

August 19

"Developing a common understanding of culture:  
Knowing our own and each others culture"

1. During the XIX century and even up to the second half of this century, knowing other people's culture was, from the side of Europeans, a search for the exotic: dresses, food, habitat, rituals were described as "culture" of other people. At the same time, one's own culture was taken for granted or, when spoken about, equated with folk-dance, songs, etc..
2. With the anthropologist Ruth Benedict started in the early 40's another approach. She was given the task by the USA's government to study the Japanese mentality and to describe it so that the army could know what to do. She read all kinds of books, + documents and produced a masterpiece "The chrysanthemum and the sword" which remains a classic. There, the other people's culture is the way they think, the values by which they abide, the logic of their behaviour.
3. A lot is done by tourist agencies (and by the 400 million of people who went abroad for holidays this summer) concerning the most obvious elements of other people's culture. They popularize what was studied by a few in the XIX century... what we miss <sup>now</sup> is the understanding "from within" of the thinking, of the "soul" of other people's culture. If the spirit counts, it is the spirit of other people's culture that we ~~must~~ try to reach + understand.



4. The Knowledge of one's own culture is not an obvious process. It is essential for one's own culture identity and grows as identity affirms itself. It incorporates elements of geography as well as of history, of arts + crafts as well as of social organization, of memories from the traditional past as well as of aspirations + dreams for the future.

5. One's own culture is not a static given. If we live in our time and in our own "place", we are also contributing to the continuous re-elaboration of our own culture. We can only attempt to understand other people's culture in so far as we are actively involved in the historical shaping of our own culture. All the rest is for the museums.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro



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Meaningful events, Annual reports, International Teams Survey

1. All these documents should be distributed to all the ~~active~~ international participants.
2. Is there a possibility to convert the matter-of-fact reports into "flashes" for young people outside the Grail?
3. I hope that the International Team concentrates its survey on the future ahead: goals, strategies, steps to be taken.



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August 20

"Local culture + global trends : village + city culture"

1. The over-popularized slogan of all alternative movements is "Act locally; think globally."

Though there are more + more people acting trans-nationally, ~~the~~ the overwhelming majority acts locally. It is there the concrete life of people is shaped.

2. "Local" is not to be equated <sup>only</sup> with one's own job, village, neighbourhood, town. "Local" is a homogeneous space in terms of culture, institutions, easy connections, social organization, common responsibility. From a subjectif point of view, "local" is the space everyone is able to encompass in her spirit, relationships, activities, commitments.

3. Global trends are the expression of the ideas + events expressed in the global space. They are born sometimes from the spreading of a local or national trend in a wider space (the most flagrant examples are the "rock" music and since 89 the ideology of the market economy). They are born also sometimes in the global space itself - in international meetings, in the coalescing of the same intuitions formulated by individuals in different places.

4. Today - and that is new at the end of the XX century - the global trends are not a superstructure in relation to local culture. They relate to each other in a horizontal way because all realities are interdependent.



5. The immersion in the local culture, as it unfolds itself, leads to a capacity to grasp the global trends. Reversely, the sensitivity to the global trends helps to go deeper into the local culture.

6. Some examples of global trends and local culture connections:

- we move towards a peaceful coexistence of the former super-powers, through the reduction of arms — how big is the cut in the defense budget in your situation?

- at this moment we seem to be not anymore in a bi-polar world, in terms of "power", but in a uni-polar world

- what is needed in your situation in order to contribute to a balanced multi-polar world?

- market economy is spreading everywhere — how can you help the economy in which you live to participate freely in international trade?

- explosion of demographic growth/environment/development/massive poverty are all interconnected — where is the decisive element of this inter-connection in your situation?

7. It is clear that the local culture and the global trends are also in interaction with the national space. However, they are not degrees in a pyramid of importance. They are all part of the interdependence as a condition of our lives in this time.

