

Note

We wish to thank Fabricio Balcazar, Maurice Elias, Dennis Fox, Milo Fox, John Lord, and James Taylor for offering helpful suggestions. We tried to incorporate their thoughtful and insightful feedback.

12

Cross-Cultural Psychology: The Frustrated Gadfly's Promises, Potentialities, and Failures

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Editors' note In theory, cross-cultural psychology has the potential to challenge mainstream psychology's assumptions and institutions. Cross-cultural psychologists understand, after all, that culture plays a significant role in human behavior. An explicit focus on cultures different from the Western societies dominating psychology should improve the likelihood of creating alternative methods and theories. Freed of the assumption that the West is all there is, cross-cultural psychologists should be more open to noticing and appreciating differing perspectives. As it turns out, however, Fathali M. Moghaddam and Charles Studer demonstrate in this chapter that cross-cultural psychology is not a critic of the mainstream but a fervent supporter. As a result, instead of promoting human diversity, mainstream cross-cultural psychology actually promotes cultural homogeneity.

Along with social and political psychology, cross-cultural psychology bears the irony of neglecting the context where behavior occurs. Like these other two disciplines, cross-cultural psychology is wedded to cognitive and laboratory approaches and discounts the role of power disparities, injustice, and lack of resources. Moghaddam and Studer note that the increasingly dominant cognitive model neglects the importance of social norms and social context. Instead of seeing culture in a holistic way, encompassing the social, historical, and political background, culture is viewed as just another variable to account for. Indeed, most cross-cultural psychologists adhere to traditional positivist frameworks of analysis based on mainstream norms.

Despite the potential for psychology in (and about) other cultures to develop in liberatory ways, Moghaddam and Studer note that "mainstream cross-cultural psychology has failed to be liberating" and that it "helps disseminate false beliefs that are contrary to the interests of minorities around the world." The authors seek to reclaim the place of power, justice, culture and context in a more critical cross-cultural psychology.

Cross-cultural psychology has lived in the margins of general psychology as a frustrated gadfly.

R. A. Shweder, "Cultural Psychology: What is It?"

This insightful observation, made by Shweder (1990: 11–12), serves as a useful point of departure for our critical discussion of cross-cultural psychology. Most psychologists would agree that cross-cultural psychology has failed to make an important impact on traditional general psychology. Moreover, anyone familiar with the tone of discussions in the cross-cultural literature generally, and cross-cultural conference gatherings specifically, would readily agree that cross-cultural researchers feel frustrated about this situation.

But as to *why* cross-cultural psychology remains a "frustrated gadfly," and what should be done to remedy the situation, there is considerable disagreement. On the one side are mainstream cross-cultural researchers whose interpretation of science and the scientific method would keep cross-cultural psychology very closely tied to general psychology's mainstream (e.g., Triandis, 1994). Those in this camp constitute the dominant group. They tend to support a traditional positivist philosophy of science, sometimes explicitly. On the other side are scholars who propose a variety of alternatives to traditional psychology, sharing a common anti-positivist platform. This latter group is a minority.

We agree with Shweder (1990) that cross-cultural psychology remains marginal partly because it offers no substantial challenge to the core working assumptions of mainstream general psychology. At the heart of these assumptions is a general hypothesis: so-called "central processing mechanisms" lie behind, and *cause*, observable behavior, whether that behavior is performed by a Japanese, a French, an Indian, a South African, or any other person. More broadly, cross-cultural psychology shares with traditional psychology the assumption that *causal* rather than *normative* models better explain human behavior – in other words, that behavior stems from identifiable "causes" rather than being related to factors such as social norms. We discuss these issues in the first part of the chapter, where we also refer to the growing literature in cross-cultural psychology.

A central feature of both mainstream general psychology and mainstream cross-cultural psychology is a neglect of ideology, power disparities, intergroup relations, and other issues related to justice (Taylor and Moghaddam, 1994). This neglect of ideological issues is often manifested in *reductionism*, involving attempts to explain social behavior through identifying causal factors internal to individuals. Or, when factors external to individuals are cited as causes, they tend to be factors unrelated to ideology. An example of this is attempts to explain aggression through reference to temperature variations. Through such an analysis, riots and other acts of collective aggression are described as being caused by high temperatures rather than by perceived injustices, discrimination, and other ideologically related issues.

In the second part of the chapter, we argue that human behavior is not causally determined, so that attempts to establish universal relationships between "cause" and "effect" are fundamentally flawed. Through a discussion of aggression, selected because it is a topic of both theoretical and practical importance, we argue that the most promising way ahead is not psychology as the science of observable behavior, or as the science of mental life. Rather, it is to conceive of *psychology as the science of normative behavior*. Human beings are envisaged as unique in their socially acquired skills to construct, identify, and use complex normative systems as guides to behavior. Such normative systems involve norms, rules, and other cultural characteristics that help prescribe correct behavior for people in given settings. Some patterns of normative behavior become so well established and so stereotyped that we can confuse them with causal sequences. But habits have their origin in rules and norms, not in causal mechanisms. This point becomes crucial when we examine attempts to change patterns of human action.

This emphasis on normative systems necessarily leads to a concern for power disparities. Some groups enjoy more power than others in shaping normative systems. Through such power, dominant groups can influence the behavior of minorities. Thus, psychology as the science of normative behavior is in part concerned with how dominant groups maintain and extend their favored position through manipulating normative systems.

Third, we argue that psychology conceived as the science of normative behavior is necessarily cultural in a profound sense. The normative system is a human construction, which can be reconstructed in many different ways. However, limitations in the ways normative systems can be reconstructed indicate certain universals in human social life.

Shweder (1990) insightfully assesses mainstream cross-cultural psychology's limitations as a conceptual system in relation to traditional psychology. However, we also need to examine mainstream psychology's ideological functions more broadly. Ultimately, we believe, ideological factors explain why cross-cultural psychology remains a marginal force. In the final section, we build on previous discussions (Moghaddam, 1987; 1990) to assess mainstream cross-cultural psychology in the context of power relations in the Three Worlds of psychology.

One of the points we emphasize is that psychology can be looked at as an abstract body of knowledge. But we can also look at it as a resource pool, a means by which competing groups maintain, lose, or extend their power. As a resource pool, psychology legitimizes power relations, and can be used to alter power relations. Psychology historically has been dominated by white middle-class males in the United States: over the last century they have enjoyed a monopoly as both the researchers and the "subjects" of this discipline. They constitute the core of psychology's First World (Moghaddam, 1987). By expressing the norms of their own culture as if they were universal laws of human nature, First World psychologists create a powerful impetus for other cultures to adapt their

different behavior norms to what they wrongly perceive as the facts of human life.

Cross-cultural psychology, as usually practiced, does not challenge traditional psychology's philosophical foundations. But at least it attempts to include the rest of the world in psychology's domain. Even if this inclusion is only as participants in research, it does mean a foot in the door for some minorities, with the possibility of greater influence in the long term. Let there be no doubt that this issue of inclusiveness does not just concern abstract ideas in the ivory tower. It is political and bears on conflicts over real resources. Thus, we argue, the continued neglect of cross-cultural psychology is to a large part due to the threat it poses to the political status quo in psychology.

The Gadfly and Traditional General Psychology

Cross-cultural psychology is the study of similarities and differences in individual psychological functioning in various cultural and ethnic groups; of the relationships between psychological variables and sociocultural, ecological, and biological variables; and of current changes in these variables. (Berry et al., 1992: 2)

What is psychology? It is a field of inquiry that is sometimes defined as the science of mind, sometimes as the science of behavior. (Gleitman, 1992: 1)

Students in general psychology courses are typically offered definitions of psychology matching those presented by Gleitman. A definition that gained influence through the emergence of cognitive psychology since the 1950s is psychology as "the science of mind." This replaced the more global definition of psychology as "the science of behavior," in line with behaviorism's emphasis on overt behavior.

Texts introducing general psychology convey, sometimes explicitly, two features of the discipline. First, students learn that in the vast majority of cases psychologists conduct experiments to determine the "causes" of behavior. They manipulate independent variables (e.g., temperature) in order to measure their impact on dependent measures (e.g., aggression). Causes thus come in the shape of independent variables, and their effects are reflected in changes in the dependent variables. Students learn an advantage of such experiments: researchers can conduct them in laboratories, where it seems more feasible to bring all the variables under the experimenters' control. They learn that the world outside the laboratory, the "field," has too many "nuisance variables" to allow for the identification of causal relations.

Second, students are reminded that in the present cognitive era, causes may be located either in stimuli external to individuals, or in assumed central processing mechanisms internal to individuals, or in both (for a classic treatment of this issue, see the discussion of situational, dispositional, and interactional approaches to the study of behavior by Snyder and Ickes, 1985). Thus, traditional psychology adopts a causal model. It seeks

to identify causal relations between external stimuli, internal central processing mechanisms, and behavior.

A first ideological implication of this causal model is that there is a fixed reality in the social world and an equally fixed cognitive endowment in each individual. Cause-effect relations are assumed to be permanent and part of an objective reality to be discovered by psychologists. Moreover, psychological research is seen as ideologically neutral. The model assumes psychologists use objective methods (such as the laboratory experiment) that allow them to discover truths about human behavior, independent of biases, political or otherwise.

A second ideological implication has to do with the causal model's goal of discovering universals in human behavior. This goal particularly opened an avenue for cross-culturalists to try to gain influence. In order to discover true universals, they argued, it is necessary to test the hypotheses of general psychology among different cultural groups – not just among undergraduate students in US universities, the group traditional psychology most commonly studies (see Moghaddam et al., 1993: Chapter 2). Thus, cross-cultural psychology justifies its existence in part through this "transport and test" methodology.

In a sense, cross-cultural psychology became a methodological extension of mainstream psychology because they share the same central underlying assumptions. Cross-cultural researchers would translate, adapt, and transport mainstream tests to different cultures to explore the universality of different hypotheses derived from both developed and developing societies. In this way they would "eventually discover the underlying psychological processes that are characteristic of our species" (Berry et al., 1992: 4).

Thus, the main contribution cross-cultural psychologists explicitly offered mainstream psychology has been the addition of culture as an independent variable. This vast addition has required that psychological test material be adapted for use with "subjects" drawn from different cultural groups. Since the publication of the first *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Triandis et al., 1980), there has emerged a growing literature reflecting the power of culture in the role of independent variable (for general reviews, see Berry et al., 1992; Brislin, 1990; Lonner and Malpass, 1994; Matsumoto, 1994; Moghaddam et al., 1993; Segall et al., 1990; Smith and Bond, 1994; Triandis, 1994).

However, despite increases in the number of cross-cultural psychology publications, this subdiscipline has remained in the margins and achieved minimal influence on traditional mainstream psychology. To understand why the impact of cross-cultural psychology remains minimal despite the growing cross-cultural literature, we must consider more closely the philosophical and methodological foundations of cross-cultural psychology. As Shweder (1990) points out, these foundations do not challenge traditional psychology. In the next section, we raise questions about the route cross-cultural psychology needs to take to establish itself as a viable alternative to traditional psychology.

Culture Incorporated in Causal Models of Human Behavior

Cross-cultural research in psychology is the explicit, systematic comparison of psychological variables under different cultural conditions in order to specify the antecedents and processes that mediate the emergence of behaviour differences. (Eckensberger, 1972: 100)

Eckensberger (1972) makes explicit the idea that cross-cultural psychology attempts to identify cause and effect relationships between culture and behavior. We shall use research on the assumed link between temperature and aggression, behavior intended to harm another being, to clarify two points. First, the incorporation of culture strengthens psychological research. Second, even when culture is "attached" as an independent variable to traditional psychology, the causal model is still inappropriate for explaining human behavior. Rather, we advocate the adoption of a normative model, which allows us to avoid reductionism and attend more fully to ideological issues.

Temperature–Aggression Links in General Psychology

The idea that hot temperatures promote aggressive behavior fits a number of causal explanations in psychology (Anderson, 1989). The most important of these is the *frustration–aggression hypothesis* in its original (Dollard et al., 1939) and various revised forms (Berkowitz, 1962; 1993). The original hypothesis stated that frustration produces a state of readiness or instigation to aggress, and that aggression is always preceded by some form of frustration. At the center of the hypothesis, then, is the assumed causal link between frustration, defined as the blocking of a sequence of goal-directed behaviors, and aggression. Subsequent research did not support the hypothesis, because it was shown that people can handle frustration in many ways other than aggression, and aggression can arise for reasons other than frustration (for further discussion, see Geen, 1990; 1995).

Contemporary psychologists do not accept the frustration–aggression hypothesis in its original form. However, the idea that increasingly uncomfortable temperatures should prime aggressive thoughts, which in turn increase the motive to aggress, is in line with several influential recent models (Anderson, 1989). These include the negative affect escape models (Baron and Richardson, 1994) and a revised frustration–aggression model (Berkowitz, 1993). These newer models have been influenced by cognitive psychology. They attempt to incorporate cognition and affect into the causal chain, moving from environmental stressors (stimuli) to aggression (response).

In line with mainstream psychology's traditions, researchers have conducted laboratory experiments to demonstrate the relationship between temperature and aggression. The prototypic study was conducted by Baron (1972). It involved a situation where research participants were assigned the role of teacher, and given the task of teaching material to another (supposed) participant (who was actually a confederate of the experimenter).

Teachers worked in hot or cool conditions (independent variable) and could administer shocks (dependent variable) to learners.

After a review of laboratory experiments investigating the temperature–aggression link, Anderson concluded that,

On the whole, these laboratory studies of concomitant temperature–aggression effects yield more confusion than understanding. Sometimes hotter conditions led to increases in aggression; at other times the opposite occurred. Most of the studies were by the same researchers using the same general paradigm, yet even this did not result in consistency in findings across studies. (1989: 91)

Disappointed with the results of laboratory studies, researchers faithful to the causal model have turned to field research to try to demonstrate a causal link. One line of attack has been to compare acts of aggression, such as homicide, across regions varying in temperature. Research along these lines is not new (e.g., Lombroso, 1899/1911). The results generally seem to support the temperature–aggression hypothesis. For example, the homicide rate is higher in the southern (and warmer) parts of the United States, England, and Italy, than it is in the northern (cooler) regions. Given that this relationship seems to hold across different countries, the findings could be interpreted as indicating a universal aspect of human behavior. It would seem that culture is not needed to explain temperature–aggression variation across regions. Yet in warmer climates the weather permits, indeed encourages, more public social contact, an equally plausible generic explanatory concept for increases in aggression.

More broadly, an account of aggression based on temperature variations ignores the issue of ideology entirely. Consider, for example, collective riots in major urban centers of the United States. Such riots have typically involved ethnic minorities, such as African Americans and Hispanics. One interpretation of such collective aggression is that minorities are rebelling against unjust social practices, including what they see to be a corrupt and immoral "justice" system. But an alternative account is that such aggression arises because of hot temperatures, independent of ideological issues specifically and culture more broadly.

The Culture of Honor

Nisbett and his associates have challenged the idea that aggression is best explained by factors such as temperature rather than by cultural characteristics (Nisbett, 1993; Nisbett and Cohen, forthcoming). Examining differences in homicide rates between North and South in the US, these researchers evaluated and dismissed explanations for this difference based on temperature (hotter in the South), poverty (poverty more acute in the South), the institution of slavery (historically centered in the South), and the notion that Southern whites learned violence by imitating the violence of African Americans. More specifically, they dismissed the temperature-based explanation by showing that violence in different subregions of the South does not vary with differences in temperatures across locations.

Having argued against these possibilities, Nisbett put forward the explanation that "the South is heir to a culture, deriving ultimately from economic determinants, in which violence is a natural and integral part" (1993: 442). As we review the characteristics and sources of this culture to which Nisbett refers, it is important to keep in mind that although he has moved beyond the approach of traditional psychology to adopt a cross-cultural view, he has not abandoned the assumption that behavior is causally determined. But now it is culture, derived from economic determinants, that is the causal agent, the independent variable.

The culture Nisbett (1993) refers to is presumed to derive from economic determinants associated with a herding economy. (Nisbett focused on the herding culture of the South, but the implication is that his thesis may extend to herding cultures in the West of the US and elsewhere.) Herders are always vulnerable, because all their wealth, their herd, is on display in the open, and can be attacked. A lifetime of work may disappear in an instant if they allow the theft of their herd. For this reason, it is essential that herdsman portray themselves to be manly and ever ready to fight if provoked.

Laboratory Studies on the Culture of Honor

In addition to gathering field evidence for this explanation, Nisbett and his associates conducted a series of interesting laboratory experiments to show that Southerners and Northerners respond differently to insult (Nisbett and Cohen, forthcoming). The research participants were students from the North and the South studying at the University of Michigan. In a prototypic experiment, participants in the experimental treatment were insulted (called an "Asshole!" by a confederate who posed as a passerby), and a series of measures were taken to assess their reactions. Subjects were also presented with scenarios and asked to explain how they imagined the stories would end. For example, one scenario involved a man with his fiancée at a party when an acquaintance of theirs, who clearly knows of their engagement, makes several obvious passes at "the other man's woman."

Results showed consistent differences between the two groups of research participants. The Northerners were more likely than the Southerners to be amused rather than angry by the "Asshole!" incident. And the insulted Southerners were more likely to end the scenario concerning the fiancée with some kind of violent confrontation (e.g., the man leaves the party with his fiancée, after punching out the acquaintance who had made passes at the woman in question).

In general, then, Nisbett and his associates make a strong case for the idea that Southerners react to insult with greater violence. More broadly, they use the results of experimental and field studies to propose that higher homicide rates in the South are better explained by a culture of honor that characterizes herding societies, than by temperature differences *per se*. This

research seems to represent an example of how cross-cultural psychology can contribute to traditional psychology.

However, if we treat culture as a causal agent and assume a deterministic link between culture and behavior, then we have not moved toward a position that is fundamentally different from that of traditional psychology. It is only when a normative explanation of behavior is developed on the basis of culture that cross-cultural psychology can offer a viable and preferable alternative. "Honor" is a code, not a mechanism. One can live up to it, fail to live up to it, and so on. One risks contempt by not responding to provocation appropriately. Of course, what constitutes an appropriate response depends on the cultural context (for a fascinating account of an honor code, see Shakur, 1993).

Causal and Normative Approaches

In order to highlight the crucial differences between causal and normative accounts of behavior, it is useful to delve deeper into what we mean by culture. The most important achievement of culture is that it prescribes correct behavior, the way people *should* do things. The details of what is correct behavior can vary considerably, depending on the characteristics of the person and the situation. For example, people vary with respect to their *positions in social space* (e.g., one can be a mother or father in kin space, an employer or employee in occupational space, and so on) and their *social roles* (the behavior prescribed for a person in a given position, such as how a mother or father, or an employer or employee, is expected to behave). *Norms* are prescriptions for behavior in particular settings (e.g., correct behavior at a funeral as opposed to a wedding); *rules* are prescriptions for behavior for people in specific social roles (e.g., how guests, priests, and so on, are supposed to behave at funerals and weddings). Positions, roles, norms, and rules are all part of a *normative system* that clarifies correct behavior for persons in situations.

During the processes of socialization, individuals become skilled in identifying and using particular normative systems. This ability develops gradually through socialization, and alongside language learning. But it is essential to appreciate that rules, norms, and other aspects of culture do not cause individuals to behave in particular ways. Rather, they provide guidelines about how people are supposed to behave.

For example, when motorists reach a stop sign at a crossroads, the sign does not cause them to stop. Indeed, some motorists choose to ignore the sign altogether and drive straight through. However, most drivers recognize the sign, and the vast majority follow the rule by bringing their car to a halt. Similarly, when a father tells his son, "If a kid hits you, then you get a stick and smack that kid over the head," he is not causing his son to behave aggressively. He is telling him what is considered the right thing to do in their family. The son could do the right thing according to his family's values, but he could also behave differently.

Thus, culture provides prescriptions for behavior in a normative manner, it does not cause behavior. A normative explanation of behavior allows room for agency, for some measure of free will and for deviations of various kinds from an acknowledged code. Also incorporated in a normative account is the idea of humans as *intentional* beings. By this we mean that the instruments of human thinking (words, signs, models, and the like) stand for things other than themselves. In a sense, behavior is always pointing beyond itself, as long as there are people to interpret intentions in behavior.

Aggression and Ideology

Causal accounts conceptualize a wide range of factors leading to aggression. Such factors include temperature, genetic characteristics, psychological traits, and the like (see Geen, 1990). The assumption underlying causal accounts is that the presence of causal factors, such as high temperatures or a certain genetic makeup, will automatically lead to aggression. By *automatic* we mean that individuals have no choice, and need not even be aware of what is going on when they act aggressively.

But consider the aggression shown by a group of workers who are on strike and trying to prevent nonunionized workers from crossing the picket line. The workers on strike may show aggression toward the police, strike-breakers, and other people seen to be acting against their collective interests. How are we to explain the scenes of fighting outside the factory where the striking workers are picketing? We contend that such behavior is best explained with reference to issues of perceived justice, collective rights, and ideology more broadly. Explanations based on temperature variations would certainly be inadequate, because they completely neglect the political nature of the behavior in question, its relation to the codes of working-class culture.

To take an even more dramatic example, consider the issue of terrorist attacks. A terrorist who places a bomb in a crowded part of the city with the intention of killing people is certainly acting aggressively, although surreptitious bomb planting is very unlike struggles on the picket line. But is such aggression to be explained by reference to temperature variations, or genetic features of the terrorist, or other "context-free causes"? Again, our contention is that such acts of aggression must be considered in political context. What is the political goal of the terrorist group? What is their ideology? More broadly, we may ask how it is they came to be labeled as terrorists, keeping in mind that one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter (see Taylor and Moghaddam, 1994).

The Issue of Prediction

Culture creates patterns in the social behavior of collectivities, but it does not allow prediction of any one specific individual's behavior. For example, cross-cultural research among boys in Finland, Israel, Poland and the

United States shows that early television viewing is associated with aggressiveness (Huesmann and Eron, 1986). This research reveals a broad pattern of relationships among subject samples from particular populations. But if we picked out a specific boy from that population and asked, "Can we predict the aggression of this one particular boy on the basis of his television viewing?," the answer would be no.

This brings us to two major criticisms typically leveled at normative models. The first is that they lack predictive power. In response, we reiterate that when the behavior of specific individuals is being considered neither the normative nor the causal model enjoys high predictive power. Although patterns of behavior may be identified among collectivities, the behavior of specific individuals is not predictable.

For example, although Nisbett and his associates demonstrate a general tendency for subjects from the South to react more violently to insults than those from the North (Nisbett, 1993; Nisbett and Cohen, forthcoming) they could not predict how any one specific research participant would behave. It is not possible to predict if a particular Southerner or Northerner will be among those who behave differently from most of their regional group. This is not because of random variation in some other variable but because of different degrees of commitment to a code.

The inability of statistical trends to allow predictions about specific individuals is taken for granted in legal practices. The intellectual historian Daniel Robinson never tires of telling the following New York story that clarifies this point wonderfully. Consider the case of a robbery in New York's Harlem section, which is largely an African American neighborhood. Statistically speaking, there is a high probability that if a robbery is committed at 2:00 a.m. in Harlem, the robber is a young African American male. Suppose the police round up people they find in the vicinity of the robbery that morning, and their "net" brings in two bus loads of Japanese tourists lost on their way to the airport, and one young African American male. Why bother to have a trial? If we are willing to work on the basis of probability, then the Japanese tourists should be set free and the young African American male should be declared guilty. Of course, the legal system works in a wiser manner, and so should psychologists.

The Normative Model and Variations in Behavior

A second criticism of the normative approach is that it fails to explain variations and change in social behavior. If culture prescribes "correct" behavior, and people conform to normative systems, how can we explain the fact that everyone does not behave the same, and that behavior does not remain stable across time? In response to this criticism, we make two points.

First, there is not one culture, but many cultures. Cultural diversity is a feature of most societies, both Western and non-Western (Moghaddam and Solliday, 1991). Consequently, individuals may become skilled in the

recognition and use of many different normative systems, just as they can learn different languages.

Variations in culture become particularly apparent when immigrants use a range of assimilation and heritage/culture retention strategies to integrate into their adopted societies. This is reflected in the literature on ethnic groups in North America (e.g., Lambert and Taylor, 1990; Moghaddam and Taylor, 1987; Moghaddam et al., 1987; 1989; 1995) and in Western Europe (Lambert et al., 1990; see also readings in Goldberger and Veroff, 1995). Improved communications systems allow greater movement of populations, and thus people become more aware of alternative normative systems. They learn that what their culture deems correct (e.g., how to cook food, how to entertain guests, how to conduct wedding ceremonies) is only one way of doing things, and there are many other alternatives. The availability of a variety of normative systems is one explanation for differences in human behavior.

Second, in response to the criticism that normative models fail to explain social change, it is important to note that individuals do not conform to normative systems in an absolute manner. They can, and do, flout the prescribed or correct way of behaving, and they sometimes initiate alternative normative systems that are at least partly novel. Technological advancements contribute to this process.

For example, consider the rapid spread of video games among young people, particularly in Western societies. Many video games involve players shooting at moving human targets, as well as the simulation of other types of extreme aggression (Cooper and Mackie, 1986; Zuckerman, 1987). In some important respects, youngsters playing these games undergo the same kinds of experiences as soldiers in army training: reflexively shooting at moving targets (Grossman, 1995). The increased violence among young people since the 1970s may be associated with the development of new norms relating to aggression, with youngsters regarding the streets as an extension of the killing fields they experience in video games. These norms are described by many people as anti-social. This is an apt description in the sense that they are "anti" the norms that once prevailed.

Thus, by advocating a normative model, we are not suggesting that people necessarily follow the prescribed behavior in their culture. Individuals can and sometimes do behave contrary to prescribed ways. This is one means by which social change comes about. The research of Moscovici (1985) and his associates suggests that minorities can bring about change if they remain consistent in their stand. The nature of this minority influence tends to be fundamentally different from majority influence: minorities influence more through persuasion arising out of a rethinking and a reassessment of issues, whereas majorities influence more through sheer domination and superior power. The success of the major religions that began with a small number of followers, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, demonstrates that minority groups can bring about cultural changes and make their own normative systems dominant.

Culture and Universals in Human Behavior

Nasrudin ran to an appointment in a near-by town, stark naked. People asked him why.

"I was in such a hurry to get dressed that I forgot my clothes."

The fate of cross-cultural psychology brings to mind this instructive Sufi story: cross-cultural psychology has been in such a hurry to put on the scientist's white lab coat that it quite forgot about culture. Of course, researchers have not forgotten culture as an independent variable, as something assumed to causally affect behavior. Rather, they have neglected culture as the manufacturer of the very "central processing mechanisms" that are at the heart of cognitive psychology.

Cognitive psychology has a central assumption, sometimes made explicit: behind observable behavior, behind the symbols of communication, behind all the cultural variations evident among human populations, lie detached central processing mechanisms. These mechanisms are the focus of social cognition research (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). Important cognitive theories, such as dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), are assumed to reflect psychological universals. Cognitive psychologists assume that if researchers successfully strip away all the surface elements, such as those that appear as variations across cultures, then the deeper underlying cognitive processes become apparent.

Cross-cultural psychology's contribution to this traditional general psychology has been to test the universality of certain assumed central processing mechanisms. For example, researchers have pointed out that cognitive dissonance does not manifest itself in the expected way in some non-Western cultures (see Moghaddam et al., 1993: 12). Cross-cultural psychology is making a valuable contribution in this way.

But it would make a far more important contribution if it went one step further and pointed out that the concept of central processing mechanisms is itself a cultural construction, a point we elaborate in the final section. Culture is not "out there," to be treated as an independent variable, as something that "impacts on" individuals. Rather, the very thinking, the "deeper level" of cognition that is the focus of cognitive psychology, is constructed culturally.

However, by asserting that there is not a context-independent, culture-independent level of cognitive processes, we are not claiming there are no psychological universals. There is enough similarity in the human condition (ecology, physiology, and so on) to create some commonalities in cultures and psychological characteristics (for a related discussion, see Krebs and Miller, 1985). In order for there to be a human society, certain common psychological characteristics must be present. For example, for there to be meaningful dialogue between persons, there must be turn-taking in verbal and nonverbal speech. Irrespective of the language, ecological conditions, and other characteristics of the speakers and their surroundings, each must speak in turn. Otherwise, what is accepted as meaningful dialogue in

human societies will not be achieved. However, the norms of turn-taking are enormously various, expressing the widely different rights accorded to speakers and potential speakers in different cultures.

Our contention, then, is that human thinking and all the various mechanisms cognitive psychology idolizes as reflecting deeper universals are themselves constructed through culture. This is far from being a novel position, since it has been elaborated by a number of long-standing alternative approaches to psychology (Moghaddam and Harré, 1995). These alternative approaches, including ethogenics, cultural psychology, narrative psychology, discourse analysis, and the like, challenge traditional psychology in a way that is far more fundamental than does cross-cultural psychology.

One set of reasons, then, as to why cross-cultural psychology remains marginal has to do with the lack of foundational differences between traditional psychology and cross-cultural psychology. In short, cross-cultural psychology does not seriously challenge traditional psychology's assumptions. But there are also factors related to ideology and power, which we turn to next.

Issues of "Inclusiveness"

In order to explain the nature of psychological research and why it has taken on one set of biases rather than others, we must go beyond considering the discipline as a "scientific enterprise" independent of ideology. Psychology has an important role in power relationships, both within societies and internationally. Psychologists enjoy considerable control over important resources, through their roles as experts who define and measure intelligence, sanity, mental health, normalcy in behavior and psychological functioning, and many other things that are pivotal in modern life. This enormous power is unequally distributed across groups.

Moghaddam (1987) has described the dominance of the United States, the First World of psychology, in the international arena. The US extended its domination in this arena after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. This dominance allows the United States to monopolize the manufacture of psychological knowledge, and to export this knowledge to other countries around the globe. This monopoly is maintained through the control that the US has over publication outlets (books, journals, etc.), test manufacturing and distributing facilities (to publicize and disseminate major psychological tests internationally), training centers, and the like.

The Second World countries, consisting of Western European nations and Russia, have far less influence in shaping psychology around the globe. Ironically, the philosophical roots and many of the seminal ideas of contemporary psychology originated in the Second World. But it is in the United States that mainstream psychology has taken final shape. Just as the

countries of the Second World find themselves overpowered by US pop culture (from Walt Disney to rock music, from McDonald's to Hollywood movies), they also find themselves overwhelmed by US-manufactured psychological knowledge.

Third World countries are for the most part importers of psychological knowledge, first from the US, but also from the Second World nations with which they historically had colonial ties (e.g., Pakistan and England; Algeria and France). India is the most important Third World "producer" of psychological knowledge. However, even in India the vast majority of psychological research follows the lines established by the United States, and to a lesser extent by Western Europe (Sinha, 1986).

The unequal abilities of groups to influence psychology internationally is paralleled by inequalities within societies. As noted earlier, psychology in the United States, the First World, has traditionally been dominated by white middle-class males who have been both the researchers and the subjects of research (see Moghaddam et al., 1993). For most of the twentieth century, this is the group that has set the agenda, defined the issues, directed the research, and interpreted the data. It is only in the last few decades of the century that women, ethnic minorities, and others outside the mainstream have had a voice in shaping psychology.

But even today, crucial resources in US academic institutions remain under the almost total control of the majority group. University presses and research funding committees still tend to discriminate against minorities, albeit in highly subtle ways. Scholarly publishing remains a largely white enterprise. University presses employ few minority staff members, and in many cases none at all. The same is true of research funding sources. In many cases they distribute money among an inner circle and reject the use of external/blind reviewers, for the avowed reason that it would be "administratively difficult" to include them. One of the consequences of such discrimination is to impede the influence of minorities in psychology and other research domains.

Cross-cultural psychology is one of the avenues through which minorities have begun to have their voices heard in psychology. First, there has been a demand that psychology make good its claim to being the science of *humankind* by including women and nonwhites as research participants. This is reflected to some extent in the contents of the more recent editions of *The Handbook of Social Psychology*. For example, the editors of the third edition explain that the chapter on sex roles reflects "issues and interests that were simply not factors in 1954, were barely on the horizon in 1968-69, but are very much part of our lives in the 1980s" (Lindzey and Aronson, 1985: iv).

Second, the question has been raised as to how valid psychological theories are when applied to minority groups (e.g., Matsumoto, 1994). In part because mainstream cross-cultural psychologists have raised such questions, even while still accepting traditional psychology's philosophical foundations, cross-cultural psychology has earned the neglect of traditional

psychology. It has been maneuvered into a marginal position. However, we need to look more closely at cross-cultural psychology's role in relation to minorities.

Cross-Cultural Psychology and Minorities

Mainstream cross-cultural psychology has failed to be liberating. Instead, it has only helped extend traditional psychology's dominance. Indeed, we believe that, from the perspective of minority groups, cross-cultural psychology is in some ways even more backward looking than mainstream psychology. (By minorities in this context, we refer to all those who have less power – and this includes psychologists who are critical of mainstream psychology.) General psychology is often criticized for neglecting issues of power, justice, intergroup relations, discrimination, and the like (Taylor and Moghaddam, 1994). These issues are also neglected, perhaps even more so, in cross-cultural psychology.

Cross-cultural psychology's neglect of such issues is particularly devastating to the interests of minorities, because cross-cultural research helps legitimize psychology in the international arena. Cross-cultural psychology helps create false consciousness at the international level, because it helps disseminate false beliefs that are contrary to the interests of minorities around the world (for a discussion of the concept of false consciousness in psychology see Jost, 1995). Our illustrative example is the case of aggression; we referred earlier to attempts to explain aggression by doing "cross-cultural" studies of how variations in temperature "cause" aggression. Such theoretical orientations obviously leave little room for ideology and real differences of interests, such as those between minorities in rebellion and oppressive powers, or between traditional psychologists and heretical critics!

Concluding Comment

The academic domain should ideally be a democracy of ideas, where open competition leads to the recognition of, and support for, the very best products of the human intellect. In practice, however, academia is still far from being an open system. It continues to be monopolized by majority groups, as are disciplines such as psychology (Sampson, 1977). Traditional psychology is molded by ideological biases that reflect the culture of the United States, particularly the main normative system of the culture, and more specifically the biases of the white males who have historically dominated the discipline. They have been the researchers and the subjects, they have posed the questions and provided the answers, they have reported the findings and taken up the applications. To point out the historical monopoly in psychology of white US males is not to deny that they are also well represented in the vanguard of "anti-positivist" psychology. However, to say this is not to justify traditional psychology's continued ethnocentrism.

Mainstream cross-cultural psychology does not challenge the causal model, the assumption of central processing mechanisms, or any of the other fundamental philosophical foundations of traditional psychology. Despite this, it has still been demoted to the sidelines in the bigger academic picture. In essence, cross-cultural psychology remains a frustrated gadfly because it has called for the inclusion of minorities as participants in research so that the universality of traditional psychological theories could be tested. Traditional psychologists could not tolerate cross-cultural psychology even in this minimal role as an additional, exotic methodology – a means by which traditional psychological tests would be transported and tested among different cultural populations.

But there are pointers indicating how cross-cultural psychology could make important contributions. These are provided by vanguards of the new alternative psychologies, such as the orientations discussed by Bruner (1986) and others. Cross-cultural psychology should reject the causal model and the idea of culture as an independent variable. Instead, human behavior should be seen as normative and fundamentally cultural: if culture is integral to thinking, a decontextualized central processing mechanism is an impossibility. Cognition and culture are inseparable. Both the instruments of cognitive research and the mental mechanisms under study are cultural products. This perspective leads to a viable alternative to traditional psychology, and takes cross-cultural psychology out of the situation of the frustrated gadfly.