Indigenous, cultural, and cross-cultural psychology: A theoretical, conceptual, and epistemological analysis

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This paper compares indigenous, cultural, and cross-cultural psychology by examining their theoretical, conceptual, and epistemological foundations. They have been influenced by the three research traditions in psychology: (1) universalist, (2) contextualist, and (3) integrationist approaches. The goal of the universalist approach is to test and verify universality of existing psychological theories. Cultural psychologists, in contrast, point out that presumed universals are actually Western impositions and not universals. They affirm the contextualist approach and argue that every culture possesses its own unique characteristics, and they should be understood from within the culture. Integrationists argue that search for universals should include the content and context of culture, and they reject absolute universalism and relativism. In cross-cultural psychology, two integrationist approaches can be identified: the derived etic approach (Berry, 1980) and the indigenous psychologies approach (Kim, Park, & Park, 1999). In the derived etic approach, researchers adapt and integrate existing theories to fit local knowledge. Indigenization as articulated by Sinha (1997) represents this approach. In the indigenous psychologies approach, the primary goal is to understand how people think, feel, and behave in a particular context. It advocates a bottom-up model-building paradigm that examines the generative capabilities of human beings. Detailed analysis of the indigenous psychologies approach is provided.

Introduction

From ancient times cultural diversity has fascinated many philosophers, traders, missionaries, and travelers. These people recorded their observations and outlined possible reasons for observed differences. However, most of these interpretations were biased and bound by personal intuitions, religious beliefs, or philosophical orientation. Systematic investigation of cultural differences was not conducted until the nineteenth century, and psychological analysis of cross-cultural variation is a relatively recent endeavor (Klineberg, 1980). In cultural and cross-cultural research, three approaches that attempt to explain cultural differences can be identified: universalist, contextualist, and integrationist approaches.

The universalist approach aims to discover abstract, nomothetic, and general laws of human functioning (Koch & Leary, 1985; Shepard, 1987). Cross-cultural psychologists have carried out research in various areas of psychology to test and verify the universality of
existing psychological theories, such as in the areas of perception, cognition, development, personality, social, and clinical psychology (Triandis et al., 1980).

Within the universalist approach, two types of explanations have been advanced to account for observed cultural differences. In one camp, cultural differences are considered to be superficial contextual factors and they were deemed unimportant since the underlying mechanism is considered to be universal (Shweder, 1991). In the second camp, Darwinian theory is used to grade and rank cultures according to different stages of development or evolution (i.e., from traditional to modern, from primitive to civilized, and from backward to advanced). The universalist approach is an example of the etic approach (Berry, 1980).

Scholars representing the contextualist approach reject claims that current psychological theories are universal. They point out that many theories are ethnocentric, biased, and culture-bound (Berry, 1980; Shweder, 1991). Often researchers use their own culture implicitly as the standard by which other cultures are judged. They argue that each culture should be understood from its own frame of reference, including its own ecological, historical, philosophical, and religious context. Cultural psychology is an example of this emic approach (Berry, 1980; Shweder, 1991).

Echoing the criticisms of cultural psychologists, indigenous psychologies evolved around the world as a reaction against unjustified claims of universality (Kim & Berry, 1993; Sinha, 1997). Although existing psychological theories and concepts are assumed to be objective, value-free, and universal, in reality they are deeply enmeshed with Euro-American values that champion rational, liberal, individualistic ideals (Enriquez, 1993; Kim, 1995; Kim & Berry, 1993; Koch & Leary, 1985; Shweder, 1991). As such, they can be characterized as imposed or pseudo etics, and not as true universals.

The integrationist approach recognizes the importance of integrating the context and content of psychological knowledge in our search for universals. There are, however, two differing orientations: indigenization from without and indigenization from within (Enriquez, 1993).

Indigenization from without

Enriquez (1993) identified two types of indigenous psychologies: indigenization from without and indigenization from within. Indigenization from without involves transporting psychological theories, concepts, and methods and modifying them to fit the local cultural context. The derived etic approach (Berry, 1980; Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen, 1992) and indigenization as described by Sinha (1997) are examples of the indigenization from without. In this approach, rather than assuming that a particular theory is universal a priori, researchers integrate the local emic knowledge to modify and adapt psychological theories. Only those aspects that are verified across cultures are retained as cultural universals. Similarly, indigenization involves “transformations that the transplanted or borrowed external elements undergo so that they suit the characteristics of the region or the culture” (Sinha, 1997, p. 133).

Although theories, concepts, and methods are modified based on local cultural contexts, indigenization from without represents an external imposition (Enriquez, 1993). It represents an accommodative change, in which new and different perspectives are simply added to the existing paradigm (Kim, 1995). Adair (1992) points out, “Most would agree that an indigenous psychology should resemble the North American discipline, although its variables and theories will reflect the local culture” (p. 62). Indigenous knowledge is treated as an auxiliary source, not as the primary source of knowledge.

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Although local *emic* knowledge can be used to supplement, complement, and modify existing theories, it may be insufficient to challenge the basic assumptions or the scientific paradigm. For example, if *emic* results do not fit the existing theory, the mismatch is often viewed as a problem in translation, data collection, or methodology (Kim, 1995). If the phenomenon is fundamentally different, researchers outside of the culture may not possess the necessary schema to understand the difference. Although theories, concepts, and methods are modified based on local cultural contexts, *indigenization from without* still entails an external imposition. As such, psychologists can commit errors of commission and errors of omission:

As a set of concepts and theories developed in the industrialized West, modern psychology lacks some concepts crucial to describing and understanding the mind in a very different culture. It may even include some concepts that distort perception and block a deep understanding when applied to another culture. When a psychologist looks at a non-Western culture through Western glasses, he may fail to notice important aspects of the non-Western culture since the schemata for recognizing them are not provided in his science. (Azuma, 1984, p. 84)

Many psychologists who recognize the limitations of Western theories search traditional philosophical and religious texts for alternative interpretations and theories (e.g., Confucian, Buddhist, or Hindu texts). They use the knowledge stored in these texts as an explanation for observed differences between the US and China, India or Korea. These texts, however, were developed for philosophical and religious purposes several thousand years ago, not for psychological research in the twentieth century. Psychologists run into the danger of becoming an “armchair philosopher” by accepting these texts at face value or attempting to translate these philosophical texts into psychological theories. Within a culture, only a small percentage of the population actually know the detailed contents of these texts and follow them rigorously. Moreover, we do not know whether they follow these guidelines, and when, how, and why they affect people’s behavior. In addition, systematic analysis of these texts may reveal numerous contradictions, inconsistencies, and conceptual leaps that are not amenable for logical, verifiable testing. They may be useful in pointing out cross-cultural differences in values, beliefs, and attitudes, but they cannot explain within culture variations.

Researchers should not automatically assume that Chinese will follow the Confucian way, or that Hindu Dharma will automatically explain the behavior of Indians. Although these indigenous texts were developed within a particular culture, they could also be a form of imposition representing the interests of a particular religious group (e.g., Brahman caste in India) or social class (e.g., the ruling elite in East Asia). In order to use these texts, researchers must translate them into psychological concepts or theories, and then empirically verify whether they influence how people think, feel, and behave. Indigenous texts may be useful for developing an alternative descriptive framework and they may serve as a useful source of knowledge, but they may not be able to explain within cultural variations.

Although we must be careful of cross-cultural impositions, we must also be wary of within-culture impositions. Molding lay knowledge into institutionalized psychological theories is an example of the external imposition. Heider (1958) points out, “The ordinary person has a great and profound understanding of himself and of other people which, though unformulated or vaguely conceived, enables him to interact in more or less adaptive ways” (p. 2). Based on Heider’s preliminary work, J. Rotter developed his theory of locus of control and B. Weiner developed his attribution theory. These theories are, however, far removed from people’s conception about attribution and control and, more importantly, they

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possess low internal and external validity (Bandura, 1997; Park & Kim, 1999). The main problem with these approaches is that they have eliminated the influence of context and agency, which are central to understanding people’s conception of control and belief system (Bandura, 1997; Park & Kim, 1999).

Kim, Park, and Park (2000) contend that current psychological theories represent psychologists’ conceptions, interpretations, and explanations rather than an accurate representation of human psychology. In other words, the current psychological knowledge can be described as the psychology of psychologists, and not the psychology of the lay public (Harré, 1999; Koch & Leary, 1985).

**Indigenization from within**

In the indigenization from within, theories, concepts, and methods are developed internally, and indigenous information is considered to be a primary source of knowledge (Enriquez, 1993). The indigenous psychologies approach advocated by Kim and colleagues (Kim, 1999; Kim & Berry, 1993; Kim & Choi, 1994; Kim et al., 1999; Kim & Yamaguchi, 1995) is an example of this approach. While indigenization from without represents a modification or extension of existing psychological theories, the indigenous psychologies approach advocates a shift in the scientific paradigm, a transformative change in which theories, concepts, and methods are developed from within, using a bottom-up approach.

The indigenous psychologies approach advocates examining knowledge, skills, and beliefs which people have about themselves, and studying these aspects in their natural contexts. It represents a bottom-up approach in which the goal of psychology is to understand how people function in their natural context and to examine how they interact with their natural and human world. It recognizes that human psychology is complex, dynamic, and generative. It advocates a transactional model of human functioning that recognizes the importance of agency, meaning, intention, and goals (Kim, 1999). Epistemology, theories, concepts, and methods must be developed to correspond with psychological phenomena (Kim, 1999; Kim et al., 1999). The goal is not to abandon science, objectivity, experimental method, and a search for universals, but to create a science that is firmly grounded in the descriptive understanding of human beings. The goal is to create a more rigorous, systematic, universal science that can be theoretically and empirically verified, rather than naively assumed.

**Analysis of culture**

To learn about our own culture or another culture, we typically examine cultural products (e.g., art, music, dance, dress, food, and customs), and psychological constructs (e.g., attitudes, values, beliefs, and norms). In order to gain a deeper understanding of a culture, we can study organized bodies of knowledge such as history, philosophy, language, customs, and folkways. However, even if we acquire this information, our understanding of the culture will still be limited. If we are outsiders looking in, the understanding would be qualitatively different from insiders who are capable of thinking, feeling, and identifying as members of the culture.

Although people identify and define culture through cultural products and psychological constructs, these entities are not the essence of culture. As Giovanni Battista Vico pointed out, if we did not participate in the creation and re-creation of these products, we would lack

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the insight and phenomenology that insiders possess (Berlin, 1976; Kim, 1999; Kim et al., 1999). The creation and re-creation of a culture represents a continuous process that occurs every moment a child is born into a cultural community, is socialized by its members, and interacts with its members. Behind the external products and psychological entities, there are groups of people who maintain, share, and create a particular set of values, beliefs, skills, and goals. They have special meaning and relevance to participants of the culture.

For example, if I choose to burn a piece of cloth, it is of no concern to others. However, if I paint it red, white, and blue, pattern it as stars and stripes (i.e., like a USA flag) and then burn it in public, it could be offensive to Americans from the US, but it may be of no concern to non-Americans. (In the US, the Congress has attempted to pass a bill to ban flag-burning since it is considered to be an offensive act.) Similarly, if I burned pages of collated paper, it would be of no concern to others. But it would be a highly offensive act to the religiously devout if the collated papers happened to be the Bible, Koran, or Bhagavadgita. Objectively, the item may only be a piece of cloth or paper, but people have waged war for these symbols and have died as heroes defending them.

**Two approaches to understanding culture**

In traditional psychology, culture is considered to be a contextual factor and was eliminated from the research design. When scientific psychology was imported from Europe and established in North America, psychologists adopted a top-down, positivistic approach in their search for abstract and universal laws of human functioning (Kim, 1999; Koch & Leary, 1985). By emulating the natural sciences, psychologists hoped to amass a periodic table of human behavior and psychological laws that govern the formation of complex behavior by adopting its methods (i.e., experimentation, inferential statistics) and its philosophy of science (e.g., objectivism, elementism, empiricism, positivism, and determinism). The goal of psychology was to discover objective, abstract, and universal relationships between independent variables and dependent variables (see Figure 1). Aspects that were not directly observable (i.e., consciousness, agency, meaning, and intention) were considered to be noise and eliminated from the research design. Psychological constructs (e.g., anxiety, motivation, or emotions) were included as intervening variables. Culture was considered to be a contextual factor and not included in the research design.

In cross-cultural psychology, researchers became interested in examining the influence of culture on behavior (Berry, 1980; Berry et al., 1992; Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, 1990). Adopting the traditional positivistic approach, culture is treated as a quasi-

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**Figure 1**  Positivistic model of causality

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independent variable and behavior as a dependent variable (Berry, 1980). Since researchers cannot control culture like independent variables in a laboratory setting, it was considered to be quasi-independent variable.

For cross-cultural comparisons, a researcher typically selects cultures using the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF), or Hofstede’s (1991) four cultural dimensions (e.g., individualism-collectivism) and examines how cultures should be used to explain behavioral differences across cultures. There is, however, a logical flaw in selecting cultures using the HRAF or Hofstede’s dimensions and then using cultures as an explanatory construct. The HRAF and Hofstede’s dimensions were created conceptually based on behavioral and psychological data. If psychological and behavioral indicators are used to define culture and then culture is used to explain the psychological and behavioral differences, researchers fall into a tautological trap: the psychological and behavioral data used to categorize cultures are then used to explain them.

In the indigenous psychologies approach, culture is defined not as a variable, quasi-independent variable, category (e.g., individualistic vs. collectivistic), or a mere sum of individual characteristics. Culture is an emergent property of individuals and groups interacting with their natural and human environment. Culture is defined as a rubric of patterned variables. To use an analogy, painters use different colors to create their work of art. The different colors are like the variables that operate within a particular culture. These colors are used to create certain forms and patterns (such as a face, apple, or house). These forms are then combined to convey a particular ethos, providing an overall gestalt and coherence. The quality of a painting cannot be reduced to its constituent parts, such as wavelengths of light. Like a painting, culture is an emergent construct that provides meaning, coherence, and direction to its members. Like the different colors which artists use, people use available natural and human resources to achieve their goals (such as solving subsistence and psychological needs). This is the process definition of culture: culture is the collective utilization of natural and human resources to achieve desired outcomes.

From the perspective of an outsider looking in, culture is seen as affecting the way people think, feel, and behave (Berry et al., 1992; Segall et al., 1990). But from an insider’s perspective, culture is basic and natural. When children are born, although they have the potential to learn any language, they usually end up learning one particular language. To most adults, the particular language they speak is natural and basic, and other languages are viewed as being incomprehensible, foreign, and alien. With the aid of their language, they organize their thoughts, communicate with others, and construct their social and physical world. Genetics, physiology, or biology cannot explain culture and cultural variations. To use computers as an analogy, our physiology resembles the hardware of a computer and culture resembles the software. Depending on what type of software is downloaded, a computer would operate very differently. The difference between a computer and people is that human beings possess generative and creative capability that computers do not possess (Bandura, 1997; Harré, 1999; Kim, 1999).

Without culture human beings would be reduced to basic animal instincts and we would not be able to think, feel, or behave the way we do. Culture allows us to define who we are, what is meaningful, communicate with others, and manage our physical and social environments. It is through culture that we think, feel, behave, and interact with reality (Shweder, 1991). Because we think through culture, it is difficult to recognize our own culture. Culture provides a framework for perceiving what is meaningful, relevant, and salient. For a person born and raised in a particular culture, his or her own culture is perceived to be natural and it is the way he or she thinks, feels, and behaves.
Differences in cultures exist because we have focused on and developed different aspects of our environment and attached different meanings and values to them. The difference, for example, between a weed and a vegetable is not determined by qualities inherent in a plant (i.e., whether or not it is edible). It has to do with our involvement with the plant (Shweder, 1991). What is considered a weed in one country (e.g., seaweed in France) is considered an important vegetable in another (e.g., Japan and Korea). What is considered a pest in Korea (e.g., snails) is considered a delicacy in France. Shweder (1991) notes that if a beautiful cabbage grew in a rose garden, we would treat it as a weed and pluck it out. The cabbage is treated as a weed since it was not our intention to grow a cabbage in a rose garden. Conversely, if a rose grew in a cabbage patch, it would also be treated as a weed (Shweder, 1991). Thus the distinction between a plant and a weed is complex and it includes the ideas of edibility, meaningfulness, and intention.

Understanding a culture from within

Giovanni Battista Vico (in Berlin, 1976) pointed out that in the physical world, human beings can ascertain only the objective, impartial, third-person knowledge. In the natural sciences (e.g., physics, botany, and entomology), we can describe a table, a tree, and an ant, but we cannot ascertain phenomenological knowledge (i.e., what it is like to be a table, a tree, or an ant). In the human world, we can ascertain not only the impartial, third-person knowledge, but also the firsthand knowledge (who I am), and secondhand knowledge (who you are). In other words, I can understand “who I am” and communicate this information to another person. Although knowledge in the natural sciences is limited to objective, impartial, third-person knowledge, in psychology, first-, second-, and third-person knowledge can be obtained (Kim et al., 1999). Unlike the physical world, we know and feel what it is like to be a person, and we can communicate this knowledge to others. Works of art (such as novels, paintings, movies, and music) are the media through which we communicate our inner phenomenology and agency.

Second, in the natural world we do not question the motives, intentions, and purpose of inanimate objects or animal behavior. Such an act would be considered irrational, or as an example of anthropomorphism or animism (Berlin, 1976). In the human world, these questions are essential in understanding human action. We ask, “Why do men act as they do . . . what mental states or events (e.g., feelings or volitions) are followed by what acts, but also why, why persons in this or that mental or emotional state are or are not likely to behave in a given fashion, what is, or what would be, rational or desirable or right for them to do, and how and why they decide between various courses of action” (Vico, in Berlin, 1976, p. 22).

The results of a hundred years of psychological research in behaviorist and cognitive traditions are disappointing because investigations have been limited to objective third-person analysis (Kim, 1999; Koch & Leary, 1985). In the indigenous psychologies approach, although the third-person knowledge is important, this knowledge must be supplemented by first-person and second-person knowledge.

The indigenous psychologies approach recognizes the existence of two types of knowledge: analytical, semantic, and declarative knowledge on the one hand, and phenomenological, episodic, and procedural knowledge on the other. Analytical, semantic, and declarative knowledge represent information based on objective, impartial, third-person analysis. Phenomenological, episodic, and procedural knowledge represent the subjective, first-person experience. For example, adult native English speakers can freely
express their thoughts in English (i.e., procedural knowledge), but may not know the grammatical syntax or structure of the spoken words (i.e., semantic knowledge). In other words, the person knows how to produce the sentences, but may lack the ability to describe them analytically. This is the case because “description of the grammar of a word is of no use in everyday life; only rarely do we pick up the use of a word by having its use described to us; and although we are trained or encouraged to master the use of the word, we are not taught to describe it” (Ludwig Wittgenstein, in Budd, 1989, pp. 4–5). Wittgenstein pointed out that “the meaning of a word is its use in the language” and not in the description of the word (Budd, 1989, p. 21). In everyday life, people may know how to perform certain actions, but may not have the analytical ability to describe how they were done. As Fuglesang (1984, p. 42) points out: “The farmer’s knowledge is experiential . . . He uses his knowledge like his hoe. He is in a sense not mentally aware of it. He is his knowledge. His knowledge is his self-image and his self-confidence as a community member.”

Analytical knowledge, like grammar, is taught as a part of formal education in most cultures. For example, a mother can raise a child efficaciously, but may lack the analytical ability to describe how it was done. In contrast, a developmental psychologist can analyze and document successful mothering skills, but may lack the procedural skills in implementing that knowledge in raising her own child. The task of indigenous psychologists is to translate the first-person phenomenological, episodic, and procedural experience into analytical, semantic, and declarative knowledge.

In contrast to the reactive model of human functioning espoused by the positivistic model of causality, the indigenous psychologies approach advocates a transaction model of causality that focuses on the generative and proactive aspects (see Figure 2). In this model, the unobservable human qualities (such as agency, intention, meaning, and goals) are the central concept that links situation or events on one hand with behavior on the other. First, it is important to examine how an individual perceives and interprets a particular event or situation (causal linkage 1). This information can be obtained directly through self-report. The second step involves assessing individuals’ performances based on their perception (causal linkage 2).

Indigenous psychologies approach shares the basic scientific tenets outlined in the sociocognitive theory developed by Bandura (1997). Bandura investigated the generative capability known as self-efficacy. He defines self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). In a study of management effectiveness with a group of business graduate students, Bandura systematically elevated or reduced their level of self-efficacy by providing them with a preset feedback of how well they were performing compared to their counterparts. He found

![Figure 2 Transactional model of causality](image_url)
positive feedback increased their self-efficacy and negative feedback decreased their self-efficacy (causal linkage 1). Participants with higher efficacy beliefs were more likely to use efficient analytical ability, were satisfied with their level of performance, and had higher performance ratings (causal linkage 2). The reverse was true for participants who were given negative feedback. Thus, individuals’ performance can be systematically elevated or depressed by providing feedback information that increases or decreases their self-efficacy. The rise or fall in self-efficacy can be systematically linked to the subsequent rise or fall in their performance. Bandura has systematically documented that people do not simply react to existing situations, but they are proactive and generative agents of change. In other words, people set goals and develop the necessary skills to achieve these goals.

Another important aspect of the indigenous psychologies approach is the separation of different levels of analysis: physiological, psychological, and cultural. Although all actions must have a physiological or neurological basis, behavioral explanations cannot be reduced to that level. Our physiology and genetics could be further reduced to four basic atoms (i.e., carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen, and oxygen) we share with all other organic life forms. This information does not help us to understand, predict, and manage human behavior. In addition, the important distinction between life and death cannot be defined through genetics, since the genetic make-up of a person who has just died is the same as when he was alive. Athletic, artistic, and scientific feats cannot be reduced to physiological, neurological, or genetic levels. Harré and Gillet (1994) point out that “the brain, for any individual human being, is the repository of meaning in that it serves as the physical medium in which mental content is realized and plays a part in the discursive activities of individuals” (p. 81).

Finally, characteristics of collective entities, such as groups, societies, and cultures, are emergent properties that cannot be reduced to the mere sum of individual characteristics. Culture, language, philosophy, and science are products of collective human effort. The relationship between an individual and a group needs to be viewed as a dynamic, interactive system of mutual influence.

To investigate culture, the indigenous psychologies approach emphasizes the need to examine three key aspects: (1) context, (2) epistemology, and (3) phenomenology (see Figure 3). First, culture and psychology need to be understood in context. Cultural differences arise partly due to variations in ecology and human adaptation to it (Berry, 1976; Kim, 1994). Researchers have documented a systematic relationship among ecology, culture, socialization practices, and psychological functioning (Barry, Bacon, & Child, 1959; Berry, 1976; Berry et al., 1992).

**Ecology and cultural adaptation**

Ecology refers to the total pattern of relationships between life forms and their environment, and includes the natural environment that humans share with other living organisms. Climatic and natural conditions (such as temperature, humidity, water supply, soil conditions, and terrain) all affect the existence of various types of vegetation and life forms (Segall et al., 1990). Early in human history, collective units, such as families, clans, and tribes developed strategies to cope with and adapt to their particular ecology. A critical element of survival rested upon the availability of a food supply (Segall et al., 1990), which was largely determined by ecological conditions.

Various collective responses appeared in reaction to the differing ecological pressures. For example, people living in mountainous areas, jungles, or deserts had a limited food
supply. When it was depleted, they had to move on to another region in search of a new food source. Hunting and gathering tribes subsisted by moving with or toward the food supply.

Some of these migratory tribes found land where the soil was rich, the water abundant, and the terrain was flat. They used these favorable conditions to develop agriculture and animal husbandry. With increased agricultural efficiency and storage, people could depend on the food produced from the land and from animals that they raised for a steady supply of food. They no longer needed to migrate to find a new food source. The development of agriculture and animal husbandry is a form of collective human effort to manage and adapt to the environment. In Europe, wheat became the staple crop and was grown in dry fields. In Asia, rice was the staple crop and was grown in wet fields.

Migratory tribes who lived in jungles, mountains, and deserts needed a specific set of skills to survive in their hostile environments. Barry et al. (1959) found that in migratory tribes, socialization practices emphasized assertiveness, autonomy, achievement, and self-reliance. Adults in migratory communities tended to be individualistic, assertive, and venturesome, and they view these characteristics as being adaptive and functional to their ecology. In the agricultural communities, socialization practices emphasized compliance, obedience, and responsibility. Adults in agricultural communities tended to be conscientious, compliant, and conservative. Berry (1976) found that ecological context has a significant effect on types of cultures that emerge, which in turn affect individual functioning, namely cognitive style.

**Social and cultural change**

Drastic alteration in the ecological context in Western Europe began around the sixteenth century. From that time, human beings began to exert increasingly greater control over their environments, thereby significantly altering the ecological balance. Numerous factors contributed to the change: the rise of international trade and commerce, the rise of city states, rapid developments in science and technology, greater agricultural efficiency, and industrialization. These changes resulted in a movement away from subsistence economies.

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(largely determined by ecology) to market economies (created by human intervention). For example, people did not have to migrate to find new food sources, or till their soil to have dinner on the table. They did not have to store food for the winter. They did not have to sew to have clothing. They no longer needed their neighbors’ help in putting up a barn. Instead people worked for wages. Money earned could be used to buy necessary goods and services or deposited in a bank for future use. Money acted as an intermediary commodity that created the efficient movement of resources.

These changes drastically altered cultures and lifestyles in Western Europe. With greater agricultural efficiency, many serfs and peasants were dislocated from their agricultural communities. They congregated in the newly formed cities in search of other forms of subsistence. Industrial factories paid wages for their labor. The new types of work demanded a different set of skills. People could no longer rely on the skills and knowledge that had been passed down from one generation to another in agricultural communities. The work involved acquiring new skills (such as working with machinery) that resulted in a rapid increase in production and distribution. Workers produced specialized goods for mass distribution.

Socialization practices in the industrial urban centers contrasted sharply with those of agricultural communities (Toennies, 1887/1963). In traditional agricultural communities, trust, cooperation, and conservatism were important aspects of daily life. In these communities, social intelligence was highly valued (Mundy-Castle, 1974). In the urban setting, however, technological intelligence began to play a prominent role (Mundy-Castle, 1974). In subsistence economies, the goal of socialization was survival and subsistence. In the newly formed urban communities, socialization emphasized the development of cognitive and linguistic skills that were necessary to acquire greater wealth and profit.

Industrial urban settings were full of unrelated strangers. The relationship a person had with an employer was contractual, and not based on any long-standing relationship of trust and obligation. Workers provided their services and they received a wage for their labor; this relationship was fueled by the law of supply and demand. When demand for labor was low and supply was high, workers were underpaid, underemployed, or unemployed. In the nineteenth century, many employers in Western Europe exploited their employees in search of greater profit. In these settings, there was no one to protect the rights of these unrelated individuals. Using the law of supply and demand, human beings as laborers were often treated as commodities.

Collective action began to appear to protest the poor working conditions and working relationships. A new form of collective emerged in Western Europe defined by class (e.g., ruling class, merchant class, and working class) or by common interest (e.g., union). Members of the working class began to organize and lobby their interests through demonstrations, confrontations, and revolutions. These collective actions resulted in the development of new political philosophies and institutions in the twentieth century, such as democracy, fascism, and communism.

In Western Europe, new collectives emerged with the separation from collective entities such as family, community, clan, and religion. These new collectives were based on common interests, experiences, and goals. Cultures based on this type of realignment have been labeled individualistic (Hofstede, 1980). Cultures that maintain familial and communal relatedness have been labeled collectivistic. This distinction represents an outsider’s analysis of cultural differences. These differences must be contextualized in each culture by examining their corresponding epistemology and phenomenology.
Epistemology

In the Louvre museum in Paris, one can trace the development and transformation of Western cultures through the artwork. In most medieval paintings, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, or some other holy person occupies the center of the picture, and commoners are on the periphery. These paintings represent the Judaeo-Christian belief and value system at that time. God, as the Creator of the universe, represents the truth, light, beauty, and goodness, and thus occupies the center. Human beings, who are the created, are on the periphery.

In medieval paintings people do not look very expressive, except for showing reverence for Jesus and the Virgin Mary. A person’s individuality was not important or valued in medieval Christian culture. In order to know the truth, one had to seek the Will of God. The truth was revealed only through Him, priests, or the Bible. Even music was created especially for God. It was monotonic and directed toward heaven (e.g., Gregorian Chants).

The Renaissance in Western Europe represents a cultural revolution: a different way of understanding the physical, human, and spiritual world. There was a shift in the perception of reality: the relationship between figure and ground became reversed. Human beings were no longer on the periphery, but instead occupied center stage.

In the Louvre, one piece of artwork attracts enormous attention. Throughout the day people queue in front of the painting of Mona Lisa hoping to take a photograph of her. Why does this painting attract so much attention, even after 500 years? Mona Lisa was not a saint or gentry, and her beauty is not extraordinary. She was a plain-looking commoner. There is a striking difference between the painting of Mona Lisa and other medieval paintings. She is at the center of attention, and the landscape is in the background. Compared to traditional medieval paintings, context and figure are reversed. A common human being occupies the focus of the painting. She also has an expression that denotes inner emotions and individuality.

During the Renaissance, it was discovered that individuals have the potential to discover the truth without the aid of religious leaders, or the Bible, or through Divine revelation. Rather than viewing human beings as sinful and the world as a forsaken place, human beings were considered beautiful, and it was believed that they had the capability to discover the truth firsthand. In the medieval period, the human body was considered sinful and so kept covered. In contrast, the sculpture of David by Michelangelo is an example of celebration of the beauty of the human body.

Religion, culture, and science

René Descartes lived at a time in which many conflicting ideas emerged, and new discoveries were made. He was in turmoil due to these conflicting ideas, doctrines, and beliefs. He decided to adopt a method of critical doubt in which he rejected all ideas, doctrines, and beliefs unless the truth was self-evident. He found he could doubt virtually everything: traditions, customs, beliefs, and even his own perception. There was, however, one thing he could not doubt: his own existence. His fundamental question was “How do I know I exist?” He concluded that it is through rationality and reason that this knowledge can be obtained with certainty. Descartes concluded, “Cogito, ergo sum” (I think therefore I am) (see Figure 4).

Descartes found that through rationality and reason he could understand not only himself, but also natural scientific laws and mathematical laws. This type of understanding was considered impossible in the medieval period because it was believed that only God could know and reveal the truth. Furthermore, Descartes concluded that one could know
through rationality that God exists, since rationality is a special gift from God.

Descartes separated our bodies from the mind. Our body, like other animals, is controlled by natural instincts. This was evidenced by the reflex arc that he discovered through experimentation. Human beings, however, were different from animals because we possessed rationality and reason. Rationality and reason allow us to understand ourselves, natural and mathematical laws, and God.

Descartes influenced and modified the Judaeo-Christian worldview. His views created a duality and dichotomy between mind and body, good and bad, light and darkness, justice and deceit, and heaven and earth. Life came to be viewed as a struggle between truth and light on the one hand and evil and darkness on the other (see Figure 5). Modern Western movies, television dramas, and novels reflect this basic struggle between good and bad and the triumph of the human capacity to overcome evil for good (e.g., the movies Star Wars, and Titanic). Emotions, on the other hand, were considered unreliable as they were linked with the desires of the flesh, the body. Love was the only emotion that could transcend rationality and reason, since love was the embodiment of God.

**Western liberalism**

Descartes’ discovery was a purely individualistic enterprise. He could determine truth by himself, instead of depending on some arbitrary body. Other people, authorities, and institutions cannot dictate what is right and what is wrong. Only you yourself can know what is true with absolute certainty. Western individualistic societies emphasize individual...
uniqueness and the pursuit of their unique identity, the truth, and self-actualization. Liberal education provides the necessary training to discover one’s rationality with the belief that there is just one truth, paralleling the scientific and mathematical laws. Through democratic discussion one can arrive at this truth. Democracy and social institutions represent the development of collective rationality (see Figure 6).

In the West, the liberal tradition focuses on a rational individual’s rights to freely choose, define, and search for self-fulfillment (Kim, 1994). The content of self-fulfillment depends on the goals that individuals freely choose. The nature of the goal can vary from one individual to another and can range from hedonistic fulfillment to self-actualization. This freedom of choice is collectively guaranteed by individual human rights. At the interpersonal level, individuals are considered to be discrete, autonomous, self-sufficient, and respectful of the rights of others.

From a societal point of view, individuals are considered to be abstract and universal entities. Their status and roles are not ascribed or predetermined, but defined by their personal achievements (i.e., by their educational, occupational, and economic achievements). They interact with others using mutually agreed-upon principles (such as equality, equity, non-interference, and detachability), or through mutually established contracts. Individuals with similar goals are brought together into a group and they remain with the group as long as it satisfies their needs. Laws and regulations are institutionalized to protect individual rights; everyone is able to assert these rights through the legal system. The state is governed by elected officials, whose role it is to protect individual rights and the viability of public institutions. Individual rights are of prime importance, and the collective good and harmony are considered secondary.

**East Asian perspective**

Descartes grew up in France during the Renaissance, otherwise known as the Age of Reason. What if Descartes had been Chinese, Japanese, or Korean, how would he have answered the
fundamental question of his existence? I believe he would have answered, “I feel, therefore I am.” In contrast to Western emphasis on rationality, Confucianism focuses on emotions that provide a basis of harmonious familial and social relationships.

In East Asia, individualism and rationality are viewed as being unstable, while relationships and emotional attachments are considered stable. This is not to say that individualism and rationality do not exist. They do exist, but they play a secondary role to relations and emotions. In other words, relationships and emotions are the focus, and individuals and rationality are relegated to the background. Relational emotions that bind and bonds individuals together, not the private and narcissistic emotions, are emphasized.

In East Asian art, human beings are placed in the context of the natural and social environment. Individuality is not emphasized. In traditional landscape paintings, human beings are placed in context of nature. The expressions of individuals cannot be seen as in Western art. Human beings are considered to be part of nature in Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoistic, and Shamanistic epistemologies. In these philosophies, harmony is the most important value since it integrates human beings with nature, spirits, and with other individuals.

**Confucianism**

Confucius (551–479 BC) saw the universe and all living things in it as a manifestation of a unifying force called the *Dao* (translated as the Truth, Unity, or the Way). *Dao* constitutes the very essence, basis, and unit of life that perpetuates order, goodness, and righteousness.
Confucius, who was born into an agrarian society, expounded his moral and political philosophy to maintain, propagate, and reify natural order.

*Dao* manifests itself in the harmonious opposition of *yin* and *yang*, and in humans through *te* (virtue, goodness, moral excellence). *Te* is a gift received from Heaven (Lew, 1977). It is through *te* that a person is able to know the Heavenly Truth and it is the “locus where Heaven and I meet” (Lew, 1977, p. 154). *Te* can be realized through self-cultivation. It provides the fundamental source of insight and strength to rule peacefully and harmoniously within oneself, one’s family, one’s nation, and the world.

There are two interrelated aspects of virtue: *ren* (human-heartedness) and *yi* (rightness). The basis of humanity and the individual is *ren*. *Ren* is essentially relational. Confucius pointed out three related aspects of *ren*. First, it “consists of loving others” (Analects, XII, 22). Second, “the man of *ren* is one who, desiring to sustain himself, sustains others, and desiring to develop himself, develops others” (Analects, VI, 28). Third, one should not do to others “what you do not wish done to yourself” (Analects, XII, 2). Mencius noted that without *ren*, a person couldn’t be considered a human being: “When you see a child drowning in a well, if you do not feel compassion, you are not human” (Mencius, II/A/6). *Ren* is an essential component of the self and relationships in Confucian cultures. Individuals are born with *ren* and experience *ren* through their parents. In Figure 7, the Confucian model of development has been outlined as an alternative to the Western model (see Figure 7).

The second concept, *yi*, notes that an individual is born into a particular family with a particular ascribed status. *Yi* articulates that individuals must perform and fulfill their duties as defined by their particular status and role. Confucius considered society to be hierarchically ordered, necessitating that people fulfill their duties: “Let the ruler be a

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(Figure 7: Confucian developmental stages)

*Ren* = Human-heartedness  
*Yi* = Rightness  
*Li* = Propriety  
*Xin* = Trust  

ruler, the subject a subject, the father a father, the son a son” (Analects, XII, 11). Fulfilling one’s given role as father, mother, elder brother, or younger sister is considered a moral imperative.

Ren and yi are considered as two sides of the same coin. For example, a virtuous father fulfills his duties because he loves his son, and he loves his son because he is the father. Through ren and yi, individual family members are linked together in unity (Dao). The primary relationship is the parent–child relationship as defined by xiao dao (filial piety). Parents are the vehicles through which the Dao is transmitted and manifested in their children. Relationships between parents and children (and also between spouses and siblings) are not based on equality, but on ren and yi. Parents demand love, reverence, obedience, and respect from children. Children expect love, wisdom, and benevolence from parents. The parent–child relationship involves more than just two individuals. Parents represent ancestors and the past, and children represent progeny and the future.

Confucius considered society to be hierarchically ordered and that each person has fen (portion or place) in life. Each fen had attached roles, and each person must fulfill these roles. Duties and obligations of each fen are prescribed by li (rules of propriety). Li articulates expectations and duties of each individual according to status and role. Social order and harmony are preserved when people observe their place in society and fulfill required obligations and duties.

The fourth concept is zhi (knowledge). Zhi allows us to understand the virtues of ren and yi and to follow those virtues. It is the basis of the development of wisdom. The four concepts of ren, yi, li, and zhi are the basis of Confucian morality. Like the two arms and two legs that we are born with, ren, yi, li, and zhi exist from birth, but we need to further cultivate and develop them. This knowledge is further refined and extended in a school, where teachers affirm morality as the basis for all thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Teachers are seen as extensions of the parents. They have a moral basis from which to provide children with education in order to further develop zhi. Finally, as children mature they need to interact with a wider range of people, including strangers. As such, they need to develop xin (trust).

Confucius distinguished two competing forces within oneself: first-order desires (e.g., material and carnal desires) and second-order desires (i.e., virtues of ren and yi). To be a virtuous person, one must control first-order desires and cultivate second-order desires. An inferior person is governed by egocentrism, selfishness, narcissism, and li (profit). Confucius pointed out that a superior person cultivates the virtues of ren and yi: “the superior man comprehends yi; and the small man comprehends li” (Analects, IV, 16). True freedom is obtained by overcoming first-order desires through self-cultivation. Self-cultivation, coupled with care and nourishment received from significant others are considered the necessary and sufficient conditions for development of a truly moral, virtuous, and free person.

Confucius considered all individuals to be linked to others in a web of interrelatedness. The fundamental principle for governing relationships among individuals, family, society, the world, and beyond is best articulated in his piece entitled “Righteousness in the heart” (in a chapter called the Great Learning, in The Book of Rites). Although he considered individual morality to be central, the individual is still situated in a web of interpersonal and social relationships. He states that:

If there be righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in character.
If there be beauty in character, there will be harmony in the home.
If there be harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation.
If there be order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

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Confucian morality places priority on substantive goals over individual self-interests. Each individual has roles and a position in the family. The behavior of each role and position is formalized in the Confucian code of behavior. Within a family, the father is considered the symbolic head. As such, he holds the authority to represent the family, and to speak and act on behalf of the family, but not against the family. For example, property was the communal possession of a family. Although the father had the right to dispose of the property, the other family members also had rights to the property. In the selling or leasing of family property, Lee (1991) found that in traditional China, family members other than the father or the eldest son (such as other sons, daughters, or even grandsons) also signed sales and lease contracts. An arbitrary decision by the father was generally considered uncustomary or an illegitimate act (Lee, 1991).

A father had the authority, duty, and responsibility of handling family property on behalf of the family and not solely for his own benefit. Thus, wisdom and benevolence are necessary to ensure that his decisions are not myopic or self-serving. He must consider the long-term implications of his decision for individual family members, the family’s reputation, and the family’s position, ancestors, and progeny. The role of other family members is to obey and respect his decisions. Rights and obligations in Confucianism are thus role-attached, unequal, welfaristic, paternalistic, and situational.

Although Confucianism emphasizes emotions and relationships, Confucian cultures have also evolved in the modern era from the traditional agricultural communities to rapidly developing industrialized nations. Many people think that East Asian societies have simply Westernized, but the situation is much more complex. Although some aspects of Western cultures have been adopted, the more significant changes involve the transformation of Confucian cultures that now emphasize the future rather than the past (see Table 1).

**Limitations on using Confucianism to explain behavior**

It is tempting to use Confucian philosophy to explain the behavior of East Asian societies. There are four reasons why Confucianism cannot be used in this way. First, Confucianism can be used as a descriptive model, but it should not be used as an explanatory model. Ideas articulated by Confucianism must be translated into psychological concepts and then empirically verified. Empirical verification is the feature that distinguishes science from philosophy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Transformation of values</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural</strong></td>
<td><strong>Urban</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>Industrial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past-oriented</td>
<td>Future-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended family</td>
<td>Nuclear family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancestor</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status quo</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td>Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony with nature</td>
<td>Control environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formalism</td>
<td>Pragmatism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom acquired through experience</td>
<td>Analytical skills acquired through formal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex differentiation</td>
<td>Equality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Second, there are blind spots and biases in all philosophical traditions. In Confucianism, the father–son relationship is considered primary and the prototype of all relationships. However, if we examine developmental research in East Asia, the father–son relationship turns out to be secondary, while the mother–child relationship is primary. In traditional East Asian societies, fathers participated in socialization of children after the age of 3 or 4, which is after mothers have socialized children with basic linguistic and social skills. Also, the emphasis on paternalism and sex-role differentiation may have been functional in traditional agrarian societies, but in modern society it may create social and organizational problems (Kim, 1998). In families, schools, companies, and society, paternalism must be supported by maternalism in order to achieve balance and harmony (Kim, 1998).

Third, the lay public may not be fully aware of basic Confucian concepts such as ren, yi, li, zhi, and xin. These are philosophical concepts that are learned through formal schooling, but they are not psychological concepts. It is necessary to translate these philosophical concepts into psychological constructs and to relate them to everyday terminology. For example, in Korea the concept of chong (defined as the “affection and attachment for a person, place or thing”) may be the functional equivalent of ren (Kim, 1998). In Japan, amae (“sweet indulgence”) may be its functional equivalent (Kim & Yamaguchi, 1995). Although chong and amae have very different denotations, psychological analysis reveals a similar pattern of results, capturing the essence of ren (Kim, 1998; Kim & Yamaguchi, 1995). Filial piety can be interpreted as an example of yi (Kim, 1998). Although researchers examine the functionality of filial piety (such as taking care of parents in their old age), all children must fulfill the duties of filial piety; it is a moral imperative. The East Asian concepts of loyalty and duty may also capture the essence of yi. Finally, the concept of “face” parallels the Confucian concept of li.

The final limitation of using a philosophical text is that, within a particular culture, there can be competing philosophies and worldviews. For example, Buddhism outlines an alternative conception of self, relations, and society in East Asia. In addition, native religions (such as Shamanism in Korea, Shintoism in Japan, and Daoism in China) have influenced both Buddhism and Confucianism. These three epistemologies have mutually influenced each another and have been integrated and blended into a synthetic form.

Confucian philosophy can be used as a starting point for research, but not as the end point. Confucian ideas can be used to develop hypotheses, constructs, and theories about human development and relationships. Once these ideas are developed, researchers need to test and verify them empirically.

**Phenomenology**

As pointed out above, even native philosophy can be considered an external imposition. It is important to understand how the ideas contained in native philosophies are understood, used, and modified in everyday life. They need to become integrated with the phenomenological lives of individuals.

The greatest variation across cultures exists in the area of phenomenology. In a cross-cultural study of child development, Azuma (1988) provides a poignant example of a phenomenon as viewed from within and without. In a collaborative study with Robert Hess, they studied American and Japanese mothers’ behavior in regulating and disciplining their children. When a child refused to eat vegetables, a Japanese mother responded, “All right, then, you don’t have to eat it.” The US research group coded her response as giving up after
a mild attempt at persuasion. The Japanese research group, in contrast, insisted that the response was a strong threat. The US research group could not initially understand and accept the Japanese interpretation, since the mother explicitly allowed the child to do as he pleased. Azuma (1988) explained that the purpose of the mother’s utterance was to elicit guilt from the child: “It made the child feel that mother was suffering, and implied a threat to terminate the close mother–child tie” (p. 4). Although mothers in the US are encouraged to reason with the child and provide a rational explanation of their request, in East Asia, interpersonal distancing is used to socialize children (Azuma, 1986; Ho, 1986; Kim & Choi, 1994). A threat to terminate the close mother–child relationship could be viewed as one of the most severe forms of punishment.

According to Azuma (1988), the US researchers interpreted the concept of guilt very differently from the Japanese researchers. Consistent with Western psychoanalytic and psychological theories, the US researchers viewed the concept of guilt negatively: guilt was presumed to be based on irrational beliefs, unrealistic fear, or forbidden wishes. Extensive use of guilt is believed to cause later developmental problems in children. In East Asia, it is considered appropriate that children feel guilty toward their parents for the devotion, indulgence, sacrifice, and affection they receive from their parents (Kim & Choi, 1994). Through the feeling of indebtedness, children feel guilty since they are unable to return the love, affection, and care that their parents gave them. In East Asia guilt is viewed as an important interpersonal emotion that promotes filial piety, achievement motivation, and relational closeness.

Finally, Azuma (1988) points out that the US method of discipline (i.e., enforcing adults’ rules on children – eat your vegetables!) could be considered cruel in Japan. In East Asia, children should not be punished for refusing to comply with adults’ rules that they do not understand. Rather than punishing the child, or reasoning with the child, the mother should reveal her hurt feelings and disappointment to the child, especially since she is trying to do what is best for the child. In East Asia, a mother should use her close emotional and relational bonds to convince the child to behave appropriately (Azuma, 1986; Ho, 1986; Kim & Choi, 1994). Through the use of close relationship and interpersonal bond emotions, the indulgent child is transformed into a compliant child.

Summary and conclusion

Although science can provide the most accurate understanding of the world, it can also blind and limit our understanding. Research is a humbling experience in which ideas accepted with certainty can be refuted or refined after further investigation. Researchers all start with an idea, model, theory, or method to uncover yet another secret of life. A researcher’s preconceptions can aid as well as limit scientific discovery. A number of external impositions described above have limited the development of psychology. Science, above all, is a product of human creation, but we often become a victim or slave of scientific myths.

First, researchers in the field of psychology imposed the natural sciences model to study human beings. In the rush to become an independent and respected branch of science, early psychologists tailored the psychological science to fit the natural science paradigm. Psychologists were able to achieve a modest degree of methodological sophistication, but the natural sciences paradigm distorted psychological phenomena.

The second imposition is the assumption of the universality of psychological theories. With very little development, testing, and data, psychological theories were assumed to be universal. This assumption is particularly problematic since most theories were developed in
the United States and tested mainly on university students. In other words, theories that were tested on less than 1 percent of the total population have been assumed to be universal. Psychologists have been premature in claiming universality. Enormous amounts of time and resources have been wasted testing the universality of these theories, without seriously questioning their basic assumptions, conceptualization, methodology, and scientific foundation.

Third, expert or professional knowledge have imposed on the lay public. Psychological theories and philosophical concepts have been used to explain behavior. In most cases, the predictive value of these theories is very low when compared to the natural sciences. Psychologists may have been premature in developing theories, concepts, and methods, without understanding the phenomenon itself. Psychologists have largely failed to describe psychological phenomena from the inside, from the experiencing person. Instead, psychologists have dissected the world into cognitions, motivations, emotions, and behavior, whereas in real life these elements are components of experience, and not the unit of experience. Perhaps psychologists’ assumed expertise is a fabrication rather than firmly based solid evidence, since researchers have difficulty predicting, explaining, and modifying human psychology.

The indigenous psychologies approach advocates liberation from these external impositions and advocates the experience of a phenomenon as an insider, for the first time. Researchers may have focused too much attention on getting the right answer, and ignored the process by which to get it. Along the way, psychologists have discarded many central constructs such as agency, consciousness, or intentions as extraneous noise. However, this is the “stuff” that makes human beings human. Psychologists have been focused on finding the basic components of behavior and have not realized that behavior is an emergent property of cognition, emotions, intention, and agency. It is not reducible to its respective components.

The indigenous psychologies approach advocates a linkage of humanities (which focus on human experience) with social sciences (which focus on analysis and verification). We have focused most of our attention on internal or external validity and not on practical validity (Kim et al., 2000). In other words, do our theories help to understand, predict, and manage human behavior? In a practical sense, perhaps the greatest psychologist was William Shakespeare. He was not an analyst like Freud or Piaget, and he did not conduct experiments like Skinner, but he was able to capture human drama on paper and on stage. His dramas have been performed over the past centuries, in many cultures, and are loved throughout the various parts of the world. In a similar vein, the greatest therapist might have been Ludwig van Beethoven, or Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, whose music is able to soothe frazzled nerves and the frustrations of daily life. Walt Disney could be considered as the most notable developmental psychologist. He was able to capture the hearts and minds of the young and the young-at-heart. We may not think of these people as psychologists, but they have captured and reproduced human psychology on stage, film, or paper for many centuries, and across different nations.

Author note

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