Culture and Psyche

Culture and Psyche:

Psychological Approaches in Anthropology

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This book originates from a lecture series given on Psychology and Anthropology at Goldsmiths College London in 2018. It is an introduction to psychological anthropology and will be useful both for undergraduates and postgraduates. While providing a critical overview of topics commonly included in psychological anthropological texts: psychoanalysis, culture and personality, child development, personality, emotion, the self, memory and cognition, this book also includes a chapter on Darwin, sociobiology and evolutionary psychology to emphasise that behaviour is not infinitely malleable, but rather culture impacts existent biological and psychological structures, and stresses the fact that the mind is not a *tabula rasa* which culture acts upon.[1] While, as I will demonstrate, culture impacts psychological processes, these processes are constrained by genetic, biological and evolutionary factors.

It is well-recognised by contemporary psychologists that human psychology has important neurobiological underpinnings, and that our psychology has been moulded through processes of human evolution (Boyer, 2000; Henrich and Gil-White, 2001; Henrich and McElreath, 2003; Rozin, 2000; Smith, 2000). While there is a longstanding rift between biological and psychological anthropology, this has not always been the case: Freud and Piaget saw the implications of Darwin's theory of Natural Selection for understanding motivation and thought.

Furthermore, as Hruschka, Lende and Worthman (2005) contend, conversations between biological and cultural anthropologists have the potential to provide novel insights when applied to key issues in psychological anthropology, such as the nature of emotions (see Chapter 6). These authors assert that relationships between the individual and the environment are central to psychological anthropology; internal processes (i.e. biological) can simultaneously influence and in turn be influenced by environmental factors. They underscore the fact that human psychology is grounded in neurobiology, and that processes of psychological functioning

have been impacted by human evolution. Additionally, the emerging focus on embodiment in anthropology (e.g. Mascia-Lees, 2011) has refocused anthropologists on how culture becomes internalised (an approach raised by the culture and personality theorists), while at the same time it has provided an essential corrective to the mind-body dualism, which is often seen in psychology. Finally, for these authors the biocultural approach is useful in enabling cultural anthropologists to learn about the research skills of biological anthropologists.

Recent decades have seen a dramatic growth in evolutionary studies of human behaviour reflecting increasing acknowledgment across the social sciences that evolutionary considerations complement and deepen our understanding of behavioural diversity. As the unifying theory of the life sciences, evolution by natural and sexual selection provides significant possibilities for the integration of currently disparate research areas (Wilson, 1975), and helps us to understand the complex patterns of causation involved in psychological and behavioural processes. Evolutionary approaches in anthropology provide vital information about how both current environments and legacies of past selection impact human behavioural diversity; they complement and enhance our understanding of such diversity and its ultimate causation and integrate the *how* and *why* of psychological traits. From an evolutionary-psychological theoretical perspective, which emphasises biocultural evolution and psychocultural adaptation, personalities, selves, and behaviour are viewed as adapted to ancestral and contemporary environments, both natural and cultural. Sociobiology alongside evolutionary psychology and Gene-culture coevolution attempts to identify which human psychological traits are evolved adaptations i.e. result from processes of natural or sexual selection.

I concur with Bloch (2012), who argues that in failing to take account of cognitive science and evolutionary anthropology, anthropologists work with obsolete assumptions and furthermore they ignore cross-cultural regularities that reflect human universals – ‘the core mental attributes that are shared at some conceptual level by all or nearly all non-brain damaged adult human beings across cultures’ (Norenzayan and Heine, 2005:763).

Psychological Anthropology

Having briefly discussed biological and evolutionary perspectives in anthropology, I shall now address psychological anthropology as a

discipline and then discuss five central themes: its history, the relations between anthropology and psychology, culture and mind, ethnopsychology and a brief discussion of methodology. Anthropologists have had a longstanding interest in psychological issues. In this book I argue that culture and psychological processes are closely intertwined and anthropology needs to take account of psychological issues to understand cultural processes. While culture is a product of human minds, human minds are at the same time products of culture. Cultural processes and the environment impact minds, emotions and cognitive processes and at the same time panhuman aspects of human minds impact the transmission and dynamics of culture, thought and behaviour.

The inclusion of psychological topics in anthropology and of culture in psychology is essential for these disciplines to fully understand human cognition and practice. While anthropological research has challenged assertions of a universal human nature, so too, psychological research poses profound challenges to anthropology. Theories of culture make implicit assumptions about how perception, cognition, memory, emotion and motivation function and every theory of culture is implicitly an account of human psychology.

Psychological anthropology is the study of psychological topics through using anthropological concepts and methods. Among the areas of interest are personal identity, selfhood, subjectivity, memory, consciousness, emotion, motivation, cognition, madness, and mental health. It should be distinguished from cross-cultural psychology. In terms of its concepts and methodology the latter derives from Western academic psychology, while psychological anthropology is rooted primarily in anthropology. Compared to other anthropological fields, psychological anthropology is more open to the inclusion of wide-ranging perspectives ranging from the humanistic to social scientific to the scientific.

Ingham (1996:1) provides a more specific definition: ‘Psychological anthropology is concerned with subjective and sociocultural worlds and with the interplay between them’. Psychological anthropologists focus on how social and cultural factors impact individual psychology and the psychological underpinnings of social behaviour and shared culture. They examine psychocultural processes, such as human adaptation, learning and development, integration and disintegration at individual and social levels and view these processes from diverse perspectives: cultural, biological, psychological and sociological (LeVine, 2010). Pertinent questions for

psychological anthropology include: do different population groups differ in their psychological make-up and if so how? Does the organisation of the human mind and psychological processes vary by social and cultural context, if so how and in what ways? Can these variations be accounted for by differences in individual development? How are developmental pathways and adult motivations of individuals related to macrosocial forces involving stability and change?

Beatty (2013) notes how the subfield of psychological anthropology has developed very differently on either side of the Atlantic. Until the 1960s anthropologists in Britain and in France followed strongly sociological or structuralist agendas, which were unsympathetic to psychological anthropology. The term structuralism in cultural anthropology is associated with the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963), who analysed cultural themes through the structural relations among their elements. Anthropologists of this persuasion claim that are able to discover thought processes from the study of kinship, myth, and language.

With a lack of concern for individuality, this paradigm suggested that the structure of human thought processes was the same cross-culturally, and that these mental processes existed as binary oppositions (Winthrop, 1991). American anthropologists had a broader conception of culture and interest in individual experience and led the way with culture and personality studies, a diverse body of work that was reinvented in person-centred anthropology.

The field of psychological anthropology has changed significantly in the last one hundred years or so. While psychoanalysis once was predominant influence on the field, contemporary psychological anthropologists now incorporate elements ranging from biology, developmental psychology, linguistics to praxis theories and cognitive science, and it is thus a truly hybrid subject. Unlike the field of cross-cultural psychology, which is taught in departments of psychology and assumes that Western psychological constructs are universal, psychological anthropologists are highly critical of the imposition of these Western cultural constructs onto Non-Western cultures.

Linger (2007) contends that, while cultural anthropology is generally dominated by representational approaches (symbolic anthropologists attempting to decipher public language, images, rituals and performances), psychological anthropologists and those favouring phenomenological,

humanist and existential approaches place greater emphasis upon mental processes, individual particularities, existential immediacies and personal agency. Culture is typically viewed by psychological anthropologists as a distributed phenomenon, rather than as social inscription, and instead of reading public texts or text analogues in the mode of literary criticism, these anthropologists deploy psychological theories to infer individual subjectivity through engagement of subjects in in-depth interviews, such as 'person centred interviews' (Levy, 1984; Linger, 2001).

Significantly, in the past two decades, a number of prominent anthropologists have taken issue with reifications of collective abstractions ('culture' as a social phenomenon) disconnected from personal experience (Strauss and Quinn, 1997; Sperber, 1996; Shore, 1996; Bloch, 1998). In line with this Schwartz, White and Lutz (1992:1) contend that 'psychological anthropology… remains the field most centrally concerned with putting people and experience into theories of culture and society'.

What distinguishes psychological anthropology from other forms of anthropological theorising? Throop (2003:109) asserts:

> 'If there is one topic of inquiry that can be said to distinguish psychological anthropology from other variants of anthropological theorizing and research it is arguably the problem of "internalization" (D'Andrade and Strauss, 1992; Strauss and Quinn, 1997). Whereas researchers working in other fields of anthropology have often failed to problematize how it is that cultural knowledge is reproduced, given meaning and motivational force in the context of individual minds and bodies, psychological anthropologists have long been interested in exploring the psychological, somatic, and cultural processes underpinning the acquisition, replication, and internalization of cultural forms. Psychoanalytically inspired anthropologists in particular have played a significant role in highlighting the importance of emotion, motivation, and early childhood experience in the cultural patterning of subjective experience and social action'.

The theory of internalisation of culture has not gone without its critics. Foucaultian anthropologists, like Judith Butler (1990), deny the coherence of the human subject. Geertzians see culture as 'something out there' – emphasising the publicness of meaning, culture and thought. Geertz underscores the fact that public symbols are observable and psychological states are not, therefore we should only study what we can observe. Geertz, deploying Wittgenstein's take on language, maintains that culture does not exist in the heads of humans; 'Culture is public, because meaning

is' (Geertz & Darnton, 1973:12). For him cognition is largely similar throughout humanity (Geertz & Darnton, 1973:13), but the symbols employed in communication vary in different cultural groups. Symbols should therefore not be studied in order to have access to mental processes, but rather as formations of social phenomena. It is incumbent on anthropologists to unravel the webs of meaning and interpret them. In his view these meanings are intersubjectively shared and are socially established prior to an individual learning them. Thinking relies on objects in the world. But importantly structures of meaning are both public, and, at the same time, psychological states.

Historical perspective on the relationship between anthropology and psychology

Psychological anthropology has tended to pursue three interrelated intellectual lineages: historical-phenomenological; comparative-cognitive and the cultural-psychodynamic. The phenomenological approach is indebted to Boas and his work on the linguistic, cultural, practical and material realities that shape experience. The cognitive approach derives from W. H. R. Rivers (1901) seminal work on colour perception and sensory discrimination. The psychodynamic approach is significantly influenced by Malinowski's critique of Freud's work concerning the Oedipus complex and his ethnographic examination of culture's impact on the intersubjective dynamics and resulting forms of attachment in specific cultural caregiver-infant relationships.

In modern day scholarship psychology and anthropology are largely considered separate and distinct disciplines with different theoretical, epistemological and methodological underpinnings. However, this separation has not always been the case historically. As Bruner (1996) notes, the cognitive revolution has again called into question the relationship between anthropology and psychology. Anthropology has been marginalised from cognitive science and at the same time cognitive scientists have failed to incorporate culture into their theories (Shore, 1996). Some contemporary researchers attempt to bridge this divide through examination of both the psychological and cultural aspects of mental life. One perspective in this respect has been the emphasis on cultural models, which link anthropology and cognitive science and provide an important revision of the culture concept and can potentially bridge the cognitive revolution and postmodern critical theory. These ideas will be discussed in depth in Chapter 9 where we discuss cognition.

Before psychology and anthropology developed into different disciplines, social scientists deployed both psychological and cultural constructs in their work. Anthropologists, such as Morgan, Tylor and Frazer in the second half of the 19th century, made use of a unilinear cultural evolutionary paradigm and underscored the idea of 'the psychic unity of mankind' according to which all humans have the same basic psychological structure, makeup and evolutionary potential. The postulate of psychic unity was originally formulated by Adolf Bastian, the 'father of German anthropology', a classical German humanist and a cultural relativist, who maintained a belief in the intrinsic value of cultural variation. However, despite the fact that all humans had the same evolutionary potential, this potential was realised to differing degrees in different societies; hunter-gatherer societies were held by cultural evolutionists to be less culturally and psychically evolved than industrial societies. But these 'primitive' societies still had the potential to evolve into more 'advanced' societies.

For the unilinear evolutionists cultural practices reflected the more or less evolved psychic conditions of members of a specific culture. Thus, culture and psychology were closely intertwined. Furthermore, this doctrine is deeply enmeshed in complex ways with now discredited ideas of racial character and 'progressive' cultural evolution. In the early twentieth century this evolutionary perspective was heavily criticised by anthropologists, such as Franz Boas (1911), who argued in *The Mind of Primitive Man* that the cultural evolutionist paradigm was inherently racist and he himself adopted a cultural relativistic stance – the idea that an individual's beliefs and practices should only be understood by others in terms of that same individual's culture, rather than from the vantage point of another culture. For him mind and the cultural milieu cannot be easily separated from each other. Psychological anthropologists attempt to examine the universality or cultural diversity of psychological processes building on the longstanding anthropological preoccupation with the psychic unity of mankind – 'anthropology's oldest and most vexing question' (Shore, 1996:15).

Until the late 19th and early 20th century anthropology and psychology were not clearly separated into different domains. Boas, the founder of American Anthropology, established the first department of anthropology in 1896 at Columbia University and it soon developed into its modern institutionalised form, teaching biological, linguistic and sociocultural anthropology and archaeology. He attempted to provide psychological

explanations using the reports of ethnologists. He formulated different contracting stages, such as the 'totemic' stage, the 'age of heroes and gods', and the 'enlightened age of humanity' and maintained that the mind of both 'primitive' and civilised groups possessed equivalent learning capabilities, but that they simply deployed that capacity in different ways. Of interest is the fact that his other students included eminent anthropologists, such as Malinowski.

After Boas established his anthropology department there was frequent interchange of ideas between anthropology and psychology and institutional boundaries were rarely an issue. In fact attempts to integrate anthropological and psychological research predate Boas. A paper published in *American Anthropologist* (Wissler, 1920) is titled 'Opportunities for Coordination in Anthropological and Psychological Research'. Throughout the twentieth century, however, the two disciplines drifted away from each other with their own theoretical and methodological paradigms and this has largely continued until the present time. There has been a recent renewed interest in their intersection with a focus upon culture and psyche in a holistic way (e.g. Cole, 1996; Shweder, 1991; Shore, 1996; Ross, 2004).

The culture and personality movement was popular among social anthropologists in the 1930s and 1940s. It explored the relationships between individual psychology and the overreaching culture. LeVine (2001) contends that culture and personality was far too divided to call it a 'school of thought'. While it was without any orthodox viewpoint, centralised leadership, or coherent training programme, there were also some basic tenets that the majority of practitioners would concur with: adult behaviour as being 'culturally patterned', childhood experiences impacting adult personality, and adult personality characteristics having an influence on cultural forms, like religion (LeVine, 2001). The movement's theoretical perspectives included aspects from psychology, anthropology, and sociology, but predominantly stressed the application of psychoanalytic theories to ethnographic data.

Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict were pioneers in this field. Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) was 'the first sustained consideration of the relation between personality and culture' (Winthrop, 1991:214). Culture and Personality developed during the 1930s and 1940s, but after 1950 it increasingly lacked support. In the wartime period Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead attempted to understand different peoples through an

examination of their ‘national character’. In 1972 Francis Hsu recommended that the discipline of culture and personality should be renamed ‘psychological anthropology’. He considered the former title cumbersome and outdated. Many anthropologists held that personality could not be distinguished from culture, and maintained that the study of personality required a more in-depth examination than the average anthropologist could carry out (Hsu, 1972:6). The Culture and Personality School is the focus of Chapter 4, where there will be a more in-depth discussion of its adherents and their ideas.

While Boas, Malinowski, and Mead argued for the inclusion of psychology into anthropology, later anthropologists have generally been more antagonistic to psychology. This is so despite the fact that much anthropological research is being conducted on psychological constructs, such as the self (Spiro, 1993). Nor has psychology demonstrated much interest in culture given its quest for putative universal laws. Hugely influenced by Durkheim (1964), who asserted that social facts can be explained only by sociological laws and there can be no psychological explanation of these facts, anthropologists have for the most part strongly opposed psychological explanations of cultural phenomena. Durkheim repeatedly emphasised that sociology cannot be reduced to psychology, but instead has its own laws (*Rules of Sociological Method*, 1964:125). For him the study of society must eschew reductionism and consider social phenomena *sui generis*: the properties of society cannot be understood by studying isolated individuals. Rejecting biologistic or psychologistic interpretations instead, Durkheim focused on the social-structural determinants of social phenomena. He vehemently rejected methodological individualism – the proposition that social phenomena derive from the actions, decisions, and attitudes of individuals.

For Durkheim ideas of a collective nature could not be caused by individuals. Knowing what goes on in individual minds would not give any clue about the dynamics of collective forces. But for him sociology could be seen as a collective psychology studying the mental lives of people in a community. Durkheim referred to societies as ‘they are living consciousnesses’, ‘organisms of ideas’, or as ‘systems of representations’ and never neglected psychic life.

While Durkheim opposed the attempt to explain social facts by individual psychology, he was not opposed to psychology per se. His most fundamental concepts ‘collective conscience’ and ‘representations’ refer to

mental or psychic realities (Bellah, 1973) and he himself referred to sociology as 'collective psychology'. He was knowledgeable about the psychological theories of his day and was aware of the work of Wundt, James, and British psychologists. For him the relation between sociology and psychology was analogous to that between psychology and physiology in that mind had an autonomous existence, which could not be reduced to physiology -it is an emergent property of biological organisms. However, it would be fair to argue in my view that overall, he undervalues the role of the psyche in social life generally.

In contrast to his uncle, Durkheim's nephew, Marcel Mauss, had a significant impact upon both anthropology and psychology. In 1923 he was the president of the Societe de Psychologie. In lectures delivered to psychologists in the 1920s and 1930s, Marcel Mauss appealed for a rapprochement between sociology and psychology. He stated in his inaugural lecture that he wished to 'show the full importance of the mental fact and all of the benefits of studying [psychology]' (Mauss, 1923). He did not attempt to unite the disciplines, but rather to develop a more holistic sociology that acknowledged the mutual constitution of the body and mind, and the impact of culture and society on embodied personhood. He can be seen as a unifying figure for both disciplines.

Influenced by Durkheim, Clifford Geertz (1973:405) argued that psychological reductionism is one of two 'great saboteurs of cultural analysis'. He views all thought as social. The other is logicism – reducing cultural facts to psychological phenomena overlooks the world of meaning that shapes and interprets human worlds. The most famous lines in Geertz's essay are to be found towards the end of the short first section (1973:5):

> 'The concept of culture I espouse is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning'.

Indeed psychology and anthropology have never experienced a harmonious relationship (Jahoda and Krewer, 1997). Schwartz (1992:324) refers to the two disciplines as exhibiting a 'mutual estrangement'. Lindholm (2001) sees psychology and anthropology as essentially different disciplines with an acrimonious relationship, and furthermore 'any attempt to marry academic disciplines is a dangerous enterprise, one

that is likely to be perceived as a threat to the integrity of each partner, and one that is likely to produce bastard offspring, not acceptable to either parent' (2001:10). In a similar vein, Quinn and Strauss (2006) point out that there has been considerable opposition to psychological theorising and to psychological anthropology among cultural anthropologists, especially from those in the USA. There linguistic, medical and educational anthropologists may be more somewhat receptive to psychological approaches.

One possible reason for this opposition, these authors speculate, is that in the second half of the twentieth century, Geertz (Geertz & Darnton, 1973:11) saw his symbolic or interpretivist anthropology as directly opposed to the hugely successful subfield of cognitive anthropology, with both approaches being interested in cultural meaning. D'Andrade (1995:246) contends that the opposition from Geertzian anthropologists resulted from 'placing meaning too deeply in the mind would lead to imperialist claims by psychologists'. Frank et al. (2006:282) summarises this resistance to psychological theorising:

> 'There are a number of possible reasons why scholars in the current academic climate have been reluctant to do more than nod towards the existence of an interior domain of human life – to posit concrete psychological processes at work in their discussions of agency. First, there has been an intellectual backlash against ahistorical and culturally imperialist uses of psychology and psychological concepts more generally, and especially against interpretations of human decisions as individual acts of pathology rather than as productions of or responses to systems of power and domination. Theoretically, with the influence of poststructuralist and postmodernist thought, there has also been a deconstruction of the idea of the unitary subject (or of a coherent self). Along these same lines, there is general recognition that the notion of the individual, which is often invoked when discussing psychological processes, is in fact historically and culturally produced'.

Having examined the relationship between anthropology and psychology historically, I now move on to look at their similarities in more detail.

Psychology and Anthropology: A Comparison

I shall now elaborate on the similarities and differences between psychology and anthropology. Psychology stresses the centrality of individual psyches and the individual is the basic analytic focus. It adopts the construct of atomism, whereby individuals are akin to self-functioning

and self-contained hermetically sealed units. Traditionally its methodology is quantitative and positivistic. Furthermore, psychological phenomena are tested typically across populations to derive generalisation concerning psychological processes. Among psychologists, culture is seen as an 'add-on' to the effectively universal personality traits, and is seen as an explanatory variable for individual psychological variation. Danziger (2009) as an example contends that culture has been accorded secondary importance among psychologists, if not ignored all together.

Humans are largely assumed by psychologists to be the same type of psychological beings. Cross-cultural work reveals the cultural variations in some psychological constructs. The deep psychological structures, however, are assumed to be universal across diverse cultural groups. To the extent that psychology typically deploys a narrow empirical base, it presents an obstacle to the discovery of genuine human universals. But as Norenzayan and Heine (2005) note, the recent fields of evolutionary psychology and cross-cultural psychology (and its focus on cross-cultural studies) have begun to take culture seriously and have established an interest in psychological universals. They underscore the fact that much cross-cultural psychological research finds that many of our Western-based psychological theories and findings cannot be easily generalised to other cultural milieu.

On the other hand anthropologists would argue that psychology has generally ignored anthropology. Psychological tests used cross-culturally are often not culturally validated and therefore the data provide an incomplete and rather inaccurate picture of human nature, and significantly, as I shall later discuss, impact negatively on assessments of educational development and psychopathology. Anthropology focuses upon collective difference at the level of a society group or subculture and aims to deliver rich ethnographic details to demonstrate how groups vary. Human lives are investigated in their broader ecological contexts. Geertz (1973) speaks of 'thick description' – the attempt to extensively document the social milieu and understanding local symbols in their own terms. Unlike psychology, culture cannot be reduced to another variable in a statistical model; rather the cultural context is the very means through which psychological worlds continue to exist. Its methodology is qualitative, emphasising in depth fieldwork. The different methodologies deployed by psychologists and by anthropologists mean that it is unusual for them to take into account each other's data.

Ethnopsychology

I now turn to ethnopsychology. The Western tradition conceives mind as a puppeteer or homunculus, which guides people. Mind is typically tied to the brain and feeling to the heart. As we shall discuss later this conception is far from universal across cultures. The term ethnopsychology refers to the scientific study of psychological concepts as they exist across different ethnic groups. It is based upon the premise that a group's conception of mind is always culture-bound. Ethnopsychologists study how individuals within a cultural group conceptualise the self, emotions, human nature, motivation, personality, and the interpretation of experience (Kirmayer, 1989; White, 1992). Ethnopsychology, according to Catherine Lutz (1985:36) is: 'concerned with the way in which people conceptualize, monitor, and discuss their own and other's mental and/or behavioral processes'. The ethnopsychological approach explores how societies understand persons, selves, and emotions. The emotions we experience, and assume to be universal, may not have an exact equivalent in other cultures.

The field of ethnopsychology arose from an extension of the scientific work examining local understandings of psychological processes. This was, to some extent, a continuation of the longstanding preoccupation of the Culture and Personality School with the cultural patterning of emotions, such as anger, guilt and shame. Three early ethnopsychological studies are Hildred Geertz's work on cultural categorisations of emotions in Indonesia, Jean Briggs's work on the expression and the management of anger among the Canadian Inuit and Robert Levy's study of emotion in Tahiti. Godfrey Lienhardt's (1961) study of the Dinka illustrates how their conception of the mind differs from the Western notion. For the Dinka conscience is not seen as internalised; rather conscience, in the form of the spirit *Mathiang Gok*, is experienced as an external power.

Importantly Western psychology is itself an ethnopsychology. In relation to Western psychology Misra (1996:497-98) alerts us to the fact that:

> 'The current western thinking of the science of psychology in its prototypical form, despite being local and indigenous, assumed a global relevance, and was treated as a universal or pan-human mode of generating knowledge. Its dominant voice subscribes to a decontextualized vision with an extraordinary emphasis on individualism, mechanism, and objectivity. This peculiarly western mode of thinking is fabricated, projected and institutionalized through representational technologies and scientistic

> rituals, and transported on a large scale to the non-Western societies under politico-economic domination. As a result, western psychology tends to maintain an independent stance at the cost of ignoring other substantive possibilities from disparate cultural traditions. Mapping reality through Western constructs has offered a pseudo understanding of the peoples of alien cultures and has had debilitating effects in terms of misconstruing the special realities of other, peoples and exoticizing or disregarding psychologies that are non-Western. Consequently, when people from other cultures are exposed to western psychology they find their identities placed in question, and their conceptual repertoires rendered obsolete'.

Methodological Issues in Psychological Anthropology

Finally, a brief discussion of methodological issues is warranted. Beatty (2013) provides a good discussion of methodological issues in psychological anthropology. The methodology of this discipline is different from psychology, with psychological anthropologists taking account of the context in which statements are made to a much greater extent. The naturalistic emphasis of anthropology is to be contrasted with the experimentalism lab-based emphasis in psychology. The former observes phenomena in the field. While experiments and structured interviews remain an important source of data in psychological anthropology, participant observation and in-depth interviews (person - centred) remain the gold standard for research associated with personal engagement with their subjects.

Anthropology recognises and embraces the fact that personal factors impact data generation, in contrast to psychologists, who strongly attempt to eliminate them. The ethnographer becomes part of the experiment. Psychological anthropologists are acutely aware of imposing emic categories onto their subjects and attempt to frame questions from the native's perspective. They are concerned to establish how the world is seen from the native perspective, and to understand their grasp of reality and their indigenous theory of mind or ethnopsychology. Diverse experiential worlds are understood in broader social and economic contexts, which link the part to the whole.

Ross (2004) similarly appeals for the inclusion of experimental methods into anthropology hence borrowing from psychological methodology. For him such methods can provide insights for anthropologists, which are difficult to obtain by more traditional techniques, such as informal interviews and participant observation. Furthermore, controlled experimental

settings not only facilitate the comparison of detailed responses across individuals, but also provide data suitable for statistical analyses. He cautions, however, that lab-based experimental studies fail to attend to the impact of the social and physical environments on the production, transmission, acquisition and shaping of cognitive processes, and therefore these methods must be supplemented with detailed studies in the real world, integrating experimental research with ethnographic research.

Chapter Outline

Psychological anthropology comprises a number of diverse and often incompatible theoretical perspectives on psychological phenomena. I have chosen the following themes on account of their prominence in cross-cultural research.

Chapter 2 focuses upon neo Darwinian perspectives. Following Edward Wilson's (1978) now classic text *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*, there has been an increasing advocacy of a biological/evolutionary approach to the understanding of human society. Drawing on the writings of Charles Darwin, this development has been particularly concerning for anthropologists on account of its perceived biological determinism and its neglect of culture. The chapter will critically assess these biological approaches to cognition. I will specifically discuss three perspectives, namely sociobiology, evolutionary psychology and Gene-culture coevolution. Sociobiology applies evolutionary theory to social behaviour arguing that some behaviours are partly inherited and can therefore be affected by processes of natural selection. This discipline underscores the idea that behaviours have evolved over time, resembling the way that physical traits are thought to have evolved. Evolutionary psychology examines how evolution shapes the mind and behaviour and postulates that the human brain comprises a number of functional modules, which have been designed by the process of natural selection. In Gene-culture coevolution genes and culture continually interact with each other in a feedback loop such that changes in genes can lead to changes in culture, which can then influence genetic selection, and vice versa.

Chapter 3 discusses psychoanalytic understandings of culture. Like Marx, Sigmund Freud has had a profound impact on contemporary culture, and the chapter will focus on his theory of psychoanalysis. This theory emphasised the importance of the unconscious and the emotions, and thus heralded an important critique of the Cartesian subject. I shall discuss the

ways in which psychoanalytic perspectives were commonly deployed by anthropologists belonging to the so-called Culture and Personality School. I critically examine Freud's anthropological writings, specifically *Totem and Taboo* and *Civilisation and its Discontents*. The chapter will discuss the relationship between anthropology and psychoanalysis and will critique psychoanalytic constructs, such as the Oedipus complex. Finally, I draw parallels between the psychoanalytic process and ethnographic methodology.

In Chapter 4 I examine in detail the Culture and Personality School, which is associated particularly with Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict. It was an important intellectual tradition in the US in the middle of the last century. Through the further studies of Irving Hallowell, Abram Kardiner and Melford Spiro (among others) it was a crucial influence in the development of psychological anthropology as a sub-discipline. The chapter will critically explore how this school perceived the relationship between culture and personality and its contentions that personality types developed through socialisation with particular emphasis on specific child-rearing practices, such as feeding, weaning, and toilet training. Finally, there will be an examination of contemporary work arguing for the universality of the Big Five Personality Traits: extroversion, neuroticism, openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness.

The following chapter, Chapter 5, focuses upon cultural aspects of child development and learning. I begin by discussing different conceptualisations of childhood across cultures. Socialisation has been a central theme in psychological anthropology since its inception although relatively few anthropologists have taken up the challenge of closely studying child rearing, parenting styles, childhood and development in their ethnographic work. There follows a critical appraisal of developmental theories, such as Piaget's, where I question the notion of culturally universal stages. I then review ethnographic evidence suggesting that in some cultural groups children learn through participant observation, rather than formal schooling. The implications of cognitive development for Western education are discussed. One exciting area for psychological anthropology involves findings that young infants may possess innate cognitive and social abilities (such as folk physics, folk biology and understandings of social interaction). After a critical appraisal of this area I finish by discussing the impact of culture upon attachment, emotional and linguistic development.

Emotion has become an emerging topic in social anthropology. This is the theme of Chapter 6. I discuss a number of issues: how do anthropologists understand emotion and how do they study it. Are there cross-cultural emotions? How does culture construct emotions? I begin with Darwin's writings on emotion in *The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals*. Next I critically appraise the ethnocentric Western conception of emotion as 'internal' and present ethnographic examples in Non-Western cultures, where emotion is rather seen as intersubjective. Much of the contemporary work on anthropology of emotion looks at how conceptions of selfhood impact expression of emotion. This work will be overviewed. The second half of the chapter examines anthropological perspectives on the clinical disorder depression, particularly its universality and ethnopsychology. I underscore the fact that according to an ethnographic approach, in trying to understand depression across cultures, anthropologists and psychiatrists must develop an understanding of that culture and then look whether conceptions of depression in that particular culture resemble those of Western culture. The chapter ends through consideration of mind/body dualism, thought/feeling and autonomy and their impact on the experience of depression.

Chapter 7 critically reviews the anthropology of the self. I begin with a discussion of the differences between self, person and individual before moving onto the cultural construction of selfhood including a critique of the distinction between the individualistic (Western) conception of self and the collectivistic or sociocentric (Non-Western) self-conceptions. I move on to critically appraise the theories of Mauss, Hallowell, Dumont, Spiro, Markus and Kitayama then examine the Western notion of individualism. Finally, recent evidence is presented for the biological basis of the self.

Chapter 8 explores anthropological approaches to memory. I address a number of issues: what is meant by 'collective memory' and how does such remembering impact identity development in the present? How does collective memory relate to individual memory? How do societies remember? Whereas the discipline of psychology has long sought to understand the functions of individual memory, what do we mean when we say that whole societies 'remember' something about their past? How and why do sites of collective memory (historic places, textbooks, films, anniversaries) acquire emotional and political importance? I provide an overview of the work of Connerton particularly focusing upon ritual and discourse in the commemoration process. The chapter ends with a

discussion of evolutionary approaches to memory – the notion of adaptive memory.

Chapter 9 discusses upon anthropology and cognition. After presenting an overview of anthropological theorising on cognition and the field of cognitive anthropology, it discusses the role of cognitive science in anthropology with a critical examination of Bloch's writings on anthropology and cognitive science; especially his book *Anthropology and the Cognitive Challenge*, which asserts that anthropology *is* part of cognitive science since it makes a major theoretical contribution to understanding and accounting for the behaviour of the animal species *Homo Sapiens.* After examining cultural theories of mind (Quinn, Shore, Ross, Toren) I present some examples illustrating the impact of culture on cognition, through discussion of cultural diversity in relation to figure-ground perception, self, attributional styles and logical thinking.

Chapter 10 provides suggestions for future research in psychological anthropology. I argue this should involve the integration of cultural, biological and genetic perspectives. Future psychological anthropologists should adopt an interdisciplinary framework integrating perspectives from anthropology, psychology, neuroscience and genetics and should take advantage of the rapidly evolving techniques for imaging the brain. I present a brief summary of the new field of cultural neuroscience.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DARWINIAN LEGACY: CULTURE, BIOLOGY AND EVOLUTION

The history of the social sciences has generally been characterised by an alleged dichotomy between 'biological' and 'social' factors as competing candidates that might impact human behaviour. Social scientists have traditionally avoided the former and favoured the latter. The antipathy towards 'biological' explanations in social science derives from foundational figures, such as (in different ways) Durkheim and Boas. Their theoretical pronouncements resulted in the view that culture 'is independent of the laws of biology' (Murdock, 1932:200).

Bloch (2012) provides a cogent discussion of how social and natural sciences became estranged. This general mistrust pertains to the evolutionary roots of cognitive approaches to culture and some undisputable mistakes in early evolutionary ideas about culture – for example, the conviction that evolution equals 'progress' and that history might be viewed as a process akin to natural selection. After Franz Boas contrasted race with history, anthropology became increasingly antagonistic to naturalistic explanations, and ethnography became increasingly hostile to generalisations of human beings as a biological species. The development of interpretative and symbolic anthropology, and later, the hegemony of postmodernist approaches, substantially intensified this animosity.

Anthropology became the champion of 'culture' against 'nature' explanations, with the latter mistakenly reduced to racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, and/or colonialism. Bloch asserts that this resulted in a discipline studying a self-contained phenomenon: the 'cultural' or the 'social, which excluded biology. In a similar vein Laughlin and Throop (2006) assert that anthropologists and psychologists have long debated the relative roles of nature and nurture in human cognition and behaviour. Anthropologists have mostly adopted what might be referred to as the 'naïve culturological

position', contending that when our species developed culture, it abandoned its biological roots.

Schwartz, White and Lutz (1993) note that, while biological factors have been always present in psychological anthropology as 'givens', they have generally not been seen as factors to be examined in research. A full understanding of the human condition requires that humans are seen as *biocultural* beings with complex interactions between psychological and cultural processes and between the individual and his or her sociocultural milieu. In a similar way, Fuentes (2016) argues against the nature/nurture divide, which obscures our ability to understand ourselves. While most anthropologists concur that humans are simultaneously historical, biological, behavioural, and social, many still hold to a relatively dualistic paradigm dividing anthropological questions into biological and/or social aspects. In Fuentes's view anthropologists can, and should, combine evolutionary science, cultural analysis and ethnographic research. He argues for the biological and social as intertwined processes of becoming and the need to adopt an integrative biosocial approach.

Shore (1996) contends that a biocultural approach within psychological anthropology may be a means of resolving the 'muddle in the middle', and to reconcile the positions of psychic unity with cultural diversity. More specifically, it presents an agenda for research pertaining to what makes us similar (in terms of recurrent features of our neuropsychology and our environment) and of what differentiates diverse cultural groups (in terms specific sociocultural, linguistic, and biological environments that impact human developmental processes). As I will discuss below, culture impacts biology; our brains, especially during the first five years of life, develop in the context of a particular culture, language, and set of social relationships and norms. It is therefore appropriate to refer to the human brain as a 'cultured' brain. This flexibility of human brain structure is referred to as neural plasticity.

Here I also argue for an evolutionary approach to psychological anthropology. Gangestad and Tybur (2016) underscore the fact that virtually all psychological subdisciplines have been significantly influenced by evolutionary approaches. From its beginnings, evolutionary psychology was seen by its proponents as an overarching theory that could bridge gaps between cognitive, developmental, social, and other areas of psychology, while at the same time inspiring novel and unique theoretical perspectives.

Evolutionary perspectives can raise certain questions about psychological phenomena that would never occur from other perspectives.

MacLean (2016) contends that phylogenetic approaches to studying animal cognition can answer questions relating to the selective pressures and proximate mechanisms impacting cognitive change and can potentially provide significant insights into the processes through which the human cognitive phenotype evolved. While an important contention, there is not space in this book to further examine primate evolution in relation to understanding human behaviour. To provide a historical context on the evolutionary approaches in psychology I begin with an overview of Darwin's theory of evolution.

Darwinian Evolution

Although human beings aren't mentioned per se in *On the Origin of the Species*, Darwin never had any doubt that his theory of natural selection also applied to human beings. He published *The Descent of Man* twelve years later. Darwin maintained that natural selection not only shaped human anatomy, but also emotions and social instincts that we share with animals. In 1872 he published *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, in which he proposed that all humans, and even other animals, demonstrate emotion via strikingly similar behaviours. For Darwin, the evolutionary history of emotion could be traced across cultures and species. This view was unpopular at the time. He argued that human emotional expressions had evolved over time on account of their link with reactions that had adaptive or survival value.

As an example, he posited that animals bare their teeth in rage as a sign of aggression; emotion provides a physical advantage. Similarly, Darwin argued that the 'fight or flight' reaction, which occurs in conjunction with heightened nervous arousal, encouraged survival. He also maintained that human reactions, which no longer demonstrated any clear survival value, most likely did so in the distant past and that the similarity of emotional expression among all known human groups strongly suggested a common origin from an ancestor, which predated the appearance of humans. Today, many psychologists concur that certain emotions occur universally in all humans, regardless of culture including: anger, fear, surprise, disgust, happiness and sadness.

In *On the Origins of Species By Means of Natural Selection* Darwin asserted that nature is a historical process. He was not the first scientist to propose evolutionary ideas; others had done so before him, but they lacked any cohesive explanation of how life had evolved on Earth. Darwin's theory stresses the notion of variation, arguing that the numerous traits and adaptations that differentiate species from each other also provide explanations as to how species evolved over time and gradually diverged. Variation, or what is now referred to by geneticists as mutation, is the raw material on which natural selection acts. Charles Darwin demonstrated that variation was common in many species, but was unaware of the cause. It was only fifty years following the publication of *Origin of Species* that geneticists began to understand that mutations were random and spontaneous.

Another prominent idea is natural selection. The term denotes the process, whereby those organisms, which are more highly adapted to their environment, are more likely to survive and produce more offspring. It is now regarded as the main process that brings about evolution. Natural selection gives rise to evolutionary change; individuals with certain characteristics possess a greater survival or reproductive rate than other individuals in a population and therefore pass on these inheritable genetic characteristics to their offspring.

In *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* he applies evolutionary theory to human evolution, and discusses his theory of sexual selection, a form of biological adaptation, which is distinct from, yet is connected with, natural selection. In sexual selection members of one biological sex select mates of the opposite sex to copulate with (intersexual selection), and compete with other same sex individuals to access the opposite sex (intrasexual selection). Darwin (1871:398) contends:

> 'the sexual struggle is of two kinds: in the one it is between the individuals of the same sex, generally the males, in order to drive away or kill their rivals, the females remaining passive; while in the other, the struggle is likewise between the individuals of the same sex, in order to excite or charm those of the opposite sex, generally the females, which no longer remain passive, but select the more agreeable partners'.

Sexual selection has now become a central theory in modern evolutionary biology and behavioural ecology.

Darwin has had a huge impact on psychology. This includes both his method of naturalistic observation of behaviour and his theory of evolution. In his theory of evolution, Darwin suggested that animals and people manifest behaviour that is adaptive to the environment and that facilitates survival. In *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin stated:

> 'In the distant future I see open fields for more important researches. Psychology will be based on a new foundation, that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation'.

More specifically, in what ways has Darwinian theory impacted human psychology? Much of contemporary psychology has strong biological underpinnings; psychologists often attempt to understand psychological concepts through examining biological processes. Some prominent schools of psychology are hugely influenced by Darwinian ideas, like ethological psychology (the most celebrated 20th century ethological psychologist being Konrad Lorenz) and evolutionary psychology, which will be examined below. The emphasis on an individual's adaptation to the environment spawned the 'functional' view of the mind and of human behaviour, shaping the thinking of psychologists, like John Dewey (1859-1952) and James Angell (1869-1949) in the United States, both of whom were founders of the functionalist movement at the University of Chicago. We might further argue that Darwin firmly embedded psychological phenomena in a naturalistic scientific ethos (see Burghardt, 2009 for a good discussion).

Finally, Darwin's more specific contributions to psychology include: (1) his ideas relating to the evolution of instinct; (2) mind evolving from the lowest animals to the highest humans; (3) the expressions of emotion; and (4) his influence on the psychological investigation of individual differences.

Darwinian evolutionary theory was central to the development of sociobiology, which I shall now discuss.

Sociobiology

The gap between biological and social anthropology is a fairly recent occurrence. Relationships between the two disciplines had been good until the end of World War II when biological approaches to human nature and culture were publicly discredited. They, however, emerged again following the publication of popular books by popular authors including

Desmond Morris and Lionel Tiger, and culminating in the final chapter of E. O. Wilson's scholarly work *Sociobiology* (Wilson, 1978). Here the celebrated entomologist advocated for a reintegration of the social sciences into the mother science, i.e. biology.

While the term sociobiology originated the 1940s, the concept itself was only popularised following Edward O. Wilson's 1975 publication of *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* in which he presented the concept of sociobiology as the application of evolutionary theory to social behaviour. He argued that some behaviours are partly inherited and are influenced by natural selection. This discipline underscores the fact that behaviours, like physical traits, have evolved over time. In his view animals acted in ways that were evolutionarily adaptive over time, resulting in the formation of complex social processes. Sociobiology emphasises the notion of adaptationism according to which certain species or groups of species are currently alive because their distant ancestors were in possession of certain phenotypic traits that they could transmit to future generations. It postulates that just as selection pressures led to animals evolving useful ways of interacting with the natural environment, it similarly resulted in the genetic evolution of adaptive social behaviour.

From this perspective much of social life and culture is genetically determined:

> 'The genes hold culture on a leash. The leash is very long but inevitably values will be constrained in accordance with their effects on the human gene pool. The brain is a product of evolution. Human behaviour--like the deepest capacities for emotional response which drive and guide it--is the circuitous technique by which human genetic material has been and will be kept intact'. (Wilson, 1975:167)

Sociobiology maintains that human nature was derived from and rooted in an earlier hunter-gatherer existence and current behaviour and social life are to be understood as manifestations of an evolutionary past. It is therefore a biologically determinist theory. The discipline investigates social behaviours including, but not exclusively, mating patterns, territorial fights, and pack hunting.

E. O. Wilson, 1978:32-33) writes in *On Human Nature*:

> 'The heart of the genetic hypothesis is the proposition, derived in a straight line from neo-Darwinian evolutionary theory, that the traits of human nature were adaptive during the time that the human species evolved and