

Experiencing New Worlds

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Chapter I

The Methodological Interface of Psychology and Anthropology

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Introduction

How do we experience new worlds? This question can be taken as the basis of much of social science enquiry, especially in (cross-)cultural psychology and in anthropology. Indeed, either our informants experience novelty in a situation of acculturation (and the very presence of researchers is part of it!), or the researchers can be said to experience new worlds when they are confronted with cultural diversity, or even with disciplinary diversity if and when they try to interact with colleagues of other social sciences. This chapter, written by two cross-cultural psychologists, attempts to show, in an interdisciplinary context such as this volume, some methodological questions and answers that can be derived from the experience of cross-cultural psychologists, and that could possibly be of use or interest to other social scientists, particularly anthropologists. To provide such advice in a few pages is quite a challenge, and we are well aware of the pitfalls, in particular that of over-generalization. There are, of course, many different anthropologies with their respective epistemologies and methods, just as there are many psychologies, and this has to be kept in mind, lest we be accused of naive stereotypes.

Various disciplines of the social sciences are relevant to the study of experiencing new worlds, among them sociology, linguistics, cognitive science, and of course particularly psychology and anthropology. All of them are primarily concerned with the study of human beings, although they do it from different vantage points. While one can find considerable evidence for the explanation of social or cultural phenomena in psychological terms early in the history of anthropology (e.g. Rivers 1914; cf. also Jahoda 1982), the explanation of behavioural phenomena in cultural terms has generally been less attempted in psychology (Jahoda and Krewer 1997). The newly developed field of (cross-)cultural psychology is an exception, where culture 'is taken seriously' (Dasen and Jahoda 1986) by psychologists in understanding human behaviour.

Cross-cultural psychologists accept the principle of 'the psychic unity of mankind'. They generally believe that basic psychological processes

underlying behaviour are universal, but the way in which they develop and find expression across human populations varies considerably according to cultures. In order to demonstrate this, they obviously need to compare across several cultures. They think that culture (as an independent variable) influences behaviour (as the dependent variable). Cultural psychologists refute this, and claim that culture and the psyche mutually constitute each other. Also, they tend to concentrate on one single culture, and eschew comparison; they are hence often closer to anthropologists.

Despite facing several criticisms, psychological perspectives have gained substantial recognition in anthropology. The emergence of several subdisciplines within anthropology has particularly been instrumental in this process. Much of the work carried out in cognitive anthropology, psychological anthropology and symbolic anthropology seems to have a strongly psychological or quasi-psychological flavour. While the sharing of perspectives has been partly reinforced through research collaborations between some anthropologists and psychologists, some of them feel uncomfortable with the use of the methods and perspectives of the other discipline. The problems that bother anthropologists quite often relate to the nature of psychological inquiry, the (mainly quantitative) methods used by psychologists, including the level of analysis and the ecological validity of behaviour observed in unnatural circumstances. There are also concerns about the level of understanding of behaviour reached by anthropologists and psychologists even if they engage in the study of the same group of people at the same locations.

While the mutual influence of these disciplines seems to be imbalanced, in this chapter we will try to argue for an active collaboration between anthropologists and psychologists. We strongly feel that both of them can learn a lot from each other. Psychologists can learn the ways of analysing the larger eco-cultural context in which human behaviour occurs in order to add greater meaning to their conclusions, and anthropologists can learn to employ methodological rigour in their studies and analyses of human behaviour in order to enhance the objectivity, reliability, validity and generality of their conclusions.

In the following sections we would like to discuss some of the issues that are still alive as matters of debate between anthropologists and psychologists. None of these issues is new; researchers in the respective disciplines faced them time and again. The purpose is to bring them together in the hope that researchers will find some advantage in an interdisciplinary approach when designing, executing and reporting their research studies. In this paper, we commit the very crime we are quick to denounce, that of overgeneralization: We speak of anthropologists and psychologists as if these were homogeneous categories! Of course, we know they are not, yet it is quite impossible to take all the distinctions and complexities into account. Each reader will have to tune the statements according to his or her own particular situation.

Levels of Understanding

There is no doubt that the kind of presuppositions anthropologists and psychologists bring to the enterprise and the kind of observations and inferences they are led to make in their studies of human behaviour often lead to difficulties. These difficulties can be well illustrated by narrating a brief but extremely interesting dialogue (cited in Cole and Scribner 1975) that took place between Margaret Mead and Jerome Kagan at the conventions of the American Association for the Advancement of Science held in 1972. Professor Kagan presented a paper summarizing the research that he had carried out with children in Guatemala for almost a decade. Assessing the responses of young infants to stimulus novelty he had noted that rural Guatemalan children, as compared to Americans, were several months retarded in one particular cognitive function, the 'activation of hypotheses' (an increase in attention and active mental work) at around 1 year of age. On the other hand, using recall of familiar objects, recognition memory, embedded figures test, and other standard measures of cognitive development, he reported only minimal differences between Guatemalan and American children by the age of 8 or 9 years. Such findings led Kagan to conclude that 'infant retardation seems to be partially reversible and cognitive development during the early years more resilient than had been supposed' (Kagan and Klein 1973: 957). It appeared that there was a period of 'catch-up growth' during which Guatemalan children grew up at a faster rate, so much so that by late childhood their cognitive performance was fairly comparable with that of American children.

Following Kagan's presentation, Professor Mead took the floor as the discussant and asked: 'Why has it taken psychologists so long to discover what anthropologists have known all along?' Professor Kagan replied by saying that perhaps the psychologists were a little slow. This unusual response was followed by great laughter, and obviously a great variety of discussions. This little dialogue does raise a number of basic questions that are alive even today with respect to the level of understanding of a phenomenon by anthropologists and psychologists.

Was the reply Professor Kagan gave in response to Professor Mead's question really appropriate? The fact that Kagan took ten years to discover what Mead already knew is not really surprising, if psychologists are really slower than anthropologists in understanding a behavioural phenomenon, it could be by virtue of the respective methodological demands of their disciplines. Does one consider informants' reports or casual observations of behaviour on a few cases to be enough? Or does one require a lot more time in setting up the study in a manner that fulfils the conditions of sampling and measurement?

A related question is whether anthropologists and psychologists reach the same level of understanding of a phenomenon by using the 'methodological armoury' of their respective disciplines. In other words, did Mead and Kagan really know the same thing about Guatemalan

children? The basic issue is whether the differentials of perspectives and methods lead to the same kind of understanding of a behavioural phenomenon. It may be noted that Mead and Kagan shared their opinion about cognitive competence of Guatemalan children without examining the suitability of each other's data before reaching that conclusion. They had also not examined other research evidence in which the performance of Guatemalan children was found not to be up to the 'American standards' on tasks similar to those that Kagan had used. Does it mean that what others have reported about these children's competence is absolutely wrong, or is there something else involved in these studies that makes such apparent contradictions in understanding inevitable? As cross-cultural psychologists we keep our fingers crossed in answering any one of these questions.

We believe that both anthropology and psychology can be characterized by certain strengths and weaknesses in the study of human beings. We also believe that a joint venture of researchers belonging to these disciplines can reinforce the strengths, tone down the weaknesses of each other's research and promote a better understanding of behaviour.

Levels of Analysis

When attempting to understand human behaviour, anthropology deals with cultural-level processes, whereas psychology is confined exclusively to individual-level processes. The former focuses its analysis at the phenomena that operate at the group level, whereas the focus of the latter is primarily at the phenomena that operate at the individual level. Adherence to these practices has often remained so strong that some anthropologists (e.g., Tiger and Fox 1974) have even managed to interpret behaviour in terms of biology and culture without any reference to psychology. If psychology claims to be the science of behaviour, then how was this possible? The same is true for psychologists who, in their attempts to be 'scientific', have altogether ignored culture in their studies. Shottler (1975) argues that in the relationship between man and nature, there is a third term, 'culture', which is not genetically inherited but communicated to man after birth as a 'second nature'. This implies that any analysis of human behaviour will be incomplete and its description lopsided if culture is not brought seriously into psychological research.

Considering culture as a group-level phenomenon, anthropologists have largely remained occupied with the search for and description of 'uniformity' in behaviour of individuals of a given culture. They believe that cultural-level processes must be available to and expressed in all individuals of that culture more or less in the same manner. Hence, it is possible to discover a particular pattern of behaviour of individuals in a given culture. Psychologists, on the other hand, are largely engaged in studying behaviour by controlling for any possible influences of cultural variables. This concern can be easily discovered even in their studies carried out away from the laboratory. They believe in individual differences

in behaviour, and try to demonstrate these variations within the same cultural setting. They show that individuals participate in cultural processes in variable degrees, and argue that different patterns of individuals' behaviour are likely to be observed within the same culture. These differences cannot be easily glossed over, and a major task of psychologists is to find out appropriate explanations for them.

The preoccupation of anthropologists and psychologists with the study of group-level and individual-level processes respectively has led to different strategies for organizing research studies. Anthropologists have preferred to focus on the analysis of customary achievements of people (e.g., in hunting, navigation) in their 'natural-cultural habitat' (the broader ecological and cultural setting in which people negotiate their day-to-day life) and interpret them in terms of people's recurrent experiences, which provide the basis for all learning. In doing so they do engage in some observations, but their reliance on informants is often the key issue in the data collection process. Thus, the analyses of behaviour are carried out at a global level, and the conclusions remain specific to the group of people studied. They lack the component of generality, which is a major goal of scientific inquiries.

On the other hand, psychologists, by virtue of their training in laboratories, generally feel uncomfortable in dealing with the 'natural-cultural habitat'. They prefer to design situations according to the needs of the study, and carry out observations in contrived situations that often do not match with real-life situations. The focus is more on the effect of variables that are proximal and immediate in space and time than on those which are embedded in the life of people but not so easily observable. Although this approach fails to meet 'ecological validity' (Berry 1980), generalizations are advanced for all situations and for all kinds of people. Thus, while anthropologists do not intend to come down to the level of designing observational or experimental situations, psychologists do not intend to go beyond contrived situations to observe people's behaviour as it occurs in natural settings. Hence, the concerns expressed in studies and the levels at which analyses of behaviour are carried out differ sharply between anthropologists and psychologists. Some rapprochement between the two is essential for producing a unified science of behaviour.

Use of Instruments

The scientific study of any process or phenomenon requires the use of instruments. These may vary along a dimension of sophistication with crude or less sophisticated at one pole of the dimension and highly sophisticated at the other. Instruments add accuracy and precision to any observation or assessment. While psychologists cannot think of a research study without using instruments and quantitative measures, anthropologists often find most of them to be too superficial, so as to deny their usefulness in research. Psychologists are in possession of innumerable instruments that range from

simple paper and pencil variety to the most sophisticated electronic equipment. These have been found to be extremely helpful in assessing the processes underlying behaviour. The advantage is that they can be designed and used in ways that permit the elicitation of standard responses in a variety of situations. These responses can be recorded and preserved for thorough analyses at later points. Instruments can also serve other purposes. In particular, they can relieve us from dependence on memory, and render valuable help in identifying the processes involved in a particular behavioural phenomenon or in checking and ensuring the reliability of our observations. As an example, we may consider the classical study of Gladwin (1971), who documented the remarkable navigation skills of Puluwat navigators in Micronesia. The study showed that they used a very complex system of calculation based on a star compass, winds, currents and several other cues to keep track of their distance and direction while navigating at sea. In terms of data, the study relied on past memories of the navigators as well as participant observation. However, Gladwin's descriptions of navigation processes are not precise enough to satisfy cognitive psychologists. And inconsistencies between what people report doing and what they actually do have been noted in both psychological and anthropological studies (e.g. Wassmann 1993).

Gladwin did try to use an instrument to tap the navigation process of Puluwat navigators in an experimentally designed situation, in particular the Piagetian task of working out the number of possible permutations among a set number of coloured tokens. This situation was inspired by the fact that navigators know the alignments for departure from one island to another in a large group of islands (and rote learning is used to instruct young navigators). The navigators were unable to perform this task, while young non-navigators who had been to school had no problem with it. This tells us that the navigators' skills do not easily transfer to novel situations, and also that it is difficult to adapt tasks to make them meaningful to unschooled informants, but it does not help in specifying the psychological processes actually used. Had Gladwin succeeded in devising some appropriate psychological tasks, one would have been able to place greater confidence in Gladwin's conclusions about the cognitive processes of the navigators. The availability of instruments not only encourages testing of the reliability of verbal reports, but also provides us with an opportunity for cross validation of data obtained from different sources. Here again, the psychological approach can be meaningfully integrated with anthropological studies to enhance their reliability and, more importantly, to describe the processes underlying the behavioural phenomenon under consideration.

Methodological Problems

As a discipline, mainstream psychology is still characterized by the use of rigour of scientific methodology in its research – more than any other discipline within the category of social sciences. The concern for variables,

their manipulation and control, precise observation of behaviour using some kind of instrument and sophisticated statistical treatment of data still dominates the design of psychological studies. Since these concerns are not shared by anthropology, most psychologists consider its approach less sound. Methodological inadequacies of anthropology have often been criticized. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) comment in this respect is quite pertinent. In his book *The Ecology of Human Development* he observed:

There exists a body of scholarly work in which external environmental contexts are described in considerable detail and their impact on the course of development graphically traced. Such investigations are carried out primarily in the field of anthropology.... But the descriptive material in these studies is heavily anecdotal and the interpretation of causal influences is highly subjective and inferential (1979:18).

The problem seems to be inherent in anthropology because of its focus on the study of historical changes. Here, experimentation has to be excluded from research, and the approach is bound to be inferential. On the other hand, it is not surprising if anthropologists easily dismiss the vast mass of carefully conducted research by psychologists, charging that it is narrow, artificial, parochial and unconcerned with behaviour in ordinary life.

A critical examination of the manner in which anthropologists and psychologists go about their research would indicate a number of methodological problems with both of them. In the following section, we will discuss them briefly.

Sources of Data

Because both anthropologists and psychologists collect data to substantiate their research inquiries, the sources of data surface as a major point of concern for both of them. While anthropologists prefer to observe behavioural episodes in natural ordinary life situations, psychologists mainly prefer to design experimental or semi-experimental situations to study behaviour. Besides observation, anthropologists also depend a lot on their informants for data that forms the basis of ethnographic descriptions, whereas verbal introspection by informants does not constitute a valid source of data in mainstream psychological studies. Which one(s) of these various sources may provide us with good quality data is a matter of serious debate.

Data obtained from different sources are often fraught with the problem of inconsistency, e.g. between data obtained from interviews and observations, and also between those obtained from observations and experiments. Given this state of affairs, the acceptability of data emerges as a major problem for researchers in both disciplines. Mishra, Sinha and Berry (1996) noted these difficulties when they interviewed parents (and also children) about child socialization practices with a standardized

interview schedule, and also observed parent-child interactions in a specially designed situation in which parents and children had an opportunity to work together. Data obtained from these two sources did not harmoniously match, suggesting that what people reported and what they did in real-life like situations were not the same thing. The question is, 'which one of these two data sets is more reliable and worth reporting?' One cannot find a definite answer unless the question is directed at the 'predictive value' of data in terms of theoretical assumptions that initially might have set the stage for the particular research study.

In our studies of spatial encoding (Wassmann and Dasen 1998; Mishra, Dasen and Niraula 2003; Mishra and Dasen 2005) we have encountered similar difficulties. In tasks designed by Levinson (2003) and his team at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (see the chapters by Senft and by Widlok in this volume), informants are asked to reproduce a display (such as three animals in a row) on a second table after a rotation of 180°; these nonverbal tasks assess whether they use a geocentric or an egocentric frame of spatial reference. On some of the items, the informants are also asked to explain how they remembered the display. Some informants encoded spatial arrays of stimuli in a relative frame, but explained them in absolute terms, or vice versa, in a significant number of cases.

Thus, the value assigned to data obtained from different sources (including primary and secondary sources) comes up as a major issue that requires some agreement between anthropologists and psychologists. We must remember Campbell and Fiske's (1959) advocacy of the use of a 'multi-method and multi-measure' approach to search for a deeper understanding of phenomena even if it turns out somewhat problematic in terms of generating inconsistent data sets. This practice would at least save researchers from producing method-bound conclusions, which may be acceptable to the scholars of one discipline, but not to those of others.

Task Specificity

We indicated earlier that instead of observing behavioural phenomena in natural contexts psychologists prefer to design experimental situations in order to study behaviour and infer the underlying psychological processes. A large variety of tests and tasks have been developed for this purpose, but one can also design new tests/tasks in case the standard ones appear less appropriate. While the main purpose of these tests/tasks is to make valid inferences about the psychological life of individuals as it unfolds in their day-to-day settings, psychologists hardly ever show any concern about the search for correspondence between the behaviour observed in laboratory settings and that displayed by people in real-life settings.

Psychologists also find difficulty in drawing inferences about the daily life of people based on their performance on a single task. The usual practice is to use a number of tasks supposedly aimed at measuring the same process. Confidence in the assessment procedure is enhanced if high

interrelationships in performance on various tasks is demonstrated. Although the hope is that similar tasks would demonstrate similar patterns of performance, this is not always confirmed. Minor changes in task settings can change the pattern of performance. This has been demonstrated, for example, in studies of pictorial perception (Serpell 1979), and on the spatial encoding tasks by Widlok (this volume) and by Troadec, Martinot and Cottereau-Reiss (2002).

In our studies of spatial encoding mentioned above, we systematically used (among several other instruments) two spatial encoding tasks. While both tasks had the same structure, one of them (called 'The Animals') was easy to encode verbally ('All three animals look north'), while the other (called 'Steve's Maze') elicited a more iconic encoding (the memory of a shape, or movement of the hand). With the first task, we found systematic geocentric encoding, and relatively more egocentric encoding with the second one. This 'task specificity' was found in all our studies, in Indonesia, India and Nepal, which speaks for the reliability of the finding. In this case, making changes to the task settings (such as changing the wording of the instructions, or the orientation of the display along main geocentric axes or not) made little difference in terms of results.

Evidence for 'task specificity' in performance suggests that the nature of the task is an important factor in determining the type and the level of performance of subjects. Thus, any general conclusion about the behaviour of individuals based on their performance on psychological tasks has to be drawn with great caution. It is important to use several tasks, several types of instructions and settings, in order to make sure that the tasks really 'measure' what is intended by the experimenters. The research orientation developed by Cole (Cole et al. 1971; Cole and Scribner 1974) under the name of 'experimental anthropology' has been very telling in this respect (for a review, see Segall et al. 1999).

Domain Specificity

Besides task specificity, research provides considerable evidence for 'domain specificity' of behaviour. Studies of cognitive behaviours of people carried out in diverse cultural settings support the notion of 'domain specific competence' (Berry 1984), which means that people in some societies can competently deal with stimuli related to behavioural domains that are reinforced in their settings. For example, hunters and gatherers develop high levels of differentiation in the perceptual domain because of the day-to-day demands placed on their life for disembedding (both visually and tactually) fruits, nuts and animals in the camouflaged forest environment (Berry 1976; Mishra, Sinha and Berry 1996). Contrary to this, the agriculturalists develop high levels of differentiation in the social domain because of the high premium placed on social relationships in agricultural societies.

Similarly, Dasen (1975; see Segall et al. 1999 for a review), using tasks derived from Piaget's theory, found that the children in hunting and

gathering societies developed spatial concepts much earlier than quantitative concepts (quantity, weight, volume), while the opposite was true of children in agricultural societies. This is no doubt due to what is adaptive in each type of ecological setting, and hence what is valued in each type of culture: spatial concepts that help in way finding for a nomadic type of existence, and quantification in a setting where agricultural produce has to be stored and exchanged.

Thus, in order to study behaviour in different eco-cultural settings, one has to be sensitive to the kind of pressures that operate on people who negotiate life in those different settings. This essentially requires a prior knowledge of such features of groups in order to design or select appropriate tasks to make valid assessments of their behavioural characteristics. Failing that, the assessments are likely to end up estimating behavioural features that are less strongly valued among them. Informants, who are commonly used by anthropologists as important and valid sources of data, may be meaningfully utilized by psychologists as 'information providers' on such important aspects of people's life and as 'assistance providers' in selecting/designing appropriate tasks for behavioural assessments. In this way, the 'grasp of natives' point of view' (at which anthropologists are highly competent) can be meaningfully integrated with psychological experimentation and testing.

Wassmann and Dasen (1994) suggested a research procedure in three steps, combining anthropological and psychological methods. First comes what people say, obtained through interviews with informants, but taking care to include a variety of informants from different segments of the society, i.e. not only experts but also 'jiffs' (just plain folks). But, as mentioned above, people do not always do what they say. Hence observation is the second necessary step. And then, if the process of interest cannot be easily observed, it may be necessary to induce it, by using 'artificial' situations – which is what psychologists usually do. These induced situations, however, have to be ecologically and culturally valid, which is only possible if the researcher has a sound culture knowledge. Step three is therefore dependent on steps one and two, i.e. in cross-cultural psychology, psychological methods can only be used in combination, and after ethnographic ones.

Reliability of Data

The accuracy of behavioural data obtained through observation, interview or experimentation has always been a matter of serious concern in psychological research. While there are chances for misrecordings, omissions and even distortions (e.g. where there was great reliance on memory), it is also likely that the researcher does not record all behavioural episodes to the same extent. A related question is whether two researchers engaged in observing and recording a given behavioural phenomenon would do it in the same way. What confidence do we have that they will

record the same events in the same manner? In other words, what is the reliability of the observations and recordings made by a particular researcher?

While anthropologists may feel quite easy with, and confident about, the observations and recordings (made by them or their assistants), psychologists will always have doubts about them. In fact, they would hesitate in accepting any data that have not been tested for 'inter-observer reliability'. The problem appears more serious if the sources of data (e.g., observation, interview) are largely unstructured and primarily focused on qualitative features of behaviour that have either to be dealt with in their original form (i.e., as they are recorded), or require some kind of transformation in an attempt towards quantification. Psychologists use several techniques by which they try to ensure the reliability of data irrespective of whether they are of a qualitative or quantitative nature.

The question of reliability is also linked to the number of observations made of a particular behavioural phenomenon. Some anthropologists feel satisfied by asking just a few key informants about their behaviour, or by observing them on a few occasions. They may advance generalizations based on those few collections of interviews and observations. This practice has, of course, been criticised from within anthropology (e.g. Wassmann, 1995), but has not completely disappeared.

A basic tenet of scientific enquiry is to seek confirmation (replication) by a second researcher. While this is unfortunately not a systematic practice in psychology, it is almost never even attempted in anthropology. There are, of course, good reasons to claim that 'field work' implies a very personal relationship between the researcher and his or her informants that cannot easily be handed over to someone else. Another argument is that societies change over time, so that a strict replication is impossible unless carried out within a very short time frame. The world of American cultural anthropology has been shaken somewhat by the Mead versus Freeman controversy over adolescence in Samoa (Mead 1928; Freeman 1983; Côté 1994), a fantastic example of nonreplication, with all kinds of political and epistemological ramifications.

Some anthropologists tend to assume that all behavioural phenomena are cultural in origin and are expressed almost in the same way in all or most of the individuals who share that culture; there is no scope for questioning its variability across individuals within the same culture. Hence, grand generalizations were sometimes made by anthropologists about the behaviour of people of certain cultures without enough empirical evidence for making that high level of claim. The 'culture and personality' school, exemplified by Kardiner and Linton's (1945) work, provides a good example of this problem. They analysed material from several cultures provided by anthropologists, without undertaking any fieldwork themselves (hoping that others had undertaken it seriously). Thus, they described some 'modal personalities' as characterized by almost entirely negative and almost pathological traits, which were attributed to child-

rearing practices such as maternal neglect. It is hard to believe a finding like that, but Kardiner and Linton did not question it because it was not at odds with the Freudian theoretical notions through which they were trying to view cultural systems and behaviours. The question is whether a culture whose members live in such miserable psychological states could survive for long. The answer would certainly be 'no'. Such conclusions would not have been drawn had any attempt been made at seeking reliability of data through either direct or indirect methods.

Similar fallacies exist in the field of psychology as well. For a long time, psychology was characterized by its pursuit of general principles of behaviour. A vast majority still believes that the laws, principles and theories advanced in the discipline of psychology are 'universal' even if they have been developed on the basis of data provided largely by undergraduate students of psychology in the United States. They plead with forceful arguments that psychology must continue with its search for generality or universality. In doing so they perhaps believe that the world is homogeneous. They never care for or pay attention to cultural variability across populations around the globe. Hence, it is no surprise that we have several grand theories of behaviour that are claimed to apply to everybody everywhere. These theories started faltering when they were taken to test in cultural settings other than those in which they had been developed. Their inadequacies were realized, limitations pointed out, and modifications were suggested for their reformulation. Cross-cultural research carried out in different parts of the world indicates that nothing like a 'universal psychology' exists so far. However, the development of a universal psychology can certainly be set as a goal of psychological research, and attempts should be made to achieve that goal through systematic research in different cultures and across different psychological (behavioural) domains. Berry (1993) has suggested a scheme for integrating research in order to arrive at a psychology that may be called universal in its real sense.

The question of reliability is not confined to data collection alone; it is also crucial with respect to the inferences drawn from data. The development of a unified science makes this imperative for anthropology as well as for psychology. Psychologists may play a crucial role in convincing their anthropologist friends to address the issue of reliability by engaging them in repeated observations of the same phenomenon, using more than one observer/researcher for data collection, carrying out their study with a larger sample size, and searching for some correspondence in their data sets to enhance the credibility of their conclusions.

Systematization in Research Data

The search for systematic relationships in data is another important goal that anthropologists may like to welcome in their research studies. Of course, some schools in anthropology do this, for example those that use

wide ethnographic data sets such as the Human Relations Area Files (Barry III 1980; Naroll, Michik, and Naroll 1980; Levinson and Malone 1981; Segall 1989). However, the use of such a comparative stance, including inferential (correlational) statistics, is far from achieving consensus in anthropology, and has been more of interest to cross-cultural psychologists; it seems to be a vanishing enterprise. Similarly, some anthropologists influenced by John and Beatrice Whiting (Harvard Graduate School of Education) have not hesitated to appropriate the toolkit of quantitative methods. Excellent examples are Munroe and Munroe (1997) or Super and Harkness (1997). Note that these colleagues partly identify with cross-cultural psychology, and that they are quite often husband-and-wife teams, one of each discipline, which is possibly the closest way to establish an interdisciplinary collaboration!

On the other hand, ethnography based on 'radical cultural relativism' is still quite popular. Adherents believe in and try to deal with each culture in a unique way without attempting any kind of systematization of elements at either the cultural or behavioural level in an empirical manner. In fact, as Leach (1967: 87) observes, 'he [the anthropologist] purposely chooses a small field within which all the observable phenomena are closely interrelated and interdependent' (quoted in Jahoda 1982: 56). They also believe that each experience in a particular cultural setting is unique to a group of people. They adopt a similar approach in studying the behavioural domain of people, and believe that each cultural experience is linked to the development of a particular kind of behavioural repertoire in a unique way. This approach to the study of cultures and behaviours can be described as 'butterfly collection'.

The metaphor indicates that assuming that each behaviour is specific to a particular culture would lead to a great collection of behaviours without making any attempt towards examining their interrelationships. Hence, they can tell us about very specific aspects of different butterflies (cultures), but cannot suggest any general principle that could be used in making these descriptions more meaningful. Thus, while the collection of specific descriptions can document cultural diversity, it is inherently incapable of telling anything about commonalities. What is required is the extension of research towards the search for generalities across cultures. Since the very beginning, cross-cultural psychologists have committed themselves to the pursuit of these twin goals (Berry and Dasen 1974).

This is not in any way undermining the strengths of anthropology as a discipline. It simply reflects a kind of preference on the part of many anthropologists due to their adherence to traditional approaches of research in their discipline. But the boundaries of various disciplines are not so rigid today, and there is a considerable amount of dialogue and sharing of perspectives and methods among them.

Active collaboration between anthropologists and psychologists will be extremely rewarding for both. While psychologists may learn the use of wider perspectives (e.g., ecological, cultural) and contexts (e.g., learning

environments) to examine the behavioural characteristics of individuals or groups, anthropologists may learn the use of certain statistical techniques through which they may go about searching for patterns in data and achieve greater precision and generality in their findings.

Anthropologists interested in integrating psychological methods could possibly start with the more qualitative approach of cultural psychology. Greenfield's (1997) chapter on 'empirical methods for cultural psychology' would be an excellent start; she demonstrates that there can be different takes on the concept of 'validity' (see also Kirk and Miller 1986), and that qualitative and quantitative methods are complementary. This has become the most generally accepted methodological stance in social sciences such as education (Miles and Huberman 1994; Pourtois and Desmet 1997), although it is still not fully accepted in mainstream psychology. A further step would then be to consult some writings on methodology within cross-cultural psychology (for example Brislin, Lonner and Thorndike 1973; Lonner and Berry 1986) or social psychology (Camilleri and Vinsonneau 1996).

Considerable progress has been made in recent years, especially under the impulse of Ype Poortinga and his team, in rethinking psychometric methods for cross-cultural use (Poortinga 1983; Poortinga 1997; van de Vijver and Leung 1997; see also Berry et al., 2002 for an introduction). These authors are concerned with the appropriate use of psychological tests and scales across cultures: how can we make sure that these instruments really measure the same underlying construct; i.e., can we really attain comparability in test scores? This is obviously a very complicated issue. In short, the idea is to assess the construct validity of the instruments separately for each culture through factor analysis; items can be rephrased or removed until comparability is achieved. It is then only on the basis of comparable structures that cultural differences can also be documented.

Conclusions

With a primary focus on the study of humans, both anthropology and psychology have made remarkable achievements in their respective fields of knowledge. Commitment to disciplinary practices has resulted in a lot of advancement in respect of the understanding of cultural and behavioural features of groups in the discipline of anthropology. On the other hand, psychologists have made considerable advancement in the understanding of behaviour both in micro and macro settings. In anthropology, researchers have made sweeping generalizations concerning the role of culture in the behaviour of individuals. In doing so they have altogether ignored the fact that human behaviour is highly variable in response to various stimuli, and that within the same culture, a number of behavioural patterns can be found. On the other hand, psychologists have largely turned their backs on the analysis of the role of cultural factors in behaviour. Except for a small number of cross-cultural psychologists, they have mainly focused on the

study of the variables that are present in the immediate environment of individuals. The domination of an experimental approach has led to an adherence to refined methodology in terms of research design, specification of variables including their linkages, selection of samples, techniques of data collection and their analyses. Such refinements in methodology accord them credibility within the social sciences. However, the concern for methodological rigour on the part of psychologists has also led to the criticism of producing decontextualized and a-social knowledge about human behaviour, which does not make much sense if one wants to address larger issues of the society (e.g., population, health, environment).

We believe that anthropologists and psychologists need to work together to examine the strengths and weaknesses of each other's disciplinary practices more closely. While psychologists need to read more widely in history, ethnology, and the centuries of writings on man and society to develop wider perspectives on human behaviour, anthropologists may borrow from them some methods in order to grasp the notion of controls and correlations, including systematization and generalization of knowledge, to produce research that receives a wider audience and greater interdisciplinary acceptance.

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Contents

List of Figures and Tables	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Introduction Jürg Wassmann and Verena Keck	i
Part I Local Actors	
1 The Methodological Interface of Psychology and Anthropology Ramesh C. Mishra and Pierre R. Dasen	21
2 Rethinking Tradition: Invention, Cultural Continuity and Agency Ton Otiro	36
3 Intentionality of Action in Cultural Context Gisela Trommsdorff	58
4 Positioned Meaning in Personal Narrative Stephen C. Leavitt	78
5 Actors and Actions in 'Exotic' Places Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart	95
Part II Emplacement and Landscape	
6 Power, Knowledge and the Organization of Space Peter Meusburger	111
7 On the Constitution of Space and the Construction of Places: Java's Magic Axis Werner Hennings	125
8 Elementary Methodological Tools for a Recursive Approach to Human-Environmental Relations Katja Neves-Graça	146
9 Tempestuous Landscapes: Persons, Places and Memory in Two Vanuatu Hurricanes Margaret C. Rodman	165
10 The 'Anthropology of Landscape' as a Research Method Suzanne Kuehling	176

First published in 2007 by

Bergahn Books

www.berghahnbooks.com

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Experiencing new worlds / edited by Jürg Wassmann and Katharina Stockhaus.
D. Cm.

"Some of the essays brought together in this volume were originally presented at the symposium, Space Games: New Research Approaches to Spatial Orientation, Spatial Perception and Spatial Cognition, held in Heidelberg, May 2003"--Acknowledgements.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-84545-327-5 (hardback : alk. paper)

1. Human geography--Congresses. 2. Space perception--Congresses. 3.

Geographical perception--Congresses. 4. Landscape assessment--Congresses. 5.

Cognition and culture--Congresses. I. Wassmann, Jürg. II. Stockhaus, Katharina, 1966-

GF95.E97 2007

304.2--dc22

2007035168

2007035168

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Printed in the United States on acid-free paper.

Part III Memory

11 Smell, Person, Space and Memory 187
 Bettina Beer

12 Memory Measurement 201
 Edgar Erdfelder and Martin Brandt

13 The Nijmegen Space Games: Studying the Interrelationship between Language, Culture and Cognition 224
 Gunter Senft

14 The Perception of Space from a Psychological Perspective 245
 Joachim Funke

15 Conducting Cognitive Tasks and Interpreting the Results: The Case of Spatial Inference Tasks 258
 Thomas Widlok

Notes on the Contributors 281

References 287

Index 331

Figures

6.1 Coalition between knowledge and space. 114

6.2 Architecture of organizations, degree of uncertainty, face-to-face contacts. 120

7.1 Total view of the magic axis with its five so-called 'cardinal points'. 132

7.2 Town section of the magic axis with original magic points (Tugu, Kraton, both squares north and south of the Kraton with the holy Banyans) and the attempts at continuation of the following rulers (Dutch colonialists, Islam, infrastructure of modernity, institutions of the market). 134

7.3 Javanese harmony in the neighbourhood of the Queen of the South. 137

7.4 Labuhan ceremony at the holy stones. 138

7.5 Scene of the night market. 139

11.1 Map of the Philippines and the Visaya region. 193

11.2 An informant doing a pile sort task. 194

11.3 Incense and herbal medicine burned in a half coconut shell. 194

11.4 Fragrant flowers are prepared for the decoration of saints during Easter Week. 195

11.5 Saint Veronica with a perfumed robe and decorated with fragrant flowers for a procession. 196

11.6 An informant sniffs at a smell sample. 200

12.1 Assumptions underlying the standard version of Signal Detection Theory (SDT) applied to recognition judgements. 206

13.1 Diagram showing set-up of game. 225

13.2 Photo-object game. 226

13.3 Wooden-man game. 227

13.4 Tinkertoy games. 228

13.5 'Man and tree' photographs. 229