected frequencies. If there were differences between the theories one would expect to find significance in the comparison. These nominal categories were then analyzed for significant difference through a chi-square test in order to test the hypothesis. In this way responses to the questions were categorized and then determined whether to be statistically significant or not. The chi-square tests consisted of noting the observed frequencies of each category, calculating the expected frequencies for each category, and then comparing the two. In this study, there was an assumption that there are no differences between categories (reflecting the null hypothesis). Variables identified in this process and used to compare

differences in the two theories surround issues of deculturation, acculturation, reentry, and the psychological process.

Once the comparison was completed, the two theories could be compared based on findings of significant difference. In this way RQ2 was addressed.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## Results

The sample consisted of 55 respondents, all of whom were returned full-time missionaries for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

## Survey Results

The purpose of this study was to (1) describe the reentry process experienced by those who return to the United States after living abroad and adapting to another culture, (2) compare these descriptions against each other to test for significant difference, (3) determine which theory's description, adaptation or fusion, is most represented in the process of cultural reinsertion, and (4) identify any extraneous factors which may influence the presence of one or the other theory's description. This chapter begins the process necessary for the ultimate outcomes of the study. The data surrounding missionary experiences upon return to the home culture was analyzed using the hermeneutic approach described in chapter 3. This process included a bracketing of metaphysical assumptions, the use free imaginative variation, and the use comparison of invariant properties. These experiences are then placed into categories and analyzed using chi-square tests in order to answer the hypothesis. The following are the data identified through this approach.

### Demographics of the Survey

Four main demographic variables were identified as important to this project. These variables included age, sex, the foreign culture visited, and the data that the individual returned to the United States. Of the 55 responses collected for this project, the range varied dramatically, which was somewhat unexpected but

pleasantly surprising. The average age of respondents was 38, with a median age of 46, and a mode of 26. The sex the respondents was 72% male, 28% female. This is somewhat close to the overall percentages of the missionary population (85% male, 15 % female). No significant findings were discovered in relation to sex. There was a wide variety in the foreign cultures visited by these missionaries. These cultures, as defined by their geo-political boundaries, included Argentina, Austria, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, England, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Spain, and Taiwan. As one might expect, the dates of return to the United States correlate with the age of the respondent. Most subjects performed their mission at about 19-21 years of age. This is not entirely true, however. Several respondents were "couple missionaries," or mission presidents. These individuals may have completed more than one mission and in different cultures and localities. The most recent respondent returned in 2001, the most dated in 1959. The mean return year was 1985 with a median of 1980 and a mode of 1997.

## Survey Findings

An attempt was made to uncover the characteristics of cultural reentry by focusing on the individual's experience from a number of directions. First, respondents were asked to offer general impressions of their return home. It was hoped that this would provide a logical beginning point from which to evaluate the phenomenon. The related experiences varied widely and some did not even answer the question in the way it was originally conceived—which turned out to be very interesting.

The responses to this first question in the survey fall into four main categories. First, many respondents (33) had little or no trouble adjusting to the return home. These individuals reported being able to fit back in easily. There were no symptoms of culture shock or reentry (physiological, psychological, etc) and the seemed to enjoy the return home. They even reported looking forward to it. Second, there was a grouping of respondents (15 ) who reported having minor problems. These individuals identified uncomfortable issues, but nothing serious enough to warrant distress. The majority of these issues centered around family and friends. Specifically, respondents recounted how their family and friends had changed, or how they were perceived differently by them. A third group of respondents (7) identified the return home as completely troubling. This process was described as "traumatic," "feeling lost," "weird," and "alien." This third group of respondents returning home reported greater identification and affinity with the host culture. They were both eager to return home, but were willing and even desirous to remain for anywhere from three months to year longer. A last group reported serious feelings of distress and desire to return to the foreign culture permanently. None of them had attempted this, however. Most of the responses with this theme were younger respondents, not one over 25. Older respondents, however, may have reported some level of difficulty, but none to the degree of the younger respondents.

Fitting Back In

> One respondent sums up the many of the responses to this question quite well: I remember when I was a kid, this missionary returned from Chile. All he could talk about was Chile this and Chile that. It got so annoying that my

friends and I all started calling him "Wolf Brand" after a type of canned chili. We all thought it was pretty funny. However, when it came time for me to return I remembered that and swore that I wouldn't be a "Wolf Brand." I tried very hard to fit right back to life like any normal 21 year old. I was a little embarrassed because I did slip up a several times and speak Spanish or do strange things. It was harder than I had imagined. After several months, though, I recovered.

Almost every respondent reported at least some amount of difficulty fitting back in to the home culture. There was a wide variety of strategies for doing making his adjustment. The most positive responses acknowledged the need to become involved socially. This included re-acquaintance with former friends or making new ones, and dating—something they had not done for two years. The LDS culture was used by many as a support network. Returned missionaries socialized with others in their same situation and relied on church social groups such as institute (church sponsored organization and education for young adults). Most respondents also reported starting school or work directly upon the return home. Interestingly, several of the older respondents reported no trouble fitting into U.S. culture and normal home life (two respondents reported being drafted for Vietnam upon returning home). All respondents identified cultural priorities like work, school, and family/friends as the means by which they progressed through the reentry process. Additionally, respondents identified the social skills learned in the foreign culture as beneficial for readjusting.

Cultural Lapses

Responses here were very interesting. Again, the variance in responses can be equated with overall impression of the return. There were those (32%) that reported no lapses at all (another 59% reported some lapses, but nothing that was distressing). However, the responses were not all negative. In fact, many of the responses displayed a wide range in how one may relapse into a foreign culture. These included simple problems, like the affinity for certain foods or customs, and progress to more serious and potential relapses as explained by one respondent:

> About two years after I returned home, I was driving from a restaurant up the canyon late in the evening, and realized I was driving on the wrong side of the road (correct side for England). I had driven about one mile when I realized what I was doing. I had driven in England for about six months.

Only about 9% of respondents reported significant cultural lapses.

All of the responses in this study identified cultural characteristics in relation to cultural lapses (food, language, driving, etc.), and no one reported any actual negative results from them. By far the most prevalent topic was language. Many returned missionaries felt that they could not express themselves like they wanted (included issues of slang). Many respondents mentioned this in general terms, but it was also noted in the religious context specifically. This was especially true for those who identified themselves as speaking only the foreign language for the two years or 18 months of their missions.

Ways of dealing with these lapses focused on negating them or encouraging the underlying cultural causes. One strategy was to strip the foreign culture out, to fit

in and be more like those around them. Another strategy included a grasping or attempt to hang on to favorite elements of the foreign culture. Many respondents reported not being able to keep these cultural elements with them. Most gave up. This was described as an advantage and disadvantage. It was disadvantageous in the sense that familiarity with the foreign culture was not as apparent. It was advantageous because many returned missionaries felt uncomfortable speaking on certain subjects in English (religion being the more prevalent) and wanted to be able to express themselves as they did before. One respondent recognized this problem early on and functioned accordingly, "I was proud of my heritage and the fact that I was an American. I didn't try to go native as many of my colleagues did."

Wanting to Return

This question sought to determine to what extent the respondents were happy about returning home. Almost all respondents identified feelings of wanting to return home. Most were excited about the prospect of seeing family and friends and getting back to "normal" life. However, this did not correlate with feelings of dislike for the host culture. While most were excited to leave, most mentioned that they would have stayed longer if they had been asked. A small minority of the respondents (3) claimed that they did not want to return at all and would have rather stayed. One respondent writes:

> No, I wasn't excited to come home at all. I was happy to be able to spend time with my family once again and be able to see all my nieces and nephews and be able to go out on our regular family vacations. If I could, I would have stayed another year.

Personal Change

The next question on the survey sought to determine how individuals would self-report how they were changed by living in another culture and if that change had something to do with the process of reinsertion. Regardless of age, gender, or place of service, the common theme running throughout this question was feelings of gratefulness, warmer feelings for home. Participants reported that the time spent in another culture offered a deeper appreciation of home and its advantages. These included economic, political (democratic), social, resource based (what you could get in the U.S. versus other countries), and prosperity. This theme was found throughout every participant response. This wider view of the world and cultures in an important finding. While they acknowledged greater appreciation for home, these individuals simultaneously reported becoming more intercultural. They felt that they had changed to the degree that they saw the world differently than the world around them. "It made me realize how parochial my home community is. I was less impressed with those who would judge and put down ideas from other parts of the world." Another respondent noted:

> I developed an appreciation of different lifestyles, culture, and people. I learned that you can be very happy without all of the material things and creature comforts that we have here. I became very comfortable walking into unfamiliar circumstances with people I didn't know and getting to know them.

This occurred to such a degree that one respondent wrote that his experience "caused some resentment toward the narrow minded views in Utah." Another returned missionary writes, "I have learned to be patient with the somewhat narrow

views of our people." This reported change in the way individuals view the world and place in it was even extended to religious organizations. A subtopic in this category was a greater appreciation and understanding of "different backgrounds and religions." The data show that individuals recognized that there had been a change in them, but that the change was not an either-or type of change, but an expansion of their intercultural horizons.

Lasting Consequences

The final question in the survey focuses on issues of cultural permanency. Are there lasting consequences to intercultural encounters that would help to distinguish the two theories? This is a repetition of the multicultural theme. Most respondents reported having a greater lasting impression of others and their worth. A good representation of this is in the account of one returned missionary, "It opened my eyes to other ways of living. Ours is not always the best in every aspect. I like 'foreigners' much more. For a while, I think I liked them more than people from my own culture." Other identified lasting consequences included humility, ability to adapt to difficult situations, appreciation of other types of food and dress, love for home country, love of other cultures and peoples, and most prominent, the learning of another language. Responses in this section were expected to be more culturally based. The number of general descriptions (such as "learned to love other cultures") is a bit surprising; not in the sense that one would not expect this to happen, but that there should be other culturally-specific elements that one would expect to stick. Of the above list, the most prevalent is also the most culturally specific. Several respondents discussed the nature of language in the returning process. These

identifications describe the lack of word availability in English or the use of language and speaking it. Perhaps the most poignant of these descriptions is also the best example:

> It also taught me to be what I was and not to try and become that which I could not become. A good example, after 35 years of using the German language I learned, it was still very clear that I was not a native German. The same went for the fine 55 year old lady that taught me German in the language school. She had been in the United States for over 35 years and spoke perfect English which is more than I can say about my German. However, she still carried an accent that was obvious and it was very easy to tell she was a German. Her clothing, mannerisms, and presentation was American, but as soon as she opened her mouth the "th" in my name didn't come out that way.

Test of Difference

Having established a base from which to categorize responses, they can now be used to test for differences between adaptation and fusion theories. These tests center around issues of deculturation, acculturation, reentry, and psychological response to the return process. It should be noted here, that many of these categories were defined according to how the theories described the cultural contact process. Responses were placed into these categories according to how the participants responded generally. In all cases survey questions were designed to correspond with each comparison. In some cases participants reported elements of both theories, but were placed in one or the other category based on how they responded overall. An effort was made to establish a sharp categorical distinction between the two theories,

which was sometimes difficult. This was especially true with the acculturation and psychological variables.

Deculturation

As acculturation takes place, Gudykunst and Kim (1997) describe the unlearning of old cultural patterns. These new cultural patterns are used in situations which would normally have evoked other responses. Gudykunst and Kim (1997) identify the dynamic between acculturation and deculturation as essential to the adaptation process. "As the dynamic interplay of acculturation and deculturation continues, newcomers gradually undergo across-cultural adaptation process" (p. 337). This process may not reach to the value level, but it does affect behavior and cultural patterns. "...strangers may adopt the cultural patterns of the host society to a significant degree" (Gudykust & Kim, 1997, p. 337). One would expect the data to show significant prolonged exposure to a foreign culture, coupled with a motivated effort to function efficiently within that culture, to supply adequate "emotional and physiological differences" upon return to the home culture.

Deculturation is in direct opposition to the approach taken by fusion theory. Kramer (2002c) states:

> This [deculturation] is not at all in agreement with the observations of hermeneuticians who instead speak in terms of "sedimented" meanings, that one does not abandon the past with each new experience but rather each new experience adds into the fusional process of experience. (p. 23).

Using the hermeneutic method, elements of the textual responses were identified and placed into two categories, forgetting original culture (as identified

through lapses or reverting to foreign culture once home)—adaptation, and little or no forgetting of the original culture—fusion. This variable is labeled "unlearning." The null hypothesis is that there is no difference between the number of respondents reporting forgetting and those reporting recollection.

Table 1. Distribution of deculturation responses among returned missionaries.

Unlearning

| | Adaptation | Fusion | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Observed Frequency | 4 | 51 | 55 |
| Expected Frequency | 27.5 | 27.5 | 55 |

$X^2$ for this table is 40.1. With 1 degree of freedom, this value of $X^2$ is statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level (critical value is 3.84). There is a significant difference between descriptions of unlearning as found in adaptation and fusion theories. $\Phi^2$ for this difference is .73, indicated a fairly strong difference.

This fusional process is supported by the data. All respondents, regardless of age, sex, place of the mission, or feelings about the mission reported a change in their views toward the foreign culture and their own. These responses fell into several categories, and were associated with Kramer's conception of endless integration and invention as facilitated by their time in the foreign culture. These responses included feelings of interculturalness, multilingualism, altered views of home (both positive and negative), patriotism, and self-growth. In addition to this, there was a greater identification with the ability to compare cultures, including one's own. One respondent writes, "I did feel a larger sense of distrust around Americans, even

though I'm one of them. I never felt threatened in Japan. America seems to have a lot more violent aggression. And I missed the quiet industrious confidence of the Japanese people as a whole." Participants in this study conform to the description found in fusion theory, in that their experiences were not given or taken away, but sedimented and layered into new modes of thinking and ways of conceptualizing the world around them.

This finding did not only correspond with participant attitudes toward culture, but were witnessed in other modes of expression such as language (slang or other cultural codes) or skills. An example of this is the experience of a returned missionary driving in the United States. In it a returned missionary explains a harrowing experience upon realizing he was driving on the wrong side of the road. It occurred two years after his return from England. The original way of driving was not lost, but retrieved upon return. Also, the foreign way of driving was not lost either, even two years afterward. Obviously, there was a combination of experiences influencing this result—driving on BOTH sides of the road. This theme was echoed throughout many of the responses. It is a sentiment of being both cultures simultaneously; of identifying oneself as both native and foreign. The findings of this study indicate that one does not become merely socialized into another culture, but uses the combined experience in an integrating fashion. Again, this experience can expand the horizon of individuals upon returning. An excellent example of this was posited by one ex-Argentine missionary:

> I think I can understand and appreciate Hispanic peoples much better than I did before my mission. We lived in an agricultural area in California for

several years and I enjoyed speaking Spanish and spending time with Mexican immigrants there. I think we were able to help some of them adjust to living in the United States. I would have been completely oblivious to them if not for having lived in a Spanish-speaking culture. I'm still very concerned about the economic situation of Latin America and am planning to get involved in church programs to support education and training—after I get my small children raised.

Fusion theory claims that experience and culture is not lost, perhaps suspended until needed. The responses by older participants here offer a wonderful backdrop to this question. None of the respondents reported "losing" their home culture. Several worked to not suspend it as much, to keep it a part of themselves in the host culture, but no one in this study reported having to relearn any element of the original culture. There was a significant difference, though in the way language was described. Over half of the respondents reported at least an initial difficulty speaking English (United States version) again. This was even true for those who had lived in English speaking countries like England, Ireland, and Australia. Reports included the need to "becoming adjusted to the sound of American voices again," and that "the Queen's English was better, softer, and more quiet than ours." This difficulty in speaking English seemed a greater concern for those who were home less than four years. Older respondents did not identify this issue. Of the problems in speaking English, most of the difficulties were reported in speaking on religious topics. This is certainly understandable as this would have been the major topic of conversation throughout the experience. One respondent six years removed from his mission

experience claimed he still had trouble discussing religious topics in English. However, is this evidence for deculturation? For reasons discussed in the next chapter, the unlearning of culture in relation to "forgetting" original language cannot be supported here. Overall, the data agrees with fusion's basis in plus-mutation. Again, Kramer argues that cultures fuse together in an incremental way. Cultural change amounts to a process of addition. He argues that new capacities and abilities presuppose old ones. The related experience corresponded with this description. A reoccurring theme throughout the responses, regardless of the question, was the incorporation of foreign cultural elements which were very much a part of their feelings of self.

Adaptation's proposition of deculturation, then, was not supported by the data. Over 85% of the respondents identified having little or no trouble reentering United States culture. The respondents who did mention difficulty did not mention it in terms of the foreign culture, but in terms of the missionary culture. This was identified in two ways. First, the structure of the mission life accounted for the majority of difficulty upon reentry. This included missionary structure and the lack of it upon return, not being with a companion constantly, and the oversight of one's activity (supervision). Second, no responses acknowledged foreign cultural characteristics that made reentry more difficult. In fact, several respondents identified either foreign cultural characteristics or their time in that culture as more helpful in the return process. But by far, the overwhelming discomfort came when respondents attempted to return to normal life (social factors). These included school, work, and especially dating.

There were evidences that elements of the home culture had been forgotten. These included language, especially concerning religious topics, and some skill elements of cultural functioning, such as being "rusty" at driving. The responses here were not overwhelming and not forceful enough to warrant buoying one's unlearning. This was evidenced by the massive reports of no problems adjusting at all to the reentry. These findings are also in agreement with Dunn and Heffelfinger's findings regarding feelings of returned missionaries upon immediate return. They found the majority of respondents felt positive about the process. There was, however, one significant difference. They described a higher number of returned missionaries who self-reported feelings of culture shock. If deculturation was to be demonstrated by this study, one would have expected to see more problems upon reentry.

Acculturation.

In adaptation's description of the process of acculturation, individuals look for similarities and differences in the new environment, become acquainted with them and may even adopt norms and values of salient referent groups of the host society (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). This process was supported nicely by the research. All returned missionaries in this survey identified at least one foreign cultural element in a very positive way. The data sustains the proposition that individuals adopt some of the norms and customs of the host society. This is evidenced responses concerning food, dress, language use (slang), gestures, and rituals. These cultural elements were evidenced to have been accepted readily by the majority of the respondents. The only differences were the three respondents who reported having scaled down their attempts to "go foreign" in an effort to maintain their United States identity.

However, all three went on to identify at least one cultural element that they "missed." While one may classify these individuals as outliers, there is ambiguity as to how far this characterization can be applied.

Fusion takes exception to adaptation in its description of the process of socialization. It states the different cultures and horizons fuse differently with others. There is not just one way of prescribing the process of contact and socialization.

The differences between the two theories' accounts of acculturation are found in the description of how one socializes. Participant responses were relating to this issue were grouped according to this description—whether one is socialized into a system (adaptation) or whether the horizons are fused (adaptation). The survey question regarding the description of the foreign experience as it related to personal feelings of change was primary in the determination, but evidences of this theme could and were discovered in responses to other questions as well. If the response identified no change in the individual or a one-way incorporation, it was labeled as adaptation. If the response indicated the use and functioning of both cultures, such as sedimentation, it was labeled as fusion. This variable was called "personal change." The following are the findings concerning this variable.

Table 2. Distribution of returned missionary reports of personal change.

Personal Change

| | Adaptation | Fusion | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Observed Frequency | 15 | 40 | 55 |
| Expected Frequency | 27.5 | 27.5 | 55 |

$X^2$ for this table is 11.09. With 1 degree of freedom, this value of $X^2$ is statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level (critical value is 3.84). There is a significant difference between descriptions of personal change as found in adaptation and fusion theories. $\Phi^2$ for this difference is .21, indicated a difference that is not extremely strong.

Examples of evidences of adaptation theory include identifications regarding personal change "no change at all," while fusion identifications were coded from responses such as "I will never think of the world in the same way again. Before living in another culture I only had one culture's view. Now I have two."

The data show that returned missionaries responded differently to different cultures. Leaving Japanese and European cultures was described as harder than those countries with more in common with the United States (especially economically). This would be an important finding if there had been more data from each foreign culture. There just was not enough data to argue a trend. Associated with this is the relationship between the difficulty level upon reentry and the foreign culture visited. Seemingly, the European missionaries had the easiest time coming home. South American, Mexican, and third world missionaries also reported a sense of shock at the resources in the United States, but ease fitting back in. The most difficulty was reported by Asian missionaries, Taiwan and Japan. Again, there are not enough examples here to provide a significant argument for differently fusing horizons.

Reentry.

The majority of responses here recounted social difficulties, including family and friends. The complaint was that these people did not know them in the same way

and certainly did not treat them the same. They felt as if they did not belong in the U.S. Closely related to this was a reported sense of loss. This loss was usually centered around cultural characteristics, such as time, food, customs, and dress. Another loss was that of missionary life. The regimented, structured missionary life was more flexible than the return to home life. While most of the reports discussed foreign cultural issues, many participants reported missing being a missionary.

While these ideas seem to be informative on their own, taken as a whole the problems of "fitting in" were centered on issues of cultural comparison. Respondents acknowledged comparing cultures, observing (perhaps for the first time) things in U.S. culture that "do not make sense." A different perspective was gained, one which expanded the scope of intercultural understanding, but also opened up the home culture to critique. "I was caught between two worlds...the one I had grown up in (which would never be the same for me) and the one I had just spent the last one tenth of my life in."

Again, there were individuals who had no trouble at all coming home. These individuals reported ease in the adjustment, and even comfort. "I had no problems fitting back in—it was actually very refreshing."

The variable describing respondents' feelings of reentry was labeled "reentry." This variable is used to indicate an individual's feelings of positiveness or negativeness concerning the reentry process. Reentry responses corresponding to the adaptation approach identified feelings of culture shock as explained and used in adaptation theory. Those responses more in tune with fusion theory may have expressed feelings of nervousness or discomfort, but were overwhelmingly positive

about the experience and happy to be home. This variable was identified in the survey with the question asking for experiences upon reentry or "fitting back in."

Table 3. Distribution of returned missionary reports of reentry.

| | Adaptation | Fusion | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Observed Frequency | 9 | 46 | 55 |
| Expected Frequency | 27.5 | 27.5 | 55 |

$X^2$ for this table is 24.89. With 1 degree of freedom, this value of $X^2$ is statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level (critical value is 3.84). There is a significant difference between descriptions of reentry as found in adaptation and fusion theories. $\Phi^2$ for this difference is .45, indicating a somewhat weak difference.

Examples of respondent responses identified as adaptation included "when I returned I had a hard time. I felt out of place and it took me a while to adjust. It wasn't fun." Responses identified as fusion include, "I was glad to be home, but it was a bit weird."

Psychological Adjustment.

Perhaps one of the greatest differences between adaptation and fusion theories is the description of the sojourner's psychological health in the process. Adaptation sees psychological health as an important consequence of cumulative adaptive experience. It describes mental illness as one consequence of maladjustment.

> Inquiries on mental health of immigrants have emphasized the extent to which the adaptation experiences challenge the individual with stressful psychosocial demands. Aside from psychological distress, immigrants, at least initially, are considered to be prone ot behavior impairment in social productivity. Many investigations have been make to assess different mental health issues related to maladaptation or to present specific clinical cases of mental illness and counseling...Psychological health is clearly an important consequence of cumulative adaptive experiences. (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 352)

This group of individuals is unsuccessful in coping with the challenges of the host environment and therefore do not have increased mental health. Fusion theory takes exception to this stance, arguing that one may choose not to incorporate oneself into the cultural system and not have symptoms of mental illness. To test this, responses to the question asking for difficulties upon reentry were analyzed and categorized according to issues of mental heath. This variable was called "mental health." Responses that expressed feelings of emotional or psychological distress upon reinsertion where placed in the adaptation category. Those that identified little emotional or psychological stress where placed in the fusion category. This research understands that fusion theory does not discount the presence of psychological stress. Hence, an effort was made in the classification to only place those who expressed "serious" problems upon return in the adaptation camp. Fusion states that one may behave appropriately for that culture, but still not like being there. This was also taken into account. Serious problems identified with adaptation theory included not

wanting to return to the home culture, not wanting to stay once home, crying, depression, and extreme difficulty reentering home culture life.

Table 4. Distribution of returned missionary reports of mental health.

| | Adaptation | Fusion | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Observed Frequency | 4 | 44 | 49 |
| Expected Frequency | 24.5 | 24.5 | 49 |

$X^2$ for this table is 34.3. With 1 degree of freedom, this value of $X^2$ is statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level (critical value is 3.84). There is a significant difference between descriptions of mental health as found in adaptation and fusion theories. $\Phi^2$ for this difference is .62, indicating a somewhat strong difference.

The data from this study does not demonstrate a profound psychological dilemma in the minds of the few responses that identified unease in the reentry process. On the contrary, all respondents mentioned that they knew where to go to receive support and help in fitting back in. Support for the application of mental disturbances in returned missionaries was not found. However, psychological shifts were noted. One respondent states, "I am often homesick for Japan. I have returned twice with my wife for some wonderful experiences. I feel that I became more accustomed and comfortable in the Japanese culture than I do in American culture." Although when questioned about fitting back into his home culture he responds that his mission experience, "...changed me immensely, but not in the sense that made it

difficult to adjust back to the U.S." There appears to be recognition of a shift in the psychological process—many respondents mentioned this, but the findings here do not correspond to the description of adaptation theory to the process. This shift seems to be healthy, supportive, and beneficial to the individual in his or her intercultural functioning.

## Data Concerning the Research Questions

With a general discussion of the data completed and tests of difference established, the focus can now be turned to the specific research questions. The following section is a discussion of the data in relation to (1) theoretical representations ofone or the other theory, and (2) extraneous findings that may be illuminating to the theoretical comparison.

### Theoretical Representations

The above data show a disparity in how each theory is evidenced in the experience of returned missionaries. The dichotomy favors the fusion approach. This was true in all categories which were compared. Of these categories, the closest was in acculturation. Related to acculturation is enculturation, or the process of cultural learning. Individuals become familiar with processes of communication, such as writing, reading, and speaking (for missionaries this occurs in theory in the Missionary Training Center, and in practice through direct cultural contact). This is the process of creating a "home world" usually in the early years of life. The data does show that there are definite feelings of "homeness." Respondents identified the United States as their home, their primary culture. This identification was consistent throughout the responses and found throughout responses to all questions.

Adaptation identifies assimilation as "a state of a high degree of acculturation into the host milieu and a high degree of deculturation of the original culture. It is a state that reflects a maximum convergence of strangers' internal conditions with those of the natives and of a minimum maintenance of the original cultural habits" (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). The data derived from this study does not correlate with this description of assimilation. Individuals reported a love for and functioning within their host culture, but did not report strong levels of unlearning to be able to do so. This was also evidenced in the relative ease with which many reported being able to reinsert themselves into their home culture. Many respondents did mention a learning and socializing process which included language, culture, and missionary life. This process, however, was not unidirectional.

## Extraneous Factors Influencing the Comparison

While extraneous factors were not necessarily expected to emerge from the data, it was hoped that through the use of the hermeneutic method, there would be an interesting finding not covered in the first research question or hypothesis. There was, and it resulted from the wide disparity in respondent age.

### Time

A very surprising result was discovered in response to subject age. The study did not expect to get many participants over the age of 45. They weren't targeted, but some voluntarily participated. The outcome is that these individuals provide a measurement to how the reentry process is viewed over time. It places another dimension into the equation in that participant responses can be compared from the point of first return to 40 plus years later.

When this is done, one notes that time plays a great role in how individuals view the return process. There is consistency in the way the views change as described in the surveys. Time appears to have several impacts on the process. There is the issue of forgetting.

An older respondent writes:

> When I came home, I was much more grateful for the simple things that I had previously taken for granted. Unfortunately, as the years passed, the vivid memories of the Irish culture became less memorable, and I tended to become less cognizant of our rich heritage and blessings.

The tendency to forget elements of another culture is a byproduct of time. Several older respondents mentioned a loss of either language or "remembering what it was like." Presumably, this process of forgetting is what adaptation labels "deculturation." This process, however, is life-long. Gudykunst and Kim (1997) state:

> For most people, even for natives, complete adaptation is a lifetime goal and individuals vary in the degree of adaptation achieved. The adaptation of strangers, therefore, should be thought of as falling at some points on a continuum ranging from minimally adapted to maximally adapted. (p. 338-339)

Religion in the Responses

In a large portion of answers, respondents felt it necessary to describe their experiences in religious terms. This was after survey instructions specified that these sorts of answers were not needed or necessary. It can be argued, then, that the

experience of being a missionary is tied to experience in the foreign culture. Based on the responses to the survey, the two cannot be separated.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Discussion

Having the results of the test identified, this chapter will analyze them and draw conclusions about the theories. This is organized according to the research questions and will be treated by discussing the data in correlation to each question. Before those are discussed, the respondent demographics should be discussed.

## Discussion of Survey Results

This study was hoping to gather data from a variety of different missionary experiences in different cultures. This was pretty much the case. The distribution of respondents according to sex was in line with overall missionary numbers. The results did not show any patterns of difference between male and female respondents. This may have been because of the lower number of female respondents. There were too few to tell for sure. This was not the only small number. The number of different cultures represented in the study was also a little low. Only 15 foreign cultures were identified and used in this study. That is a very low number when compared to the number of foreign missions worldwide. It would have been nice to gather a little more information regarding experiences in and returning from foreign cultures. Having more foreign cultures represented (both the number of different cultures and the number of individual cultures) would have strengthened the ability to compare how individuals from United States culture are affected differently by exposure to different (and distinct) cultures. By far, the most represented culture in this study was Spain. This could be explained by this researcher's association with Spain and

Spanish missionaries. Having an affiliation with the researcher and his missionary experience may have been a motivating factor in volunteering as a respondent.

While a treatment of the demographics is not necessarily a part of the discussion section, because of the surprising number of older respondents, a few words over the way the demographics emerged would be beneficial. Some respondents reported passing the survey on to those who were not part of the online subject pool. One can only assume that there was an important factor of word of mouth. While their participation was very helpful, one must wonder why they chose to participate. These older individuals may be more nostalgic about their missions, be in church leadership positions, have more time available to fill out the survey, been influenced by younger participants, or have a greater interest in this type of research. Whatever the reason, the number of older respondents was surprising. Along these same lines, younger participants who volunteered to participate also reported forwarding the survey to their "mission buddies." Perhaps this is another justification for the large amount of survey from Spanish missionaries.

## Discussion

The data show that while there may be problems in reinserting oneself into the original culture, that process is not necessarily prescriptive. Specifically, missionaries did not follow the process described in adaptation theory when they returned. Many reported what Kramer describes as reentering the "original linguistic and cultural milieu with a sigh of relief." But this did not mean that they did not experience difficulties, many of which were fraught with stress, discomfort, disorientation, and anxiety. However, as reported in the previous chapter, these

feelings of discomfort do not seem to be rooted in the loss of foreign culture, but in the loss of missionary culture. These finding correspond with what Dunn and Heffelfinger (1987, p. 34) identified 15 years ago when they wrote:

> In an article in the Church News, other problems cited by returned missionaries included feeling a loss of structure, routine, and time constraints in their lives after the mission. This period of adjustment also included periods of homesickness for the mission, including culture, people, language, and opportunities to share the gospel. Others reported loneliness and depression as factors that made the adjustment during the transition period more difficult. "A few said worldly pressures, and a return to bad habits and transgression caused them to be inactive ("Missionaries Active," 1978, p. 3).

They went on to state that:

> It is reported that this is a critical time for the returned missionary, and although the end result may be emotional, spiritual, and social growth; for the returned missionary the process will more than likely be very stressful. (p.36)

It is very difficult to separate the returned missionary responses concerning feelings of foreign culture with feelings concerning missionary life. Difficulties such as this do nothing to support adaptation's reliance on steady-state culture. Moreover, these findings negate the unidimensional approach to cultural movement. One is not just a United States citizen living in a foreign culture who just happens to be discussing religion with the native population, but is multicultural to the extent that competing cultural influences (mission culture) in that setting may have just as profound an impact on cultural functioning as does the foreign culture itself. Therefore, one is not

learning to be "Spanish," or "Argentine," but instead learns to be a "Spanish missionary," or "Argentine school teacher." Conforming (assimilation in the Gudykunst and Kim model) means developing maximum convergence with the native conditions and a minimum maintenance of original cultural habits. In this description one becomes integrated into the new system, effectively functioning at such a high level that one loses his or her original identity. Returned missionaries reported being very functional in their host cultures, of learning the language proficiently, of being very close to natives and native cultural characteristics, and expressed great love for their host culture. They reported feeling "functionally fit." They knew how to act, where to go, and what to watch out for:

> The last few months of my mission I was in the downtown area. This was the "red light" district and I knew that it was probably dangerous, but we know all the problem people by sight and they knew us. Sometimes for fun at night we would follow the pickpockets around yelling when they were about to rob somebody. We knew the gangs, the hookers, and the thieves. We actually had a pretty good relationship with most of them (except the pickpockets). There were many times when we would help the locals navigate the area. I really miss that feeling of being so competent in an obviously dangerous situation. I was king of downtown Madrid.

While all survey respondents reported at least one element of cultural functioning, they did not report being "assimilated" as described by adaptation. In fact, they held tightly to "home." The strongest finding in this study was the degree to which respondents reported a continued identification with home. The new culture did not

replace the old. They did not become Japanese or German in place of "American." However, many did identify feelings of dual culture—that they now felt that they were both "Japanese and American," or "Jamaican and American." The two cultures merged into a new identity. This finding was in accordance to some of the new research in the area of transnationalism. It also bolsters Kramer's view of the process. Kramer states, "...it is important to recognize that intercultural communication consists of a synthetic process of multidirectional influences. It is not and never could be unidirectional conformity" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 11). Kramer's concept of plus-mutation, then, has empirical support from returned missionary data. This is the concept of plus-mutation in fusion theory. Kramer continues, "As a person moves from one cultural environment to another, they do not loose the old ideas, language, ways of living, values, and so forth, but rather, they acquire a new language and new styles of comportment and communication..." (Kramer, 2002c, p. 28).

This finding argues for further explanation from adaptation theory. What happens when an individual alternates between home and a foreign culture? Is there a process of cultural acculturation/deculturation over and over? If repetitive process were the case sojourners would start anew (depending on the level of assimilation) every time they wanted to visit/return to another culture. Returned missionaries tell a different version of the process. The findings of this research project reject the notion of deculturation. Individuals rarely "forget" elements of the original culture. They did not "unlearn" their original culture. In fact, the cultural contact helped to heighten awareness of the original culture. These primary cultural actions were not

reported to have been lost. They may be submerged or hidden from behavioral action, but they are there. The one disappointing element of adaptation, and one which complicates an analysis, is that adaptation does not discuss the impact of time on the adaptation process. The only mentioning of it is in stating that "complete adaptation is a lifetime goal." Presumably, one would need to live his or her life in a foreign (new) culture in order to be fully adapted (and even then it is not assured). Because of this lack of recognition of time, one is unable to compare the loss of culture with the fading of memories.

Older respondents reported forgetting cultural characteristics and even language as time passed. There are several things that seem to be going on. First, one forgets. This is only natural. To justify deculturation on the experiences of those who have not used their cultural tools in a long time is premature. Additionally, there is no proof that the loss of culture is the direct result of exposure to another one. Second, different ways of expressing oneself are culturally based. This being true, if one were to learn to "preach the gospel," for instance, in Spanish, it is logical that those thought processes would be culturally based in the foreign cultures system of code. Expressing those meanings in English would then constitute an original learning, not relearning.

Older respondents also reported less instances of language problems upon return. While many of the younger participants acknowledged difficulty in some English speaking situations, the older respondents either did not recall having as much difficulty, or did not see it as a problem. Again, this phenomenon could be explained by the values of missionary culture at the time.

One must assume, then, under adaptation theory that the loss of original culture is the result of deculturation, even that may not be the case. The data show a more stratified approach to the acquisition of cultural functioning. When layers of experience and meaning sediment, they can be recalled, remembered and then used quickly. Because missionaries reports coincided with this description, this research recognizes the value of such an approach.

Experience in a foreign culture solidified feelings of home and positive notions of it. Patriotism increased, as well as an appreciation for the home culture. This does not correspond with elements of adaptation theory. While the host culture alters the individual, it is possible for that individual to both gain a greater sense of appreciation for it and look forward to the return home. Also, respondents in this study did not respond negatively toward their home culture in any way. While several individuals wished for the missionary situation again, nothing evident in their responses could be linked directly to negative feelings of their home culture upon reinsertion. Favorable responses about home and the foreign culture were by far the majority. While this may not be new news, it is important when analyzing the two theories.

Contact with another culture builds experience which enables better functioning in a diversified culture such as U.S., for example, a second language. Some returned missionaries report a lasting consequence as being able to communicate with a segment of the population that was formerly foreign to them (Spanish speaking missionaries). Not only are they not returning to the culture they

left, but they are returning to a culture that is much more open and possibly welcoming than before.

Reentry

If adaptation is more accurate, the research data should have shown that individuals have some degree of difficulty reinserting themselves into the "home" culture upon return from successful adaptation into a host or foreign culture. If fusion were more representative, the data should have shown that while there is a newness to the reinsertion, there is not a relearning of old way/knowledge.

The returned missionaries that reported the greatest difficulty returning home, also reported higher affinity with the host culture. There could be many reasons for this, some of which may include personality type but also mission structure. Several (3) of the respondents that reported difficulty also reported a high competence in language skill and cultural functioning. Additionally, these individuals reported higher levels of functioning within missionary culture, especially in comparison to other missionaries. Mission rules were said in some instances to mandate communication only in the foreign language. Upon return the ability to communicate, especially over religious topics, was said to be difficult, especially for those who were two years removed from the experience.

What happens when an individual alternates between home and a foreign culture? Is there a process of cultural acculturation/deculturation over and over? If this were the case sojourners would start anew every time they wanted to visit/return to another culture. The findings of this research project object to this notion of deculturation. Individuals rarely "forget" elements of the original culture. They may

be submerged or hidden from behavioral action, but that are there. The data shows a more stratified approach to the acquisition of cultural functioning.

The return home and adjustment to it can be facilitated by the social and economic network of friends and family. Participants reported getting directly into work or school to ease the transition period. Family and friends helped in many cases.

Psychological Discussion

Little severe psychological problems were reported by returned missionaries. The most troubling experiences dealt with missing the culture and crying. This experience led one of these respondents to say that she experienced depression. She, however, also mentioned that she was happy to come home, just that the transition was difficult. This response was not unusual. When asked if they would have stayed in the foreign culture longer, those that experienced difficulty readjusting said they would have stayed a little longer, but so did many of those who had no problem readjusting to home culture. Psychological problems, then, may have little to do with the adaptation's identification of abnormality or not conforming to the system. The individuals who did report profound psychological discomfort were acting within the cultural system (either missionary, home, or foreign). While this does indicate that in the reentry process adaptation's psychological description is not as applicable, one must be careful in making universal statements regarding these findings. Missionary culture added another variable to the cultural equation. Stress was evident, but extraneous influences eased that stress. Additionally, even those that experienced psychological stress, as reported either in the foreign culture or upon reentry, also reported a heightened level of cultural functioning (including language, customs, and

interacting with new people). There are these extraneous cultural variables which one can use to increase functioning, while perhaps not willingly adapting. One may have feelings of warmth and longing for home while at the same time be extremely functional in the foreign culture. However, the longing to return home in this study could very well be linked to missionary culture. Missionaries tend to discuss in great length what they did before their mission and their plans upon return. There is even a term ("trunky") for a missionary who has lost his or her focus on missionary work and is waiting for the day he or she can pack his or her trunk and go home. One missionary writes:

> There was a missionary in our mission who completed his mission, went home, and came back and married a local girl. They returned to the states and she got pregnant quickly and had a baby. They came back to show the baby to the mother-in-law, who then convinced the girl to stay. Of course the returned missionary stayed as well. All the missionaries got a chuckle out of that. The joke was, "stay away from the girls or you might end up like Elder Jones."

Intercultural movement and the critique of culture. To which culture does an individual belong when one obtains a multi-cultural perspective. The cultural boarders get blurred. Is "A" culture really definable?

Assimilation

Gudykunst and Kim's (1997) concept of assimilation moves outside their stated theoretical boundary condition. They claim that the stranger is deculturized and moves away from the original culture toward becoming a member of the host

culture. However, their supporting data is not based on individual movement, but seems to be based on generational studies (see Barnett & Kincaid, 1983; Y. Kim, 1977a, 1977b, 1978a, 1978b, 1980, 1989a, 1989b; McGuire & McDermott, 1988; Subervi-Velez, 1986; Szalay & Inn, 1988, as provided in Gudykunst and Kim, 1997, p. 338). This study found no evidence that one may experience psychological problems to such a degree that he or she would be prohibited from functioning within that culture. This was found to be true in both the foreign cultural situation and the return home.

The ability to express oneself in another language has elements of thought involved in functioning within that language. Returned missionaries, or any other sojourner who has developed strong bond with a foreign culture and its language will naturally have problems communicating what they are thinking because the way they think has been altered.

Time

The most telling variable identified in this research may be the element of time in the cultural learning process. Overall, younger respondents reported more difficulty returning home. Younger respondents reported having more difficulty adjusting from mission life than did older respondents. This may have been due to an increase in varied life experience that, by contrast and retrospect, makes the transition less stark in comparison (another example of fusion's plus-mutation). Younger respondents reported feeling more at home with the host culture and functioning within it at a higher level. A greater affinity for the culture was generally reported by younger returned missionaries. There could be several reasons for this. Perhaps an

increase in Church control over the missionaries or a greater emphasis on particular activities upon returning has led to greater functioning within the host culture resulting in greater stress upon reentry. More hierarchical control and mission rules could lead to feelings of loss of control or boundaries upon returning home. Next, these individuals are more freshly from these experiences and would be expected to feel strong about them. Another, and possibly more revealing situation, is that increased global awareness is facilitating faster or more intense host functioning for sojourners. The newer missionaries reported less initial culture shock, perhaps due to better Missionary Training Center instruction. But, not all missionaries would be expected to absorb enough information within the limited time there to make a significant difference. Almost all newer missionaries report less initial culture shock. Extraneous variables relating to the global city, such as mediated culture should be revised. While this claim certainly seems to be supported here, more research needs to be accomplished in order to determine if this is actually occurring or just an anomaly. Regardless, however, the implications to this type of finding are enormous. If this is indeed a trend, the literature surrounding culture shock and adaptation would need to be revisited. There are no longer strangers, as one can access cultural messages/meanings through technology and use those contacts as a buffer. If this is true, theory and research should rely less on the concept of the "stranger," probably moving to something more like an unmet acquaintance.

The result that older respondents viewed the reentry process as easier is another justification of the fusion theory. Incorporated within this process are elements of an incomplete horizon. Kramer (2002a) states, "Past communication and

experience affects future communication and experience is a process of continual integration. And it is not a unilinear process for future experience changes the meaning of past meanings." Whereas adaptation theory is mute on the element of time and its result on the process, fusion theory at least mentions that time does have an impact on how the experience is perceived.

Culture is not a static phenomenon. It is not a manual one puts down upon leaving one culture, picking up a new one upon entering another.

Mental Illness

One may say that these missionaries did not experience the kind of mental illness described by Gudykunst and Kim, but on second glance they are different. They are not doing what others in their culture are doing—school, work, social activities. These individuals have chosen an 18 month or 2 year sabbatical from their home culture voluntarily. Should this deviation from the culture and "fitting in" be considered a mental aberration? If so, Gudykunst and Kim's reliance on the system and United States cultures as means of comparison and adaptation is so skewed that any decision that deviates from the system is "inefficient" and negative.

Theoretical Comparisons

Last, this chapter will discuss how these adaptation and fusion compare theoretically when viewed against the returned missionary responses. Perhaps the two most important elements of cultural insertion, whether foreign or reentry, are the duration of the contact and the intensity of it. Both theories contain descriptions surrounding time and intensity, and this is a good starting place for the comparison. First, adaptation claims that one may never fully adapt and that it is a lifelong

process. If this is true (and it has been demonstrated in this study) one may not undergo the process described by adaptation theory even though he or she lives in a foreign culture and is functionally and behaviorally fit in it. Such an individual would find it difficult to relate to the acculturation/deculturation dynamic, as they most likely did not experience it in the way described by Gudykunst and Kim. Certainly, returned missionaries did not. Adaptation, then, should only apply to those wanting to leave their original culture to never return home. It should not be applied to the current phenomenon or those *wanting* to live in another culture and do so of their own free will, as is ever increasingly the case. These people may want to experience the different culture, but yet retain their "homeness." The dearth of research in this area of intercultural communication is astounding. This study's finding, that those with a United States home culture do not experience adaptation as described by Gudykunst and Kim, corresponds with Kramer's contention that adaptation theory is insidious and agenda oriented. "Their theory lends itself perfectly for consultation and 'training' to modern bureaucracies, which should not be surprising, since that was its initial motivation" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 6). He continues to argue that this training is usually a one-way process of adherence to an all-powerful system:

> Many illegal Hispanics in the United States fit this model because, since they are illegal, they can be greatly exploited and they will not complain or try to unionize, or even go to the police when they are victims of crimes. Nor do they threaten to take high paying professional jobs because, since they often migrate with the harvesting of crops and other forms of outdoor labor such as

> lawn care, the highly mobile children of such families find it very difficult to excel in the educational system. According to the model minority ideology, this is the right kind of 'harmonization' and 'equilibrium' both at the level of society and in the 'growing' minds of 'highly adaptable' individuals. (Kramer, 2002b, p. 8)

It is not only that returned missionaries do not adapt in the way described, but that the description does not apply to those who do not adapt. In other words, returned missionaries do not conform to adaptation theory and yet show no significant signs of mental illness or any of the other monumental impacts of not adapting. This finding necessitates a change in adaptation's approach. There must be a distinction in the way Gudykunst and Kim describe the sojourner. Not all migrants are alike, and reasons for the migration can vary widely. Not all sojourners are forced into a humbling situation, as in the case described above, and are held captive by an all-powerful system which must be conformed to. Migrants can also be those with the prestige capable of garnering the respect of or preferential treatment from the system. Functioning in a foreign culture would be much easier for a Mormon missionary from the United States living in Spain, for example, than it would be for a refugee of color from Northern Africa. "The rural Laotian has a fundamentally different perspective and way of assimilating new information than an urban Parisan. This in interpretation or the hermeneutic process Gadamer called fusion" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 29). The system also treats each migrant differently and is therefore affected differently by each type of sojourner.

Moreover, adaptation assumes that integration into the new culture (whether foreign or the new home culture) is manipulated by the individual only. This was not the case with returned missionaries. They had help on both ends including specific cultural training in the Missionary Training Center, a veteran companion to ease the new missionary into the foreign culture, and a support system of church organization, responsibilities, and education program upon return. These supports could have mitigated some of the harsh contrasts that one might feel when entering the new culture. These support structures are not accounted for in adaptation theory. Gudykunst and Kim assume that the sojourner is on his or her own. They are placed in direct opposition with the host culture, with no way of beating or influencing it. Fusion theory, however, accounts for this contingency through acknowledging the influence that the individual has upon the environment. Additionally, Kramer describes a different horizon for each individual. These horizons fuse are composed differently and therefore fuse differently. This correlates with the findings of this study, as there was much agreement in almost all of the responses, regardless of the question. The most identified commonality of the responses was missionary culture and missionary life in it. This element provided an alternative horizon, and one which is not accounted for in adaptation theory. This extra horizon may have made the transitions easier, but they certainly made them different. Adaptation addresses this issue very briefly and only in passing. Gudykunst and Kim state that, "strangers are less likely to feel the pressure of the host environment when their own ethnic community enjoys a strong presence and exerts its own conformity pressure on its members" (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 353). This statement does not address

autonomous functioning of the individual and still argues for top-down pressure to conform to whatever system is dominant over that individual.

Because of the flowing, changing nature of culture, any impetus, not matter how small, will have an effect on the culture. When the number of individuals grow, so too does the influence, and in many instances so too does the system. The impact that one person can have upon the power system is amazing, and one can pick any recent social revolution as an example. The data derived from this research hints at a changing of not only the influence of the cultural system on the individual, but also the individual on the host system. The foreign culture was assuredly influenced by the influx is missionaries, if for not other reason than the missionaries were attempting to change the religious look of the system. While many missionaries reported feeling close to individuals, making, friends, and having wonderful linguistic and cultural experiences, their main purpose was to convert people to their religion. This type of activity is not discussed in adaptation theory. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the church organization also uses the time its missionaries spend completing a mission as a time of training. They are steeped in church doctrine, discipline, obedience, and leadership skills. Upon return, they are well on their way to serve in the church's lay clergy. In this manner the church is schooling the next generation of leaders. The expectation is that they will return home more dedicated and qualified to function within the system of the church. Missionaries simultaneously indoctrinate others as they are indoctrinated themselves. They can then use those skills to affect others upon return. The process of fusing doctrine and experience into a lasting religious worldview is used as a tool. A very detrimental

condition would exist if adaptation theory were correct and returned missionaries forgot their experiences and functioning as missionaries (including domestic and foreign service). The growth/success of the church alone negates adaptation's description of deculturation.

Intensity of the contact is a second important variable in cultural contact. Gudykunst and Kim assume a constant intensity. They do not account for levels of intensity in the contact. The closest they come is in describing the many different contexts in which adaptation can be applied. These include any lifestyle change that may be difficult. "Examples of in situ changes requiring adaptation include such situations as starting at a university, making a transition from school to work, changing professions, getting married, getting divorced, retiring, and aging" (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 335). Other situations explained by adaptation include sojourning, settling, subcultural mobility, segregation, and changes in society. They also state:

> International migration, whether for a long or short term, represents a classic situation where the newly arrived strangers are required to face substandtial challenges of uncertainty. Because of the relatively greater severity of cultural change, the experiences of international immigrants, refugees, and sojourners provide us with comprehensive insights into the process of cross-cultural adaptation that can be extended to understanding the situations of other less drastic adaptation situations. (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 336)

Although many divorcees, for example, might want to unlearn some of their marriage experiences, application to these "less drastic situations" has yet to be undertaken.

The time element is the most intriguing statement here. This is because they later go on to argue the adaptation is never complete and may be a lifelong process. Perhaps it is completed with the ultimate unlearning—death. But then again, one would be free from the system and that could not be good either. Regardless, while adaptation claims that its description is applicable to contexts regardless of time, this research demonstrates that time is indeed an important element in the functioning of the theory. While many returned missionaries reported behavioral competency in both the foreign culture and reentering the original culture, they did report "forgetting" some things. Perhaps adaptation's description of deculturation would work better if there were an acknowledgement of how many years one needed to remain isolated in that foreign culture for unlearning to occur. However, even if this were the case, scholars would then be faced with the dilemma of cultural learning versus cultural atrophy. Just because the muscle is not used does not mean that it is not there, it just needs a little flexing to return to normal. Is there a way to tell the difference?

When compared against adaptation theory, fusion seems to have more recognition of time and cultural functioning. This is because it describes life as constantly assimilating information based on previous experience. Therefore if one were to live in a host culture, this experience would merge with the old to form a new perspective. This perspective is dependent upon experience, which in turn is necessitated by contact and time in that foreign culture. The process is never-ending:

> But the synthetic process of fusion is dynamic and characterized by synergy. When a person encounters new information as when a sojourner enters a new cultural environment, there is a process of reading or interpreting that occurs.

> And volumes have been written on the complexities of interpretation. The text is never finished and the "reading" process of making sense is also never finished. (Kramer, 2002c, p. 29)

The last element of theoretical comparison is sojourner happiness. Adaptation claims that while there is a small group of people who are unsuccessful in coping with various challenges of the host environment (mentally ill), most individuals will "naturally and inevitably" adapt as long as they remain in contact with the host environment. Psychological processes such as cognitive, affective, and operational communication competence will be increased. Inherent in this change (and in opposition to the negative psychological aspects on not adapting) are increased self-image, self-esteem, feelings of belonging, satisfaction with life and the host environment, and other psychological advantages (see Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, pp. 352-352). The results of this study indicate that individuals may have behavioral competence, be seen as integrated within the culture, but yet feel alien. Many individuals reported not having adapted in the way described by Gudykunst and Kim. Returned missionaries reported being happy in the foreign culture and in their home culture. But they did not report other consequences such as acculturation/deculturation. The undeniable conclusion to this is that if returned missionaries do not adapt in the way described, Gudykunst and Kim's model labels them psychologically unfit, even when they claim to be perfectly psychologically healthy. This conclusion is very unfortunate, as it does not correspond with respondent accounts. Most returned missionaries seemed very happy to be home, even though some of them experienced difficulties adjusting to the change.

Alternatively, according to cultural fusion theory, "what is interesting and makes us happy is admixture, multiple differences and integrative complexities" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 24). Missionaries reported satisfaction in learning new languages, meeting new people, and becoming competent in another culture. They also reported becoming aware of United States culture as they had not before. The result was greater appreciation for the home culture, as well as a modified cultural view of themselves. While they reported difficulties, they did not want to return, and they quickly returned to competent home functioning. Adaptation's account of personal satisfaction with the contact and return process is more descriptive of empirical experiences, as least those of returned missionaries.

# CHAPTER SIX

A comparison of theoretical approaches to intercultural contact is not only interesting in its ability to examine the viability of the approach, but it can also provide value and directions for further investigation. This chapter is a recounting of this comparison and what it means for the study of intercultural communication. The discussion will take the form of summery of findings, limitations and critique of the research, and lastly, areas of extension.

While the reports from returned missionaries are interesting, their only use here is as objects of comparison. Without delving too deeply into the religious aspects of the Mormon mission, this research found and acknowledges the viability of approaching intercultural contact for the perspective of layering of meanings. It is on this level that this analysis and application of the comparison finds its greatest use for communication studies. Findings here have demonstrated that much of the current research and cross-cultural approaches are based on a theoretical explanation of adaptation that does not have universal application. Its usability (along with the evidence used to support it) has been based on limited contexts of research and a headstrong commitment to efficiency and power systems. The purpose of this dissertation has been to provide an analysis of competing descriptions of the process of intercultural contact, compare them to see if they are indeed different, and use the descriptions and differences to examine the viability of these approach, with a focus on the reentry process. As extension, the main argument has been that there is value in reexamining theoretical approaches as new alternatives emerge.

In its effort to identify main elements and differences in theoretical approaches, this dissertation has hopefully provided useful information to those interested in issues of contact. Theoretical identification was conducted mainly of description and difference. As a result, the following main findings emerged. First, returned missionaries reentering a home culture do not experience the effects of adaptation as described by Gudykunst and Kim, but rather acknowledge a process more in tune with Kramer's fusion of horizons. Second, respondents did not identify elements of deculturation. They recovered what they lost without reporting having to relearn it again. Additionally, even when behavioral functioning was competent upon return, elements of the foreign culture appeared as cultural lapses, both in language and action. Third, there was a definite acknowledgment of fusion of experience, corresponding with more recent transcultural research and literature. Last, psychological illness was not found to be linked with cultural proficiency upon return. While there respondents who did acknowledge depression an anxiety, they also reported competent cultural functioning. While this is simply a beginning to a much larger program of study, it does offer areas of future extension. Roland Barthes (1973) has noted, "The fact that we cannot manage to achieve more than an unstable grasp of reality doubtless gives the measure of our present alienation: we constantly drift between the object and its demystification, powerless to render its wholeness" (p. 159).

## Weaknesses of this Study

Each approach to the investigation of communication phenomena has its strengths and weaknesses. This is especially true in the application of the

methodology. This current work as with most other research endeavors, has its weak elements. This section will discuss those weaknesses, along with how they might be corrected in subsequent research. These main weaknesses include (1) methodological critiques, (2) metaphorical validity, and (3) hermeneutical capability and correct comparison of theoretical elements. The first two critiques are preexistent to undertaking the project. They will always be evident in this type of research. The last is an accumulation of objections based on how the project was conducted.

Methodological Critiques

This section is the obligatory discussion of methodological debate. One of the biggest critique of methodological perspectives which take more of human action approach (hermeneutics and phenomenology is placed in this category by most researchers) is that these types of methodologies do not allow for prediction of future events, although they are helpful in building hypotheses. Most of this critique radiates from the methodology dilemma in much of communication research. The pull between quantitative and qualitative research approaches guarantees that whichever one a researcher uses, there will be critics. The criticism of this research would probably be based on its direct conflict with (and suggestion for) the quantitative research program. This is especially true when viewing the value that intercultural studies places on promoting efficiency. The ability to control and predict future human events has been at the heart of many intercultural and international studies, with the outcome being able to predict adaptation (for instance) or results of cultural contacts. There are two intercultural approaches which value the quantitative method. These are the social science approach, which aims to identify

variable which can be used to predict communication outcomes in the intercultural setting, and the developmental communication approach, which forms theories and guidelines in order to bring about intentional social change. Steinfatt and Christophel (1996) identify the main lines of social science research as uncertainty reduction processes, relationship issues, and communication effectiveness. The main focus of these types of research, an effort to promote efficiency in the intercultural encounter, is the driving force for the criticism. This is certainly not the purpose of the hermeneutic phenomenological effort. When research does not fall into mainstream justification, as is the case in this current work, criticism can exist. Because phenomenological and hermeneutical investigation chooses not to take the quantitative route, the effects of that choice are the basis for the criticism and are different from much of what is currently being done. There is acceptance of other forms of the humanistic methodology, but these lack the predictive ability necessary for optimum validation. While the methodological approach is a serious point of conflict in communication study, it should be noted that these critiques exist from the moment methodological selection occurs.

The main knock against phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches is that they do little in the way of predicting the future. This is especially troubling when the practicality of the research is considered. While an obvious advantage for humanists is its emphasis of the individual, other approaches could see this as a negative. What grand good is there from an individual discovery? The laws researcher could maintain that the utility of the human action perspective can only be ascertained after sufficient data has been accumulated to test it. Under this criticism

the humanist perspective falls short. In addition to this, the phenomenologist must be able to write especially well. The quality of his or her work depends on the ability to persuade the audience. In this area the empiricist systems research have a distinct advantage.

There are several responses to the quantitative critique. The first is that the phenomenological methodology counteracts some of the more extreme ideas of the covering laws approach. It states that in order for one to understand a communication event, he or she must understand the individual's perception of that event, not just the event itself. This approach is different from both quantitative perspectives listed above in that it places a very strong emphasis on the individual and what phenomena mean to that individual. This, in fact, is listed by some of its proponents as its main strength. By studying humans as individual and active choice makers, researchers in this area are better able to study human communication. Mumford (1990) argues, "In the long run, unceasing change is as monotonous as unceasing sameness: real refreshment implies both uncertainty and choice, and to have to abandon choice merely because external reasons for a style has changed is to forfeit what real gain has been made" (p. 314).

The second main advantage of this methodology is that the theories developed from this perspective are very useful in understanding why communication takes place as it does. An individual's perspective is taken into account in the research. By doing this, researchers are able to probe beneath the surface of the communication and get to more satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon. This can be seen as a great advantage over more law-governed approaches.

Farrell (1987) claims that human communication is simultaneously a process and a practice. Thus, it should be seen nonscientifically. Although this research does not agree with the claim that phenomenology is a nonscientific method (neither would Giorgi or Merleau-Ponty), his point about the usefulness of an approach counter to the broad stroke of neo-positivism is warranted. He claims that hermeneutics and phenomenology offer themselves as interpretive methods designed to expand upon the ways in which any object of inquiry comes to acquire meaning. There are many ways in which communication scholars can use these two methods. These studies focus both on essential elements of human action, as well as on historical understanding of creating and discovering meaning in communication texts. This focus allows the communication researcher to set an individually-oriented agenda for extended focus on communication, as well as offer a rich method for construct definition and refinement. Kramer (1992) identifies the, "...realization that positivist science, in spite of its seemingly enormous success, is unable to confront the true task of the century, namely solving the social question of the image of a new human being, of a new society. This is the most urgent issue we face" (p. 65). Thus, while some researchers may view the method used as disadvantageous, it was the most appropriate for the purpose at hand.

Metaphorical Validity

In any type of comparison study, on must be very careful in assuring that the two theories are capable of comparison. This is perhaps one of the strongest critiques of this work. This argument can take three forms: (1) are the comparable using the same phenomenon, (2) does the examination of one yield comparable results for the

other, and (3) can one be sure that the outcomes of the comparison are of any value. Certainly, the potential for the fallacy of false analogy or comparison certainly exists in this type of approach.

First, the two phenomena must be identified as comparable. In this light, one might ask, "Can elements of adaptation really be compared with elements of fusion theory?" They certainly come from very different perspectives. Fusion theory has more of a philosophical foundation, where adaptation is more quantitative. Additionally, does the use of returned missionaries constitute a comparable phenomenon? Missionaries do not travel into a foreign culture with aspirations of remaining there permanently. They know they will return home. Does this mindset counteract adaptation's basis and skew the results toward fusion? This context may be a fusion context. One may argue that when an individual knows that he or she will return home at some point in time, he or she will consciously strive to retain that culture, as it is known it will be of some value in the future. Here, fusion would be the preferred course of action. Additionally, returned missionaries could be argued to be poor subjects of comparison as they may not fit the criteria for those who want to adapt. Perhaps 18 months or two years is not enough time to evoke the kind of deculturation described by Gudykunst and Kim. However, if this is true, the element of time versus orientation should have more play in adaptation research. However, adaptation's adherence to cultural behavioral fitness seems to negate these arguments. Returned missionaries reported being behaviorally fit, both in the foreign cultures and at home.

Second, one could argue that the insights gained here many not have been based on the foreign culture, but were a result of missionary culture. In this scenario, one is unsure to what degree the change/reentry problems were a result of loss of foreign culture or a loss of missionary culture. One could argue that this insight is pointless if missionary life (the mission) can be recognized as its own culture, and especially if the main influences of these individuals were not based in the foreign culture, but in the missionary culture. While this may be true, the missionary culture is still recognized under the list of situation applicable to adaptation theory. It is a new (foreign) culture experienced by the new missionaries, and a leaving of it by the returning missionaries. Combined with influences of the foreign culture such as dress, custom, language, and behavior, foreign missionary culture could be identified as its own foreign culture. In this sense individuals moving between these United States and foreign missionary culture still should experience the effects of adaptation. Critics, though, are correct in arguing that this study did not use the typical sojourner participants.

Last, how can one be sure that there is any value in the comparison. This critique is especially pressing when the two theories explain the same phenomenon in different ways. In this argument, almost any response could be identified as an adaptation response or fusion response based on the bias and experience of the researcher. This is especially pressing with variables such as psychological health. While one theory identifies psychological health as detrimental, the other one states that it is naturally occurring, and not necessarily a consequence of inability to adapt.

Fusion theory says that even those that adapt may experience psychological discomfort. Classifying responses to this variable, for example, was indeed difficult.

While these objections may have some merit, and while one must be very careful to make the research as comparable as possible, efforts have been taken in this research to alleviate some concerns these critiques propose.

First, while the experiences of returned missionaries are just one limited view of the process of intercultural contact, it does have value in the theoretical design. This dissertation is not overly concerned with missionaries per se, but it is interested in what this type of context says in the comparison. The cultural and social milieu surrounding intercultural knowledge and movement has changed, as well as the political and religious backgrounds. But this can be seen as an advantage. This research looks for consistencies beyond the culturally observable and analyzes them directly with cultural responses. This approach is a departure from what much of the efficiency approaches value most—finite observable characteristics. This research takes the approach that these finite characteristics are fleeting, that they tell us little more and has barely more value than other types of research that study rapidly changing phenomena. Understanding the essential nature of communication, in various contexts, and across various subjects yields a greater cross-section of the phenomenon.

Secondly, while hermeneutic and phenomenological results are detailed, they have value if for no other reason than they describe the value of a specific phenomenon—that value is especially evident when the phenomenon has profound an impact as cultural contact. Separate from this, though, is its detailed comparison with

intercultural theories. The comparison here is the description of how the individual negotiates new contacts, whatever those may be. In this case the experiences from returned missionaries are compared to the study of theoretical descriptions in intercultural contact. As long as the comparison remains in this context the comparison holds true. However, once it moves beyond the contact dimension, the comparison may become suspect. This dissertation has actively sought to hold to the discussion of cultural contacts, what they look like, and how they function in intercultural communication. In this light, while this critique is very important, it has hopefully been precluded by the approach to the phenomenon.

Last, while almost anything can be used as a comparative tool, one must make sure that the comparison is accurate. If it does pass the first two critiques mentioned above then it certainly would apply whatever it is being compared against. This means that there is an enormous amount of cases which can be used to compare and contrast current intercultural study. In fact there is so much out there that there almost needs to be a way of organizing the work. While this may superficially seem to dilute and complicate intercultural study, the truly exciting result is just the opposite. It opens the door to research extension and validation. Current theories can now be tested in multiple contexts and in many ways, and certainly not by just using current observations. This extends both the breadth and depth of research possibilities, making the field both more attractive to researchers and consistent with its findings. The contextual element can be very important in extending and solidifying intercultural contact research. The global nature of intercultural investigation seems to be much more extensive, dynamic, and dependant upon

contextual interactions than other forms of communication, although parallels can be established there as well. Communication, though, is the key to cultural understanding. As Kramer (1992) points out, Gebser placed culture within a multilayered conception of the communication process.

While metaphorical application is an important element of consideration, the largest critique of the current research is in the way that the methodology was conducted and in how it was explained. As mentioned above, one critique of the hermeneutic/phenomenological method is that one needs to understand the phenomenon in detail, but then have the ability to explain those findings in a convincing way. Regretfully, this author falls a little short in the talent needed to fully expound the findings. If there are faults in the explanation of the phenomenon or in the identification of the essences, the responsibility for this rests squarely on this researcher's shoulders. The findings of this research seem perfectly evident, but perhaps this is because of the lack of suspension of metaphysical assumptions in totality. One must be very careful in making sure that the results of the hermeneutic/phenomenological method are indeed essential.

Subject knowledge.

In order for the researcher to be able to extract information from the context, he or she must become couched in it. This familiarity can be especially tough when dealing with cultures and contacts. Reason for this include the complexity of the culture, the research needed understand and uncover essences, and the ability to function in extra-cultural and linguistic contexts.

Specifically, any extraneous culture is difficult to study because of the complexities surrounding the understanding of that culture. This was especially true in this study. Although the researcher has had experience with Mormon missionaries and their culture, some of the responses were indeed surprising and unexpected. Knowing the culture and ways of uncovering elements inherent in it is the key to good intercultural research. For example, to understand a missionary's experiences, the researcher would need to know who a missionary is, what he or she does, the hierarchy of the mission, the dynamics between missionary companions, etc. As the investigation deepened, so too would the need for knowledge of that culture. Additionally, knowing how to interpret the results in accordance with that culture is paramount. One cannot simply approach separate cultures with the same ethnographic mindset.

Not only does the researcher have a detailed familiarity with the cultures in comparison, but it is helpful is he or she feels comfortable with the technical elements on the cultural/historical level. The culture must be understood first, before any attempt at comparison is made. Perhaps this is why many intercultural scholars are fixated on using the United States as control culture. One might also argue that even these studies do not attempt to understand the United States culture first. Next, a linguistic understanding would be helpful for the intercultural researcher. While this study was conducted in English, one must ask how much more insight could have been gained by allowing for other linguistic responses. Perhaps missionaries would have felt more at ease discussing their experiences in other cultures in that culture's language. If this medium were used identified affinity with the host culture may have

been greater, as well as an acknowledgment of cultural lapses. Those who study intercultural communication would benefit from the ability to converse in multiple languages, especially in terms of research participants. What is the cultural outlook/worldview and how does the culture/individual manifest it. At this level the research can become very difficult. In order to understand the cultural contact, one must understand it in its varied contexts. One cannot only study returned missionaries and from that study conclude that adaptation theory is invalid. More needs to be done. Becoming steeped in this process is time consuming and could be seen by some as a waste of time and effort, as each case of cultural contact is just one example of intercultural communication. While this is true, there exists in contact the ability to view the presence of cultural reactions, both individually and collectively. Cultural contact is observable. As one gets into it, however, the description takes shape and energy. Emersion into the phenomena is one of the criteria of quality phenomenological research. While this research my feel that he has an abnormally his comprehension of missionary culture, a definite critique of this research is a superfluous understanding of the how that culture meshes and changes within the host culture. While I understand how missionaries approach differently cultural experiences religiously, the specifics of how this is done culturally are not as clear. This research does not have the background necessary to fully comprehend missionary action in differ foreign cultures. This can also be the case for other researchers who are not steeped in the contextual tradition. In a discipline such as communication, one would not expect many researchers to have interest in learning how one culture inserts itself into many others. For one to attempt a project of his

sort, he or she might have to dedicate massive amounts of time to achieve even a modest proficiency. This might be a bit much to expect.

Essence identification.

One needs to be certain that all essences are correctly identified and extracted from the phenomenon. When the methodology is employed correctly this may not be as much of a concern, but inherent in this type of approach is incompleteness. This work does not offer a full description of the returning missionary process as well as the essences of the phenomenon. This story does not end with the termination of this project. The study of cultural contact (as well as Mormon missionarying) has a history before and after the material treated in this work. One may question why the returned missionaries were chosen as subjects of comparison. Additionally, how can one be sure the essences and comparison identified in dissertation will not change when the contextual scope of widened. This is a valid concern. One cannot be sure that the essences will remain consistent. For this reason, the phenomenological investigation is never-ending. There is always more to do. The best that the researcher can hope to accomplish is to take the chunks that are available and do what he or she can with it. Another approach is to piggyback off of other research; to take up either before or after the confines of previous research. The current work selected a context that was thought to be relevant and applicable to current theoretical approaches and applied the findings. Most any other context that fit the criteria could have been chosen without much change in methodology. The criticism that this research wants to avoid is the mistake of focusing on the details of the communication occurrence to the degree that overgeneralizations occur. How many

contexts does it take to accomplish this? Is the context selected here adequate enough to combat overgeneralizations in theories without creating its own? The only real answer here is, "I hope so." Regardless of whether it does or does not fall into its own critique, this research is at least a start in the general direction for extending the scope of intercultural theoretical approach. Much more research comparing theories in context needs to be done. This research is only the beginning of such a program.

Language needs.

One of the reasons that more research is not being done in the historical area is that researchers can be intimidated by language barriers. Since the majority of mainstream research in intercultural communication is being conducted in the United States, it is logical that those researchers might only be familiar with one language and should shy away from extra-English research programs. If one is to contacts in varied contexts, one needs the ability to understand those contexts. Unfortunately, while many contacts occur with at least on culture using English, this is not the case for the majority of intercultural contacts. And the deeper the research attempt to go into a cultural subject, the more the need for other language skills. Although this researcher is not proficient in any languages other than English and Spanish, this research would have benefited from an ability to expand the subject pool to missionaries serving foreign missions regardless of home culture. Because of this language deficiency, the scope of the project had to be somewhat limited, only examining the contact from the perspective of English-speaking returned missionaries. Yet this research would have benefited greatly from a proficiency in all the cultures represented. Many different scholars from a variety of backgrounds have

commented on the topic. This study's comparison and analysis of the two theories were limited by this researcher's lack of multilingualism. Lack of language proficiency is a valid critique of this work.

## Extension of the Research

### Justification for Future Research

While the comparison of adaptation and fusion theories is a valuable start to the theoretical discussion surrounding cultural contact, it is only the beginning. Much more work needs to be done in order to solidify this study's findings. The results here provide various avenues for extension. Some of these are be identified and discussed here.

First, there must be more research investigating the different contexts of intercultural contact and then relating them back to their theoretical approaches. These specific studies do several things for theoretical research. First, contextual investigations force the researcher to focus on the details of the phenomenon and their impact on the contact This is something that is quite bothersome to architects of exaggerated generalizations. Most researchers realize the value of detail in constructing specialized data into meaningful overviews. However, in communication studies researchers must understand that the value of specifics is a historical principle and cannot be circumvented by big theory. These particulars can only come with strict attention to detailed contexts of communicative action. Perhaps the greatest challenges that can come to grand communication narratives will be accomplished through micro-contextual analysis. When new scrutiny is applied to grand communication designs, perhaps the accepted way of approaching terms and

label do not have the same function. Grand theories applied in specialized situations can be proven/disproved contextually and historically. Saliba (1999) has argued that terms such as culture, civilization, language, and science are no longer the stable, commonly accepted terms of reference they once were. "Instead, it is becoming apparent by the day that such terms do indeed embody ambiguities of their own and embody hegemonic theoretical structures that prohibit their modification with old adjectives as was once done" (Saliba, 1999, p. 1). Specific contextual analysis and its subsequent attention to particulars not only circumvents the potential problems of some of the pretentious big theories, but also offers insights to communication contexts themselves.

Second, contextual and theoretical comparisons are ways of forcing researchers to reexamine accepted views of communication. Adaptation, for example, no longer becomes an almost transparent phenomena, but is seen as a complex processes requiring an understanding of the acts themselves, not simply the outcomes (behavior). Gebser (1985) suggests a concept of plus-mutation, proposing a process of enrichment. The past is not abandoned, only added to.

Last, comparing and testing communication theories in context allows the possibility of the construction of generalizable conclusions to the communicative process. While these essential structures may not be laws, they could certainly be applicable to differing types of communication research.

Lines of Future Research

One would expect that in comparative studies such as this, there would be ways in which the research should be extended. Research developing and comparing

theoretical approaches to intercultural study should begin with this project and using it for further research. There are two directions in which future research should go from here. First, future projects should continue to test adaptation and fusion theories in a number of different contexts and using different subjects. Second, future studies could look at specific instances of contact, narrowing the focus of the contact.

While adaptation theory claims to be useful in a variety of contexts, it has yet to be tested in these varied contexts. So far, it has only been demonstrated in instances of migration to the United States and only in group situations. This current research casts doubts on how applicable the description really is. If adaptation does not explain the missionary contact, what other contexts might find it unusable? Additionally, theoretical approaches need to be tested historically. This adds another dimension to the understanding of the contact. Are the outcomes merely relative, or are they demonstrative to the larger human experience? Historical focus demonstrates communication as a layered or flowing phenomenon. Like geology or archeology, communication can sift through the strata of history to arrive at a more comprehensive view of the formation of current communicative practices. It offers analysis of current communicative theories from a historical perspective. This type of project can be done both theoretically and contextually. For example, do the experiences of all foreign missionaries coincide with those of Mormon missionaries? More importantly, are there universal characteristics in the missionary experience across both religious and historical lines? Additionally, more research must be done without the ethnocentric focus of United States as the control culture. What happens

when United States citizens move abroad? Do they experience the same type of process as those migrating to the United States?

Some respondents reported experiencing cultural lapses, sometimes years after they returned. An interesting line of research would be to investigate the elements surrounding these occurrences. What triggers cultural lapses? Because this study casts doubts on the descriptive process of adaptation, and especially the acculturatation/deculturation dynamic, a worthy area of investigation would be why these cultural lapses occur. While missionaries reported forgetting certain elements, many of these elements were argued to be new in the sense that they were picked up during the missionary time and not a forgetting of original culture. Linked with this is the concept of how individuals report the psychological process of contact. Individuals may or may not realize or understand to what degree they have been psychologically affected by the transition process. Future studies making claims involving psychological discomfort should be aware of the degree to which this is reported in various contexts within theoretical boundaries.

The proliferation of technology and its facilitation of individual contact is another area of extension. Is the global city demanding a rethinking or reinvestigation of issues of culture shock? There has been an increase in discussion about the growing transnational individual and the trend in becoming transnational identified. Theoretical application of the phenomenon has not kept up. Scholars like Oboler (1995) and Hedge (1998) argue that increased intercultural contacts necessitate a change in the ways scholars approach it. Adaptation theory has done little to acknowledge this trend. However, fusion theory does realize this occurrence

and addresses it forcefully. "But today, with vast infrastructures of transportation and communication, the difference between the center and periphery is deconstructing. Cultures are fusion all over but of course with various rates according to access. Defusion is not longer unilinear" (Kramer, 2002c, p. 25). Future studies concerned with the theoretical description of the contact process should be more concerned with how this is taking place. Studies of this sort would identify technological innovations and their impacts on the contact process, or identify how cultures respond internally to increased technology. Additionally, movement and types of movement, along with time of insertion, will also bring positive outcomes. Does the increase in communication technology warrant a change in the way we view the phenomenon? Are the older studies based on outdated research? Is it applicable to this time?

Finally, future research into the process of intercultural should not be so concerned with meeting an agenda and look at the phenomenon from disinterested eyes, so that genuine outcomes may result. Perhaps the greatest benefit of this study to future research efforts is the need to strip personal biases from the research. This is especially true in theoretical modeling. Preconceived notions of what the contact should look like are disingenuous and misleading. Principles such as efficiency in the contact and the application of broad labels such as "mentally ill" do not explain the variety in contact and motivation for that contact.

## Conclusion

Theoretical approaches to how scholars view intercultural communication and contact are important, but comparisons of competing theories offer options and insights into how and where they can be applied. This research has found that based

on the experience of returned missionaries, Kramer's fusion theory is more explanatory. This does not mean that adaptation is without merit. As mentioned above, more study involving disparate contacts must be undertaken. What is obvious, though, it that context and approach is necessary for accurate description. Additionally, theoretical approaches should consider the constantly changing nature of cultures. Both of these elements continue to lend support for fusion theory. Mumford (1974) has stated that, "Every manifestation of human culture, from ritual and speech to costume and social organization, is directed ultimately to the remodeling of the human organism and the expression of human personality" (p. 10). While cultural experiences such as those used in this study can be viewed as singular, they also can have a profound impact on the individuals in the contact. This dissertation used this contact as a backdrop for the comparison, hopefully resulting in new ways of viewing theories describing the intercultural experience.

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Appendix

Survey

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Research Project Consent Form

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Thank you for participating in this research project. This project is being conducted under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma—Norman Campus. We are interested in what happens when individuals return to their original culture after having lived in a foreign culture. You will be asked to identify experiences on this subject. These experiences will better enable us to make determinations about culture shock and re-entry. This information will remain confidential and will be reported collectively. Your name will remain confidential and all of your responses will be kept confidential. Depending on the detail of your responses, this survey will take about 15-30 minutes of your time.

## Personal Consent

I hereby give my consent to participate in this study. I understand that:

1. My participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which I am entitled.

2. I may terminate at any time prior to the completion of this study without penalty.

3. Any information I may give during my participation will be used for research purposes only. Responses will not be shared with persons who are not directly involved with this study.

4. All information I give will be kept confidential and will be used in such a way that identification of me as a participant is impossible.

5. I understand that there are no foreseeable risks for participating in this study.

6. I understand that as with all Internet communication, there is no guarantee of confidentiality from hackers.

7. I may contact the University of Oklahoma Office of Research Administration at (405) 325-4757 if I have any questions regarding my rights as a research participant.

8. I know the investigators are available to answer any questions I may have regarding this research study. If I have any questions, I can reach the investigators using the following information:

Clark Callahan
Dr. Eric Kramer
Penn State University--York
1031 Edgecome Avenue
York, PA 17403
(717) 771-4030
clarkcallahan@yahoo.com

9. Subject Pool Statement:

   By returning this survey, I understand that I am agreeing to participate in the above described study.

## Returning Home Survey

Age:

Male or Female:

Foreign culture visited:

Date returned to U.S.:

Describe your experiences upon returning to the United States after your mission was completed:

Explain the most troubling aspect of returning home:

How did you fit back in?

Describe your feeling before you left your mission. Were you excited to come home? Nervous? Would you rather have stayed a little longer?

Did you have any lapses (reverting to the foreign culture) once you got home? If so, how did you deal with them?

Do you think your time in another culture (outside of the U.S.) changed you in any way? If so, in what way and how did that effect you fitting back in to the U.S.?

Do you feel that there are any lasting consequences to your time in another culture? If so, what were they?