

Cross-Cultural Psychology as a Scholarly Discipline

On the Flowering of Culture in Behavioral Research

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A history of cross-cultural psychology shows it to be an increasingly important part of modern psychology. Despite widespread agreement that culture is an indispensable component in the understanding of human behavior, there are noteworthy conceptual differences regarding the ways in which culture and behavior interrelate. Perspectives include absolutism and relativism, each with methodological consequences for such contemporary research concerns as values (including individualism–collectivism), gender differences, cognition, aggression, intergroup relations, and psychological acculturation. Societal concerns relating to these topics are briefly described. When all of psychology finally takes into account the effects of culture on human behavior (and vice versa), terms like cross-cultural and cultural psychology will become unnecessary.

Can it still be necessary, as we approach the millennium (as measured on the Western, Christian calendar), to advocate that all social scientists, psychologists especially, take culture seriously into account when attempting to understand human behavior? This has been a self-evident proposition to all whose work has long been identified with cross-cultural psychology (e.g., Berry et al., 1997) and its many constituent parts—“cultural psychology” (Shweder & Sullivan, 1993), “ethnopsychology” (Diaz-Guerrero, 1975), “societal psychology” (Berry, 1983), and “*la psychologie interculturelle*” (Camilleri & Vinsonneau, 1996)—as well as its closest related disciplines—“psychological anthropology” (Bock, 1994; Hsu, 1972; LeVine, 1973, 1982), and “comparative anthropology” (Ember & Ember, 1988; Munroe & Munroe, 1997; Whiting & Child, 1953). It was long ago asserted, as if it were a dictum, namely, “human behavior is meaningful *only* when viewed in the sociocultural context in which it occurs” (e.g., Segall, 1979, p. 3, emphasis added)!

The present article, directed especially to the readers of the *American Psychologist*, has several precursors. In this journal, there have been several articles calling for more attention to culture by psychological researchers (e.g., Betancourt & Lopez, 1993; Cole, 1984; Fowers & Richardson, 1996; Gergen, Gulerce, Lock, & Misra,

1996; Greenfield, 1997b; Phinney, 1996; Triandis & Brislin, 1984).¹ Nevertheless, psychology in general has long ignored “culture” as a source of influence on human behavior and still takes little account of theories or data from other than Euro-American cultures.

It is not easy to understand why psychology has been so reluctant to recognize culture. Perhaps the answer lies in an observation (attributed to Marshall McLuhan): “It’s a cinch [that] fish didn’t discover water.”

Just as clearly, psychologists didn’t discover culture. Any context for human behavior that is so all-encompassing as culture is for the developing individual is likely to be ignored, or if noticed, to be taken for granted. And just as quickly as the fish out of water discovers its importance, so too has psychology recently had to contend with culture as an important foundation for the discipline. As national societies become increasingly diverse and international contacts become common, psychologists can no longer assume an acultural or a unicultural stance.

An inventory done several years ago of the contents of undergraduate textbooks in psychology revealed that culture in relation to behavior had been nearly always absent, or, at best, either perfunctory or an afterthought (Lonner, 1990). However, we can applaud several introductory psychology texts that, during the past few years have made solid attempts to rectify the situation (e.g., Sternberg, 1995; Wade & Tavris, 1996; Westen, 1996). Despite these efforts, there is still widespread neglect. Perhaps this neglect reflects some misunderstanding of

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¹ Of these, the Triandis and Brislin article was the first and last in this journal to emphasize *cross-cultural* (as distinguished from cultural) psychology. The present article reintroduces this emphasis on cross-cultural psychology.



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what the many varieties of cross-cultural psychologists do, what kinds of research are carried out, what the implications of the field's research findings might be, and how the field has evolved from its beginnings some four decades ago. To clarify these matters is the intent of this paper.

The developers of modern cross-cultural psychology (see below for a brief history) meant it to be unabashedly multicultural and maximally inclusive (see Berry & Dasen, 1974), although it has often fallen short of these ideals. Berry and Dasen discussed three complementary goals that were proposed for the emerging field: to *transport and test* our current psychological knowledge and perspectives by using them in other cultures; to *explore and discover* new aspects of the phenomenon being studied in local cultural terms; and to *integrate* what has been learned from these first two approaches in order to generate more nearly universal psychology, one that has pan-human validity. The existence of *universals* in other disciplines (for example, biology, linguistics, sociology, and anthropology) provided some basis for the assumption that we would be able to work our way through to this third goal with some success.

Along the way, questions have been raised regarding the best name for the enterprise. For instance, Lonner (1992) expressed concern that "cross-cultural psychology" might appear too limited or restricted, because of its unfortunate historical association with two-culture contrasts—the kind of research sorties that lead to uninterpretable data, as Campbell (1961) pointed out. Also, to some observers, this name may call to mind an overly intense focus on quantitative, reductionist methods and a shunning of more innovative, qualitative techniques. Over the years, the debate was quiet, bubbling up only in the 1990s (e.g., Dasen, 1993; Davidson, 1994; Diaz-Guer-

rero, 1993; Malpass, 1993; Poortinga & van de Vijver, 1994; Segall, 1993), but a better name for the enterprise than "cross-cultural psychology" never emerged. Our position on the name issue is that what cross-cultural psychology is called is not nearly as important as what it does—to ensure that the broadest range of psychological topics be explored within the broadest possible spectrum of ethnicity and culture and by diverse methodologies.

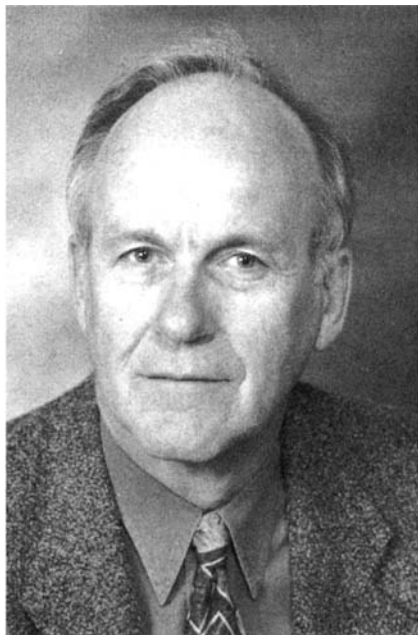
Cross-cultural psychology, defined broadly as we do here, comprises many ways of studying culture as an important context for human psychological development and behavior. Articulate spokespersons for *cultural psychology* (e.g., Boesch, 1991; Cole, 1996; Shweder & Sullivan, 1993) offer one approach for focusing on culture as integral to all psychological functioning, with culture and psychology viewed as "mutually constitutive phenomena" (Miller, 1997, p. 88). Cross-cultural psychology consists mostly of diverse forms of comparative research (often explicitly and always at least implicitly) in order to discern the influence of various cultural factors, many of them related to ethnicity, on those forms of development and behavior.

In this comparative mode, culture is treated as comprising a set of independent or contextual variables affecting various aspects of individual behavior (Lonner & Adamopoulos, 1997; Segall, 1984). Cross-cultural research typically seeks evidence of such effects.

Aware of the famous early definition of culture by the anthropologist Herskovits, who stated, "Culture is the man-made part of the environment" (Herskovits, 1948, p. 17), cross-cultural researchers occasionally seek as well the influence of individuals' behavior on ever-changing culture. When doing so, the independent and dependent variables are interchanged, and their distinction becomes blurred. But more often than not, the search is for culture's effect on behavior.

That such a comparative research enterprise, albeit clearly feasible, is difficult has been confronted constructively from the start, by some of psychology's most respected methodologists (e.g., Campbell, 1964). We have consistently argued that all psychologists necessarily carry their own culturally based perspectives with them when studying in other cultures; as restated recently, "these perspectives were initial sources of bias (usually Euro-American), to be confronted and reduced as work progressed in the other culture(s)" (Berry, in press).

The modern era of cross-cultural psychology began shortly after the end of World War II. Its rapid expansion may be attributed to a shared motivation to understand the attendant horrors of the war and to expand the intellectual horizons of psychology beyond parochial, nationalistic boundaries. With the increased salience of international perspectives accompanying the cold war, the study of human behavior in cultural context evolved particularly rapidly. The half decade 1966–1970 saw the start of the quarterly *Cross-Cultural Psychology Bulletin* (originally called the *Cross-Cultural Social Psychology Newsletter*, published aperiodically) and the *International Journal of Psychology*, as well as an initial *Directory of Cross-*



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Cultural Psychological Research (Berry, 1968). These years were marked also by the publication of a multi-societal study of cultural influences on visual perception (Segall, Campbell, & Herskovits, 1966), a paperback volume entitled *Cross-Cultural Studies* (Price-Williams, 1969), and the inauguration of the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* in 1970. By the 1980s, enough research had been done to justify two major handbooks, one in cross-cultural psychology generally (Triandis et al., 1980) and the other in human development (Munroe, Munroe, & Whiting, 1981).

Albeit vigorous, the discipline was marked by some conceptual and methodological weaknesses. In the early days, there was, far too often, a naive application of Euro-American theoretical notions and, worse, instruments designed, produced, and validated in Euro-American settings to research conducted in other settings. This approach, dubbed "imposed *etic*" (Berry, 1969) most often yielded uninterpretable "cross-cultural" differences. Recently, it was once again criticized (Greenfield, 1997b) appropriately, if belatedly. On the other hand, when it could be demonstrated that the instrument, although produced in one setting, was nonetheless applicable in many other settings, differences obtained with that instrument could be taken as reflecting some cultural variables. When, in addition, those differences were predicted on the basis of a theory (as in the case of Brunswikian theory of phenomenal absolutism predicting cultural differences in optical illusion susceptibility), empirical findings became highly interpretable, if not immune from plausible alternative interpretations (e.g., Segall, Campbell, & Herskovits, 1966).

Following the linguist Pike (1967), many cross-cultural psychologists used the terms *etic* and *emic* to refer, respectively, to (a) comparative, across-cultures studies,

and to (b) careful, internal exploration of psychological phenomena in local cultural terms. When such emic research succeeded, it would be expected to provide indigenous, culturally based meanings that were most probably missed when making the initial imposed *etic* approach to psychological phenomena in various cultures. Consequently, one could emerge with what has been termed a "derived *etic*" (Berry, 1969), which is clearly to be preferred over an "imposed *etic*."

If extensive use of emic approaches in a number of cultures produced instruments that satisfy the derived *etic* criteria, then comparative examination with such an instrument of behavior in various cultures could yield either differences or similarities in psychological functioning. If obtained behavioral differences were superficial, but nonetheless, reflective of underlying shared psychological phenomena, even these could support notions of psychological universals. For example, the Segall, Campbell, and Herskovits study (1966) obtained cross-cultural differences in illusion susceptibility, but these differences reflected a universally shared process of active interpretation of ambiguous stimuli by perceivers in all the cultures sampled in ways that were always "ecologically valid" (Brunswik & Kamiya, 1953).

In the extreme, and probably late in the game, even a universal psychology might emerge, but we argue that universality can never be assumed in advance. Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen (1992) posed three theoretical orientations in cross-cultural psychology, which they called "absolutism," "relativism," and "universalism." The absolutist position is one that assumes that human phenomena are basically the same (qualitatively) in all cultures: honesty is honesty, and depression is depression, no matter where one observes it. From the absolutist perspective, culture is thought to play little or no role in either the meaning or display of human characteristics. Assessments of such characteristics are likely to be made using standard instruments (perhaps with linguistic translation), and interpretations are made facily, but most likely erroneously, without alternative culturally based views taken into account. This orientation resembles, of course, the imposed *etic* approach that was characteristic of some early cross-cultural work. Cross-cultural psychology is still stereotyped and unfairly criticized for having used this research mode in its earlier incarnations. It is true, however, that although a priori absolutism is deplored, a universally applicable psychological theory remains a tantalizing and presumably attainable goal for many cross-cultural psychologists. They seek it in a more sophisticated manner than they used to.

Cultural relativism, a term advanced by the anthropologist Boas (1911) and expanded and disseminated by Herskovits (1948), was initially meant primarily to warn against invalid cross-cultural comparisons, flavored by ethnocentric value judgments. Berry et al. (1992) appropriated the word relativism to designate the opposite of absolutism. Thus, for relativists, in this sense, there is typically little or no interest in intergroup similarities, a stark contrast with absolutists, who assume there to



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be species-wide basic processes that produce many similarities.

Absolutists would be prone to attempt context-free measurements, using standard psychological instruments, frequently making evaluative comparisons, and, as a consequence, open themselves up to the error of using “imposed etics” when working in societies other than their own. In contrast, relativists would lean toward strictly emic research, considering context-free concepts and their measurement to be impossible. They would try to avoid all comparisons, which, if made at all, would be as nonevaluative as possible.

Few scholars are found at either pole. However, for some years, one could find many European and American experimental psychologists who stubbornly denied that cultural factors affected psychological processes, and they proceeded to accumulate culture-bound findings that they believed to be universally valid for all of humankind. In parallel, some adherents of the cultural psychology movement (e.g., Shweder & Sullivan, 1993) sometimes place themselves quite close to the relativist pole, emphasizing that psychological processes and structures vary in such fundamental ways in different cultural contexts that they are beyond comparison, or nearly so. Although this orientation resembles the one currently espoused by “cultural” psychologists, many do make comparisons (see Miller, 1997).

Where are most cross-cultural psychologists on these dimensions defined in the extremes by absolutism and relativism? The answer is somewhere in between, where they strike a balance, revealing an orientation that borrows from both of the poles. Cross-cultural psychologists typically expect both biological and cultural factors to influence human behavior, but, like relativists, assume that the role of culture in producing human variation both

within and across groups (especially across groups) is substantial. For example, Poortinga, van de Vijver, Joe, and Van de Koppel (1987) examined cultural variables very carefully (a process they call “peeling the onion”) in order to reveal the “psychic unity of mankind” at the core of culture. Of course, the outer layers of the “onion” are important cultural phenomena in their own right.

So, many cross-cultural psychologists allow for similarities due to species-wide basic processes but consider their existence subject to empirical demonstration. This kind of universalism assumes that basic human characteristics are common to all members of the species (i.e., constituting a set of psychological givens) and that culture influences the development and display of them (i.e., culture plays different variations on these underlying themes, called “variform universals” by Lonner, 1980). Assessments are based on the presumed underlying process, but measures are developed in culturally meaningful versions. Comparisons are made cautiously, using a wide variety of methodological principles and safeguards, whereas interpretations of similarities and differences are attempted that take alternative culturally based meanings into account (see van de Vijver & Leung, 1997a, 1997b). This orientation resembles the derived etic approach. It is characteristic of much of contemporary cross-cultural psychology and is also advocated by some cultural psychologists (e.g. Greenfield, 1997a). It thus serves as a communal basis for convergence of the various approaches to cross-cultural psychology (see Lonner & Adamopoulos, 1997, and Poortinga, 1997).

What Is Culture and Where Is It Found?

Earlier conceptions of culture included the views that (a) culture was “out there” to be studied, observed, and described; (b) culture was a shared way of life of a group of socially interacting people, and (c) culture was transmitted from generation to generation by the processes of enculturation and socialization. In recent years, along with the emergence of more cognitive approaches in many branches of psychology, individuals have come to be viewed in cross-cultural psychology not as mere pawns or victims of their cultures but as cognizers, appraisers, and interpreters of them. In contrast, from a “social construction” perspective (Misra & Gergen, 1993), culture is not a given but is created daily through interactions between individuals and their surroundings. *Cultural psychology*, which has been defined as “a designation for the comparative study of the way culture and psyche make up each other” (Shweder & Sullivan, 1993, p. 498), emphasizes this constructive characteristic of culture and places culture not outside individuals, where it influences their behavior, but “as an intersubjective reality through which worlds are known, created, and experienced” (Miller, 1997, p. 103).

A perspective in which culture and the self are seen as interdependent (Miller, 1997, pp. 88–89) has been a part of cross-cultural psychology for some time. There are numerous examples of interactions between context and person (e.g., feedback relationships in the ecocultural

framework; see Berry et al., 1992), and this perspective was explicit in Herskovits's (1948) definition of culture, so it is certainly not exclusive to those calling themselves "cultural" psychologists (Segall, 1993).

Definitions of culture abound (see Munroe & Munroe, 1997, p. 173, for a succinct discussion), but the most meaningful way to grasp the concept of culture as it exists in the field of cross-cultural psychology is to consider how it is conceptualized in the research, in short, to glean its operational definition.

As noted by Munroe and Munroe (1997), most cross-cultural psychologists, whose ultimate concern is with individual behavior, use the concept of culture either to identify contexts or to designate a set of antecedent variables.

Typically, culture is used as a label for a group within a set of groups (e.g., groups constituting nationalities resident in different parts of the world or ethnic groups, often of varying national origins, living within a multicultural society) being compared on some behavioral dimension. As such, the term is an overarching label for a set of contextual variables (political, social, historical, ecological, etc.) that are thought by the researcher to be theoretically linked to the development and display of a particular behavior.

To cite only one example, in recent years, many researchers have shown interest in the notion of individualism–collectivism as a cultural characteristic and have predicted behavioral differences across national samples that are presumed to lie at various places along the individualism–collectivism dimension (see Kagitçibasi, 1997, for a thorough review of this research).

What Did Cross-Cultural Psychology Come From?

Both a delineation of human diversity and a search for psychological universals (goals that are described as often in "tension" by Jahoda and Krewer [1997, p. 4] in their history of cross-cultural psychology), have consistently shaped research in this field from its modern "institutionalization" in the 1960s. Jahoda and Krewer showed in a comprehensive manner how various precursors of these complimentary goals can be found in European Enlightenment writings of the 17th through the early 19th centuries and were reflected in empirical research before the dawn of the 20th century; sometimes those precursors were little more than general observations, as by Francis Galton in Africa in the late 19th century, but occasionally there was systematic data collection with laboratory instrumentation, as by W. H. R. Rivers in New Guinea in 1898 (Jahoda and Krewer, 1997). In the modern era, now some 40 years old, research has focused on phenomena of fundamental importance in general psychology, with particular emphasis on abnormal psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, and social psychology (listed here alphabetically, not in the order of importance or in the number of studies falling under these rubrics²).

In all of this research there is either a search for differences across groups or for similarities, or, as is increasingly the case, for both. Jahoda and Krewer (1997, p. 4) confirmed that all cross-cultural psychologists, regardless of perspective (toward absolutist or tending to relativist) must cope with, in order to understand human behavior in different cultures "the diversity of human behavior in the world and the link between individual behavior and the cultural context in which it occurs" (Berry et al., 1992, p. 1).

What Kinds of Research Are Carried Out?

Most studies in the field involve data collection from at least two cultural groups, but, as noted by Van de Vijver and Leung (1997b, p. 259), some studies are monocultural, with comparisons made, at least implicitly, with data collected previously, usually by other researchers and often in one researcher's own society. It is generally agreed that a minimum of three cultures should be involved if meaningful comparisons are to be made, for, as Campbell (1961) noted, all studies that consist solely of single-pair comparisons are uninterpretable. By implication, of course, monocultural studies—if not accompanied by an examination of appropriately comparative data from at least one other culture—are also uninterpretable. This fact has inspired the notion of the "unconfounding function of cross-cultural research" (Campbell, 1961; Segall, 1979; Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, 1990) in recognition of the fact that potentially important variables (e.g., the father's roles as mother's lover and as boy's disciplinarian in middle-class Viennese society) are separable only by going elsewhere. By so doing, Bronislaw Malinowski found the former role attached to fathers and the latter to maternal uncles in the Trobriand Islands (where he found that all the ambivalence was attached to the uncles). And this, of course, is why cross-cultural research is essential! Without it, whole generations of psychologists might have continued to believe that the Oedipus Complex, revealed by intergenerational sexual jealousy, as depicted by Freud, is a psychological reality, rather than an unfortunate guess by a clever clinician, rooted in his own time and place.

The Implications of Cross-Cultural Psychology's Research Findings

First (and probably foremost), our findings are meant to contribute to the understanding of human behavior. In this respect, cross-cultural psychology is, in its intent, as "pure" as general psychology in its incarnation as a "science of human behavior." (And because cross-cultural psychology studies behaviors always in cultural

² Topics in social psychology have been studied cross-culturally more than any other domain, followed by developmental psychology. There have also been many studies involving "personality" as noted in a special issue of the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Church & Lonner, 1998).

context, it even provides correctives to culture-bound interpretations of data previously collected in a single society, where the potentially relevant variables were inextricably confounded.)

Because cross-cultural psychology is descended from modern, scientific, general psychology, it is part of an intellectual tradition, rooted in Europe but developed mainly in America, that was a reaction to an earlier European tradition of political and social philosophy. Rejecting this as "soft," the late 19th century founders of psychology followed the Wundtian laboratory tradition and adopted the controlled experiment as the sine qua non of scientific research.

But, as Jahoda and Krewer (1997, p. 14) recently reminded us, the same Wundt published 10 volumes on *Volkerpsychologie* and commented, "only the individual psychology and *Volkerpsychologie* together constitute the whole of psychology" (Wundt, 1908, p. 228). And so, with one foot planted in the laboratory, the early cross-cultural psychologists, like Rivers, put the other foot forward and undertook data-gathering expeditions.

Beyond its historical links with general psychology, cross-cultural psychology has diverse influences, including some that originate in such social-science disciplines as anthropology, sociology, history, and political science among others. For the most part nonlaboratory disciplines, these disciplines have long labored in the field, out there among real people in real places and at real times. Willing to settle for truth in context, both historical and cultural context, cross-cultural psychologists take the world as it is and the people in it as they are—or, at least, as they perceive them to be. What is lost in scientific control of the subject matter is, we believe, more than made up by the enhanced validity, especially the ecological validity, of our findings. In the process, we endeavor to give all human beings the respect and understanding they deserve.

Cross-cultural psychology is also an inherently international discipline. Its practitioners include many whose origins and present home bases are beyond the European American world. Even though their training has likely exposed them to Western scientism, their everyday surroundings cry out for their work to be useful. For psychologists trained in the West, but who work in third-world settings, the imperative to do something useful³ is also very much there. Even when we do "scientific research" in such settings, we feel a strong, compelling urge to give something back to people who have allowed us to study them.

Furthermore, because we often do our research in settings where human problems are so dramatically visible—in countries where poverty, disease, and suffering of many kinds are daily realities—and because we have seen other places where the world is a better place, we know that the best of all possible worlds is a goal not yet attained, but well worth pursuing.

Even when we work in technologically developed nations—because most of them enjoy considerable cultural diversity—we are often confronted by an uneven distribution across ethnic groups of well-being on the one hand and various kinds of distress on the other, and

we sense an ethical imperative not to paper over these inequities with dispassionate research reports. So our work lends itself not merely to discussions of scholarly findings but to their social applications as well.

Among the topics the field has pursued, there are many that have yielded findings with practical implications.

In the field of cognition, we have come to know, among other things, that there are differences between identifiable groups in performance in many different domains (e.g., Irvine and Berry, 1988; Poortinga, 1983), including in some classical measures of "intellectual competence," such as IQ, and scholastic aptitude tests of various kinds. But we also know well the inherent faults of such measures, and we know the many other variables that correlate both with membership in the various groups compared (e.g., income and wealth) and with performance, so we can support in a compelling way policies that are designed to enhance the equality of opportunity and oppose vigorously the use of test measures as selection devices into experiences that prepare people for subsequent opportunities to improve their lot in life.

Implicit in cross-cultural studies of values (e.g., Smith and Schwartz, 1997; Triandis, 1995) are guidelines for improvements in intergroup relations, the global marketplace, and international diplomacy and negotiation. We know about many ways in which peoples in different parts of the world, and peoples in the same part but who have come from other parts, differ from each other in their approach to life. One dimension among these that is currently receiving considerable research attention is "individualism–collectivism" (Kagitçibasi, 1997; Triandis, 1995). The many differences in conceptualizations of the world affect what people in various societies think is fair, for example, or what they think matters a lot, a little, or not at all. These kinds of differences necessarily affect how we relate to each other when those in the relationship come armed with their own values, which are sometimes different from those of the persons with whom they are interacting (Gudykunst & Bond, 1997). So professors interacting with international students (Brislin & Horvath, 1997), clinicians with clients (Beardsley & Pedersen, 1997; Tanaka-Matsumi & Draguns, 1997), diplomats with their opposite numbers in negotiation sessions, and businessmen and women operating in the global market place (see Hui & Luk, 1997) are all prone to errors of judgment, interpretation, and self-presentation, errors that vary from the trivial, through the humorous, to the disastrous. Not surprisingly, a whole field of training has grown up around the issues in intercultural understanding, and in these domains, an applied cross-cultural psychology clearly exists (Bhagat & Landis, 1996).

Cross-cultural research on gender (see Best & Williams, 1997) has also resulted in applicable findings of

³ If the need is expressed or acknowledged by the potential beneficiaries, if assistance would be welcomed, and if the psychologist has the wherewithal to provide it.

considerable social import. The core finding in this domain is, of course, the cultural embeddedness of gender-related phenomena, from sex differences in behavior, to relations between the sexes. An understanding of traditional gender roles, which are both reflective of and supportive of traditional patterns of relations between the sexes, as rooted in economic, religious, political, and other cultural forces, should not support the continuation of any policies or programs that permit discrimination against one of the sexes, including policies that undergird unequal pay for equal work, or differential access to certain kinds of careers or to the training programs that lead to careers. Also, a form of behavior that is so unforgivably common in many societies—spouse battering, rape, and male bullying of females—might be reduced were we better able to articulate the relationship of such behaviors to culturally based “common wisdom” concerning how men ought to behave toward women. In this respect, the vicious cycle of beliefs in superiority and inferiority, and the use of such beliefs to justify continuing discriminatory practices, which in turn reinforce the beliefs and so on, round and round, as if in perpetuity, might be broken were we to break the stranglehold of outmoded beliefs about the basis of differences between the sexes.

An understanding of the involvement of gender role phenomena in the story of crime and punishment in our societies (see the recent review by Segall, Ember, & Ember, 1997) should inform our thinking on who commits crimes and why, and therefore, what should be done to reduce the potential for criminal behavior. That most crimes in most societies are committed by adolescent boys, and how this is rooted in culture (and not only in biology) would lead to programs that focus on the availability of role models, on family supports, and other preventative measures, rather than on more and more punitive responses, which probably do nothing to reduce crime, but instead much toward increasing it. How this same set of ideas from cross-cultural psychology enables us to understand the ways that notions of manhood, honor, and ethnic pride are involved in many contemporary wars may well be one of the most important potential contributions of cross-cultural psychology.

As noted earlier, cross-cultural psychology is concerned with the influence of cultural diversity wherever it is found. Historically, much of the research was carried out internationally, “in the field,” by doing “fieldwork” with “other” cultures. More recently, there has been a substantial increase in concern with cultural diversity within culturally diverse societies (Berry & Annis, 1988). This new emphasis (variously termed “ethnic,” or “acculturation” psychology) and “*la psychologie interculturelle*,” mainly in the French language tradition (e.g., Clanet, 1990; Retschitzky, Bossel-Lagos, & Dasen, 1989; Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre, 1997), has begun to treat cultural communities living together in plural societies as “cultures” in their own right (rather than as mere “minorities”). Examples are immigrants and refugees, indigenous peoples and ethnocultural groups that continue to manifest distinct cultural features years (even generations) after contact with more dominant

cultural groups. As intercultural contacts increase in all parts of the world, interest in this area of psychology will almost certainly grow.

In part this interest has been stimulated by the fact that many cultural attributes remain important to people and that they serve as important contexts for psychological development even while they are in the process of changing during acculturation. There are two important areas of study in this evolving field. In one, there is a domestic parallel to the international work, looking at how culture, ethnicity, and behavior influence each other. In the second, there is a concern for the psychological difficulties (termed “acculturative stress” by Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987) that may arise for individuals who carry out their lives in or between two cultures. Together, these areas of study reveal a growing emphasis on psychological change and mutual adaptation of persons and groups in multicultural settings (Berry, 1997; Berry & Sam, 1997).

Intergroup relations is arguably the single most important domain in which cross-cultural psychology has important ideas, theories, and facts to contribute (see the review by Gudykunst & Bond, 1997). Moreover, it is the most serious of all the problems confronting humankind, as witness so-called Black–White⁴ relations in the United States, in South Africa, and elsewhere, and the 20th century record of holocaust, genocide, interethnic warfare, and terrorism, a history that promises to continue well into the 21st century. Our primary contribution to efforts to deal with this huge set of problems is a generalization, perhaps our highest order generalization, namely the notion that culture is the primary shaper and molder of everyone’s behavior. Differences traditionally attributed to that seemingly very concrete thing called “race,” which by definition makes those differences seem biologically determined and hence immutable, are now known to be cultural and hence changeable by policies that take into account and attempt to eliminate disadvantages suffered to date by various cultural groups—the very groups that we traditionally have thought of as races, differentially blessed or damned by their nature to be among the haves or among the have nots.

From the viewpoint of modern science, in particular population genetics, the concept of race at the human level has absolutely no meaning; it is merely a social construct (Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi & Piazza, 1994; Gould, 1994, 1997; Langaney, 1988). Earlier in this century, physical anthropologists tried to categorize human groups in terms of visible physical characteristics, such as skin color, height, hair, and facial features. They came up with a taxonomy of usually three to five categories,⁵ such as negroid, mongoloid and caucasoid, or black, brown, yellow, red, and white. That these category labels constitute “races” is still a popular misconception and has not disappeared entirely from school textbooks, dic-

⁴ That people with various levels of melanin in their skins are *categorically* designated “black” and “white” is, of course, part of the problem.

⁵ And sometimes, as many as 400!

tionaries, and encyclopedias (which lend the conception an air of reality).

An exhibition shown so far in natural science museums in Paris, Geneva, and Syracuse, New York (Langane, Van Blijenburgh, & Sanchez-Mazas, 1992) makes it clear that human genetic diversity defies any simple classification. Because the scientific evidence is clearly against any such classification, many cross-cultural psychologists no longer use *race* except as a term that is explicitly defined as the social construction that it in fact is. On the other hand, because the illusion of race is so compelling and so widely held (in other words, because it is such an important social construct), we have to deal with the fact that many people think it is real and view the world as if it contained races. When one adds to the belief in race the two further ideas that races are qualitatively different in terms of talent and capacity and that they should be treated differently, then we have what has long been labeled "racism". Here we are arguing that merely misusing the social construct of race as a biological reality is itself racist and should be resisted as vigorously as one resists "racial discrimination."

Summary and Future Directions

In this article, we have covered a lot of territory in relatively little space. Our main point has been that "culture" and all that it implies with respect to human development, thought, and behavior should be central, not peripheral, in psychological theory and research. To keep culture peripheral, or, worse, to avoid it altogether lest it challenge one's own view of reality is myopic and a disservice to psychological inquiry.

Fortunately, over roughly the past 30 years, with a growth spurt that attracted hundreds of enthusiastic scholars, there has ensued a small explosion of books, journals, and scholarly organizations that take culture seriously.

Highly significant was the six-volume *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Triandis et al., 1980), which recently led to the three-volume second edition (Berry et al., 1997), both noted earlier. Together, these handbooks define the scope of the cross-cultural effort in psychology, which is also reflected in the dozens of other books in the field (e.g., Matsumoto, 1996; Smith & Bond, 1993), and those dating from the early 1960s that were mentioned earlier in this article.

Among several scholarly and professional organizations, within and adjacent to psychology, with an international or cross-cultural focus, the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP) remains at the center of the enterprise's growth and development. Since its inaugural meeting in Hong Kong in 1972, IACCP has held international congresses every two years, and a host of regional congresses nearly every odd-numbered year, in nearly every part of the world. Recently, and in celebration of its 25th anniversary, IACCP held its first ever international congress to take place in the United States. The meeting took place from August 3

through 8 on the campus of Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington.

That Silver Jubilee Congress honored past accomplishments and also peered into the future in an effort to determine how best cross-cultural psychology may continue to expand its horizons and to contribute to the solution of increasingly global as well as intercultural problems. Attended by approximately 500 psychologists from more than 60 countries, as well as representatives from various indigenous groups, the complex scientific program was exciting and wide-ranging and in several ways, a landmark conference. APA President-Elect Richard M. Suinn was on the program, as were past presidents of International Union of Psychological Sciences (IUPsyS), International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP), and other organizations. This was a healthy sign for the continued growth of IACCP.

Cross-cultural psychology has grown from a whisper and a hope circa 1960 into a large and thriving intellectual enterprise circa 2000. We close our examination of this phenomenon with a paradox, namely, that cross-cultural psychology will be shown to have succeeded when it disappears. For, when the whole field of psychology becomes truly international and genuinely intercultural—in other words, when it becomes truly a science of human behavior—cross-cultural psychology will have achieved its aims and become redundant.

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