



サンプル問題
Culture
(英語エッセイ用)

• Culture

We hear that “people are the same all over the world.” Yet there are obvious differences. How can we reconcile this universality of man with the uniqueness of his many cultures?

People everywhere are impelled to satisfy certain basic needs such as for food and shelter, for love and affection, and for self-pride. Man has banded together to meet these needs. Predictably, different bands of people have developed different ways of doing so. An Eskimo might convey love and thoughtfulness to an elderly person by helping his friends and relatives hang him when he wishes to die; an American might manifest the same sentiment by attempting to prolong the life of an incurably sick elder in constant pain from cancer. The question students of intercultural communication can ask of any observed or reported behavior in the target culture is: What universal need is the individual trying to satisfy?

One universal need is to eat. The World Relief Corporation sent forty tons of Canadian cheddar cheese to refugee camps in Thailand in 1975. The Thai response: “Thank you for the soap, but it doesn’t wash clothes very well.” A doctor at the site got them to eat a little cheese by letting them think it was medicine. Not only didn’t they like the taste, they complained that when they perspired it made them smell like white people.

Five hundred years before the birth of Christ, Confucius observed that “By nature men are nearly alike; by practice they get to be wide apart.” We are by nature alike because we share the same basic needs. We all need to eat and to make friends, for instance. The different ways we go about doing this frequently puzzle and sometimes alienate people who are looking in from the outside.

To satisfy universal needs we have to employ behavioral patterns that will enable us to “bring home the bacon.” For some Southeast Asians, trapping dogs is an accepted behavioral option for getting food. In certain societies, dogs are eaten only on prescribed ritual occasions, while in others they taste good all year round. Here in Disneyland we slaughter domesticated cattle for daily food but shun the ingestion of domesticated dogs on even the most sacred of ritual occasions.

It takes us years to become socialized in the do’s and don’ts of need gratification, and it takes even longer to develop skill levels that allow us success in satisfying these needs. A lot of options, or patterns of behavior, are available in any society for the satisfaction of basic needs. In technologically complex societies such as our own, the role of “hunter of food” can be discharged through any one of 30,000 or more occupations.

The satisfaction of psychological needs, on the other hand, is less affected by technological complexity than it is by the amount of interpersonal uncertainty we feel toward the individuals with whom we must interact to satisfy a given need and by the extent to which need gratification supports one’s sense of continuity of identity. In some situations, the salient identity is self; in other cases it is group.

Besides asking what basic human need does the observed behavior help people in that society to satisfy there are important auxiliary questions to ask also: Is the observed behavior a frequently used behavioral option or is its occurrence rare in that society? What substitute behavioral patterns does the society allow for the satisfaction of that need? What complementary behavioral patterns are commonly associated with the observed behavior?

By itself, a behavior pattern is usually just a piece or fragment from one's repertoire of options designed for the gratification of any given universal need. When an observer of the human scene sees how a given behavior fits into the larger cultural context to enable the actor to satisfy a need everyone can identify with, the behavior makes sense and no longer seems quite as bizarre. It is at this point that understanding of another way of life begins to achieve significance.

” Question 1: People have to satisfy universal needs to survive wherever they live. Then, why does each culture possess its uniqueness?

Question 2: What is the universality of man?

Question 3: What is culture?

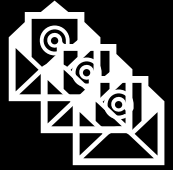
Question 4: Have you ever had any trouble or friction because of the difference in culture or values? Give some examples. And give some issues/problems caused by a lack of understanding or misunderstanding.

Question 5: About 10 years from now, you will be playing an active role in the international arena. What do you need to take an active part there and how do you think you should prepare for your future career? Write an essay on this. It would be better for you to refer to the following.

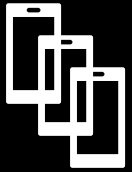
- universality of man
- culture and values
- a real observer of a different society

ありがとうございました。

LEO



yamas@leo21.net



0422-70-5205

