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CONTENIDO

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Psychology is social: Exploring universals in performance capacity and performance style[1]

Fathali M. Moghaddam[2] and Naomi Lee[3]
Georgetown University, USA

Rom Harré[4]
Georgetown University, USA / Linacre College, UK

Our goal in this discussion is to map out a scientifically legitimate and practical path toward internationalizing the social psychology curriculum. Toward developing an appropriate conceptual framework, we distinguish between the study of two different types of performance: performance capacity, how well isolated individuals can perform tasks as determined by their physical characteristics, and performance style, the way things are done through collaborative meaning making. Whereas performance capacity can be explained causally, performance style is best explained through normative accounts. Social psychology has largely approached questions of performance style by applying a reductionist and causal framework. We highlight the alternative approach reflected in the cultural-narrative turn and identify sub-research areas that need to be strengthened in order to internationalize psychology.
Keywords: International psychology, universals, causation, normative, social behavior.

La psicología es social: explorando universales en la capacidad y el estilo del desempeño
Nuestro objetivo es proponer un camino científicamente legítimo y práctico hacia la internacionalización del currículo de la psicología social. Al desarrollar una estructura conceptual apropiada, distinguimos entre el estudio de dos tipos de desempeño: la capacidad de desempeño, es decir, cuán bien los individuos aislados pueden llevar a cabo tareas determinadas por sus características físicas, y el estilo de desempeño, es decir, el modo en que las cosas se realizan a partir de tener un significado colaborativo. Mientras que la capacidad de desempeño puede ser explicada causalmente, el estilo de desempeño es mejor explicado a través de justificaciones narrativas. La psicología social se ha aproximado principalmente a las cuestiones del estilo de desempeño aplicando una estructura reduccionista y causal. Destacamos el enfoque alternativo reflejado en el turno cultural-narrativo e identificamos subáreas de investigación que necesitan ser reforzadas para internacionalizar la psicología.
Palabras clave: psicología internacional, causalidad, los universales, normativa y conducta social.

To borrow from Charles Dickens (1963/1859), for teachers of social psychology it is the best of times, it is the worst of times, it is the spring of hope, it is the winter of despair.

On the one hand, social psychology classes in the United States and other Western societies are attracting a much larger and more culturally diverse student body than ever before. Internationally, social psychology is growing rapidly and there is an enormous increase in the volume of social psychological research in both Western and non-Western societies. In terms of the sheer size of the demand for social psychology courses from a culturally diverse population, as well as the world wide publication and dissemination of social psychological works, these are the best of times.

[1] Based in part on APS Invited Distinguished Lecture, delivered by fist author August 24, 2001, San Francisco, USA and on Moghaddam, F. M. (March 2002), The Individual and Society: A Cultural Integration. New York: Freeman/Worth.

[2] Professor of Psychology at Georgetown University, USA. His most recent books are "From the Terrorist's Point of View" (2006, Praeger) and "Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Implications for Democracy in Global Context" (2007, APA). In 2007 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award of The Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict and Violence (APA). Contact information: 306 White-Gravenor Hall, 3700 O Street, NW, Box 571001, Washington, DC 20057, USA. E-mail: moghaddf@georgetown.edu

[3] Researcher at Georgetown University, USA. Her publications reflect her research interests in cultural processes, qualitative methods, and the psychology of intergroup relations. She has been conducting field research in South and North America, particularly among Spanish-speaking communities. Contact information: 306 White-Gravenor Hall, 3700 O Street, NW, Box 571001, Washington, DC 20057, USA. E-mail: nlp3@georgetown.edu

[4] Fellow of Linacre College, Oxford University and author of numerous books in social and discursive psychology, among other research areas. Throughout his almost six decades of academic research and teaching, he has received numerous honors and awards, and is considered to be one of the pioneers of the Second Cognitive Revolution. Contact information: Oxford University, Linacre College, St. Cross Road, Oxford, UK OX13JA, UK. E-mail: harre@georgetown.edu

On the other hand, the demand for the inclusion of culture in social psychology courses, the call for a social psychology of humankind rather than just North Americans, and the flood of social psychological research in many different parts of the world poses major challenges and potential problems for teachers. It is demanded that teachers of social psychology address a wide variety of new and complex questions. How should the standard, Western, typically U. S. based course content be changed? What sources should be used to revise the course? What kinds of barriers exist to internationalizing the social psychology curriculum? These are just some of the questions confronting social psychology teachers, who have to make decisions under pressing time and resource limitations, and who under such pressures may at least momentarily feel that in some ways these are the worst of times.

Our goal in this discussion is to map out a scientifically legitimate (Moghaddam & Harré, 1995) and practical path toward internationalizing the social psychology curriculum; a path that will allow social psychologists to see this as the best of times. In this paper we continue the discussion begun over a decade ago on the practical and conceptual challenges confronting social psychologists in the classroom in an age of cultural diversity and globalization (Moghaddam, 1997, 1998; Moghaddam, Taylor & Wright, 1993).

The main thrust of our argument is that the internationalization of the social psychology curriculum requires first and foremost an appropriate conceptual framework, and not just increasing numbers of research studies in more countries using the same traditional theoretical approach. An appropriate conceptual framework will allow for more effective exploration of universal and local features of human thought and behavior based on the growing body of international research evidence.

Central to our argument is distinguishing between two aspects of human performance: performance capacity, how well isolated individuals can perform tasks as determined by their physical characteristics, and

performance style, the way things are done through interactions with others and the meanings ascribed to behavior (Moghaddam, 2002). While performance capacity is akin to what Pribram (1991) refers to as a deterministic structure, performance style is akin to phenomena with greater degrees of freedom. Social psychology, we argue, should concern itself only with performance style, which is normatively regulated rather than causally determined.

Our distinction between two aspects of human performance leads to the second conceptual theme in this paper, causal versus normative accounts of behavior. Causal accounts assume that behavior is determined by certain factors, severally necessary and jointly sufficient to cause a response. The social psychologist's task is to identify cause-effect relationships as correlations between stimulus conditions and behavioral output – from which the individual human person can be excluded, as merely a site where these links occur. The alternative, normative account, takes persons as basic active agents in social interactions, just as electric charges are basic active agents in physics. However, the normative account sees persons as oriented to norms, rules, and other contextual guidelines for behavior: most people do what they interpret to be the appropriate thing in a given context. At the same time, people can and sometimes do behave in non-normative ways. In our view, the correct interpretive framework for social psychology is normative rather than causal.

Normative accounts of behavior involve researchers in attending to social context, and this is a third theme in our discussion. We view the social context as cultural, consisting of systems of meaning (Geertz, 1973). Furthermore, meaning is not imposed upon passive minds but arrived at actively, through collaborative construction with other social beings (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, the investigatory lens of social psychology must point more to meaning making through social interactions, and to shared systems of meaning *out there* in society. To help illustrate this point, Moghaddam (2002) introduced the concept of *carriers*, the

means by which styles of doing and thinking are sustained and passed on to others (see also Moghaddam, Slocum, Finkel, Mor & Harré, 2000).

A major implication of the arguments presented for the human sciences is the explicit distinction between two related research domains, one focused on capacities determined by physical characteristics and the other centered on meaning systems. This possibility is considered in the concluding section.

We begin, then, by examining the conceptual framework for an international social psychology of humankind. Next, the content of core courses is considered, in relation to the concept of appropriate social psychology. In part three, we discuss sources of information and course materials. Barriers to internationalizing social psychology are discussed in part four. The concluding comment highlights some wider implications of internationalizing the social psychology curriculum along the lines proposed.

Toward a conceptual framework for internationalizing the social psychology curriculum

The movement toward the internationalization of the social psychology curriculum derives its legitimacy from the growing recognition that the discipline of social psychology has been fundamentally influenced by cultural biases, and in major ways reflects the characteristics of Western, and particularly U. S. culture. In order for the internationalization effort to succeed, there has to be more careful analysis of the cultural biases inherent in traditional social psychology, and the crafting of a conceptual framework that will prove to be less biased. We begin by focusing on just two major cultural biases inherent in traditional social psychology: reductionism, a tendency to explain behavior with reference to the smallest unit possible, and what we term causal

universalism, the assumption that behind human behavior are universal causal agents that function in the same manner in all contexts as cause-effect relations do in the physical world, as studied by chemists, physicists, and so on.

Let us clarify at the outset that our comments are not intended as an attack on laboratory experimental methods, or on any other kind of method per se. Laboratory methods, like all other research methods, can be used constructively in social psychology, as long as the interpretation of results follows a normative rather than causal framework (see Moghaddam & Harré, 1995). Also, a normative approach is compatible with the proposition that there are universals in human behavior. There is no logical fallacy in hypothesizing that some ways of doing things and the meanings attached to these performances may be shared across cultures. Universals need not be exclusively the manifestation of mechanistic, cause-effect relationships, as one finds in chemistry or physics.

Reductionism

The most prominent feature of modern social psychology is reductionism, the philosophical commitment to decomposing complex things (phenomena, explanations, objects) into collections of simpler elements. Reduction to underlying, basic cognitive processes is common (for examples, see Fiske & Taylor, 1991). These processes are treated as individually housed in some content-free, universal form, often by hypothesizing their basis in neurological substrates. This commitment to explaining social psychological phenomena in terms of underlying, neurologically-based processes has fostered a neglect of collective and inter-group processes as topics of study (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994). Modern social psychology's reductionist ontology and methodology limits explanations to psychological factors presumed to be located within the isolated individual. It also ignores the fact that the components of a decomposed whole may be significantly different from their character when located in that original whole.

Traditional social psychology reflects the same biases as found in the ethos of self-help and individual responsibility pervasive in U. S. culture, and so prominent in the speeches of U. S. politicians. Irrespective of whether we are born economically rich or poor, politically powerful or powerless, socially high or low in status, the behavior and ultimate fate of persons is claimed to be determined by factors that lie within us. This assumption is associated with a view of U. S. society as open, a *land of opportunities* in which every individual will find his or her place depending on personal characteristics and what they have inside them, in terms of personal motivation, drive, talent, and the like (McClelland, 1961). This kind of self-made or rugged individualism is deeply rooted in American culture, and is reflected in the autobiographies of self-made heroes such as Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790).

Causal universalism

Two assumptions are combined in causal universalism: the assumption that human behavior is causally determined, and the assumption that the same cause-effect relations operate in the same way in all humans, just as in the physical world studied by chemists and others from the hard sciences. Thus, the task of social psychologists is to find the *hidden causal hand* behind behavior, such as assumed universal cognitive processes operating independently of culture.

The causal orientation also dominates cross-cultural psychology. In a review of the literature, Smith, Spillane and Annus (2006), for instance, identify the need for belonging, autonomy, competence, and being a "good self" as some examples of empirically verified "universal, content-free psychological processes" (p. 219). Such processes are "instantiated differently in different contexts" (p. 212). Thus, they advise searching for cultural psychological universals at the level of "more abstract, general processes that underlie specific psychological processes" (p. 227).

From our perspective, such processes as the ones named above are not processes at all but rather abstractly formulated human values. To construct these abstractions as processes that are instantiated in particular social contexts reifies normatively upheld and valued ways of doing things into deterministic processes. We instead give priority to the social context and the actual everyday practices that people imbue with meaning by using such constructs as competence, belonging, and autonomy. Values like competence and autonomy are not instantiations of abstract, underlying general processes but are conceived, upheld, and contested in specific cultural environments and through the manifold social practices in which people take part.

The above example illustrates the causal universalism guiding much of cross-cultural psychology. This assumption severely limits the possibility of identifying true cultural psychological universals at the level of norms. In treating cultural particularities as merely a superficial gilding one can scrape away to reveal a content-free processor, traditional cross-cultural psychological approaches also fail to provide much insight into cultural particularities.

From performance capacity to performance style

From around the mid 19th century the hallmark of traditional psychology has been the measurement of human performance capacities, with the idea that behind behavior lie some universal, fixed, and context-independent entities or processes that await discovery, such as the Big Five personality traits, or IQ, or different types of limitations to memory systems (such as the assumed universal rule of seven plus or minus two). The insistence of traditional psychology has been that only by discovering such entities or processes can psychology fulfill its promise as a science. A concern with what is local, variable, and context dependent would weaken the scientific basis of psychology.

This tradition continues to be as strong today as it was in the mid 19th century, but now sophisticated technology has been incorporated in the research. For example, while the original studies of Ebbinghaus (1913) examined capacity for remembering nonsense syllables (how many nonsense syllables can this container / brain hold and for how long?), neuroimaging techniques are now used to locate particular types of memory in the brain (see for example Wagner et al., 1998). Although the techniques are different, the tradition continues of examining memory capacity of isolated minds without reference to the meaning-in-context of what is remembered. In contrast, remembering as a collaborative context-based social process has received relatively little attention (Engel, 2000).

Following in the footsteps of general psychology, social psychology has tried to discover universal, fixed, and context-independent features of humans that presumably determine social behavior. In particular, social psychologists have adopted the idea of cognitive mechanisms, such as cognitive dissonance (see Fiske & Taylor, 1991, for extensive examples), as underlying causes of behavior. The goal of this traditional research is to study the de-contextualized person and on this basis discover universal laws of social behavior, so that irrespective of whether one lives in New Delhi or New York, or Hong Kong or Cape Town, the cause-effect relationship between a mental mechanism and one's behavior would be the same.

Our point is that some questions posed about human behavior concern neurophysiological capability (performance capacity) whereas others concern how people negotiate meanings and assign values to phenomena (performance style). The one focuses on neural mechanisms, the other on rules, conventions, and customs. In trying to emulate the hard sciences and permitting only cause-effect explanations, traditional social psychology has neglected performance style and underdeveloped the *social* in social psychology. The distinction between questions of performance capacity and style is an enormous step forward in set-

ting the stage for internationalizing the social psychology curriculum because it allows for the correct incorporation of culture, systems of meaning, in research studies.

As an illustration, we can consider the social psychology of social psychologists. How well can we account for our day-to-day research practices by using the conventional causal model and attending exclusively to performance capacity? Are we willing to presume that certain fixed, universal processes underlie and fully explain our own behavior as social scientists? Certainly, any conceptual approach that claims to reveal human universals should apply equally well to our research participants' activities as to our own. In our view, the scientific practices of social psychologists are most meaningfully understood using a normative approach. Social psychologists have established certain normative conventions for carrying out research, including interpreting the actions of research participants using cause-effect explanations or searching for underlying causes by using factor analysis. That social psychologists are parts of communities of practice who create meaning systems and assign values to these practices does not derogate the value of social psychological research, much to the contrary (see Harré, 1986). This illustration should caution us to be wary of a cause-effect conceptual scheme that is applied uncritically to our research participants but grudgingly to ourselves.

Performance style in social psychology

We have argued that the focus of social psychology should be on performance style, the ways things are done in relation to others and the meanings ascribed to behavior. The most historically important and influential social psychological studies already meet this requirement, without necessarily being in the experimental laboratory tradition. For example, Sherif's (1966) inter-group studies and Zimbardo's (1972) prison simulation do not mimic controlled experiments in the physical sciences, yet they continue to be cited in introductory texts

and are considered by many to be classics in social psychological research. Their success derives from their close attention to performance style. Nonetheless, there are also studies that use rigorously experimental methods yet are insightful regarding performance style. To further clarify this point, we will use as illustrative examples two sets of experimental studies on social influence, a classic example by Sherif (1935) and a contemporary set of studies by Steele (1997).

Sherif (1935) used the autokinetic effect, the illusory perception that a point of light in a darkened room is in motion, and asked participants, individually or in groups of two or three, to sit in a lightproof and soundproof room and estimate the distance that a spot of light moves. Participants tested alone and asked to make repeated estimates established a range of estimates fairly normally distributed around a median value, an individual score for each participant. Such individual scores differed across individuals. When individuals who had already established individual scores were now asked to make estimates in group, their estimates converged and resulted in group norms. Individuals continued to be influenced by the group norm even a year later (Rohrer, Baron, Hoffman & Swander, 1954), and the norm could be transmitted to several generations of group members (MacNeil & Sherif, 1976). These studies demonstrated the powerful influence group norms can have, even when they are wrong; the group estimates were always wrong, because the spot of light never moved.

In Sherif's (1935) study, the estimates made by isolated participants tested performance capacity; he gave participants a perceptual test akin to tests that might be given by opticians, results being indicative of the physical characteristics of the individual. It was only after Sherif (1935) brought participants together in groups that performance style became a focus in his study. When placed in groups, participants collaboratively constructed an alternative estimation of movement of the spot of light, one that was different from individual estimations.

From this experimental example we can clarify the causal nature of performance capacity, and the normative nature of performance style. How accurately isolated individuals perceived the movement of light was causally determined by individual physical characteristics; a greater defect in the visual system of a participant would cause a greater inaccuracy in estimated movement. But when the focus shifts to estimates made by the groups, the key explanation is to be found in the social influence of group members on one another and the emergent agreement about estimations of movement. In the group situation, an extreme estimation made by a *planted* confederate who pulls the group toward the confederate's position (Jacobs & Campbell, 1961), indicating again that group estimates are normatively regulated through social interactions and not causally determined by physical characteristics. Surely, participants need certain physical characteristics to make the estimates, but their performance capacity can be understood as a tool they use and not an underlying, determining force.

Thus we can make a more general point about the relationship between performance capacity and performance style as two aspects of human thought and behavior. Namely, we can consider human thought and behavior as explainable to varying degrees in terms of performance capacity and performance style. Some activities, like providing individual estimates of how far a dot of light moves, can be just about fully explained in terms of performance capacity. We say *just about* to preserve the possibility that participants will be concerned to give what sounds like a reasonable answer. In other words, their normative concerns do not vanish but play little to no role in the response the participant would give. At another pole of the spectrum, participants' normative concerns may make available a wide range of appropriate responses. In those cases, the response given is best understood in terms of performance style, and the endpoint of explaining the response will be in terms of the normative conventions the person attended to, i.e. the culturally-embedded value and meaning she attributed to the episode, for example one *should* agree with the opinion of one's friends.

Performance style and culture

Social psychology, then, should be focused on performance style, and particularly the meaning systems collaboratively constructed through social interactions. The most brilliant social psychological experiments, such as the classic ones on social influence (Asch, 1956; Milgram, 1974; Sherif, 1935), attend to such meaning systems and demonstrate how individual behavior is regulated through involvement in meaning systems. Such studies demonstrate a clear tendency for participants to want to *do the right thing* according to perceived local norms. In Asch (1956), Milgram (1974) and Sherif (1935), participants do what they assume is expected of them by the majority/authority figure, even though they might act differently if they were free from the pressure of the majority/authority figure. The explanation for their behavior lies in social relationships in a given context, in the social world out there involving the majority/authority figure and the participant.

More precisely, the social world out there involves relationships that have particular meanings associated with cultural symbols, such as the scientist in the white lab coat in Milgram's (1974) obedience studies. In many cultures now, the scientist is an authority figure, particularly in the context of a research laboratory. In the context of a church, a priest would be a more powerful authority figure for many people. Clearly the elements of culture that can work in social psychological studies may need to change across different cultures: In post-revolution Iran a *mullah* would make a more appropriate authority figure than a scientist, even in an academic setting.

This leads us to consider how meaning systems enter and influence individuals, and how individuals enter and influence meaning systems.

The individual in society and society in the individual

Individuals are born into meaning systems, but they also actively participate in interpreting and appropriating the social world and its meanings (Moghaddam, 2002). Of course, this two-way social influence process is to some extent one-sided, in the sense that each individual has limited power to change the meaning systems present in larger society. The social world out there consists of systems of meaning that are largely independent of any individual and exist "in the air" (Steele, 1997, p. 613). Yet meanings are not entirely free-floating; they attach to *carriers,* symbols and practices that function as hooks on which cultural meanings can be hung (Moghaddam, 2002). For example, a national flag, such as the Stars and Stripes, serves as a carrier of national pride and beliefs about a country (*America the land of the free...* and so on). Similarly, the traditional practice of women attending to domestic affairs while men *ruled the world* has been a carrier of stereotypes about men and women's intellectual capacities.

The meanings that people assign to carriers has a demonstrable bearing on behavior. Steele (1997), for instance, conducted a series of experiments on *stereotype threat*, defined as "the event of a negative stereotype about a group to which one belongs becoming self-relevant, usually as a plausible interpretation for something one is doing, for an experience one is having, or for a situation one is in, that has relevance for one's self definition" (Steele, 1997, p. 616). In a series of studies, women and men, matched on math and literature abilities, were tested in advanced math and advanced literature under various conditions. Results demonstrate that the stereotype of women not being good at math detrimentally affected the scores of females, and this effect was particularly strong when participants were informed before taking the test that the test showed gender differences.

Though Steele (1997) did not look for the carriers of gender stereotypes, her research shows the power of the meanings we assign to

carriers. In most social contexts people can draw on multiple carriers, some of which contradict and support competing views of the world. For example, the traditional stereotype of women, part of which is the idea that women are not good at math, is contradicted by an alternative, liberated stereotype that depicts women as equal to men, including on math ability. Each of these stereotypes may attach to a different carrier, or may even inhere in one carrier. The polysemous nature of carriers and the multitude of carriers in circulation suggests that individuals can actively appropriate and be influenced by competing interpretations, such as different stereotypes about women.

One interpretation of Steele's (1997) research is that it focuses on performance style, and specifically on the different meaning systems, including carriers, that exist at the level of social interaction, not in individual minds. To understand the behavior of participants in Steele's (1997) studies, we have to examine the nature of these meaning systems in the larger social system, rather than focus on assumed cognitive mechanisms in isolated minds. In their relationships with meaning systems *in circulation*, individuals enjoy some level of choice about what they appropriate and use. Rather than describing the behavior of individuals as causally determined by stereotypes, it is more accurate to describe persons as attending to the range of stereotypes available. The next step is to recognize that individuals have some measure of choice in their relationships with meaning systems and the carriers that sustain meaning.

Causal and normative accounts

The internationalization of the social psychology curriculum requires a shift from causal to normative accounts of behavior. On the one hand because a normative account is more accurate, and on the other hand because a normative account will allow us to effectively incorporate culture in social psychology. Of course, a normative account does not treat culture as another variable that causes certain types of

behavior, but as providing guidelines for behavior that are assessed, appropriated and, to some extent, influenced by individuals.

Cultures do not cause individuals to behave in one way or another, as causation takes place in the sphere of physical matter. Rather, cultures form particular meaning systems that are used as guides for appropriate behavior in given contexts. For example, carriers such as flags, popular images, advertising icons, and social practices provide guides for the behavior of women and men. Such symbols and practices are used by most, but not by all: Research psychologists are well aware that in any experiment concerned with meaning, and this includes all of the topics traditionally included in social psychology, not all of the participants will behave in the same way. Even when statistical tests show that results of a study are significant (on an arbitrary, cultural criterion such as $p < .01$), in most cases some participants did not behave in the statistically significant manner. Thus, not all of the females in Steele's studies get lower math scores in the traditional stereotypes condition, just as not all of Milgrams' (1974) participants obeyed the command to give high voltage electric shocks to the learner, not all of Asch's (1956) participants conformed to the wrong group norm, and not all of Sherif's (1935) participants showed a convergence toward a group norm.

Even in experiments that yield significant results some participants typically behave differently from the majority of participants, and this deviant minority reminds psychologists that people are capable of deciding to act non-normatively. In Steele's (1997) experiments, in one condition the local norm (derived from the larger, societal norm) was that females do poorly on math tests. But this norm did not cause some females to achieve a lower score on the math test. Clearly, this is not causation in the sense that water will boil at a certain temperature - part of the water in a pan cannot decide not to boil, and even to try to change the relationship between heat and water. Some women reject sexist norms, as do some men, and some people explicitly attempt to change sexist stereotypes, rather than allowing such stereotypes to

shape their behavior. Steele's (1997) research reminds us that such reforms are difficult to achieve because of the power of stereotypes that attach to carriers.

How should the course content be changed?

The introductory discussion leads us to an inevitable conclusion: A fundamental change is needed in the content of social psychology courses in order to effectively move toward internationalization. First and foremost, content must change with respect to discussions of a conceptual framework for social psychology.

Some attention is already given to theories and concepts in social psychology, as reflected by traditional social psychology texts (e. g. Baron & Byrne, 2000), but such discussions are currently limited to specific topics, such as when different theories of attraction or attitude change are considered. Almost no serious consideration is given to the much larger questions of the nature of social psychology. For example, in the introductory chapter to their social psychology text, Baron and Byrne (2000) include a major heading that states "Social Psychology Seeks to Understand the Causes of Social Behavior and Thought" (p. 10). More consideration needs to be given to the evidently inadequate cultural assumption that social behavior is causally determined.

The causal model and the legal system

One of the ways in which teachers of social psychology can explore the limitations of the causal model is to discuss the implications of this model in the legal arena. Bring to mind once again causation as it exists in the sciences such as chemistry. If water could talk, we could ask it *why did you come to a boil?* and it could reply *because the heat caused me to*. The cause-effect relationship is unquestionable and the jury would have to accept the explanation.

Now consider the case of Joe, a bank burglar who is on trail for armed robbery. When Joe is asked *why did you rob the bank and shoot the guard?,* he replies *it was the heat and a number of other factors that caused me to do it. Social psychology says that heat causes people to be aggressive, and everyone knows I robbed the bank on a very hot day. I also live in a crowded neighborhood, and am exposed to violence on TV. Social psychology says these factors also cause aggression*.

Fortunately for us, the legal system has not been influenced by what we have termed causal universalism. Under just about all circumstances Joe will be held personally responsible for his actions (for some exceptions, such as the insanity defense, see Robinson, 1996). He will be told *despite the heat, your crowded living conditions, exposure to violence on TV, and all the other factors, you are assumed to have some measure of free will, and you are found guilty because you chose to rob the bank and shoot the guard. You chose from among a number of alternative actions, and the action you took is illegal*.

Among the major topics of an internationalized social psychology, room has to be made for a critical discussion of the causal model, and an alternative normative model. The normative model proposes that individuals select courses of action from among alternative possibilities. Such alternative possibilities are evaluated differently by the standards of the local culture, so that some courses of action are culturally more acceptable than others. Most people most of the time select to act in the way that is more favorably regarded by the local culture (as they themselves interpret it), and thus there is some level of predictability in human social behavior. For example, most people are influenced by generally accepted stereotypes of their culture and behave according to such stereotypes (as we saw in Steele, 1997).

For example, consider the case of Mary, who is driving her E-Type Jaguar toward a yellow light. Before she gets to the light, it changes to red. Mary puts her foot on the break and brings the car to a stop. Did

the red light cause her to stop, in the same way that heat causes water to boil? Obviously not, because Mary could have put her foot on the accelerator and sped through the red light (as some drivers sometimes choose to do). In stopping at a red light, Mary acted according to a local regulation, one that is cultural and completely arbitrary. We could change the system so that green means stop and red means go, but we have chosen red to represent stop, and that is what Mary attended to when she chose what to do.

Adopting a normative model in no way reduces our potential for predicting people's behavior. It does, however, change the explanatory framework. Rather than viewing regularities in social psychological phenomenon as instantiations of cause-effect relations, they can be seen as arising from the normative conventions that communities develop over historical time. Such explanations require that social psychologists develop a deeper understanding of the cultural context from the participant's point of view. Someone who has embraced a certain rule, say to eschew dessert, is likely to follow it.

More on topics

Our first proposal concerning topics, then, is that internationalized social psychology must include critical discussions on causal models of social behavior as well as normative alternatives. The theme of causal versus normative accounts should run throughout the rest of the course, so that each specific topic (such as attributions, conformity and obedience, and so on) can be discussed through the lens of the causal versus normative debate (as an example, see Moghaddam, 1998). As regards the specific topics that are discussed, an internationalized curriculum requires greater attention to a number of issues, including the following: Gender relations and feminist social psychology, ethnicity and multiculturalism, inter-group and collective processes, language and social psychology, social class and poverty, the *new* social psychologies in the discursive tradition, the international movement in critical

psychology, culture and research methods. I elaborate on these and other topics below.

What sources should be used to revise courses?

On resources and texts

In suggesting sources for an internationalized social psychology curriculum, we are keenly aware of the time and resource limitations confronting most teachers of social psychology. Practical constraints lead most of us to use one major text as required reading in a social psychology class. A minority of teachers supplement the main text with a book of readings, and a smaller number use a combination of readings rather than a main text.

Introductory social psychology texts

To our knowledge, the only comprehensive introductory social psychology text produced in the U. S. that adopts an international perspective is Moghaddam (1998), *Social Psychology: Exploring Universals Across Cultures*. However, this text can justly be criticized for not being international enough.

Among texts produced outside the U. S. and adopting an international viewpoint is *Introduction to Social Psychology* (Hogg & Vaughan, 1995), in the Preface to which the authors explain "we felt the need for a comprehensive social psychology text written specifically for universities in Australia and New Zealand - a text that captured the scope and detail of contemporary social psychology as an international enterprise, but at the same time dealt with the subject in a way that was relevant to university teaching and social psychology research in Australia and New Zealand" (p. xiii). A similar sentiment has led to edited social psychology texts (that could be used in introductory classes) to be

produced from the perspective of social psychologists in Europe (Hewstone & Stroebe, 2001), India (Dalal & Misra, 2002) and Asia (Leung, Kim, Yamaguchi & Kashima, 1998). These edited texts do add to the international dimension of social psychology, but the chapters tend to be unevenly written. I have highlighted the Hogg and Vaughan (1995) because it is well written and gives explicit attention to issues such as positivism, reductionism, and collective processes.

Supplementary material

Teachers of social psychology who prefer to use a traditional text, but introduce an international element through adding a supplementary book, have a number of possibilities under titles such as *Social Psychology In Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Moghaddam, Taylor & Wright, 1993), *Sociocultural Perspectives in Social Psychology* (a book of readings, Peplau & Taylor, 1997) and *Social Psychology Across Cultures* (Smith & Bond, 1994). Fiske, Kitayama, Markus and Nisbett (1998) provide a useful but pedantic discussion of a cultural approach to social psychology in a lengthy review chapter.

A creative choice for a supplementary book in social psychology is a case study of social relationships in a non-mainstream culture, such as *Gifts, Favors & Banquets* (Yang, 1994), an exploration of social relations in China.

Culture and behavior

Texts covering broader discussions of culture and behavior can be used as a good additional source. Cultural perspective on topics such as the self, gender, emotion, language, organizations and intergroup relations can be found in *Understanding Culture's Influence on Behavior* (Brislin, 2000), *The Person in Social Psychology* (Burr, 2002), *Culture and Psychology: People Around the World* (Matsumoto, 2000), *Human Behavior in Global Perspective* (Segall, Dasen, Berry & Poortinga,

1999), *Introduction to Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Shiraev & Levy, 2001) and *Human Diversity: Perspectives on People in Context* (Trickett, Watts & Birman, 1994).

Gender and feminist social psychology

Teachers of social psychology can adopt a number of different strategies for making gender a more important theme in their courses. A first strategy is to dedicate a number of classes exclusively to gender and feminist social psychology; an alternative strategy is to weave these topics through as major themes in every class. Moghaddam (1998) found the first strategy more effective than the second. Among the sources that can be used to strengthen the theme of gender in social psychology courses, the following are particularly rich: *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Brettell & Sargent, 1997), *Innovations in Feminist Psychological Research* (Kimmel & Crawford, 1999) and *Feminist Social Psychology: International Perspectives* (Wilkinson, 1996).

Ethnicity and multiculturalism

The end of the 20th century coincided with an improvement in the quality of scholarship in the area of ethnicity. This is in part because researchers adopted an international perspective on ethnicity, as in the lucidly written social psychological work *Written in Blood* (Worchel, 1999), and in part because of a strong trend to consider ethnic issues in cultural context and in relation to gender and race, as in *Social Psychology of Gender, Race, and Ethnicity* (Garcia & Keough, 1999), *Gender, Culture and Ethnicity: Current Research About Women and Men* (Peplau, Debro, Veniegas & Taylor, 1998), *Culture, Ethnicity, and Personal Relationship Processes* (Gaines, 1997) and *Scattered Belongings: Cultural Paradoxes of Race, Nation and Gender* (Ifekwunigwe, 1998).

Intergroup and collective processes

Since the late 1960s, in large part through the influence of Henri Tajfel, Serge Moscovici and their students, Europe has been at the forefront of social psychological research on intergroup relations, with Canada, Australia and India also making important contributions (for a review, see *Theories of Intergroup Relations: International Social Psychological Perspectives*, Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994). Two excellent recent European contributions in this area are *Changing European Identities: Social Psychological Analysis of Social Change* (Breakwell & Lyons, 1996) and *Social Identity and Social Cognition* (Hogg & Abrams, 1999). Pettigrew's (1998) paper provides an accessible review of some of this literature.

Language and social psychology

The international state of affairs suggests that language should have a far more important role in social psychology. The social psychology of language and particularly bilingualism is another domain to which researchers from many different societies outside the United States have made important contributions, as reflected in *Language: Contexts and Consequences* (Giles & Coupland, 1991) and *The New Handbook of Language and Social Psychology* (Robinson & Giles, 2001). *Semantics, Culture, and Cognition: Universal Human Concept in Culture-Specific Configurations* (Wierzbicka, 1992) combines in a richly illustrated volume a number of the relevant themes we have introduced as essential to the project.

Social class and poverty

Another topic that deserves a central place in social psychology, but actually receives scant attention, is social class, power inequalities and poverty. Fortunately there is an international literature available to teachers, the most traditional treatment being *The Psychology of Social*

Class (Argyle, 1994). Two works that students generally find inspiring are *Poverty Revisited: A Social Psychological Approach to Community Empowerment* (Ortigas, 2001) and *Roots of Civic Identity: International Perspectives on Community Service and Activism in Youth* (Yates & Youniss, 1998). A more challenging but very insightful work is *Banal Nationalism* (Billig, 1995), which focuses on discursive processes associated with class differences.

The new social psychologies in the cultural and discursive tradition

Among the most promising international movements in the last two decades, the growth of two associated areas of scholarship, cultural psychology and discursive psychology, is found. These new movements focus mainly on the explanation of social behavior. Examples of recent works in this area are *The Cultural Psychology of the Self* (Benson, 2001), *Arguing and Thinking: A Rhetorical Approach to Social Psychology* (Billig, 1987), *Acts of Meaning* (Bruner, 1990), *Cultural Psychology: A Once and Future Discipline* (Cole, 1996), *Discursive Psychology* (Edwards & Potter, 1992), *Discursive Mind* (Harré & Gillett, 1994), *The Self and Others: Positioning Individuals and Groups in Personal, Political, and Cultural Contexts* (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003), *The Dialogical Self: Meaning as Movement* (Hermans & Kempen, 1993) and *Cultural Psychology: Essays on Comparative Human Behavior* (Stigler, Shweder & Herdt, 1990).

The international movement in critical psychology

Since the early 1990s an international critical psychology movement has gathered momentum, and an internationalized social psychology curriculum should reflect this trend because it has clear and important implications for our understanding of human behavior in historical and cultural context. A number of insightful publications have appeared (for example, Sloan, 2000; see also the journal *Critical*

Psychology), but the most accessible for students continues to be Fox and Prilleltensky's work (1997).

Research methods

Our emphasis in this discussion has been in developing a conceptual basis for an international social psychology curriculum, but there is also need to give attention to research methods. An excellent review chapter of issues relating to culture and research methods is provided by Greenfield (1997) and a more critical approach is represented in *Rethinking Methods in Psychology* (Smith, Harré & van Langenhove, 1996).

Additional topics

An international social psychology curriculum should also give more attention to a number of other topics, including: International and cross-cultural leadership (Dorfman, 1996), behavior in organizations across cultures (Earley, 1997), multiple identities (Frable, 1997), Vygotsky and mediation (Karpov & Haywood, 1998), biculturalism (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993), black psychology (Jones, 1991), social inequalities in the Third World (Biswas & Pandey, 1996), the complexity of individualism-collectivism (Buda & Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1998; Stephan, Stephan, Saito & Barnett, 1998), emotions and culture (Harré & Parrott, 1996; Kitayama & Markus, 1994), national attitudes toward competitiveness (Furnham, Kirkcaldy & Lynn, 1994), values across cultures (Schwartz, 1994), social change in the former communist world (Glad & Shiraev, 1999), the culture of violence (Staub, 1996), cognitive consistency and culture (Peng & Nisbett, 1999), social memory (Engel, 2000; Middleton & Edwards, 1990), and the promise and challenge of a cultural approach to social behavior (Shweder & Sullivan, 1993).

For additional social topics, see the following edited volumes: Social Behaviour and Applications (volume 3 of the *Handbook of Cross-Cul-*

tural Psychology, Berry, Segall & Kagitcibasi, 1997), *Psychology in International Perspective* (Gielen, Adler & Milgram, 1992), *Toward a Global Psychology: Theory, Research, Interventions, and Pedagogy* (Stevens & Gielen, 2007), and *Progress in Asian Social Psychology: Conceptual and Empirical Contributions* (Yang, Hwang, Pedersen & Daibo, 2003).

Barriers to internationalizing the social psychology curriculum

The two most important barriers to internationalizing the social psychology curriculum are: 1) Lack of a variety of high quality social psychology texts with an international perspective, and 2) Lack of sufficient critical discussion within traditional social psychology.

Texts with international perspective

The most direct and effective way to internationalize the social psychology curriculum is to support the publication of additional texts that adopt an international perspective. However, authors who attempt to produce a text with an internationalized curriculum in mind face major challenges that in part result from the monopolistic nature of the publishing industry.

A very small number of publishers dominates the international college market. The larger publishers are the only ones willing to take the financial risks involved in producing an introductory text. Such texts have become extremely expensive to produce. In addition to a glossy multi-colored text there are now numerous additions, such as computerized test banks, study guides, instructor's guides, videos, web sites, and so on. The high cost of producing an introductory text is associated with a very conservative approach being adopted by publishers, and this is one of the greatest obstacles to internationalizing the social psychology curriculum.

Nonetheless, authors and teachers are also in part responsible for current shortcomings. Authors have failed to take the necessary risks in order to produce texts that are truly international. On the other hand, teachers need to become more vocal in their support for efforts to produce international texts.

Critical international discussion within traditional social psychology

A major obstacle to the internationalization of the social psychology curriculum is a lack of critical international discussion. Such discussions would not only involve scholars representing different cultures, but also scholars representing different schools of thought under the broad umbrella of social psychology. At present, various orientations to social psychology develop in considerable isolation.

The organization of a critical dialogue across cultures and across theoretical orientations is challenging considering the magnitude of the social psychology enterprise. The social psychology industry within the U. S., the psychology superpower (Moghaddam, 1987), is so large that it is understandable how American researchers can become completely absorbed in traditional U. S. social psychology and not show any interest in scholarship in other parts of the world, or even in non-traditional perspectives. American social psychologists are already flooded with more U. S. produced social psychology journals, books, and other material than they could possibly attend to. However, within this traditional U. S. literature, there is a lack of critical assessment, the kind of assessment that can best arise from more interactions with other cultural and theoretical perspectives.

In summary, more needs to be done to improve links between the international literature on alternatives to traditional social psychology, mostly produced outside the U. S., and traditional social psychology, mostly produced in the U. S.

Concluding remarks

Viewed from a historical perspective, the entire discipline of psychology seems to be undergoing a major transformation, one that may demarcate two distinct fields of study: one focused on performance capacity and the other on performance style.

On the one hand, new technologies allow far more detailed and accurate studies of the physical characteristics of humans, particularly the brain, that enable certain psychological activities to take place. For example, the various memory systems can now be identified and studied using neuroimaging techniques. The physical tools without which remembering would be impossible are being detected and explored. This line of research is very promising, particularly in association with developments in the molecular biology and biochemistry of the nervous system, cell communication, signal transduction, and eventually cell repair and replacement. These advances are directing researchers ever more to the molecular level, to explore the physical characteristics of humans and the abilities such characteristics support.

On the other hand, psychologists are increasingly investigating meaning systems as they evolve in the social world. Globalization and the movement of populations is bringing different cultures in contact more often, even though such contact is not necessarily sought by individuals. Disciplinary boundaries are also being challenged, so that researchers in areas such as communications studies and ethnic studies are likely to conduct research that is highly relevant to social psychologists. For example, the research method of discourse analysis is now indispensable for scholars in some areas of linguistics as well as for the *new* social psychologies of Europe (e. g. Edwards & Potter, 1992). These trends highlight a different type of focus for psychological research, central to which is the social context and meaning systems that evolve through collaborative construction. The discipline emerging through these processes is more in line with Cole (1996) and Vygotsky

(1978) and some of what Wundt had in mind when he elaborated *Folk Psychology* (1916).

This move toward a greater focus on performance style is accelerated by the increasing realization that genetic factors have far less direct impact on social behavior than assumed by some; leading biologists are at the forefront of this emerging perspective. For example, Ehrlich (2000) has stated,

> People don't have enough genes to program all the behaviors some evolutionary psychologists, for example, believe that genes control. Human beings have something in the order of 100,000 genes, and human brains have more than 1 *trillion* nerve cells, with about 100-1,000 trillion connections (synapses) between them. That's at least 1 *billion* synapses per gene, even if each and every gene did nothing but control the production of synapses (and it doesn't). Given that ratio, it would be quite a trick for genes typically to control more than the most general aspects of human behavior (p. 4).

This estimate by Ehrlich was made in the late 1990s, but was already out of date in 2001, when results from the Human Genome Project confirmed that there are probably fewer than 30,000 protein-coding genes in the human genome (less than one-third of Ehrlich's estimate, see Venter et al., 2001). This means that humans only have a few hundred more genes than a mouse. More recently, the chimpanzee genome project showed that our DNA are about 96% identical.

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