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## Postscript

*Adrian C. Brock*

In the introduction to this book, I suggested that it would be misguided to justify an international history of psychology in terms of “inclusion,” however well-meaning the intentions might be. No one can hope to cover everything that has ever happened in the history of psychology at all times and in all places. Selection will inevitably occur. My quarrel is not with selection itself but with the kind of selections that have been made.

In a well-known article on the future of the history of psychology, Kurt Danziger wrote:

Psychologists in East and South Asia, in Africa and Latin America, are raising questions about their own traditions and their relationship to the theory and practice of psychology. . . . The more they do this, the more dissatisfied they become with the parochialism of a historiography of psychology anchored in North American and European perspectives. (1994, p. 477)

What is particularly interesting here is not that such a development has occurred but what the consequences of this development might be:

This leads to questions that are alien to traditional histories of the discipline, including questions about psychology and cultural imperialism, for example, or the link between psychology and the historical project of modernism. . . . These developments have also led to the emergence of new concepts that are of great interest to the disciplinary historian. The concept of “indigenization,” for example, refers to the process by which imported psychological notions and practices become assimilated and changed by the local context. (p. 477)

The important point is that this development can enrich the field. It enables us to see aspects of psychology that the traditional focus on Western Europe and North America has led us to overlook. We can gain a better understanding of psychology as a result and apply this new understanding to more familiar issues and debates.

### *Cultural Imperialism*

This is not a topic that is traditionally discussed in work on the history of psychology, but it can hardly be avoided in an international account of the field. As noted in the introduction, there have been some major changes in the relationship between European and American psychology over the years. There is an interesting story of how European social psychologists issued what amounted to a “declaration of independence” from American social psychology in the early 1970s. They argued that American social psychology was not just American in the sense that it was produced in the United States. It was also a reflection of American values and concerns. Europeans, therefore, needed to develop their own approach (Moghaddam, 1987). These changes should be seen in their historical context. The years after World War II were the height of American influence in psychology and this “declaration of independence” in the early 1970s represents a decline in that influence.

If we look outside Western Europe and North America, the situation becomes even more extreme. Some examples of cultural imperialism in this book include France with respect to Argentina (Taiana), Britain with respect to India (Paranjpe), the United States with respect to Turkey (Gulerce), and even Japan with respect to China (Blowers).<sup>1</sup> Countries outside Europe and North America have traditionally been “importers” of psychology. Although there are particular patterns of dependency, the biggest exporter of psychology has been, and continues to be, the United States.

There would be no problem here if the knowledge being imported was “culture free,” but anyone who looks at the situation of psychology in many third world countries is unlikely to come to that conclusion. There is often a lack of “fit” between psychology and the local culture. This divergence can manifest itself in the kind of topics that are investigated. Many of the topics that are investigated by first world researchers are of little interest or relevance to psychologists in the third world. The problem may run deeper, however. The local population may not even think in

psychological terms. Louw shows that this is the case in the more traditional sectors of South African society. Blowers points out that Chinese did not even have a word for “psychology” when the discipline arrived and translated it as something like “heart-spirit-study.” Also, anyone who is bilingual will be aware that the psychological concepts of each language are not exactly the same. This is true of European languages like German, Spanish, and French. The problem is even more extreme when one looks at Asian or African languages. Danziger (1997) mentions the difficulty of finding mutually intelligible themes for joint study by himself and a representative of an indigenous psychology in Indonesia. In this situation, it is easy to see how alien Western psychology is.

### *Modernity*

Just to complicate the situation even further, many third world societies have a modern, Westernized sector where psychology can be found and a traditional sector where there is little or no psychology in the Western sense of the term. Most, if not all, cultures have views on what it is to be human but in traditional societies, the authority for these views is likely to be found in religion rather than science. This point applies not just to beliefs but to practices as well. Thus several countries have “indigenous healers” who have a similar role to psychologists in the modern sector. In some countries, there have been clashes between the two.

Moghaddam and Lee discuss this situation in some detail, but it is also mentioned by Louw with respect to South Africa and by Gulerce with respect to Turkey. Psychologists always belong to the modern sector. That goes with the territory. All of the contributors to this book, regardless of where they come from, received part of their education in Western Europe or North America.

Sometimes countries will embark on a modernization program, and psychology will suddenly appear. The situation after the revolution in Cuba is a case in point. In fact, we do not need to go outside Western Europe to see that. Psychology came to Ireland around the same time as it came to Cuba. The first psychology department in the country was established at Trinity College in 1964. My own department was established in 1967. The reason for this late arrival of psychology is that Ireland was a very traditional country up to that point. Agriculture formed the backbone of its economy, and the church wielded enormous power. In 1958, a

new government embarked on an extensive program of modernization and lo and behold: psychology appeared.

This link between psychology and modernity explains why most of the significant developments in the early history of psychology occurred in Britain, France, and Germany and not, for example, Spain, Italy, or Greece. Britain, France, and Germany became modern societies at an early stage and so it is not as easy to see this link as it is when countries suddenly adopt a program of modernization or in places where modern and traditional sectors exist side by side. Presumably, the exorcists who were in great demand in seventeenth-century Europe performed a similar role to that of the “indigenous healers” of today.

### *Indigenization and Universalism*

A common response to the lack of “fit” between psychology and the surrounding society in many countries has been to call for the indigenization of psychology. Indigenization refers to the process by which psychological knowledge and practices are assimilated into a new society.

Indigenization is one of the most important issues in the field of international psychology. However, apart from one or two exceptions, historians of psychology have been notable from the debates mainly by their absence. This is unfortunate because the debates themselves often lack a historical perspective. This point is made by Louw when he criticizes attempts to describe Western psychology as “Eurocentric” or “Westocentric.” Cultures are in a constant state of change. What is alien to a culture today may not be alien tomorrow, especially if cultural imperialism continues to do its work.

The “received view” in American psychology is that psychology is a universal science which is, or ought to be, the same all over the world. When one of the contributors to this volume, Moghaddam (1987), published an article in the *American Psychologist* in which he outlined the moves toward indigenization in Europe and the third world, the response was almost predictable. It was immediately followed by a “Comment” by Matarazzo (1987) titled, “There is only one psychology, no specialities but many applications.” Two years later, the same view was being expressed in another “Comment” by Kunkel (1989) titled, “How many psychologies are there?”

Presumably, the “one” psychology that these authors endorse happens to be the same psychology that currently exists in the United States. Let us

imagine for one moment that these authors are wrong and that the psychology that they endorse happens to be a distinctively "American" approach to the subject. It would then become an ethnocentric view that could unwittingly promote cultural imperialism around the world. Many American psychologists might be surprised to learn that this is how many of their counterparts in Europe and the third world view the situation.

The back issues of the *American Psychologist* contain several examples of foreign psychologists claiming that American psychology is peculiarly "American" and not a universal science. Thus in an article titled "American Psychology," one German psychologist wrote: "American psychology can be said to be truly American" (Brandt, 1970, p. 1003). A few years later a Chilean psychologist wrote of his experience under the Allende government: "A problem that was specific to psychologists . . . was the cultural homogeneity of their training or, to put it more bluntly, the unanalyzed 'Americanness' of their science. Much of the theoretical background and the totality of their professional creed were not only culturally derivative but also culturally dependent" (Zuñiga, 1975, p. 105).

Why is it that foreign psychologists can see this dimension of American psychology when American psychologists cannot? The answer lies not in some kind of anti-American conspiracy but in the "taken-for-granted" aspects of culture. If we are raised in a particular culture, it is shared by all the people around us and appears "normal" and "natural." This is especially true if we continue to live in that culture and, more importantly, if we have never experienced anything else. It is only when we go outside that culture and look at cultures that are different from our own, that we can see that it is specific to a particular place. Pointing this out has been a feature of anthropology over the years.<sup>2</sup>

There is, of course, nothing unique about Americans in this regard, though the general lack of knowledge of other countries and cultures that was discussed in the introduction plays a contributing role. American psychology is singled out for discussion only because of its size and its influence around the world. No other country "exports" its psychology to the same degree.

History can also help to shed some light on this situation. In this volume, Danziger points out that the psychology that appeared in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century was not the psychology that existed in Europe at the time. It was modified to suit the local conditions. For example, Wundt was totally opposed to the idea that psychology should be an "applied" science, claiming that psychology needed to be

more advanced before its findings could be applied (Wundt, 1909). This view was unlikely to find much support in the United States. American psychologists had to rely on private funding to a greater degree than their counterparts in Europe and could not afford the luxury of a psychology without any practical relevance.

This move toward practical application affected not just the kind of topics that were investigated but also the theoretical basis of the subject. In a famous part of his “behaviorist manifesto,” John B. Watson (1913) wrote: “If psychology would follow the plan I suggest, the educator, the physician, the jurist and the business man could utilize our data in a practical way. . . . One of the earliest conditions which made me dissatisfied with psychology was the feeling that there was no realm of application for the principles that were being worked out in content terms” (p. 168). Thus Watson was offering his colleagues an approach to psychology that was more likely to result in private funding and support. Danziger provides other examples in his chapter, but the important point that he makes is that American psychologists were the original pioneers in the indigenization of psychology, even if their modern descendents are no longer aware of that fact.

It is this peculiarly “American” aspect of American psychology that led to the situation in the 1930s where, unlike their counterparts in mathematics and the natural sciences, the German psychologists who emigrated to the United States encountered a psychology that was very different from their own. This situation is amusingly described in a well-known article titled “The Gestalt Psychologists in Behaviorist America” (Sokal, 1984).

The cultural specificity of psychology is there for all to see, and yet it has generally gone unnoticed. As Danziger points out, it has often been disguised under the notion of “schools.” Thus if we take a typical “Theories of Personality” text, it can be seen that all the behaviorists were Americans with Anglo-Saxon names, all the psychoanalytic theorists had German-sounding names, and the hereditarian trait theorists were educated in London. In spite of this, their views on psychology are typically presented as decontextualized “theories” that have no relationship to a particular time or place.

Danziger provides us with a sophisticated account of this situation. He does not see local differences in psychology as something that is inevitable. These, too, have varied historically. For example, at a time when it was common for Americans to study in Europe or to travel to Europe to find out what European psychologists were doing, there were relatively few

differences between psychology in Europe and in North America. However, as contact between psychologists on the two continents became less frequent in the years leading up to World War II, their psychologies began to diverge. Similarly, it seems reasonable to suppose that more international contact in the future will lead to a lessening of the differences. However, it is not always clear if this lessening of difference is the product of a genuine universalism or of cultural imperialism.

This point is made by Moghaddam and Lee with their concept of “double reification.” I am not sure that I like the choice of terminology, but the idea behind it is an interesting one. We have already seen how there is often a lack of “fit” between imported Western psychology in a particular country and the society around it. It has also been noted that psychology tends to exist in the more modern, Westernized sectors of society. It can even exist in a kind of “colonial enclave,” as Blowers (1987) once portrayed English-language psychology in Hong Kong.

Moghaddam and Lee warn against seeing the psychology in these countries as evidence that psychology is universal. As one recent guide to globalization puts it:

Whether you walk the streets of Nairobi, Beijing or Buenos Aires, globalization has introduced a level of commercial culture which is eerily homogeneous. The glittering, air-conditioned shopping malls are interchangeable; the fast food restaurants sell the same high carbohydrate foods with minor concessions to local tastes. Young people drink the same soft drinks, smoke the same cigarettes, wear identical branded clothing and shoes, play the same computer games, watch the same Hollywood films and listen to the same Western pop music. (Ellwood, 2001, p. 53)

It would therefore be unsurprising if these young people were to study the same kind of psychology as well. This does not mean, however, that this psychology is any more “universal” than the baseball caps that they wear.

Of all the authors in this book, Ardila is probably the most universalist. He takes issue with the view that behavior analysis and therapy are “American” approaches to psychology and points to their existence in several countries around the world. What is particularly interesting about his account is the particular countries to which they have been successfully exported. These countries include Latin America, an area that the United

States has traditionally regarded as part of its sphere of influence. They also include English-speaking countries like the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Australia, whose shared language and related cultures make them more amenable to American ideas.

In contrast, these approaches were rejected by the members of the former Soviet bloc on ideological grounds, and the French can always be relied on to put a spanner in the works where American culture is concerned. The French language and culture were once major forces in the world, and to some extent still are, but many French people have never got over the fact that the English language and American culture have taken their place.

Although Ardila sees these countries as “problem cases” where behavior analysis and behavior therapy have been misunderstood, their rejection can also be explained in social and cultural terms. It might be useful to think about whether an approach to psychology would have been adopted so widely if it had been developed in Turkey, India, or Brazil. These countries, unlike the United States, have not spread their culture around the world.

All of the authors address the topic of indigenization to varying degrees. Even Taiana’s notion of a “cultural filter” has much in common with these ideas. I believe that the topics of indigenization and universalism would be one of the main issues of a genuinely international history of psychology. With the exception of the authors in this book, such issues are rarely discussed. This is unfortunate since they can help us see psychology in a different light.

These issues have much in common with what historians of psychology call a “contextualist” approach. It has become common in recent years to explain why a particular type of psychology emerged in a particular place at a particular time with reference to the social context. It is, for example, easy to see why “crowd psychology” emerged in France at the end of the nineteenth century (Ginekken, 1992) or why “race psychology” emerged in Germany during the Nazi period (Geuter, 1992). Studies of indigenization or the lack thereof can provide us with a more sophisticated approach to contextualism. Sometimes an approach to psychology will be related to the social context; sometimes it can be better explained by reference to the social context elsewhere. This is particularly true of colonial and quasi-colonial situations. These provide a social context of a kind, but it has to be qualified in important ways.

### *Disciplinarity*

The issue of disciplinarity is discussed mainly by Staeuble in this book, but I believe it warrants a section on its own. Staeuble takes issue with the third world psychologists who have called for the indigenization of the field, arguing that the spread of “psychology” around the world is itself a form of cultural imperialism. It may be worth a reminder of the point that Blowers made about the Chinese not having an equivalent word. This is likely to have been the case in other languages as well.

Staeuble takes issue with what she calls a “diffusionist” approach to the history of psychology. We have now thankfully passed the point where it is acceptable to say that Columbus “discovered” the Americas. We are prepared to acknowledge that the millions of Native Americans who were already living there discovered them first. It is also no longer acceptable to say that these Native Americans were without civilization until Europeans arrived. If anything, the European conquistadores helped destroy the civilizations that were already there.

Why should we view the expansion of psychology around the world as any different? It is not expanding into a cultural vacuum but to places that already have cultural views of their own. In order for psychology to expand to these places, the traditional views must disappear. We might regard these views as “unscientific,” but this is suspiciously like the terms “primitive” and “savages” that the colonizers used. In both cases, the Western view is seen as inherently superior to the local view.

According to Staeuble, what are variously called the behavioral, social, or human sciences—psychology, sociology, economics, political science, and so on—are not “natural kinds”; that is, they do not correspond to pre-existing divisions within nature but are social conventions that are tied to a particular time and place. It should not be forgotten that these subjects are historically recent even in Western civilization. Thus it is not easy to categorize the work of seventeenth-century figures like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. They wrote on topics that would now be regarded as physics, political theory, psychology, education, philosophy, and much more.

To someone who sees individual human beings as embedded in society, culture, and history, it makes no sense to study the “abstract individual” apart from these things. There is evidence to suggest that even this idea arose in Western civilization at a particular time and is by no means something that all cultures share (e.g., Macpherson, 1962). Staeuble quotes a prominent Indian psychologist, Durganand Sinha, as saying that his col-

leagues find “it difficult to cast off the microscopic and individualist orientation acquired in the West.”

Staeuble’s views are very different from those of Sinha and other third world psychologists who have argued for a more indigenous approach. In an interesting sideswipe at the literature on “indigenous psychologies” (Heelas and Lock, 1981), Staeuble argues that the very notion of an indigenous psychology bears the mark of what she calls “countercolonial discourse.” This is discourse in opposition to the colonizer but expressed in the colonizer’s terms. There is no reason to suppose that all cultures have “psychology” or anything remotely like it.

Staeuble’s arguments have practical consequences. She suggests that the current division of labor in the behavioral/social/human sciences may be inappropriate for the third world not only on cultural grounds but also on practical grounds. It is expensive to replicate the entire range of these sciences with their own university departments, conferences, textbooks, journals, and the like. This is particularly true of societies where only a handful of each type of specialist exists. In this situation, it would make much more sense to adopt an interdisciplinary approach.

I do not expect that all psychologists will welcome these views, given that psychology is a part of their social identity and they have a vested interest in promoting its growth. However, I would recommend that all readers pay special attention to what I regard as one of the most interesting, original, and intellectually challenging chapters in the book.

### *Psychologization*

Connected to the issue of disciplinarity is the topic of “psychologization” since it shows that psychological explanations are by no means universal. It might be appropriate to provide an explanation of this concept first.

In everyday situations, psychological explanations are given, but they are not the only kind of explanations that can be used. Some years ago when I was living in Canada, the government workers went on strike for better pay. One of the government’s responses was to offer free counseling to the strikers so that they could deal with their “problems.” Many of the strikers were horrified. They saw their problems as economic, not psychological. Indeed, more cynical observers might suggest that it was cheaper for the government to provide free counseling services than to give its workers the pay increase that they wanted.

These kind of issues rarely come to the fore in Western societies since we live in a highly psychologized culture. This is not the case in other parts of the world. Gulerce points out that the majority of the Turkish population do not think in psychological terms. This point is taken up in greater detail by Louw, who points out that people from the more traditional sectors of South African society who testified before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission tended to interpret their problems in physical or spiritual ways. It was the facilitators who encouraged them to interpret these problems in psychological ways, using labels like “trauma” that the people themselves did not use. As Louw points out, this situation is a reflection of the situation discussed earlier where in many third world countries, modern and traditional sectors exist side by side. Also, just as different countries have different levels of status and power, it is the modern sector that is the more influential of the two. It is usually the members of this sector who have most of the wealth and power. Thus the situation that Louw describes is a kind of “internal” colonization of the traditional sector by its modern counterpart.

Some readers may be wondering what all the fuss is about. Surely we all know what “trauma” is. In fact, the term itself is historically recent. Like many common psychological terms (“stress” is another example), it originally had a purely physical meaning. A trauma referred to a physical wound. During the nineteenth century, it was used metaphorically to refer to a “psychological wound.” The metaphor has become so popular that its physical origins have largely been forgotten.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is even more recent still. It appeared on the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (known as the “Bible” of psychiatry) for the first time in 1980 and was linked to a political campaign in the 1970s to provide compensation for Vietnam War veterans (Hacking, 1995; Young, 1997; Leys, 2000). A similar process is under way with recent attempts to promote “Gulf War Syndrome.”

“Psychologization” continues unabated in Western societies, but it is more difficult to recognize since these societies are already highly psychologized. It is much easier to see this phenomenon in traditional societies like the one that Louw describes where the people do not use psychological explanations at all. Blowers (1987) makes a similar point in relation to traditional Chinese society where people favor physical or spiritual explanations rather than psychological ones.

It is also very likely that a similar situation existed in Europe when what we now regard as “psychological disorders” had physical treatments, such

as bloodletting, or spiritual treatments like exorcism. However, the shift to psychological explanation occurred a long time ago, though it was an essential prerequisite for the birth of psychology as we know it today. Work of the kind that Louw provides is invaluable in that it can show these changes occurring in contemporary situations.

*“Of What Is History of Psychology a History?”*

The title of this section, “Of what is history of psychology a history?” is taken from an article by Graham Richards (1987) on what the proper subject of history of psychology should be. This article was supplemented by further discussion from Roger Smith (1988) in an article titled “Does the History of Psychology Have a Subject?”

These authors were particularly concerned with the boundaries of the history of psychology. One of the standard texts of the 1960s and 1970s was Robert Watson’s *The Great Psychologists from Aristotle to Freud* (Watson, 1963). To what extent can Aristotle be regarded as a “psychologist”? The point has already been made in the section on “disciplinarity” that such labels cannot even be applied to seventeenth-century figures like Hobbes and Locke, who certainly wrote on psychological topics in the broadest sense of the term but who can hardly be regarded as members of a discipline or a profession that did not exist. Applying such labels to distant historical figures may have the advantage of providing psychology with distinguished ancestors (and they do not come any more distinguished than Aristotle), but it seems to involve a “presentism” of the worst kind: that is, a projection of the views of the present onto the past. One of the advantages of studying the views of historical figures is that they are very different from our own. If we assume that their views were similar to ours, those differences will be missed.

Thus these authors suggest that the history of psychology should be concerned with the discipline and profession called “psychology” that emerged in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century. This does not mean, however, that events prior to the second half of the nineteenth century can be ignored. Many philosophers and scientists from earlier periods had a profound influence on the course that psychology took, and so their work must be studied as well. The important point, however, is that their work should always be studied in relation to the discipline and profession called “psychology” that emerged in Europe in the second half

of the nineteenth century. In a sense, it forms part of the “pre-history” of psychology rather than the history of psychology itself.

I read these works soon after they appeared and was broadly in agreement with them. It was only after reading some of the work on the history of psychology in the third world that I became aware of the fact that some third world psychologists would regard these views as “Eurocentric.” Typical of this view would be Paranjpe who goes into great detail about “psychology” in India before scientific or modern psychology was introduced under British colonial rule. I put the word in quotation marks because there is some dispute as to whether it can be called “psychology” at all. If we are reluctant to call Aristotle a “psychologist,” then surely we should do the same with Buddha, Confucius, and the authors of the Upanishads.

Paranjpe, of course, is an advocate of a more indigenous psychology in India, and his attempt to incorporate ancient Sanskrit texts into the history of psychology is a part of that broader aim. He also points out that, under British colonialism, Western views were always seen as superior to Indian views. From his point of view, the arguments of Richards and Smith would lead to a focus on Western psychology, with his own culture being ignored. Moreover, if Indian psychology begins to adopt indigenous practices, such as Yoga, then these will become a part of the history—or at least the pre-history—of psychology as well.

To this already complicated situation, we must add the ideas of Staeuble, who suggests that such views bear the mark of “countercolonial discourse”—that is, anticolonialism expressed in the colonizer’s terms. However, this view raises the issue of what the alternative might be and whether it would have any practical value in the real world.

I do not pretend to know all the answers to these questions. Words are socially defined, and much depends on the labels that people apply to the things that they encounter in their lives. There is scope for disagreement on such matters, especially when different social agendas are involved. My point is simply that an international history of psychology cannot just help bring new issues to the fore. It can reinvigorate old debates.

### *Final Word*

I could not hope to discuss every aspect of every chapter here. That would require a separate book, and it would not be a particularly interesting book. Instead, I have focused on issues that I find interesting, knowing full

well that a different commentator might have chosen other themes. I also do not agree with all of the views of the authors, and I would not expect them to agree with mine. That is all part of the fractiousness of academic life. In spite of this, we are all united in the belief that internationalizing the history of psychology would be a worthwhile thing to do. In our increasingly globalized world, parochialism is no longer a serious choice.

NOTES

1. It would be tiresome to include the words, “this volume” every time an author’s work is discussed. If no specific reference for an author is given, the reference is to the relevant chapter in this book.

2. See also my discussion of this subject in the introduction.

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