

# Cultural Manifest Knowledge Contributing to Deep Disagreement\*

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**Abstract.** Current research on causes of deep disagreement with respect to cultural constituents sees a tension between the collectivist indistinguishability and the highly individualist idiosyncrasy of cultural knowledge. The tension in its settlement calls for a new way, which takes both epistemic statuses of culture into consideration. This paper answers this call and attempts to build a new way by drawing insights from post-Gricean Relevance Theory. It argues that, in looking for the cultural factors that contribute to deep disagreement, we should neither merely look to the cultural knowledge indistinguishably held by the speech participants, nor restrict our attention to the idiosyncratic knowledge of each individual. Rather, we ought to take stock of cultural manifest knowledge, in the statuses of cultural manifestness, which designates the cultural competence of individual participants.

## 1 Introduction

Since its proposal in 1985 by Robert Fogelin, the concept of *deep disagreement* has gathered tremendous attention in informal logic and argumentation studies. As David Adams remarked, “Fogelin’s analysis of why some disputes (**referring to deep disagreement**) are not amenable to reasoned resolution is richly suggestive of questions for further philosophical work”. ([1], p. 66) Indeed, it has brought about new inspirations and sparked heated disputes among scholars ([3, 5, 9, 25, 35]). Centering on the problem of deep disagreement, there can be distinguished two general lines of research or two “families of theories” as Laverio terms it ([22], p. 417). The first focuses on whether deep disagreement could be Rationally Resolved, and the second concerns what are the Causes of Deep Disagreement (CsDD for short hereafter). The study in this paper falls within the purview of the second line of research whereas the first line will have to be referred to when necessary.

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Initially, Fogelin attributed CsDD to *framework propositions* which are, in his opinion, the *underlying principles*, beliefs and preferences. ([10]) However, these causes tend to be tentative and are therefore very general, thus needing to be fleshed out in detail. Three approaches, at least, to CsDD could be distinguished and they are: epistemic, linguistic and cultural. Michael Lynch and Duncan Pritchard approached CsDD, based on framework proposition, from an epistemic perspective and represented the framework proposition respectively as fundamental epistemic principles and hinge commitments.([21, 28]) Dana Philip ([25]) and Matthew Shields ([29]) resort to linguistic factors in exploring CsDD. Prominently, Manfred Kraus ([19, 20]) make attempts to pin down, from a cultural perspective, particular constituents that contribute to CsDD in an inspiring way.

Compared to other approaches, the cultural approach has strengths as it provides a more broadened perspective on the study of deep disagreement (and also argumentation). Whereas at the same time, it has to deal with the collectivist-individualist tension that has been observed in cultural anthropology as well as in communication studies. ([6, 31]) The tension in its settlement calls for a new way which takes both collectivist and individualist epistemic statuses of culture into consideration. This paper answers this call and attempts to build a new way by drawing insights from post-Gricean Relevance Theory.

Our study is structured as follows. We'll first give a brief introduction to the concept of deep disagreement and its characteristics in Section 2, and then discuss the studies that attempt to probe into the CsDD in Section 3. On the basis of the discussion, it will proceed to pointing out the tension of current studies with an aim to enlighten what the epistemic status of the local culture is to a particular individual member in deep disagreements. In Section 4, we will propose the concept of "cultural manifestness" on the basis of Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory. In Section 5, we close the study by showing its findings and shortage.

## 2 What is Deep Disagreement ?

The concept of deep disagreement literally originated from Robert Fogelin's "The logic of deep disagreement", a paper published in 1985 in the *Journal of Informal Logic*. However, in the paper, Fogelin attributed the idea of deep disagreement to Wittgenstein, saying "My thesis, or rather Wettgenstein's thesis, is that deep disagreements cannot be resolved through the use of argument, for they undercut the conditions essential to arguing" ([10], p. 5). From this quote, we may at least know that the phenomenon of deep disagreement has been noticed by Wittgenstein.

The study of deep disagreement came in the backdrop of a time when the burgeoning informal logic as a new approach to logic, gradually found its way in logic. In the late 60s and early 70s, echoing the social upheavals and protests against the

War in Vietnam in North America was the outcry in academia for focusing on real life studies, and in the area of logic on the everyday arguments taken from newspapers, the mass media, advertisements, books and political campaigns. This is what has been dubbed as *the Informal Logic Movement* ([12]), which contrasts the traditional formal logic and represents an important departure from the standard way of looking at arguments (that is, the formal logic). It is in such a field, namely informal logic, that deep disagreement sees its roots.

## 2.1 Definition

Since deep disagreement arose out of informal logic, it concerns real-life arguments rather than merely traditional formal logic's premise-premise-conclusion (PPC) propositional sets. Though Fogelin did not, directly and clearly, provide the definition of what deep disagreement is, he referred to it on several different occasions. Taken from relevant discussions by Fogelin ([10]), deep disagreement could be defined as: **an argumentative phenomenon in which both parties are able to produce reasoned arguments to the effect that both parties are not to be convinced, thus an enduring disagreement.** One important thing worthy of notice is that in Fogelin's opinion, deep disagreement could not be rationally resolved and instead hinted at a non-rational resolution.

On the basis of Fogelin's discussion, David Adams came forward with a transparent definition of deep disagreement: *one that persists (or would persist) even if the parties were fully rational, completely informed of the relevant facts, and possessed of sufficient time and ability to deliberate fully.* ([1], p. 69) Compared with Fogelin's definition, Adams' specifies, in a more explicit way, the conditions that constitute deep disagreement, and thus tells us more about the characteristics of deep disagreement.

## 2.2 Characteristics

On the basis of above discussion, three apparent characteristics of deep disagreement could be distinguished, and they are **argumentatively rational, procedurally appropriate and temporally persistent.** These characteristics could be explained by reference to the current theories of argumentation.

First of all, the arguments produced by both participants in a deep disagreement are rational in themselves. This may mean, on a means-end approach ([30]), that the premises provides strong supports to the conclusion. In other words, there is validity between the premises and the conclusion as evaluated against standards of the traditional logics and that of a formal deductive logic, which takes on universal feature. Whereas, on a broader approach in which argumentation is placed in its context of use and the contextual factors that impinge on argumentation are taken into

consideration, “being rational” is relative to the context.<sup>1</sup> For example, Generalized Argumentation theory takes argumentation as a socio-cultural activity regulated by social norms and different social communities have different logics. Thus, different socio-cultural groups have different rational standards. ([16]) For informal logicians like Ralph Johnson<sup>2</sup> and David Hitchcock, the criteria for being rational and good arguments bear close relation to the purpose of arguments as Johnson remarked “a good argument is one that achieves its purpose(s)”, and appraised with regard to Relevance, Sufficiency and Acceptability, the RSA criteria<sup>3</sup>. ([15], p. 190)

Secondly, participants involved in a deep disagreement resort to procedurally appropriate methods in making their arguments. This characteristic could be made more explicit by referring to the rules of critical discussion in van Eemeren’s pragma-dialectic model of argumentation (there are altogether 10 rules, or 10 commandments, in the critical discussion model<sup>4</sup>). To take two of the rules in the model for example. Rule one (the freedom rule) says: “discussants may not prevent each other from advancing standpoints or from calling standpoints into question” ([34], p. 190), meaning that the protagonist have the freedom to advance a standpoint and also that the antagonist have the freedom to make a challenge to the protagonist’s standpoint; Rule four (the relevance rule) dictates: “standpoint may not be defended by non-argumentation or argumentation that is not relevant to the standpoint” ([34], p. 192), meaning that the successful defense of a standpoint rests in raising argumentation that is relevant to the standpoint. In a deep disagreement, procedural appropriacy, in the same spirit, rules out any attempt by the antagonist to prevent the protagonist from advancing standpoints or any attempt by the protagonist to prevent the antagonist from making a challenge to the standpoint he or she advanced (in relation to freedom rule). Moreover, procedural appropriacy prohibits protagonist’s raising irrelevant arguments in defense of a standpoint (in relation to the relevance rule).

Thirdly, deep disagreements tend to be temporally persistent since participants in a deep disagreement could not persuade each other into accepting their standpoints and could not reach a consensus, in light of the fact that they have both produced ar-

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<sup>1</sup>Van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst attributed such an idea of relative reasonableness to Chaim Perelman and Stephen Toulmin, and pointed out, after discussing their similarities and differences, “the norm of reasonableness is potentially relativistic to a high degree: Potentially, there are as many kinds of reasonableness as there are judges”([34], p. 130).

<sup>2</sup>Johnson also sees argumentation as “an extremely powerful and valuable cultural practice” ([15] p. 11), which means different cultures have different measures with regard to rationality.

<sup>3</sup>RSA stands for the argument evaluation standards of Relevance, Sufficiency and Acceptability proposed by Ralph Johnson and Anthony Blair, initiators of informal logic in their co-authored book *Logical Self-defense*.

<sup>4</sup>The 10 rules are: the freedom rule, the burden of proof rule, the standpoint rule, the relevance rule, the unexpressed premise rule, the starting point rule, the argument scheme rule, the validity rule, the closure rule and the usage rule. ([33])

guments that are rational in their own right (being argumentatively rational) and observed the procedures that are deemed as appropriate in argumentation. In discussing the resolution of deep disagreement, some scholars, for example David Zarefsky, regarded temporal suspension as a manageable strategy. ([35]) It is interesting to note that an anthropological point of view with regard to argumentation was proposed by Christopher Tindale ([32]), who saw argumentation from a developmental perspective and adopted an interesting attitude towards the resolution of disagreement, thinking that disagreement, like an open dialogue, is not restrained by time and agreement is always temporary.

### 2.3 The theoretical significance of deep disagreement

Deep disagreement thus defined and characterized is of great use to help recognize different types of argument (disagreement). With reference to the definition and characteristics of deep disagreement, at least two other types of argument could be distinguished.

The first type that we are able to recognize is normal /ordinary argument. As Andrew Lugg pointed out, the main distinction between ordinary argument and deep disagreement lies in “whether or not the participants share sufficiently broad background of commitments to engage in genuine argument.” ([23], p. 47) In particular, these shared commitments include rational standards and appropriate procedures for resolving a disagreement. When sufficient background commitments are lacking, there arises deep disagreement (we are soon to elaborate in the next section).

However, when participants share the same conception on what counts as rational and what are the appropriate procedures for resolving disagreements, this kind of argument is the *normal /ordinary argument*. It may result from either the epistemic disparities between participants or misunderstandings of certain linguistic symbols. For instance, two people are arguing on which team won the last European Cup. In such scenarios, resorting to football record book, the shared commitment as to what procedures are appropriate, will easily tell who won the game. Therefore, *normal /ordinary argument* could be resolved by either providing sound evidence for claims or disambiguating terms that have been used.

The second type is that of the polemic argument. Kraus defined the polemic argument as “an argument that shows no noticeable attempt at resolving the basic dissent by rational means, but consists in nothing but repeated contradiction and gain-saying”([20], p. 92). It is apparent that this type of argument is not aimed at resolving the disagreement. In contrast to deep disagreement, a polemic argument is different in that it is dispelled as irrational and as a display of un-cooperative-ness while deep disagreement involves rational arguments on both sides in the hope of convincing each other. Participants in a polemic argument disregard the procedural appropriacies and provide arguments that are non-rational. In other words, the participants

argue merely for the sake of arguing, and they don't show severity and sincerity in providing reasons for their standpoints.

### 3 Causes of Deep Disagreement (CsDD)

In the light of above elaboration on the definition and characteristics of deep disagreement, the question of concern now is what leads to deep disagreement? Or in other words, what are the sources of deep disagreement?

#### 3.1 Common ground and framework propositions

To start with, Fogelin argued for the common ground, shared knowledge in argumentative exchanges, the lack of which may lead to deep disagreement. Fogelin used *framework proposition* to refer to those elements that are common and shared by both parties in an argument. He defined it as “a whole system of mutually supporting propositions (and paradigms, models, styles of acting and thinking) that constitute ... a form of life”. ([10], p. 9) That is to say, in Fogelin's eyes, when shared *framework propositions* are lacking for both parties in an argument, a deep disagreement is supposed to arise.

However, the ideas of framework propositions, as criticized by Dana Philips ([25]) and Matthew Shields ([29]), have shown a lack of clarity and specificity (“Not only is this quite unclear” “he did not tell what the underlying principles are”). Afterwards, ideas diverge greatly as to the common ground and different scholars have different proposals to make. At least three approaches to such a problem could be identified, that is, the epistemic, the linguistic and the cultural.

For the epistemic, Michael Lynch has superseded framework propositions with “Fundamental Epistemic Principles” (FEPs) or “Epistemic First Principles” as the CsDD, which “provides a criterion according to which some source of information or method for forming beliefs can be considered generally reliable. ([22], p. 421) Whereas, Duncan Princhard considered as CsDD the “hinge commitments” which are mainly implicit common knowledge that serves the gate-keeping and knowledge distribution functions. ([27]) Both fundamental epistemic principles and the hinge commitments<sup>5</sup> are the key elements that glue the epistemic system together and deep disagreement in its inception involves the clash of those concatenated systematic elements. ([27])

On the other hand, there are efforts to reduce the CsDD to the linguistic factors. For example, Dana Philip argued “they (productive arguers) must agree on the mean-

<sup>5</sup>It is debated whether common knowledge or shared knowledge is epistemic or non-epistemic. For example, John Greco has maintained that the hinge commitments of speech participant have an epistemic status of being common knowledge while his epistemic account of hinge commitments has met with challenges by Duncan Prichard who advocated a non-epistemic account of hinge commitments ([27]).

ings of at least some terms or signs in order to understand each other at all. Without these basic shared semantic beliefs, there is simply no means by which arguers can express knowledge, preferences, beliefs and reasons to each other.” ([25], p. 88) In a more direct way, James Cartlidge argued against the epistemics as the CsDD but instead argued for the linguistic complexity of the problem, saying “this irreducible complexity at the heart of language is part of the reason that the root of deep disagreement is not, fundamentally, epistemic – it can be traced back even deeper than this, to the very nature of our language itself.” ([4], p. 369)

Last but not least, there is the third approach to the study of CsDD, namely the cultural. Different from the epistemic approach which concerns universal epistemic commitments and principles, and from linguistic semantic approach to deep disagreement which builds on a common system of semantic beliefs, cultural approach to the CsDD holds a common cultural belief system as preliminary to successful argumentative exchanges. As Kraus remarked, “One of the major factors that may account for fundamental diversity of belief systems between arguers, and hence also for deep disagreement, is most certainly the cultural environment each individual has been brought up in or acculturated to”. ([20], p. 95) Arguers from the same cultural group share the collective implicit presuppositions on the basis of which culture-specific conclusions could be drawn.

Building on the cultural analytic framework of Hofstede ([13]), Kraus briefly discussed how differences between cultures with respect to the contents, functions and goals of argument may contribute to CsDD. Concerning contents (we will set aside functions and goals of argument as they are not the focus of this study), Kraus ([20]) specified three tiers / groups of cultural constituents as follows:

- 1) there are values, norms, codes, and institutions.
- 2) A second group is represented by the elements that form the collective memory of a cultural group, such as the narratives of a society’s myths and history, but also outstanding cultural achievements such as products of literature and art, etc.
- 3) A third tier is formed by the standards that regulate everyday social life and interaction, such as language, customs, habits, routines, codes of honour, sense of shame, sense of humour, eating and drinking habits, etiquette, fashion and general lifestyle.

Indeed, certain socio-cultural values, norms, institutions, myths and the like with regard to argumentation have been shown, by way of such works as in Chaim Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca ([24]), Danielle Endres ([8]), Christopher Tindale ([32]) and Shier Ju ([17, 18])<sup>6</sup>, even though these works bear very close relation to deep dis-

<sup>6</sup>Together with three other papers on the special issue of *Argumentation* edited by Christian Plantin in March 2021. ([11, 14, 26])

agreement and they have not made explicit study of how the cultural may contribute to deep disagreement. Whereas, Kraus resorted to one of or combinations of the cultural constituents specified in the three tiers as “cultural diversity” in explaining the rising of deep disagreement. Having shown how these cultural factors may work in argumentation, Kraus came to the conclusion that “cultural diversity may be one of the principal causes for deep disagreement”.<sup>7</sup> ([20], p. 99)

Compared to that of Fogelin’s and two other approaches to the problem of CsDD, the cultural approach has its own strengths such that it provides specified aspects of culture that particularly may contribute to the rise of deep disagreement. Kraus’ discussion in particular has helped to broaden the scope of the search. As to how cultural factors function in argumentation, Kraus remarked “It is only in our globalized and multicultural postmodern world that this obvious fact has become fully manifest, explicably so since culture-specific presuppositions in argumentation frequently remain implicit in terms of unstated premises”. ([20], pp. 95–96) In other words, cultural factors work in implicit ways as underpinnings of argumentation. We could see, this approach has taken the problem beyond its original scope and argumentation is now regarded as a culture-specific activity. Culture plays a significant role in the formulation of arguments. It presents a broader picture and involves more than argumentation studies have provided.

### 3.2 The tension between collectivist and individualist aspects of culture

However, culture per se has its own problems. William Dressler pointed out that the fundamental question in cultural anthropology is: “how do we describe the relationship between culture, conceptualized at least in part as a property of aggregates (i.e., groups or societies), and the individual”? ([6], p. 1) So, the problem concerning culture here is its properties (or existential statuses), that is, whether it only exists as a collective reality (a collectivist position held by Alfred Kroeber and Clifford Geertz etc.) or it exists in the individual (an individualist position maintained by Edward Sapir and Ruth Benedict etc.). For the former, culture is “a distinct phenomenal reality that stood apart and could be analyzed separately from the individual” and “exists between minds” ([6]) Whereas for the latter, culture is seen “simply as an average of the variations in the ways that individuals behave” and none other than “personality writ large”. ([6], p.2)

In view of the contrastive positions, Dressler adopted an eclectic attitude and holds a mediating position. He thinks “there is indeed a collective cultural reality that envelops us as individuals that cannot be reduced exclusively to the thoughts and

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<sup>7</sup>It is worth to note that, apart from attributing to linguistic semantic factor, James Cartledge directly repudiated attributing causes of deep disagreement to such hinge epistemics as beliefs, thoughts, patterns of reasoning etc., and instead advocated such parameters as “incompleteness inherent to human language, the radical complexity and plurality of human culture” ([4], p. 359)



feelings of individuals, and that, simultaneously, cultural reality exists within and is modified by individuals”. ([6], p.2) Whatever position is taken, it is quite apparent that the contrastive positions have revealed a tension between collectivism and individualism with regard to culture. On the one hand, culture has a collectivist aspect. It casts indistinguishable constraints upon every individual who accepts it. On the other hand, culture has an individualist aspect as well. It exists within each idiosyncratic individual who is the substantial carrier. Dressler attempted to resolve the tension by resorting to cultural consonance, a concept he takes to mean “the degree to which individuals, in their own beliefs and behaviors, approximate the prototypes for belief and behavior encoded in cultural models.” ([7], p. 5) The cultural models mandate the beliefs and behaviors for the individuals in the culture while individuals choose, to what degree, to approximate the prototypes mandated in the cultural models. The tension here is represented between individuals’ own beliefs and behaviors and the prototypical beliefs and behavior encoded in cultural models.

This tension is also observed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in the communication studies. In discussing the roles of prior knowledge in inferring new assumptions, they made a comparison of collective knowledge and idiosyncratic knowledge within the individual members of a certain group and remarked as follows:

...individuals tend to be highly idiosyncratic. Differences in life history necessarily lead to differences in memorized information. Moreover, it has been repeatedly shown that two people witnessing the same event may construct dramatically different representations of it, disagreeing not just on their interpretation of it, but in their memory of the basic physical facts. ([31], p. 16)

From the observation, the tension is laid out between a collectivist aspect of culture and that of an individualist one. It is apparent that a collectivist aspect of culture is based on such a presumption that a culture is clear to every member of that culture, which is a myth when a more practical view of an individualist aspect of culture is taken, which was clearly dispelled as invalid by Sperber and Wilson’s clear knowledge.

As observed, individuals are highly idiosyncratic, which means that each one is unique in his own ways. Such sociological parameters as gender, class, education background helps to flesh out that uniqueness of each cultural member. These observations pose, at least partly, a challenge to the collectivist view of culture, and calls for the resolution to this problem of how a culture is represented in the individuals of that culture in terms of argumentation? To relate it to our current study, the question to ask is: what is the status of culture represented in the individuals that contribute to the deep disagreement? It means that the cultural CsDD of Kraus are not solid enough and we need to consolidate the foundation to this cultural approach.

### 3.3 Inferences

To answer this question, we need to take into consideration the relation between individual cultural members and the culture itself, as the latter, understandably, always have bearings on the former. The acculturation of the members into the culture means taking in the cultural constituents as accepted ways of behaving among in-groups. Dressler's cognitive approach to cultural anthropology has made it clear that locus of culture is within individual beings and in the aggregate social groups made of human beings and thinks that individual variation in culture needs to be taken into consideration. ([6])

As to how a culture is represented in the individuals of that culture, William Dressler provided, on the basis of his cultural consonance, his insight by remarking "In terms of a broad-brush treatment of the biocultural processes involved in cultural consonance, this is all eminently plausible and consistent with a reasonable chain of inference". ([6]) So, it is by way of inferences that cultural knowledge, at least partially, is represented on the part of the individuals. This idea was shared by John Greco, who held 'the knowledge isn't always in the background, but is rather the kind of knowledge that can easily be acquired via an easy inference from knowledge that is widely shared'. ([27], p. 189) This means that inferences are involved as means of representation on the part of cultural members in their argumentative activities.

## 4 Cultural Manifestness: Resolution to the Problem

Along the line of cultural approach to the CsDD, we have so far briefly demarcated the contour of the approach and suggested the tension between the collectivist and individualist aspects of culture per se. It has also been pointed out that inferences on the part of individual cultural members are the means of cultural representation. Now, with regard to CsDD, it remains to be revealed how inferences are to be integrated in the attribution of cultural constituents as the CsDD. To solve this problem, we are going to resort to the post-Gricean Relevance theory to model such cultural representation on the part of the individual cultural members.

### 4.1 Relevance theory and Mutual Manifestness Hypothesis

Relevance theory is such a theory about communication proposed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in 1986. It approaches communication from the perspective of cognition, holding that "human cognitive processes are geared to achieving the greatest possible cognitive effect for the smallest possible processing effort". ([14], p. vii) Its main idea is phrased in this principle of relevance: Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

To Sperber & Wilson, communication processes involve relevance on both sides. The speaker uses most relevant linguistic symbols to express what he or she intends to mean, and the hearer, upon receiving the linguistic signals, formulates guesses (inferences) on what is intended by the speaker in a way that the context postulated is most relevant to the message expressed in the speaker's utterance.

Sperber and Wilson hold that "any account of human communication must thus incorporate some notion of shared information". ([31], p. 38) Based on the shared information, people make sense of what others have said and also make inferences as to what could be intended by what has been said literally. Having criticized the Mutual Knowledge Hypothesis (see [2]) which regards mutually known information as the shared information, in view of the observation on individualist idiosyncrasy, they proposed the Mutual Manifestness Hypothesis.

Mutual Manifestness Hypothesis posits that it is not those mutually known knowledge that forms the shared information, which, to them, is hard to maintain, but the mutually manifest facts that constitute the foundation of shared information for the speakers. As to what is Mutual Manifestness Hypothesis, Sperber & Wilson hold that: ([31], p. 39)

A fact is manifest to an individual at a given time if and only if he is capable at that time of representing it mentally and accepting its representation as true or probably true.

A cognitive environment of an individual is a set of facts that are manifest to him.

Here, to be manifest is to be perceptible and inferable. So, what is manifest to a person is not only what he already knows but also what he is able to know. The concept of manifestness has presented how facts are represented in human's mind. When two people have a shared cognitive environment, the facts in the shared cognitive environment are manifest to both of them, meaning that these facts in the shared cognitive environment are either perceptible or inferable to both of them. This is what is called Mutual Manifestness.

## 4.2 Cultural manifestness

As suggested above, cultural approach to the CsDD has likewise seen a tension between the collectivist indistinguishability and the individualist idiosyncrasy of cultural knowledge, and it is unrealistic to assume that every member of a culture involved in a deep disagreement has clear knowledge of that culture. We have shown that the way to resolve the tension lies in the inferences on the part of individual cultural members, which are the means of cultural representation. The problem now is how to integrate inferences on the part of individual cultural members into the attribution of cultural constituents as the CsDD. To address this problem, we think that

Relevance theory, Mutual Knowledge Hypothesis in particular, has a lot to offer in view of the following reasons.

First of all, both relevance theory and the CsDD are concerned with problems in human communication. As suggested above, relevance theory aims at elaborating, by way of the principle of relevance and on basis of communicators' prior knowledge, how linguistic stimuli work with a cognitive inferential construct to produce implied communicative meanings. Similarly, the CsDD explores the reasons that contribute to deep disagreement, a communicative disfluency in argumentative activities. Second, the resolution of the collectivist-individualist tension in the cultural approach to the CsDD looks to a theory that can provide some potential tools. Mutual manifestness does not assume that every individual of a culture involved in a deep disagreement has clear knowledge of that culture. Thus, it can serve as such a theoretical tool, and has the potential to deal with how cultural knowledge is to be held in the individual cultural members (by inference).

Thus, based on these reasons, cultural manifestness is hereby proposed, in parallel to the concept of mutual manifestness, to characterize the state of culture to individuals with two adaptations:

A cultural phenomenon is manifest to an individual of that culture at a given time if and only if he is capable at that time of presenting that phenomenon and acknowledging it as acceptable or potentially acceptable.

A cultural environment of an individual is a set of cultural phenomena that are manifest to him.

In analogy to mutual manifestness, cultural manifestness involves both perceptibility and inferentiality, which means that even though a particular individual living in a certain culture may not have clear knowledge of the culture itself due to such reasons as personal interests, preferences, education and the like, he or she is still able to present certain phenomena as culturally acceptable or unacceptable based on his or her cultural ability which is formed out of the acculturation process. This kind of cultural manifest knowledge is the result of the inferential processes conducted by particular speech participants of aforesaid culture.

This concept has advantages over the collectivist assumption that everyone in a culture has clear knowledge of that culture. Firstly, it does not advocate a privileged idiosyncratic knowledge of each individual to the exclusion of a mutually acknowledged cultural environment; secondly, cultural inferenceability is stressed here to make a pre-emptive explanation of the situation in which individuals are not clear in terms of the cultural postulates due to a lack of interest, or notice, or education. Thirdly, from the psychological perspective, cultural manifest knowledge existing in individuals has more psychological plausibility.

We may understand it as a kind of cultural ability with which individuals of that culture apprehend and acknowledge cultural phenomena as understandable or acceptable. To make it more specific, this cultural ability has at least three parts: linguistic ability, inferential ability and memorized information.

It is well acknowledged in linguistics that language is one of the most important carriers of culture. On the one hand, language imposes certain structures on its users so that people speaking one language should look at the world in certain ways different from people of another language. Besides the outlook, language is never neutral and language uses, like idioms, may reflect the values or attitudes of the speakers. On the other hand, people differ from one another while their language production and comprehension would not differ too much from one another after a certain age, which means after certain age their phonetic, syntactic as well as semantic knowledge have been well mastered. This linguistic ability enables people of a speech community to have a shared set of communicative symbols on which other capacities are dependent.

Inferential ability, within cultural manifestness, is the cultural ability of individuals, which enables people of a particular community to derive new assumptions based on assumptions that those people involved have. This ability is closely related to the memorized information. It is this memorized information that forms the basis of inferences. Memorized information is the information or knowledge that an individual obtains in the process of his or her growth. These three aspects of cultural ability are the sites for cultural postulates to reside in, therefore giving the cultural manifestness certain degrees of specificity.

### **4.3 Cultural manifest knowledge contributing to deep disagreement**

Till now, we have shown the status of culture in the perspective of particular individual of that culture. How is it, then, related to CsDD in question? As we have seen, attributions of CsDD to cultural factors like that of Kraus' have unanimously taken a collectivist perspective toward culture itself, while we have demonstrated that an individualist perspective toward culture is more realistic attitude toward the status of culture.

As to deep disagreement, cultural manifest knowledge has captured the realistic status of culture in individuals. Cultural manifestness is weaker than the collectivist claim that members of a culture have a clear knowledge of the cultural phenomena or postulates. The corollary of this collectivist perspective for deep disagreement is that it is merely on the general collective level that deep disagreement is explained, thus leaving the more realistic perspective ignored. If cultural manifestness is adopted, a more realistic cultural CsDD is then revealed. Thus, it is this paper's main point that it is cultural manifest knowledge that is at least partially the cause of deep disagreement, rather than only the generalized cultural postulates. In other words, in looking for the cultural factors that contribute to deep disagreement, we should not merely look

to the cultural knowledge indistinguishably held by the speech participants. Rather, we ought to take stock of cultural manifest knowledge, in the statuses of cultural manifestness, which designates the cultural competence of individual participants.

#### 4.4 A case study of cultural manifest knowledge

In the above, the exploration is, to a large extent, tentative and theoretical and may understandably appear to be very general. It remains to reveal how cultural manifest knowledge could help explain the causes to deep disagreement. Here in the following, we have a case that displays certain degree of disagreement, likely to be deep disagreement. It is about the oriental and occidental differences concerning strength of a particular argument scheme, viz., argument by transitivity<sup>8</sup>. The case is from the Chinese Confucian classic, *the Great Learning*. Here is the case:

The Ancients, who desired intelligence to play its educative role through the whole country, first established order in their own principality; desiring to establish order in their own principality, they first regulated their family life; desiring to regulate their family life, they first improved their own characters; desiring to improve their own characters, they first purified their hearts; desiring to purify their hearts, they sought for sincerity in their thoughts; seeking for sincerity in their thoughts, they applied themselves first to perfect knowledge; this perfect knowledge consists in acquiring a sense of reality. ([24], pp. 230–231)

Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca pointed out the differences of strengths of argument by transitivity between the occidental and oriental cultures, saying “the passage from condition to consequence is based at each stage on different relations. Therefore the transitivity, to our occidental eyes at least, is only loose and weakly formal”. ([24], p. 231) The differences are that, to the occidental eyes, this argument is only “loose and weakly formal”, while to the oriental eyes, this argument appears to be with high strength. Why are the differences?

We could not assume that people raised in these cultures all have clear knowledge of relationships between “the whole country” and “the principality”, between “the principality” and “the family life”, between “the family life” and improving one’s own characters and so on. Then, why should the argument by transitivity still appear to be with high strength to the oriental eyes? We may tentatively resort to cultural manifest knowledge proposed above as a possible way to answer this question as follows: Raised in the oriental Confucian cultures, that is, individuals form the set of

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<sup>8</sup>Argument by transitivity is a type of argumentation scheme which is based on transitive relations between subjects under discussion. According to Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca ([24], p. 227), it may have the following different forms: 1) a R b; b R c; therefore a R c. 2) a R b, c R b, therefore a R c, for example: Our friends’ friends are our friends.

cultural phenomena/ knowledge that are manifest to themselves (for example, Confucian political ethics put a lot of emphasis on the relationship between individuals and the whole country). From these cultural phenomena, they get, in our case, their cultural manifest knowledge such as “desiring intelligence to play its educative role through the whole country” preconditioned by “establish order in their own principality”; “establish order in their own principality” preconditioned by “regulated their family life” and so on. The cultural manifest knowledge is the basis on which oriental people make inference with regard to the conclusiveness of the argument by transitivity, thus rendering the argument strong to the oriental eyes.

## 5 Concluding Remarks

What this paper has done so far is attempt to tentatively build a new way which neither looks to the cultural knowledge indistinguishably held by the speech participants, nor restricts our attention on the idiosyncratic knowledge of each speech participant, in explaining the CsDD from the culture-anthropological perspective.

To achieve this goal, this paper has drawn on Sperber & Wilson’s Relevance Theory and borrowed the concept of *Mutual Manifestness* and proposed *Cultural Manifestness* for our own purpose. Based on an observation of cultural status, this paper points out the problems of Manfred Kraus’ cultural dimension, and employs the newly proposed concept of Cultural Manifestness to solve the problem that Kraus’ perspective encounters. It’s also pointed out that there are tentatively at least three elements for Cultural Manifestness and they are linguistic ability, inferential ability and memorized information. As the study has been tentative and, to a large extent, highly theoretical, the analysis in this paper tends to be quite preliminary and more refined work needs to be done in this regard.

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## 导致深度分歧的显性文化知识

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### 摘 要

目前对导致深度分歧的文化原因方面的研究存在着一种紧张关系,它存在于文化知识的集体不可区分性与高度个人特质性之间。要解决这种紧张关系,我们需要一种新的方法。本文在后格莱斯关联理论的基础上,提出文化显性知识,试图探索解决上述紧张关系的新方法。本文认为,在寻找导致深度分歧的文化因素时,我们既不应该只从集体角度关注论证参与者所持有的难以区分的文化知识,也不应该只从个体角度关注个人的特殊知识,我们应该从包含论证参与者文化能力的文化显性知识方面入手探寻导致深度分歧的文化原因。

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