Location and Belonging:

A Study in Cultural Psychology

by

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Abstract

The author explores the meaning of 'cultural difference' and the role it plays within the context of the published research in psychology literature of the concepts, individualism-collectivism. To do this, he locates himself in the experience of life lived in several 'Third World' countries and adopts a 'humanistic' view of both the research in individualism-collectivism as well as the wider field of cross-cultural psychology.

Concluding that the 'problem,' for him in individualism-collectivism, is the cultural world view that informs this body of work, the author argues for a world view that is inclusive of all humanity rather than exclusionary. Such a view emphasises connection, one human being with another. It allows for both a deeper exploration of the significance of culture in the way in which humanity forms its groupings as well as inclusion of the experience of living outside one's base culture. Indeed, such a view reflects a perspective of a 'cultural psychology.'

The author argues that there is no real reason, other than unreflective cultural view, to divide human experience into the pre-formulated categories of the research. The result of such a stance is that what is discovered is what has already

been put in place. The 'Other' in the social science research of individualism-collectivism, cast as different and strange remains so, the biased, superficial views hold, and human interests of understanding and recognition continue to go unserved.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation, like all dissertations, has been a process involving many people.

Really it begins with my parents, Jack and Dorothy Ruffett, now long dead, who created a world which encouraged me to be sceptical of appearances, to question, to explore and to treat others with compassion and respect (no matter what one's own experiences might be). I am eternally grateful.

Next, in a linear format approved of by the North American culture, are the people I have come to know while living in Thailand, Sri Lanka, India and Papua New Guinea. I think of both my fellow foreigners and the people of these places - teachers, students, neighbours, and others I worked and lived with. Out of my experiences with you comes the ability to look at this research and say it is misguided.

I think next of my education in universities. Somehow, or so it has been my perception, I always seemed to need to exist on the edge. As an undergraduate I was kicked out once by computer error. I was allowed into graduate school the first time after two successive years of application, the first application being made from, and the requisite qualifying tests written in, India. (Maybe they just needed to know I really was in the country before taking the risk of saying yes.) Later I was allowed into another graduate programme. And I am being allowed out with another of these university degrees in hand. Along this way, which spans the years 1968 through 1994, I have found, sometimes with difficulty, encouragement to be other than what might have been expected or what might have been wished. This point of arrival speaks to us all, and I say thank you for the opportunity these environments offered.

To my committee I say thanks. To Ron Silvers, the chair, I have no words that seem appropriate. You know the encouragement you provided. You also, as you may not know, allowed me a freedom from all pre-formulated structure that allowed me to encounter and create my own. The value of that for me is beyond my ability to express. Thank you. To Peter Gamlin, I also say thanks for your continued support of whatever it was I thought I needed to do. It has been a long road of trial and error. Thank you for staying on. To Vivian Darroch-Lozowski, your ability to see, understand and speak made so much difference. Thank you for your wonderful comments. Thank you for this title, so 'deceptively simple.'

To Dorothea Gaither, my off-again-on-again thesis partner at OISE, the beam of light held. Thank you. To my friend at McGill, Marjorie MacKinnon, it was a right of passage.

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To my family and friends who have lived through this experience for these last 6 plus years, did you ever think it would end? Did I?

To colleagues at my workplace who allowed me to express the ups and downs of the final years, thanks. To Denny Hunte and Cherrie Woods, in particular, our discussions allowed me to keep this work alive every day. Thank you.

To my small family whom I come home to now every day, my wife, Mary Caravias, and our little boy, Andonis Ruffett. Mary, you were always present when the confusions would overwhelm me and, together, we would move along. I have no idea what would have happened without you. (After all, I began the doctoral process an unmarried man intending, once again, to return to Asia.) I love you very much. To Andy, you do not know the joy you bring. This completion is, really, for you and those who will form your world, together with the possibility of creating a place in which difference does not necessitate divisions and categories do not equate with prejudice. You, too, I love very much. Now there will be so much more time for play.

And to the new, unnamed, member who will be joining us, hello and welcome to a world that truly can be filled with possibilities if this is what we will allow.

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In Brief:

It may be possible to understand, or explain, culture at a societal level; however, this does not hold at an individual level despite the fact that it may be helpful, even necessary at times, in understanding an individual to understand something of that individual's cultural context - past as well as present.

At an individual level, the assumptions that may be useful in broadly understanding societies, end by being prejudicial. Since prejudice tends to be in place already, this outlook is simply reinforced. The available 'knowledge' simply reinforces what is already seen to to be true. It diminishes rather than expands.

Characteristics vary over time. Societies (cultures) change. Individuals change. In psychology research, researchers are looking to groups of individuals to inform them about 'normative' behaviours and outlooks of particular groups by asking these people to answer questionnaires. With this these researchers add the responses together, then divide them back down and get an 'average' human being who doesn't really exist but against whom the real thing is measured. The method is flawed.

Partly, there is no way of knowing what people's responses to the measurement tools mean. Partly, in transferring the 'knowledge' to individuals the mistake is being made of a culture that believes it truly is individualistic in outlook in thinking that the individual stands alone, uninfluenced by the world around. I believe this is wrong. Individuals are influenced by the worlds around them. On their own, the individual is 'different' from the group. In different groups, this same individual is different. The individual isn't static. Their behaviours are not static. Their outlooks are not static. As to their psychology, I don't believe anyone really knows. Sometimes, certainly, it appears as though people are immune to the worlds outside them. This, arguably, might be called a 'cultural' preference with the outlook called collectivist being more outward looking and the one called individualistic being more inward. However, even here, I'm not convinced, as for so-called individualism I'm more of the opinion that while, in a fashion, it exists, it's an aberration rather than a 'natural' human way. It's also, I suspect, in decline. Individualism is an imposition of control over something. In this case human nature? But then that reflects a lot of the cultural beliefs of the part of the world we call the West, another term not reflective of reality.

Culture is a manner of relating. It's not a psychological,

or characterological, trait. In trying to understand we are better placed to look to relationships. Rather than an internal construct culture becomes a between, or linking, construct.

One can, probably, take virtually any situation where 'difference' plays a role. People are composed of many facets. Even 'culture' is only one. Membership in any identifiable group does not tell us what individual members, on their own or in other groups, are like. How I relate, see myself, see others may easily vary with the situation, and the role in the situation, that I find myself in. It would be nice, and easy, if our concept-categories applied, but they don't. Unfortunately, they can be made to.

And, then, the question that needs to be asked is why this should be so.

Chapter 1

Entering the Field

Movement Towards

After an absence of five years, during which time I lived in Papua New Guinea, I came home to Canada. The homecoming was from more than just those years in the South Pacific alone, however. For thirteen years I had been coming and going: Papua New Guinea, Thailand for two years, India and Sri Lanka for one year, travel - primarily in Asia. For this extended period of time, despite several returnings, I had become as comfortable outside my country as inside. Indeed, sometimes, I wondered if I wasn't more comfortable away.

Living outside one's culture, as I will call this, is not unique to me. However, in looking at the research in one of the agreed upon areas of cultural difference, I realized that my experiences, somehow, have no place. Initially, I was pleased to see that what I had observed and thought about existed as a recognized field of study. Unfortunately, the published articles neither satisfied my questions nor furthered my understanding.

My dissertation interests grow out of my years overseas. There are always comparisons between what we know and what we find different. Our definitions, and boundaries, are, perhaps, only most clearly revealed when we encounter something other than what we expect.

Thailand, India, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea are, among themselves, differing places. Yet, from a Canadian perspective they have much in common. The most straight forward, and direct, question is why this should be so.

At the political level, the world has been divided into regions: regions of difference, regions of inequality. However, when I locate research that purports to tell me about the people of these regions, I find these works meaningless. The talk is in generalities. The talk is of groups and group norms, of culture and cultural differences. Should we want to talk about real individual people, the research seems unable to do this. It can talk about place, but not about person. It can talk with some authority on a political and societal level, but not on a meaningful personal one. (At least, it cannot do this within the present constraints of academic research.)

Coming into Canada at this period in its history, one faces the dilemmas and follies that arise when knowledge in this area of culture is so confused. The research cannot help us to understand real people; it has no knowledge of them. Rather, there is knowledge of cultural groups. In application, unfortunately, this knowledge is misunderstood so that what finally is offered are stereotypes. This may not be the intent of this research, but this is where it

leads. The research cannot handle the individual person. It can describe Thailand, but not a Thai person, not real Thai persons who live and breathe.

Thailand and Canada, as places, are different. They have similarities, but, fundamentally, their differences are what define them, distinguish them from each other. Yet, the same type of analysis when applied to Thai and Canadian people leads to misunderstanding and confusion.

My work overseas was in the field of education. However, it was also in the field of modernization which, generally translated, meant westernization. The school systems I was part of, most particularly in PNG (Papua New Guinea), played a large role in transmitting this change.

An incident that I remember from those Thailand days has to do with cheating. I taught English in a girls' high school. Some of the girls cheated on tests. (Girls in a small town school in the early 1970s were very well-behaved. Cheating came as a surprise.) However, the rationale for the cheating was so that the smarter student wouldn't stand out. It's not why a student in Canada in my day would have cheated. In my day, one cheated to help oneself. I had been taught that cheating is wrong. There's no equivocation. Yet, I've learned to consider it in another way. Rather than a sign of

laziness, dishonesty and looking for an easy out, as I would interpret it out of my Canadian background, it may be a sign of helping and sticking together. The context in which the action takes place contributes to the meaning.

Another experience, also from my time in Thailand, concerns gift-giving. The male teacher whom I felt closest to got married during my second year. I was never thanked for the gift I gave. My expectation, and experience, as a gift-giver and receiver in Canada was to thank the giver. In Thailand, I was told, the thanking may be done or not. The giver is receiving the honour of giving. There is no sense of being beholden on the part of the receiver. In my world in Canada one is grateful to receive. In Thailand, I was told, one is grateful to give. There is no particular need to thank. The good act of giving is done for the sake of the act rather than for the response. We do have a similar folklore in the West, 'tis better to give than to receive.' The interpretation still appears somewhat different, though. There remains a sense of superiority attached to giving, rather than humility.

What I am trying to describe here is cultural difference. As a Canadian living in Thailand one expects difference. The surprise is, perhaps, that there is so much similarity. Middle class Thailand was, for me, shockingly similar to

middle class Canada. Money and social standing were important. They were props to feelings of inferiority, and superiority, for many people. I recognized them from my own experience. Material possessions were important and were guarded. Bars on middle class house windows, albeit decorative, were reminders of the effort put into the acquisition of the things behind these bars, and of the threat by those who wanted to take these things away. My dream was to be a participant in revolutionary social change. The reality reminded me of my own suburban upbringing where goods conferred social status, commanded respect and were what we all were to want.

Yet, while I found much that was similar, and easily knowable, during my years in Thailand, there were differences. One of these differences, the one that interested me the most, had to do with what seemed to be the experience of self. Thais seemed to have a different experience of themselves as individuals than I was used to. There seemed less of a 'self' focus. I seemed to think about myself in a way different from the people I came to know. It didn't make communication impossible and it didn't seem a barrier. Nonetheless, it was an interesting distinction. Imagine my delight when, years later, I discovered a research area, individualism and collectivism, that seemed to stem from my own observations and conclusions regarding

this apparent difference.

Thailand, during my stay, was not a land in isolation. It had already a long history of Western contact. The Thai education system I worked in was staffed by Thai people. The language of instruction was Thai. Nonetheless, the education system had much in common with a British, or Western, system of individual effort and achievement. Underneath was a layer of competition, but also a layer of discipline, conformity and uniformity, perhaps reflecting Thai norms, perhaps not. Teachers talked, students listened and any student voice heard tended to be that of a chorus. I, naturally, taught differently (I had been taught differently) expecting individual achievement and responses - and the social fabric of the school withstood my ways.

I was different. In the Thai school context that was both expected and forgiven. In Sri Lanka, where I also worked, the situation was similar, as it was in PNG. In Canada, after that initial time in Thailand, the same continued to apply, only 'at home' it was less easy to forgive. My experiences had brought some sort of change that opened me up in a way that was not appreciated, made me doubt our world of divisions and boundaries. It set me apart in my own culture. (Which side was I on?) It is a situation that has kept me intrigued for two decades. It also helped to keep me

on the move for such a long time. Where, after all, did I fit?

Immersions

It was after the years in Papua New Guinea, and the return to Canada, that my interests in finally trying to make sense of my experiences became strongest. I was now at 'home,' after all, determined to make a place for myself. There was a lot to bring together. I found myself investigating the area in cross-cultural psychology known as individualism and collectivism. Unfortunately, what I read in the literature about people belonging to places I had been was alien to me. Something was wrong. I kept thinking that for someone who actually wanted to use the literature to try to understand a cultural other, and had no direct experience outside their own culture to move from, the current knowledge would only serve to create barriers. People are being reduced to simplifications that are ultimately meaningless. Reading what is available, the only conclusion one can come to is that all Thais, or whatever cultural group, are the same, fundamentally different from those in the West. Yet this is nonsense; my direct experience tells me this is nonsense.

The problem seems to be that the research does not know how

to balance the interplay of personal individuality and cultural context. It seems unable to allow either for the interaction or for the variance. For that matter, it also seems unable to allow for the real human experiences of change. The research lacks a conceptual framework reflective of the true situations.

The area of individualism and collectivism is relatively new (Kagitcibasi and Berry, 1989). The area already suffers, however, from the restrictiveness of the researcher-subject dichotomy. While this may be a good way in which to prove, or disprove, theory, it is not conducive to opening up new areas, the present stage of this research.

What has tended to happen to date is that a list of traits is drawn up as describing an individualistic outlook to the world and a collectivistic one. What next develops is a linear scale with opposite poles. The conditions are pre-set for division. The view is one of either/or. There is no possibility of weaving together many parts, no nuances. All is purely black or white.

Anyone who lives for a period of time outside their culture contrasts themselves with those around, particularly when people from the 'developed' world find themselves in 'developing' contexts. One of the first published studies

investigating this area of contrasts involved employees of IBM in its various world-wide locations (Hofstede, 1980). This work, through factor analysis, proposed individualism-collectivism as one of four dimensions along which cultures vary. A roster of nations emerged. Canada, the US, Australia, Great Britain were individualistic - meaning focussed primarily on the individual. Thailand, India, Hong Kong were collectivistic - the group taking precedence over the individual. These definitions, while simplistic, indicate where the focus in each national culture lay. Where it lies in individual citizens of these nations is probably quite another matter. A statement such as the following, "overwhelming evidence indicates differences in basic psychological processes between collectivistic and individualistic contexts" (Kagitcibasi and Berry, 1989, p. 516), is, at best, confusing. It's wonderful academese. On a human level, it's hard to interpret. I have no dispute that the contexts are different, but in the spaces where 'basic psychological processes' (I can only presume that this is meant to be people) meet, I wonder what the research is implying. The studies show group norms inside boundaries. Indeed, this is all this type of research tells us. People, however, tend not to stay inside the fences the research builds for them.

In the same sentence quoted above, the authors write that

the results of these studies, nonetheless, require caution. They point out that "dubious is the assumed unidimensionality, and therefore mutual exclusiveness, of individualism and collectivism - an assumption due partly to a methodological bias introduced by forced-choice strategies. In fact, both orientations can be seen in the same person at the same time" (ibid, p. 517). The research is caught in the dilemma of its own methodology. Yet, interestingly, the methodology continues to be used.

I have had a lot of difficulties with the mainstream research in psychology. It seems that it can, through its use of statistics, offer information about group norms. However, it tells little about how to apply these norms to individuals, or how to understand individual group members outside the group, or, for that matter, how to understand individuals as themselves in interaction with another (me, possibly). Looking specifically at the research in individualism and collectivism, at least, this is the situation I find.

There are other difficulties as well. Research in the social sciences does not take place in isolation. There are a multiplicity of factors at work affecting everything from the type of studies engaged in, to, most certainly, the methodologies used, to who actually does the research. Quite

naturally, this affects what we know, or, perhaps more precisely, what we think we know. Historical and socio-economic factors come into play when the research that researchers, out of the West, are trying to validate for universality is tested out in the Third World. Writing in the Cross-Cultural Psychology Bulletin, Durganand Sinha states :

> The raison d'etre for cross-cultural psychology so far has been the validation of principles and theories developed in the western sociocultural setting. Scholars in the West have at their disposal many theories that need to be tested in different cultural environments. (Sinha, 1990, p.11)

Just prior to this he writes :

> Somehow cross-cultural psychology has generated an orientation more to look for differences, which a comparative analysis of the data from the culturally distinct developed and developing countries brings out sharply. A comparison of processes in two developing countries, because of many commonalities, is not likely to yield such contrasts. (ibid, p.11)

So the contrasts, or differences, come easily to the status of sacred cows. They become the foundation on which the knowledge rests.

Looking at the work in cross-cultural psychology, two concepts appear to form the foundation of the accepted thinking: similarity and difference. The field has coined its own special terminology, 'emic' and 'etic,' in an attempt to operationalize these more common terms. Emic

qualities are the unique features of a culture - the differences, essentially. Etic qualities are the universals - or similarities (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984).

Reflecting back to my time in Thailand, I remember thinking how similar Thais were to Canadians about their wishes for their children. Parents, in both places, wanted their children to do better, to have easier, happier lives. This surprised me. Presumably, I had been expecting something else. To find so much that was so recognisable changed my thinking. (The thinking I wasn't even aware I was doing.) All around me was evidence that Thais and Canadians had a lot in common. Yet, to then search out only the similarities between cultures ends also by misleading. The differences, or individualities, are glossed over. Cultural uniqueness is a strength. For the research, the difficulty seems to come in how to accommodate differing cultures, differing individuals within cultures and commonality all at the same time.

> The dynamics of cross-cultural psychology probably derive from the basic conflict between the emic and etic approaches, and cross-cultural psychology can progress only through a dialectic of the two. (Kagitcibasi and Berry, 1989, p. 520)

In an interview in the New York Review of Books, Sir Isaiah Berlin spoke about universality and his view of culture. The man he refers to is Johann Gottfried Herder, an eighteenth-

century German poet and philosopher.

> Herder virtually invented the idea of belonging. He believed that just as people need to eat and drink, to have security and freedom of movement, so too they need to belong to a group. Deprived of this, they felt cut off, lonely, diminished, unhappy. Nostalgia, Herder said, was the noblest of all pains. To be human meant to be able to feel at home somewhere, with your own kind.
>
> Each group, according to Herder, has its own Volksgeist or Nationalgeist - a set of customs and a life style, a way of perceiving and behaving that is of value solely because it is their own. The whole of cultural life is shaped from within the particular stream of tradition that comes of collective historical experience shared only by members of the group. Thus one could not, for example, fully understand the great Scandinavian sagas unless one had oneself experienced (as he did on his voyage to England) the struggles of rough, doughty sailors against a great tempest in the North Sea.
> ... Herder believed in a variety of national cultures, all of which could, in his view, peacefully coexist. Each culture has equal value and deserved its place in the sun.
>
> ... Only what was unique had true value. This is why Herder opposed the French universalists of the Enlightenment. (Gardels, 1991, p. 19)

At the conclusion of the interview, Berlin, eighty-two at the time, makes a moving statement about culture in response to his interviewer's question about individual reactions to the universal experience of watching a Madonna concert :

> The spectacles through which the young of Bangkok and Valparaiso see Madonna are not the same. The many islands of Polynesia and Micronesia are said to be totally unlike one another; this is also true of the Caucasus. If you think that all this will one day give way to one universal language - not just for learned purposes or politics or business, but to convey emotional nuances, to express inner lives - then I suppose what you suggest could happen : this would not be one

> universal culture, but the death of culture. I am glad to be as old as I am. (ibid, p.23)

> Like Herder, I regard cosmopolitanism as empty. People can't develop unless they belong to a culture. Even if they rebel against it and transform it entirely, they still belong to a stream of tradition. ...
> But if the streams dried up, as, for instance, where men and women are not products of a culture, where they don't have kith and kin and feel closer to some people than to others, where there is no native language - that would lead to a tremendous dessication of everything that is human. (ibid, p.22)

Clearly, Berlin believes passionately in cultural uniqueness. We are not all the same. What is priceless is this variety.

So, why has the research in the social sciences not encouraged a pluralistic view? Is it due to the dominance of the view that there is one universal truth to be found? Berlin responds to this as well.

> Perhaps it is much more the rise of the natural sciences, with the emphasis on universal laws, and nature as an organism or a machine, and the limitation of scientific methods in other spheres, which dominated all thinking. Fuelled by these ideas, the nineteenth-century explosion of technology and economic development isolated the intellectual stream deriving from such nonquantitative - indeed, qualitative - thinkers as ... Herder. (ibid, p. 20)

The research looks in one way. There are possibilities of other views.

Perspective

The years abroad have had a tremendous impact on me. It has taken several years of staying back in Canada to finally begin considering what has taken place. Initially, I found I wanted to excuse how I feel, to deny it, essentially. If I had lived overseas longer, if I had been born, or raised, there, if I had had one European and one Asian parent, then I would feel more justified in feeling the way I do. Yet, I do feel the way I do. I feel attached to places and to people most of those whom I deal with now on a daily basis understand only as 'exotic.'

Pearl Buck entitles her autobiography My Several Worlds. Her opening paragraph is of connection.

> This morning I rose early, as is my habit, and as usual I went to the open window and looked out over the land that is to me the fairest I know. I see these hills and fields at dawn and dark, in sunshine and moonlight, in summer green and winter snow, and yet there is always a new view before my eyes. Today, by the happy coincidence which seems the law of life, I looked at sunrise upon a scene so Chinese that did I not know I live on the other side of the globe, I might have believed it was from my childhood. A mist lay over the big pond under the weeping willows, a frail cloud, through which the water shone a silvered grey, and against this background stood a great white heron, profiled upon one stalk of leg. Centuries of Chinese artists have painted that scene, and here it was before my eyes, upon my land, as American a piece of earth as can be imagined. (Buck, 1954, p.1)

Memories and connections. For me, I walk in the early mornings to get my daily paper and pass a bus terminus. The city around me is awaking, the sky a breathing life of auburn and rose, the streets damp, and my memories are of Thailand, of morning walks to the bus station of my Thai town and the 6 o'clock morning bus to Bangkok. Yet, I walk now in suburban Toronto. How can I possibly be reminded? But, I am.

My house in Thailand was full of memories of the summer cottage of my childhood. The unpainted wooden walls. The support beams exposed, forming shelving for a small boy's toys and a grown man's Buddha image. The linkages are constantly there. But not in the research that purports to look at the world of human beings and how we live. The preferred style of research in the discipline, cross-cultural psychology, does not want me to express such things and consider them research, literature, perhaps, but not research. So I am left with no choice except to challenge the existing structures that shape our knowledge and send us away from the truth.

> At present, it seems to me ... that man has founded all his calculations upon a mathematical system fundamentally false. His sums work out right for his own purposes, because he has crammed and constrained his planet into accepting his premises. Judged by other laws, though the answers would remain correct, the premises would appear merely crazy. Perhaps some day a true civilization will intervene and write a big W against all our answers. (Sackville-West, 1931, p.121-122)

Memory

The Air India jet landed at Beirut. The hills twinkled under the ribbons of streetlights. I paused on the platform outside the plane. Looking. Waiting, in the crush, for the moment to descend. An Indian gentleman behind me asked if this were my first visit. He then welcomed me to Asia. I believe it was he who commented on the hills of Beirut and the hills of Rome. It could not have been me as I had no memories of those Roman hills.

Welcome to Asia. It has begun. I, however, am travelling towards the other edge. Towards the other periphery. And, suddenly, the significance of Far East comes clear. From the European point of view, it is the land the farthest away. From the North American reference, this same land would be the closest point of contact.

When I remember Asia there are many memories. First, however, there is welcome. Selamat Datang. Reception. Hospitality. Please come in and be our honoured guest. We accommodate you.

At the airport that night at Beirut there were also armoured military. Later, Bombay. At Santa Cruz Airport there was the humidity of the monsoon. Women hunkered down breaking rock

for road construction. Haphazardly revolving fans at customs. Parker pens stolen out of my unlocked zippered bag. The gigantic jet recently arrived from New York and a chain of European capitals. A hurtling taxi ride through the crowded city to the opulence of a luxury hotel. I felt the heat. I was terrified by the poverty. The wretched of the earth. (I had previously read Franz Fanon.)

My destination was two years in Thailand. I began to doubt that I could stand it. It hurt too much. What, exactly, I was unsure. The contrasts perhaps. How could such divisions ever be crossed? How could any of this ever be a better world?

I recall, years later, walking through New York from Central Manhattan to Battery Park, a longish walk, and remembering Indian cities - Calcutta, Bombay - and feeling safe. At home. Things were unhidden. Pain. Suffering. Poverty. All were disclosed. Wealth. Joy. Opulence. These, too, were disclosed. All was allowed. New York and Calcutta. Linked together.

Other memories. Boarding a bus in Bangkok for a many-houred journey to the northwest. At that time I was two months in country. We were three foreigners. Members of the same group from Canada. Moments before departure, the two others got

off. I no longer remember why. I do remember that, having no reason to leave, though feeling apprehensive, I stayed. Over and over again I practised 'please help me' and 'I do not understand.' Ahead of us on the long road north the sky stormed. I remember sword after sword of lightening hurtling into the land ahead. The bus travelled on.

My other memories of that journey are of the morning mountains of the border region of Thailand, Burma and Laos. I remember shaving off my beard because the Canadian host I was visiting suggested that, as a newcomer to Thailand, it was an appropriate thing to do. A type of appropriate responding as I was to be a teacher. Later, after some time had passed, I grew the beard once more. It seemed it was not necessary, after all, to give up things I valued.

For me, there is a wealth in Asia. Hospitality. Warmth. Acceptance. Belonging. A sense of fitting. (Perhaps in so obviously not fitting.) I feel a freedom, a sense of being other. Yet, a sense of being myself. Perhaps, in a way, it is recalling the feelings of childhood. The feelings of innocence and trust. The feeling of perfection, of blessedness in this perfect human rebirth. There is a very strong sense of the spirit of humanity. The majesty of the Himalayan region. The purity and clarity of that mountain air. The serenity of a paddy field green with rice and white

with crane. Bare feet on earthen dykes. I feel the freedom of the sensations. Much less do I feel the restrictions. They are there, but not primarily for me. For me, the restrictions begin in the other part of my world. In North America. In coming home. In being home. The journey ends. And it is true to say another begins. The journey of remaining.

The sheer humanity of living is what I remember of my years away: the closeness with landscapes, with sunrises, with monsoon downpours, with colour that became suddenly transformed by being in new places, with people. It is amazing to me to think, now, that my initial, hidden, assumption was that all this would be somehow alien to me, different and unknowable. This is a style of thinking of a particular perspective. James Baldwin might link this perspective to "an idea which, whether or not one likes to think so, is the very warp and woof of the heritage of the West, the idea of white supremacy" (Baldwin, p. 630, 1953/1991). I had thought, unknowingly, primarily in this manner before that first arrival. For me, it's now impossible to return to such a state of ignorance or, for that matter, such a state of prejudice. It's almost impossible, even, to imagine.

Chapter 2

Problems with the Folklore

Problems of Methodology

When I first began my search, at the time I called it research, I started with the published material in individualism and collectivism. I accepted what was presented and distanced myself from the doubtings that kept going on inside me. I was new in research in the discipline of psychology and it was not my place to question.

For a long time I tried hard to orchestrate a 'study' that would try to better understand people who are 'collectivistic' in nature. What this meant, basically, was people outside the North American and Western European context. The easiest manner would, of course, have been to go back overseas and study 'them' there. As this was not feasible, the task became one of studying 'them' here. However, as I tried to build my design the assumptions and problems mounted and teetered.

The starting point was difference. Each of the cultures in which I've lived, and travelled, is different. How different is entirely determined by the perspective from which the comparing is being done. There are certainly a myriad of ways in which the people of these cultures, as a people, are different from the people of my culture. Nonetheless, in each of these cultures, I believe I can find as many people

with whom I feel kinship as I can here. So, connection is important to my perspective. Difference is not what, at first, it may appear.

Given that I had worked in schools, I started with high school age students of immigrant backgrounds, people likely to be living in, at least, two different cultures: the culture of the school and the culture of their home. The research in the area doesn't appear to apply to people who are in-between cultures - from one context and living in another. There's no place for this experience. Yet, it's exactly in areas of change and displacement such as these that most problems with cultural differences are experienced (Samuda, Berry and Laferriere, 1984; Jones and Thorne, 1987). Young people living in such diverse worlds as a Canadian school and an immigrant family seemed well placed to tell me about the cultural boundary areas that they, and to some extent I, inhabit.

In considering this situation I was led straight into the dilemma of how to operationalize my ideas, right where the real problems lay.

Basically, it seemed that I wanted to ask :

1. What does it mean to be collectivistic?

and

2. What does it mean in a context that is individualistic?

Whom I would select to ask these questions was the first issue to address.

What worried me were the assumptions I had to make in order to choose those I would ask to help me. I had to de-individualize them, choosing them on the basis of assumed group membership and, thereby, assumed cultural traits. This wasn't particularily a dilemma for the literature I had originally been attentive to because it reported studies of people in societal cultural contexts - i.e. American college students, Hong Kong students, Indonesian students, etc. It also was, after all, looking for cultural traits. In one study (Triandis, Bontempo, Betancourt, Bond, Leung, Georgas, Hui, Marin, Setiadi, Sinha, Verma, Spangenberg, Touzard, & de Montmollin, 1986), the American sample was taken from two different states, Illinois and California, and the Californian sample was, in turn, divided into three groups, Hispanics, Anglos and Asians. No details were provided as to how these groupings were selected. Nor, in this particular study, was any rationale offered for making the separations in the first place. While results for each sub-group were included in a table that reported results distinguishing national cultural groups, no commentary about these

particular sub-groups was made - although there appeared to be some variance across these groups. Possibly no commentary was made because of the complexity involved in a study of nine countries. Nevertheless, somewhere here there was an idea, possibly quite a reasonable one, being tested out. Unfortunately, the authors made no comment about the assumptions they were making or the apparent viability of these assumptions/theories.

Right here is, perhaps, the first example of my dilemma: an assumption. What is the rationale for indicating that an American sample is taken from two different regions? And what's the rationale for dividing one of these regions into three differing cultural groupings? The conclusion that I come to is that we suspect some cultural variation and we want to check it out. We suspect some influence of context. This exists in Canada: regional differences. The cultural climate of Alberta is distinct from that in Quebec and P.E.I., but less distinct in comparison with that of neighbouring B.C. and Saskatchewan. Any Canadian can tell you this. Any Argentinian, on Canadians, may well have a different view, depending on a number of factors, perspective being the primary one, that the research, in individualism and collectivism, isn't articulating.

Where, and how, do we look for similarity and difference? Is

this, even, a useful manner in which to proceed?

An insider has different information from an outsider. Both offer a useful perspective when trying to understand human experience. Each may be aware of relationships that the other is not. Each point of view has something to offer.

The traditional choice of research has been to decontextualize the human from the environment by breaking apart and breaking down in order to operationalize (i.e. make concrete), tabulate and replicate. (Basically, to keep the object of enquiry still, and impose order on chaos.) Researchers develop questionnaires and seek response to them.

The INDCOL, created for use in the research in individualism and collectivism (Triandis, Leung, Villareal, & Clack, 1985), is an example of one such instrument designed to get at underlying psychological traits, or orientations. (Initially, it was an instrument I considered using as a part of the study I was trying to draft.) Harry Hui and Harry Triandis (1986) began by asking a group of psychologists and anthropologists from all parts of the world what they understood by collectivism and individualism. Stemming from these responses, Hui developed a 63-item individualism-collectivism scale (originally for

use in his doctoral dissertation). These attitude items were intended to measure the differing themes inherent in the constructs (as indicated by the responses of the social scientists). The instrument asks respondents to indicate the level of their agreement with each of the items by darkening, for each item, one circle of a 6-point scale ranging from extremely disagree (or definitely false) to extremely agree (or definitely true). The results are taken to be a measure of a person's level of individualism and collectivism.

A questionnaire such as the INDCOL fits within another method, the comparative method, which has been developed as the method of choice in the social sciences when the goal is to compare "two or more naturally occurring cases which differ substantially" (Berry, 1980, p.2). The trust here is that a sample of people of one national grouping (university or college students, for example, traditionally the easiest subjects to use for these investigations) will be similar enough to a sample from another national grouping to make any differences attributable to culture. Yet, such studies cannot be certain of either the derivation of whatever these differences are that appear to be found or whether or not they are of any real importance. The assumption is that the students are representative of their culture. In polling them the learning is about both their culture and them.

Unfortunately how much the learning is about them specifically and how much about their culture is difficult to say. (Farmers might respond differently.) This learning may be about class attitudes. It may be about ideals - personal or cultural. The problem is that the researchers may not be learning whatever it is that they think they are. A lot of assumptions are made and there are a lot of expectations. When the assumptions don't come out as expected, there may be attempts to excuse them:

> Both our standardized and unstandardized scores suggest that Indonesia is the least individualist country and The Netherlands close to the most individualist. The largest discrepancy in rank order occurred for India, (intermediate individualism in Hofstede's study, low individualism in our study), but we suspect that our sample of employed males from Patna, Bihar, may be more representative of India than that of Hofstede's IBM employees. The other discrepancy is Chile. Our Chilean sample is intermediate on individualism. This discrepancy may be due to (a) our sampling students rather than IBM employees, and (b) the almost 20-year interval between the data collections by Hofstede (1980) and ourselves. Much has happened in Chile in that time interval. Major cultural change may have occurred, particularily among college students (our sample) in the direction of more self-reliance and individualism in the struggle against the military dictatorship. (Triandis, Bontempo, Betancourt, Bond, Leung, Georgas, Hui, Marin, Setiadi, Sinha, Verma, Spangenberg, Touzard, & de Montmollin, 1986, pp. 265-266)

Excuse or possibility is difficult to decide. The methodology is organized to find confirmation, not disconfirmation, no matter what is said to the contrary.

"Since the null hypothesis is quasi-always false, tables summarizing research in terms of patterns of "significant differences" are little more than complex, causally uninterpretable outcomes of statistical power functions" (Meehl, 1978, p. 806). The technology is playing games with itself as well as us.

In order to adhere to these types of research paridigms, the researcher is forced to many compromises and assumptions. They are also forced to step back behind the boundaries that have been, intentionally, set up. Whatever contact there might have been with the 'subjects' is quickly lost while the complexities of the theories lift everyone off the ground.

> Cross-cultural comparisons are alleged to produce generalizations which are trivial or tautological. The basic problem seems to be that in order to make any comparisons, the level of abstraction has to be high. (Berry, 1980, p.6)

My first problem was still choosing whom to approach. I began with members of collectivistic cultures. This meant, basically, anybody not from the world derived from Northern and Western Europe. My life had taken me to Asia and the South Pacific, well outside the boundaries of the individualistic world. I wanted to draw on this experience by considering students from these areas. This led to another assumption, however.

I was assuming that because I had lived there I had picked up some knowledge that had somehow become integrated and would, almost intuitively, help me in my search. I was assuming that I would be able to correctly interpret - both what was said and what was unsaid. I was assuming that I could combine both insider and outsider in my perspective, thereby, to some extent, crossing the boundaries. Because of my overseas experiences, I anticipated that I could ask more germaine questions, entertain better-placed ideas. I had been there and would have a concrete experience from which to work.

Yet, still, there was another issue: prejudice, in its most unattractive manifestation, racism. Here one enters the territory of colour and power difference. This was another factor contributing to my interest in doing this study. It wasn't as simple as because I'd lived there. I didn't like the assumptions made in Canada about people from these societies, the stereotyping, the racism. The literature that I was reading, although it had no direct social or political connection, seemed, tangentially, to be offering support for divisions along cultural lines. Yet, its intent was surely not this. Its intent was benign, scientific, neutral. Nonetheless, I was beginning to wonder whether the research did not in fact mirror quite closely the social and political status quo in which it existed, a status quo which

labels difference as deviance.

The other issue was the boundary one. People out of one culture and living in another have, by virtue of their situation, crossed boundaries. For whatever the reasons, their existence is primarily marginal. Few gain access to the mainstream of the cultures they have immigrated to while at the same time they almost always lose access to the mainstream of the cultures they have emigrated from. The rules, for them, don't apply. They have done things beyond what is seen to be conventional experience, though certainly well within life experiences in our present historical era. The old boundaries cannot really apply to them. Nonetheless, people try to enforce them. What is interesting, perhaps even frightening, is that the need for such boundaries continues to exist.

Here were the reasons why I was looking to Asian immigrant high school students.

The next hurdles were where in Asia, and did I want to talk to people from more than one country? The studies I had been reading had been segregated by national group. The results were then either compared with each other or some unstated, but assumed, North American norm. Although I had decided to do a study that was both qualitative and quantitative in

design, I was thinking in primarily quantitative ways. Any numbers I might have would be low in absolute quantity and virtually meaningless because of this. I knew this was problematic. Any comparison, to have value, needed to be able to make some comment about groups (and group norms) - or so the literature appeared to indicate. My understanding was also that, in order to be useful, it was necessary to be able to generalize the results, or conclusions, found to a wider audience. Were I to choose people from more than one cultural group, how would I know that my findings were anything other than idiosyncratic? (What I did not fully comprehend at the time was that I was interested in commonality of perspective among people one might expect to be somewhat different. What I also didn't fully comprehend was that any numbers in my quasi-qualitative study would be too small for a generalized conclusion anyway.) It seemed less problematic to choose people from one national cultural group. This I decided to do.

About the time that I was limiting my thoughts about more than one 'cultural' group, I began to consider the language issue. I was going to be conducting my enquiry in English. I needed to be certain of a high level of fluency.

I decided on students who had emigrated to Canada from Hong Kong.

However, my difficulties were far from over: what age? how long in Canada? how many male? how many female?

I wanted diversity of perspective and experience. Within the confines of a quantitative methodological approach, I found myself having to think of variables and to consider trying to control for everything except for the variable(s) I was investigating. Yet, my intention had never been to investigate variables. It seemed that as soon as I made one compromise I made them all.

I wanted a range of ages. Yet, in adolescence young people are considered to be at different developmental points. How might this affect the 'data?'

I felt a need, within the framework, to quantify the length of stay. Primarily, I was concerned about the influences that context played, particularily on adolescents. My assumption here was that the longer an adolescent had been in Canada, the more likely it was that they would be influenced by, and changed in the interaction with, the environment. To a large extent, this meant the school environment. I wanted to reach people who had been in the country for varying periods of time. The difficulty was in quantifying the varying lengths of stay. It seemed that I would want someone who had been in Canada for less than one

year and someone who had been in the country for more than 10 or 15 years. And some (one or two) who had been present for periods of time in between. However, in making these decisions, I was forced to other decisions, choices and, behind both, assumptions that I didn't want to make. Given that I was thinking of dealing with a small number of people (8 to 10), it seemed that I was thinking of these people as representing different categories. Yet, right away in my thinking, I was stereotyping them, using them for what, in my opinion, they would represent rather than for who they were as people. It seemed a violation of them as people.

Nonetheless, I continued trying to draft my 'study.'

The numbers game became problematic. I was thinking of approximately eight, nine or ten people. I was asked why and had no convincing answer apart from the one that 'qualitative' studies dealt with small numbers of people and mine was a qualitative intent with a quantitative twist (I was envisioning administering the INDCOL questionnaire ... and, then, talking).

I decided on using an even number of people, whatever the final total, in order to have an equivalent number of males and females. There certainly seemed enough support for the view that members of the two sexes experienced life

differently to make that an unasailable assumption. Would the young women say, in any way, differing things from the young men? It seemed an important point to consider, particularily in light of the work of Carol Gilligan (1982).

Having decided on immigrants from Hong Kong as my collectivistic sample, I wanted a Canadian sample to compare with. While it seemed relatively simple to define Hong Kong as born in Hong Kong and Chinese (ignoring any Eurasian component), the Canadian definition seemed harder. (Here the main influence is my extensive knowledge of the Canadian cultural situation and my limited knowledge of Hong Kong.) What constituted Canadian? The answer seemed to be born and raised there. Did ancestry play a role? How would my assumptions about a third-generation Canadian of Japanese ancestry compare with those of a first-generation Canadian of French background and with someone born in Trinidad but raised in Canada since the age of six months? Were urban and rural environmental differences important to consider? What about region? There seemed logical possibility for quite a range of Canadian experience. What would my assumptions be regarding the impact of these varying contexts on the Canadian human being? The logical answer would be that there would be both similarity and difference. Certainly, I didn't expect the personality traits to be radically different. But then I didn't really anticipate that the ex-Hong Kong (new

Canadian) and Canadian-born people would be radically different either - though the social contexts of the two places might well be.

If I needed an entering, and undisclosed, bias, I had stumbled on it. I wasn't looking for difference at all. My unacknowledged intention was to explore commonality of experience, connection, despite apparent cultural difference. I knew contexts could be vastly different and I believed that contexts influence who any of us become as human beings. I believed that, probably, a core personality develops responding, in part, to external (contextual) conditions. I believed that, while change can take place, there is no certainty what the effect of change of cultural context will have on anyone - at a core level, at least. Context, while very important, nonetheless didn't, alone, define who any of us is. Yet, this was what the literature (in its quest to define, and operationalize, culture) was essentially doing. It was telling us that if we were Chinese or Hungarian or Polish or whatever, that we were going to be a certain way. The literature was saying that culture was the reason for the difference.

So long as the stance taken is outside, the focus can only be on the perceived uniformity of the other culture. Once inside, however, the uniformity shatters and what emerges

are many groupings, as well as unique individuals, both similar and different to each other as well as to ourselves. The boundaries, if they are still necessary, must reform themselves - differently. In the study previously noted (Triandis, Bontempo, Betancourt, Bond, Leung, Georgas, Hui, Marin, Setiadi, Sinha, Verma, Spangenberg, Touzard, & de Montmollin, 1986) which split the American sample (but no other cultural group), the focus, no matter what the international participation in the research, remains dominated by the North American reference. North Americans acknowledge some possible variety among themelves, but those others are, for the purposes of these studies, culturally uniform. This example notwithstanding, there is no acknowledgement, in the studies, of the experience of gender difference, ethnic difference, location (urban or rural) difference, class difference or any other.

What I was discovering, as I leap-frogged around trying to stick my thumb in hole after hole in the dyke I was building was that, as long as I kept going back to the available articles, I was being completely dominated by a quantitative perspective on the area. I might have thought I was trying to undertake a qualitative piece of work (regardless of the useage of a questionnaire); unfortunately, I was using the logic of the quantitative outlook to justify what was supposed to be a very different approach. I accepted what I

was still calling the mainstream as the truth. The only thing that my work could be, in comparison, was deviant. What it needed to be was equal. As long as I felt subservient this could never happen.

Reaching Back to Move Forward

My academic education, after the initial introduction to the social sciences, had been in the field of counselling. When I first began studies in counselling I remembered being asked to consider what the underlying view of 'man' was in the various counselling theories. It meant little to me at the time. I chose the theorists I felt the most comfortable with, not fully understanding that it was similarity of world view (i.e. view of 'man') that was the basis for my affinities. I chose the existentialists, Erich Fromm being the person I felt most kinship with. Yet, counselling disappointed me (perhaps because there wasn't anyone like Erich Fromm available to teach me) and I finally left for what would turn out to be the years in Papua New Guinea (where a part of my work was as a counsellor).

Again in Canada, at a different university, I continued the study of counselling and continued to be disappointed by the inavailability of mentors with whom I felt some honest

kinship. The problem was that I felt the theories were irrelevant. (Indeed, I became anti-theory.) The people I had met, and lived with, didn't seem represented. The concepts were interesting for academic discussion, the theories nice stories. No doubt, if one could see the 'client' through the eyes of the theory, the theory would make some sense and perhaps even be of some use to the client. I, unfortunately, kept seeing people as human beings whose situations were so much more than what the theories seemed to allow. I felt I had to cut the person down to fit the theoretical model. Hardly useful, as far as I was concerned. My 'theory' became me, my experience with the client. While there was some counselling literature in this area (the therapeutic relationship) there were no mentors, and I required both.

My problem in conducting research, though it took a long while to comprehend this, was the same: world view. My concept of a human being was of a human being in existence in the world, a composite, moving picture. The research in individualism and collectivism, of course, assumed a very different stance. Its view is mechanistic, a view that we are comprised of various components, and that by the study of the components we will come to know the whole. This is possible. My experiences, and inclinations, have not encouraged me in this view, however. My view is that when we break into something we destroy something, the essence

perhaps. The casing, or whole, is important. If we break into Humpty Dumpty to find out what's inside, we cannot put him back together again, not to his original state before our intrusion.

> To look too directly at anything is to see something else because we force it to submit to the impertinence of our perceptions. After a while, though, everything will speak to us if we let it and do not demand that it say what we dictate. (Furlong, 1980, p.266)

> The essence of the Madhyamika attitude ... consists in not allowing oneself to be entangled in views and theories, but just to observe the nature of things without standpoints.. . It is primarily a path of purification of the intellect.. . It is not nihilism, which is itself a standpoint asserting that nothing is. The dialectic is rejection of all views including the nihilistic. (Furlong, 1980, p.326)

As a man with more than a passing interest in Buddhism, and with the direct experience of life as a Buddhist monk in a small Sri Lankan village, Thomas Merton (whose words are quoted above) spoke to me as another western man deeply influenced by Buddhist ways of being in the world. Any study I would begin would surely have to be rooted in this frame of reference. Similarily, it would underly any view I took of research I read, particularily in an area in which I felt compelling interest and commitment.

The methodological problems I had been having seemed to stem from the disagreement I had with the theoretical stance and conceptualizations in which the methodologies were rooted.

My preferance was to have as direct, human and responsive a connection with the subject matter as possible. I believed it was possible to come to know without imposing a pre-set structure/framework. In the research I was reading there was no feel for humanity. I kept wondering why this was. Partly, this had to do with the subject-researcher dichotomy accepted by the quantitative research frame. But, partly, I couldn't help but wonder what the conceptualization of difference, specifically cultural difference, had to do with it. 'Subjects' are, by definition, not human beings. The unfortunate thing is that culturally different 'others' don't seem to be human beings either, to those who see them as culturally different. It's a double whammy. We don't acknowledge you as one of us because we see you as different: first division. The manner in which we choose to go about trying to come to know you adds a second, higher order, division. We study you. That we apply the same alienating restrictions in the study of ourselves is not, necessarily, mitigating. It just further intensifies the barriers that protect us, meaning you and me, from real contact. James Baldwin describes a similar view in commenting on black-white relations.

> The black man insists, by whatever means he finds at his disposal, that the white man cease to regard him as an exotic rarity and recognize him as a human being. This is a very charged and difficult moment, for there is a great deal of will power involved in the white man's naivete. Most people are not naturally reflective any more than they are naturally malicious, and the white

> man prefers to keep the black man at a certain remove because it is easier for him thus to preserve his simplicity and avoid being called to account for crimes committed by his forefathers, or his neighbours. He is inescapably aware, nevertheless, that he is in a better position in the world than black men are, nor can he quite put to death the suspicion that he is hated by black men therefore. He does not wish to be hated, neither does he wish to trade places... (Baldwin, 1953/1991, p. 626)

Thais who didn't know who I was, where I fit or belonged, certainly viewed me only as a 'farang' (foreigner). I was once on an up-country bus where a group of villagers were discussing the foreigners seated in their midst. While my Thai wasn't sufficiently proficient to follow all that was going on, one of my companions' was. The villagers were discussing the fact that we were all American spies sent by the CIA. My friend broke into their conversation and informed them otherwise. What this did to jostle their conceptions of us I don't know. Based on what they could see of us as alien to them, the villagers had a way of classifying us. We were different, and in this case we were also dangerous. All they really cared about was placing us outside, certainly not dealing with us as fellow human beings.

At the school where I taught the principal's view of North Americans was that we were all conscientious and hard-working, unlike, in her opinion, most Thais. I once

suggested to her that she was only meeting a certain type of North American. She certainly listened to what I had to say. Nonetheless, in her experience of working with CUSO and Peace Corps workers, we were all people she could rely on to get our work done. She wasn't interested in more.

The same is done in Canada. There are expectations about what is Canadian. The difficulty here is that some of those viewed as not-Canadian are. What is interesting is that there is so little re-thinking of what 'Canadian' means. It remains easier to define the other as a stranger and outsider, and, by so doing, keeping them unknowable. In such a manner, people certainly are not required to meet on human terms. This other remains a cypher, a stereotype.

It seemed to me that research in an area investigating cultural differences had a responsibility to comment on these issues. In my outlook, it was imperative to include the human knowing human aspect. I didn't want to learn about theories about human beings; I wanted to learn about human beings. I wanted engagement in the human condition, a condition shared by myself and others.

Anthropology

Bifocality, "seeing others against a background of

ourselves, and ourselves against a background of others" (Fischer, 1986, p. 199), represents a part of the rationale for the existence of anthropology. Although my purpose had not been to engage in the work of an anthropologist, in my years abroad I had, essentially, lived as one. Without being initially fully aware of it, I brought this point of view, as well, to my work. In living overseas and meeting people, in varying levels of intimacy, I also questioned my own person. I was learning about others, but I was also learning about myself.

When I left Asia the first time, there was a longing to go back. It had been my home, almost as though I had never before experienced another. When Thomas Merton wrote in his Asian journal, "I am going home, to the home where I have never been in this body" (Burton, N., Hart, P., & Laughlin, J., 1973, p. 5), the homesickness was overwhelming for, at the time of my reading, I was in the state of having left and not yet returned. It was somewhat like a state of being out of grace.

In Thailand I remember hearing talk of volunteers who had 'gone native,' people who had stayed too long or adapted too well. In PNG it was called 'going bush.' The meaning was the same. Spoken by westerners there was only derision, perhaps a mixture of pity. It wasn't an achievement to be envied. In

other circumstances people talk of 'oreos,' 'coconuts' or 'bananas,' meaning black or brown or yellow on the outside and white within. The epitaphs are not compliments. We all seem to face, no matter where in the world we come from/belong, the group's pressure to preserve its boundaries. These are the racial/ethnic/cultural groups in which we have membership by virtue of nothing other than our birth. The kinship that others claim with us, or, conversely, the animosity they feel towards us, has little to do with who we are and everything to do with what we represent - to them and, possibly, even to ourselves. In PNG, in the instance of a tribal war, membership with the Lufas makes one a target for the Mendis should a state of war exist. But this is no different in the West. The Japanese/Japanese-Americans(Canadians) in North America during the second world war, or the Germans in Britain during the same era, were all separated out and displaced by 'American,' 'Canadian' and 'British' authorities. Who we are is never as important as what others decide about us when the crises occur. (Though even here there are individual exceptions.)

In the social sciences, it's the field anthropologists who are the people best placed to know these exceptions. Living with a group of people, in order to communicate what is learned to those of us who are not present, places such

anthropologists in an advantaged position to comment about humankind. In terms of statistical research, the 'n's may be small, but the learning is beyond measure, if that learning is applied towards knowledge in the area of the human condition. The anchorage for this knowing is in the self, there can be no other. It is this self that we all use in coming to understand the experience of another. The stance assumes that the other is knowable through direct contact, but this is no different from the way in which we come to know each other in our regular daily lives.

> The ethnic, the ethnographer, and the cross-cultural scholar in general often begin with a personal empathetic "dual tracking," seeking in the other clarification for processes in the self. ... Among the most sensitive and best anthropological works are those that bring personal engagements of this sort into play, albeit usually only as a subtext, rarely highlighted or explicitly acknowledged. (Fischer, 1986, p. 199)

The knowledge that I was unaware of, or perhaps more exactly reticent of, when it came to reading the research in the area of individualism and collectivism was this first-hand knowledge of culturally different others. For me these 'others' had become simply people: friends, colleagues, neighbours, market vendors, people I taught, people who taught me, people I reported to, people who reported to me, people I liked and trusted, people I didn't like and didn't trust. Together we had shared the worlds we'd lived in. Our connections had been formed for the purposes of daily

existence rather than for the purposes of research. I resented the need to distance them from myself in order to understand them. Of course, it hadn't always been like this. Of course, there had been a 'them' and 'me,' but that was no longer the situation. The unfortunate thing was that all I seemed able to do was to act in rejection in exact parallel to the way I felt forced to reject my experiences, my feelings, my coming-to-understandings by the academic community. In turn, I rejected the possibile validity of all conceptualizing and theorizing. I insisted on naked experience. Unfortunately, the person who experiences also thinks - conceptualizes and theorizes - and reaches out to others to tell these things.

I had, of course, a conceptual, and theoretical, perspective which I used to interpret experience. It was this I used to reject these other ways of understanding. Unfortunately, in the act of angry rejection, I was refusing to concede that I had much in common with these others.

Conceptual Viewing

In the mid-1960s Peter Berger and Stanley Pullberg published an article entitled Reification and the Sociological Critique of Consciousness. They offer a conceptual view of

the process by which social scientists come to knowledge, and suggest that it's askew. In the closing paragraphs they address the issue of how it is that any of us may come to doubt conventional wisdom. They suggest natural or man-made catastrophes may lead to a re-examination; that groups, or individuals, in a state of social marginality have a habit of seeing what there really is to be seen; and that "culture contact of any intensity tends to lead to a crisis in 'knowledge', as one is confronted with alternative ways of perceiving the world and ordering one's life within it" (Berger and Pullberg, 1964/65, p. 209).

It wasn't hard for me to recognize this third situation.

Earlier in this text I commented that I had been changed by my experiences overseas; I wondered where I fit in. It was the same dilemma with the body of research I had been reading. I felt like an outsider, and was unsure to what extent I had to mold my views in order to gain acceptance. I felt different - as well as insecure and doubtful. Initially, I had been respectful of what I read and respectful of the quantitative way in which psychology appeared to go about making sense of human existence.

The research in individualism and collectivism fits comfortably within the world view of empirically-based

psychology which objectifies the subject. Human beings are seen as assemblages of component parts. For this particular area, the operating assumptions are that somewhere within representatives of each type of cultural tradition are the basic, and different, components of each tradition. It is a matter of unearthing them. Had I not had first-hand knowledge of other ways of viewing living, I might have eventually come to accept this view.

I remember naming the yellow car I had in PNG the 'Yellow Peril,' in mocking allusion to the threat that yellow peoples had supposedly posed to white peoples. The intention was a joke; however, in the tradition in which I grew up such a view, at one time, was certainly not a joke. It's hard to discount the traditions we are born into that form, initially, our worlds. We receive, at birth, cultural heritages that we, all, in whatever our individual ways, must come to terms with. Even should we attempt to transform them, they will always remain a part of us.

In looking at the many possible perspectives in psychology, it was the humanists and existentialists with whom I had felt the most kinship. It was they who spoke of beings-in-the-world as though there really was an important relationship between a human being and their environment. It was here that I found epistemological questioning. Here the

purpose honestly seemed to be to try to comprehend human existence as it was experienced, from the point of view of the experiencer, rather than from the view of the person conducting the study. By definition, there was an acceptance of life as lived in all its many possible manifestations: Canadian city dweller, Papua New Guinean villager, Thai schoolgirl, Sri Lankan planter, Tibetan lama; and a respect.

Existentialists are a hard group to pin down. For one thing, they tend to deny membership in any group. According to Irvin Yalom (1980), this denial is one of their defining characteristics. It is also hard, within psychology, for their work to gain academic respect.

> It is extraordinarily difficult for a scholar to carve out an academic career based upon empirical investigation of existential issues. The basic tenets...are such that empirical research methods are often inapplicable and inappropriate. ...the empirical research method requires that the investigator study a complex organism by breaking it down into component parts, each simple enough to permit empirical investigation.
>
> ...the empirical approach never helps one to learn the meaning of this psychic structure to the person who possesses it. Meaning can never be obtained from a study of component parts; it is created by a person who is supraordinate to all his parts. (Yalom, 1980, p. 22)

The logical conclusion is that there is no fit between an existential view and quantitative research.

> The existential position challenges the traditional Cartesian view of a world of objects and subjects who perceive those objects. Obviously, this is the basic premise of the scientific method: there are objects with a finite

> set of properties that can be understood through objective investigation. The existential position cuts below this subject-object cleavage and regards the person not as a subject who can, under the proper circumstances, perceive external reality but as a consciousness who participates in the construction of reality. (ibid, p. 23)

Turning again to Berger and Pullberg, they offer a conceptual view of how social scientists come to their theories. They describe four stages: objectivation, objectification, alienation, reification.

Objectivation is the process by which I make an object of my internal experiences in order to make them available to others.

Objectification is the point of distance from these objectivated experiences at which I, and others, can think about these communicated, and now objectivated, experiences.

Alienation is the process by which I, and others, become separated from these objects we have created. The link back to direct experience is broken at this point.

Reification is the point at which the objectivated experiences, now alienated/cut off from their origins, become the standards against which internal experiences are compared and evaluated.

We relate our experiences to others and develop theories about them, possibly with others, in order to better comprehend these experiences. Theorizing then becomes an experience in itself, detaching itself from its basis of origin, spinning its own logic and finally trying to turn itself back into the originating experience for confirmation. However, rather than completing a circle of understanding, the landing is at a very different point. Like a ray of sun refracted in a mirror, the landing is not at the source.

> Reification entails a de-humanization of its object.
>
> But even in an alienated and reified world man continues to reflect and often to formulate theoretically the results of his reflection. ...this alienated consciousness...may be designated as a false consciousness - false in the sense that the actual process by which itself and its world have been produced is forgotten. ... If this false consciousness achieves a theoretical formulation, the latter functions as a mystification...there may develop a general psychology that defines persons as embodiments of abstract qualities or states.
>
> For instance, one reifies action by saying that it is performed because...the actor is an X-type person. That is, X-type persons perform such actions. Actions are perceived as standing separately from their performer. ...actions are conceived of as roles and the actor as an embodimant of roles.
>
> ...reification operates in society by bestowing ontological status on social roles and institutions. Roles are reified by detaching them from human intentionality and expressivity, and transforming them into an inevitable destiny for their bearers. The latter may act in the false consciousness that they "have no choice" - because they are bearers of this or that role. (Berger and

Pullberg, 1964/65, pps. 204-206)

It seemed to me that this was an extremely accurate representation of the situation in the research in individualism and collectivism. The research has completely distanced itself from its subject matter; it knows nothing of the meaning of living in the ways it has defined as collectivist and individualist. Its theories can only be mystifications since they have no traceable link back to existential reality. The theories aren't based in direct human experience. Yet, interestingly, it appears to be direct human experience that the researchers are using when they critique the field and attempt to point the research in another direction.

Social structure plays a role in representing culture. It may well be through social organization that cultural beliefs are most effectively maintained. In commenting on social structure, Berger and Pullberg write:

> Social structure is a part of the objectivated, the produced world. ...social structure is produced by man and in turn produces him.
>
> ...social structure is encountered by the individual as an external facticity. ...society constrains, controls and may even destroy the individual. Through its agencies of social control, society surrounds the individual at every turn. But through its agencies of socialization, society also penetrates into the consciousness of the individual, molding the latter into a socially desired shape. ...society as law coerces him from within. ... If socialization has been successful

> even to a degree, the individual acts within the socially prescribed channels with a minimum of reflectiveness. (ibid, pps. 202-203)

We're all defined by these socialization processes. We see (and don't see) in the ways we've been taught to see (and not to see) by our communities, be these communities societal or cultural, occupational, educational, familial, racial, academic or whatever the communities are in which we're members. Our knowledge reflects these influences, too. It is rooted in our experiences. It is these experiences we use to validate, or argue against, theories about human existence.

The published literature in individualism-collectivism is not touching on individuals, only cultural frames. It acknowledges that, within cultures, there is a range of human experience, but it doesn't develop this line of enquiry.

Re-Viewing the Field

My initial entry into the field of research known as individualism and collectivism came as a response to my wish to understand the differences I had noticed overseas. However, as I was longer in Canada, and was meanwhile reading the literature, I was also responding to the way in

which people 'over here' seemed to be misunderstanding people 'over there.' While over there, the only differences I finally came to feel were abstracted and distant rather than immediate and personal. I didn't understand why the social structures functioned as they did. There were certainly what I would describe as cultural differences between Canadian society and any of the others I lived in, but while, superficially, there seemed to be differences between myself, as a Canadian, and the others, as representatives of their national groups, these differences came, over time, to be more apparent than real.

Initially, I found many of the beliefs 'fascinating' - as though I were living in a National Geographic article. (Indeed, in preparing to go to PNG I was looking at slides belonging to some people who had recently returned from there when another friend in the room drew the similarity between looking at these slides and looking at pictures in National Geographic. I felt outrage at the way in which the people in these slides were trivialized by the comment. The only connection was that of a voyeur. There wasn't the possibility that these people could be like us.)

Once inside the environments what I came to see were differing ways of proceeding through life's experiences, potentially based on individualized previous experience as

well as 'cultural' suggestions of how to make sense out of existence. Cultures, as I've come to understand their functioning, provide frameworks for interpreting and understanding experience. (In addition, no doubt, they also convey the memory of historical experience - which may, partially at least, explain the entrenchment of racism.) Cultures may do more than just provide or suggest, however, they may dictate; "one of the functions of culture is to provide a highly selective screen between man and the outside world" (Hall, 1976, p. 85). As long as one remains within the frame, there will be no awareness that there is any frame involved at all. Life will be lived as it, obviously, is and anyone questioning will be seen to be deranged. The divisions have been set and the roles assigned, for men, for women, for black, for white, for rich, for poor - the categories are endless.

In Canada at this historical point, we are experiencing contact with more and more people from many different cultures. Unfortunately, these cultural frameworks, ours and theirs, are getting in the way. There are clashes, and emotional anguish.

My interest moved to these points of human conflict. We are influenced by what it is we think we know. Indeed, in the insidious way that unreflective cultural bias has, we may

only see what it is we already believe is there. There is a tendency to see others the way we have decided they are; perhaps, even how we need them to be, so the stereotypes, so the racism. We compare and contrast. It seems a very natural, human, manner in which to approach living. The human condition may be more complex, however, than a simple compare/contrast scenario.

It seemed logical, to me, to look to the area of cross-cultural psychology. As I have previously commented, I was delighted to come across the individualism-collectivism research. It seemed likely to offer the assistance I needed. Unfortunately, as I've also previously noted, it didn't. My view is of beings in the world. It's to observe and to try to understand through myself as the instrument of investigation. It assumes a connection with the other since we're all human beings together.

Rather than a re-search, deciding, even partially, what I think is going on and then going over it again for the purposes of finding supporting evidence, I have found myself conducting, as I have trusted myself to follow problematic after problematic, a real, ongoing search. The work, however, turns out not to be located in the field of individualism and collectivism, alone. The work has shifted to include the relationship between 'western' culture (the

environment that has the most influence on the area) and both cross-cultural psychology as well as individualism-collectivism. The focus has become the manner of viewing used in the published literature in the latter field. Such a focus includes speculation as to the possible reasons for undertaking the research in this way, as well as my own relationships with this research cultural environment.

Chapter 3

The Real Location and the Real Work

> Cross-cultural psychology is the study of similarities and differences in individual psychology and social functioning in various cultures and ethnic groups. ...
>
> Cross-cultural psychology...still lacks, and badly needs, a conceptual framework. (Kagitcibasi and Berry, 1989, pps. 494-495)

This first statement sounds plausible enough, even innocuous, except for the fact that the focus adopted in the research taking place is not on both similarity and difference, at all, but on difference, alone. This emphasis, in my opinion, is what contributes to the conceptual difficulties in the whole field. As well, there is the concern of whether or not similarity and difference are even useful conceptual tools to use in the exploration of apparent cultural differences. This becomes irrelevant, however, given that only one of these categorization systems is being utlized. The work, as executed, offers no sustained view of humanity, unless division can be accepted as a sustained conceptual view. What exist are views of human categories, labelled cultures, and the cutting down of humanity to these limited views predicated on this concept of difference.

An additional, though no less important, problem is that in psychology the generally accepted manner in which it is

advised to undertake the comprehension of human beings is the scientific method, or empirical studies.

> The scientific method is intended to meet three goals: description, prediction and understanding.
>
> Description refers to the procedures by which events and their relationships are defined, classified, cataloged, or categorized. ...
>
> Psychology (like science in general) develops descriptions of phenomena using the nomothetic approach. The objective of the nomothetic approach is to establish broad generalizations and universal "laws" that apply to a wide population of organisms. ... psychological research frequently consists of studies involving large numbers of participants with the purpose being to determine the "average" or typical performance of a group. ...
>
> The nomothetic approach does not deny that there are important differences among individuals; it simply seeks to identify the similarities that exist amidst these differences. ... Researchers..seek to describe what organisms are like "in general" on the basis of the average performance of a group of different organisms. ...
>
> A description of events and their relationships often provides a basis for prediction... Observations and analyses can answer important questions that call for predictions. ...
>
> An important occupation of many psychologists is the prediction of later performance...on the basis of earlier performance. ...
>
> Successful prediction doesn't always depend on knowing why a relationship exists between two related events. ...
>
> Understanding..is achieved when the cause or causes of a phenomenon are identified. The scientist sets three important conditions on the demonstration of causality and, hence, of understanding: covariation of events; a time-order relationship; and the elimination of plausible alternative causes. (Shaughnessy and Zechmeister, 1985, pps. 20-24)

These are the parameters within which the knowledge is generally acquired. There are many acknowledged limitations, however. One:

> major problem in cross-cultural studies is that when a cultural difference between two or more groups has been established, it is still not certain that the difference is due to the contrast between the two groups on cultural variables, rather than on variables that are confounded with culture. (Triandis, Kashima, Shimada and Villareal, 1986, p. 43)

In attempting to link myself with the work in individualism and collectivism I kept encountering these difficulties. The problem was that these difficulties blocked my joining those working in the area. I wasn't comfortable with the views taken. I found myself continually bringing other issues to the work. In my mind I was continually completing the cycle of exploration to conclusion to climate/culture in which the work was received and in which it played a role in sustaining the already-in-place cultural beliefs and outlooks about culturally differing others. The problem, for me, was much broader than simply the research in individualism and collectivism despite the fact that it was my own, similar, observations and tentative speculations that had led me to this field of research in the first place. The problem was the stance taken, and accepted, within cross-cultural psychology. Yet, it was not a stance that went without question. Unfortunately, no other way seemed ever to be adopted.

Within the topic of individualism and collectivism there is demonstration of these issues of concern. The usefulness of the current research in aid of understanding a specific individual of either background seems to be accepted as being fairly doubtful.

> The individualism-collectivism dichotomy, although insightful, obscures important differences among types of individualism and types of collectivism. I contend that individualism-collectivism at the cultural level and idiocentrism-allocentrism, its counterpart at the psychological level..are best seen as second order abstractions for use when broad-brush analyses are of interest (Schwartz, 1990, pps. 139-140).

There are questions about the conceptual underpinnings of the present research.

> Conceptually, researchers face a causality problem. Can individualism/collectivism research explain behaviors causally? ..does a culture cause behaviors? ....
>
> This discussion raises an empirical issue that I would call a uniformity problem. Whatever is our definition of culture, to say that a culture is individualistic or collectivistic gives an impression that a culture is uniform: members of a society are uniformly individualistic or collectivistic. Any given culture, however, is unlikely to be uniform. ...
>
> ..if we conceptualize individualism and collectivism as trait-like entities, ..research may face..a serious problem. ... According to..[some] criticism, trait personality is a culture laden construct that implies Western individualist thought. Trait personality is typically seen as "a separate entity, distinct from society and culture." (Kashima, 1987, pps. 104-105)

This area, as the very idea of culture itself, is exceedingly complex. Many do, in fact, wonder if the usual methodology is up to the task.

> Reviews from the viewpoint of different disciplines, mainly psychology, anthropology and education, have pointed to both diversity and common patterns regarding individualistic and collectivistic orientations...
>
> ...I want to stress individual and group loyalties, as first of all, I believe that a sense of loyalty or interest in the welfare of the self and/or group underlies the different orientations. ..As noted.."the term 'collectivity' has a generally pejorative connotation in social-psychology literature". It is associated with conformity to group pressure, deindividuation, crowd behavior and the like. Individualism..is the cornerstone of Western and especially American worldview...
>
> Individual and group loyalties are conceptualized as opposites. ... Such polarization may reflect more the categories and the theoretical framework used by the researcher and thus imposed on the situation than reflecting an inherent characteristic of the situation.
>
> ... A methodological issue may be relevant here. Research done in this area often forces the subjects to make a choice between individualistic/competitive responses and collectivistic/cooperative responses. ...the two orientations are often experimentally manipulated to be alternative choices.
>
> Such an approach tends to elicit only one of the orientations in behavior and is not conducive to the expression of both simultaneously. ...
>
> There is nothing to prevent the same individual to demonstrate both types of orientations at the same time with different groups or at different times with different situational demands. Individual and group loyalties are both logically and psychologically compatible. Conceptual and methodological bias toward polarization has stressed their opposing characterization rather

than their compatibility. (Kagitcibasi, 1987, pps. 94-97)

Others contend that it really is just a question of getting the level of perspective, and analysis, exact. The task seems to become one of persistence.

> The collectivism and individualism constructs reflect patterns of information processing and evaluating events in the social environment that distinguish most traditional, complex cultures from either simple or industrial, complex cultures. The major themes of collectivism are self-definition as part of group(s), subordination of personal goals to ingroup goals, concern for the integrity of the ingroup, and intense emotional attachment to the group. The major themes of individualism are a self-definition as an entity that is distinct and separate from group(s), emphasis on personal goals even if pursuit of such goals inconveniences the ingroup, and less concern and emotional attachment to the ingroups. ...
>
> In individualistic cultures it is individuals who achieve; in collectivist cultures, groups achieve. ...
>
> This picture is oversimplified, because it implies an opposition between individualism and collectivism. Our factor analyses suggested, instead, that these are orthogonal constructs. ...
>
> ..the empirical studies suggest that we need to consider individualism and collectivism as multidimensional constructs.
>
> When we analyze data within culture we find factors emerging that are similar to those that emerge across cultures. ..
>
> ..it is important to emphasize that whether individualism-collectivism is one dimension or a multidimensional construct depends on the context of the study. If one studies a broad range of values..then in that context individualism-collectivism is one dimension. If one focuses only on self-ingroup relationships..then a

> multidimensional structure emerges. In short, it depends on the distance between the observer and the data. ...one observes more complexity from a closer vantage point. (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai and Lucca, 1988, pps. 335-336)

Whatever the comments and critiques on the research, the sway of empirical research studies is strong, seemingly all-encompassing. There is only one view. This view is that difference is what is all-important. Yet, difference, is always a comparison and involves, always, perspective and stance. This, however, is not articulated. It is embedded within the cultural view in which the entire cycle of research takes place, from conception to conclusion. This view I don't share, despite sharing many of the cultural beliefs, and even traits, of the published researchers. Solving this impediment to my participation seemed crucial to my contribution to what was, nonetheless, my field of study. However, rather than cross-cultural psychology, I came up with the term of cultural psychology. Since the reflection is always back and forth between self and other and how we all, culturally, are able to view our object of exploration, 'cultural' psychology seemed the most fitting term for what I was engaged in. Culture defines us all. It includes us all. Cross-cultural does not, really, include such possibilities.

Cultural Difference

When I had first begun thinking about my life overseas and my life in Canada, I was thinking primarily about the societies, although the people I knew were the prime sources of knowledge about their wider societies. (Right away, however, it's important to note that there was always an experience of Thai society that was wider than individual people. My understanding of Thailand, and elsewhere, was, always, both collective and individual.) For a long time, I frankly prefered Thai, and in general any Asian, society to my own. Asia seemed more compassionate, in my terms, more humane. It seemed a gentler place. I felt taken care of there. I felt accepted. (All this, amazingly, while being an outsider.) I didn't feel this in Canada.

Anytime back in Canada, I was confronted with the sense of alienation and displacement I felt. Yet, I was of this Canada place. Rationally, it made no sense. I wanted to understand what was 'different' about my life away. It had infected me. I wanted to fully know what this experience was in order to adequately convey it to others as well as to accurately comprehend it myself. In trying to understand I was looking to human beings for help, those who were doing the academic research.

I had gone home to Canada from Papua New Guinea because I was not willing to always live as an outsider. Clearly, I felt 'different' in a negative sense. At the time, there was no other compelling reason to return. I didn't want to live cut off, for me, the inevitable result had I not returned.

My belief in academic enquiry as providing a means for understanding the human condition led me into the manner of seeking clarification that I chose. (Otherwise, why not write a play, a song, a poem?) Unfortunately, as I have mentioned above, I felt alien to the community of researchers I knew, really, only through their writings. Until I found intellectual support for my own meanderings, I also felt alien to the academic environment in which I was lodged.

I recall being one Christmas season in the Himalayan region. I was on vacation from a Canadian university. However, I had brought a knapsack of my books. I was never so free until the moment of my fantasy of flinging them all down a mountainside. But, as I was going back and would or have to buy them again, I held off. My compromise was that I made no more pretense of reading them during that time. This reminds me of the research I read, fled from, then read again. I can't fling it down a mountainside. It represents something that I and, perhaps more importantly, others

believe in. Nonetheless, its place, for me, is not in the forefront. The difficulty is that its snare is far-reaching. I, too, catch myself using the same binary (either/or) thinking that the research does. It recognises this itself, tries change, but then proposes variations on what are, essentially, the same themes. I am not that different. (And, in the end, realized I do belong in this community of researchers.)

To maintain that there is no such thing as cultural difference, is clearly absurd. However, to encase human beings within their culture is equally ill-informed. The truth is that the difference matters and matters not at all, both, at the same time. It matters, primarily, because we all make it so. It is intimately connected to what the other, both others, will allow. I am raised in a culture, influenced by that culture, speak the language of that culture, understand the nuances and covert meanings of that culture, see the world and understand my own experience in that world in the ways of that culture, know who is acceptable and who is not and, yet, may come to see beyond that culture. Berger and Pullberg, as previously noted, have suggested three ways in which this seeing beyond might come about.

The other, as stranger, starts out as being different.

However, in the process of getting to know, this false floor of difference shatters and connections begin to form - if this can be allowed. A colleague, of West Indian background but Canada-raised, was telling me about a friend of hers who is Canadian and Mennonite. My friend had thought that all Mennonites dressed in long dresses and caps. Her friend had wondered about West Indian culture. What they concluded was that they could have had the same parents, in terms of how they were raised and the values that were instilled. Does our cross-cultural research know this, or just even acknowledge such possibility?

Our experiences shape us and the contexts, particularily those in which we are raised, probably do represent the major influences in making us who we are. The question is whether or not they determine who we are for life. By investigating culture as though it is an internal construct, a personality trait, the research is telling us that our cultures do determine who we are. Maybe they used to. Maybe it used to matter if you were Irish or English, Catholic or Protestant, aristocrat or serf, Asian or European, male or female; but in those parts of the world where people from many different places are settling these distinctions are beginning to crumble. They are certainly not gone, and there is certainly resistance, but the meanings of these differences are under siege. It seems a disservice to the

value of academic enquiry if thinking reflects the past rather than the present and possible future.

Sir Isaiah Berlin has written, quoted earlier here, that to do away with different cultures in favour of one universal culture is not something he would look forward to. Neither would I. We would lack a variety and a richness in life, adequate modes of expression for communicating these richnesses. Should such a universal culture be formable, experience seems to show that in finding what is acceptable and common we would end by becoming reduced. Life, and the world's places, are too varied to allow this. This may well be why different cultures exist: to represent the different experiences of living in the differing environments of our world. Indeed, the places we call India are different from the Burma places which are different from the Thailand places which are different from the Indonesia places which are different from the Australia places and so o· The area known as Sydney Harbour exists nowhere else, the Himalayas are unique as are the Swiss Alps, the Rocky Mountains and the Muskoka region of Ontario. The summer sunset seen from my family's cottage on one of these Muskoka lakes was once compared to a sunset on Bali. Even an environment that is, essentially, different seems to lodge within itself the makings of connection with elsewhere. Nonetheless, Bali and Muskoka are more than their sunsets alone. In the expression

of this, human beings form their different cultures. These differences are necessary.

A highlander in Papua New Guinea fighting a tribal war, a Thai Buddhist monk meditating, a Polish family emigrating to Canada; could all really share the same culture? Could there be a logic wide enough to encompass all as well as the nuances of the experience of such differing places? What joins us is our human existence. What divides us is our culturally unique experiences. However, these experiences are knowable. What is, perhaps, being forgotten in research in the cross cultural area, is that while societies, yes, may be different the people are not. The people are us, whether we have pig tusks through our noses and mud on our bodies or mascara on our eyes and running shoes on our feet. When we come together in the same place we come together as human beings, if our beliefs will allow this.

I remember the man who was the head monk in my temple in Sri Lanka looking at some pictures of my Papua New Guinean students at the end of my first year there. He said they looked fierce, and in the manner of his speaking what he meant was that they looked frightening and alien. I would agree. They had looked this way to me, too. But, being there, they weren't. Being there, they were individual people who were also highlanders in Papua New Guinea. The

surface view was just that, the surface view. Viewed from a distance, they appeared of a whole, with the viewer the 'different' other. When joined, their dissimilarities among themselves became apparent. As well, connections with the previously different other became, also, apparent.

In PNG there is still tribal war, but I mention this with trepidation. To most outsiders this is seen as barbaric, 'uncivilised.' In acknowledging, to outsiders, what does still go on one risks misunderstanding. The risk is that someone who doesn't know PNG will think Papua New Guineans barbaric. Students from PNG at university elsewhere in the South Pacific were once taunted by other islanders as being just this. Distinctions require a context to make them meaningful. They require to be understood.

In PNG it seemed important not who you were as a single individual but where you belonged. Traditionally, and this continues to change, tribal membership brought identity. In the case of a dispute and death to a member of one tribe, the responsibility for the death did not rest with the individual who had done the killing but with the tribe of that person. For revenge, 'payback' it's called, all tribal members were potential targets. This is not, according to the literature in individualism-collectivism, an individualistic orientation. Such a distinction may, also,

appear to indicate people very different in make-up from those of the present-day western world. My issue, however, is whether this makes for fundamentally different people or, simply, people in differing circumstances.

I have written in the beginning pages here that I wanted to understand the differences I had noticed overseas. In Thailand, people seemed to look after one another more than in Canada. You were in life together. Life wasn't a competition. In a different way, this was what the old tribal membership in PNG offered.

I remember hearing that the father of the woman who was the head of my English department in Thailand still bought her clothes. This woman was married and had children. How strange that her father would still do this and she would let him, I thought. Where was her independence?

I felt respect for others in Thailand, respect for people's feelings. I think of 'saving face.' This same woman who was the head of the English department didn't speak English all that well. It was an embarrassment being faced with a native speaker of the language. The next year, another teacher with better spoken English was the head. I never really knew why.

In Sri Lanka I was living at a temple that ran a village

school for the youngest of the village children. A local village man taught English. He didn't do it very well, primarily because he didn't speak it very well. I wondered what the monk who ran the school would do. It was widely understood that the teacher wasn't very accomplished. Eventually, the children stopped attending his classes. The man left the school. A new teacher of English was found, the students returned and the classes resumed.

In the Thai situation, I was only dimly aware of what was going on; I believe the woman went to another school. In Sri Lanka, I spoke to the principal about what he would do. He chose to let the situation look after itself. Everyone was aware and he trusted that, with no active intervention on his part, the situation would sort itself out. This, of course, is what happened.

In Canada, it seems the issue would be one of competence. It seems it's supposed to be immaterial how the individual feels. The belief seems to be that some 'active' action would be taken. Although being Canadian, what I find is that I haven't enough Canadian experience to be sure this is really so. My suspicion is that much the same sort of thing takes place. The difference is that in Canada it is mostly denied. There is pretence of doing otherwise. When I was doing a lot of the initial reading about individualism I

found myself wanting to expose what seemed to me to be a false value. We're not really individualists in my country. We don't succeed, or even fail, on our own. There's always help. There's always support. There's always a relationship. Yet, these false gods of independence and self-reliance are set up. Francis Hsu (1983) has termed this rugged individualism. There seem to be a lot of what I would call false gods in North America. They work against what seem to me to be natural human inclinations so that sometimes people behave in the way of what might be called the cultural ideals and sometimes they behave in what I would call human ways. It seems to set up an unnecessary conflict.

Such value differences (in Thailand, Sri Lanka and Canada), emphasis differences, are true differences between cultures. However, they don't necessarily play themselves out between human beings in a manner that indicates different psychological functioning, unless that is what someone wants the differences to mean.

The context is what seems to be the primary support for any differences. At an individual level, outside the context, these cultural differences change. They may diminish, they may not. It will probably vary with the context of support that the individual finds themselves in as well as with the degree to which the individual has taken these values to be

their own. To look to individuals, alone, as the purveyors of cultural beliefs is, however, I believe, misleading.

Do I embody, within me, Canadian culture? I would say not. However, the longer I remain the more 'Canadian' I feel I do become. To me, however, this is an urban Canadian, different, I believe, from a rural Canadian. Yet, I am probably more similar to a rural Canadian than I am to a Nigerian police officer. But, is even this necessarily true? (I have neither been to Nigeria nor ever known a police officer from there.) The difference may be more a function of my expectation than the reality. I share some things and don't share others with everyone alive. Daily I deal with my expectations of others and others' expectations of me. This influences how I behave and how I feel. If treated like a category rather than a person, I will probably tend to act the way I feel that is expected. Certainly, I'll feel unable to be myself. Over time, I may start to wonder whether the person treating me this way actually wants to know me. Yet, this is how the accepted research treats its human subjects, as representatives of categories.

In my view, I'm not like all those other Canadians, although I share much with them. Whether they would be my primary group for identification I'm not sure. Were I to feel persecuted or feel that my group were persecuted, I might

feel differently. I'm fairly free to move through both my society and the world at large. The prejudices and stereotypes I encounter tend to be positive, although they still exist.

My culture, whatever is meant by this term, some of the literature has called it "a fuzzy construct" (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai and Lucca, 1988, p. 323), has had some role in shaping my world. My place in the society has allowed me to look at the world in a certain way. I can be curious about others. I'm not fighting for my survival. I don't particularily feel subjugated. I'm influenced by this, as we all are. Ideas come from our reflections, and the reflections of others, about our experiences. I happen to read widely. For a while in my search I was interested in views of the self. Is this a western concept? What are Asian views? I read that, really, there is no self. This seemed to be supported by what I noticed in Thailand, except that what I noticed was more a caring for one another than a different conceptualization of self. Logically, this all may be linked. If I look after you and you look after me, there is less need for a self focus. If I feel that I have to look after myself I'm going to be concerned about 'having my needs met,' a North American expression I have picked up in the last few years, because you're not doing this. I may experience the world as less friendly to me. I may not

anticipate that help will be available when I need it. I may feel less secure. I may be more selfish. I may need to look after my 'self' more which may mean a need to think about this 'self' more. (It was exploration of 'differences' such as these that led me to thoughts of individualism which led me to the research area individualism-collectivism.)

One might extend this out to an exploration of cultural differences based on differing, cultural, conceptualizations of the self. But how can we label these differences 'cultural' in nature when people with more, and less, of a sense of separated self exist in all cultures that I know? Partly, the answer is that someone has determined that there are more people of one persuasion in society A and more of the other in society B. Yet, what this might point to as easily is to commonality of a shared environment or experience. The 'difference' is then located in the human experience of the situation rather than the human being themselves. Take the situation of reactions to a death. The human psychological experiences may well be fairly similar, but those bereaved of another are not locked into this way of being by the researchers. An experience of what we label culture, however, is treated differently. It is characterized as a permenancy, unchanging, constant. If a shared experience, it's clearly one that is seen to be preeminent in all situations that one encounters, making the

experience of whatever life events one encounters 'different' depending where in the world they are experienced. This makes no sense to me. As well, of course, it disallows my personal sense of connection and attachment with 'other' places and people.

From my first year teaching in PNG I remember one senior student who stood out from the others. He seemed more selfish. Towards the end of the school year, his final one in high school, he accused me of favouritism in a team competition in our English class. He was captaining the team that lost. He was a young man who was noticed. He was bright and able and, in this context, unique in what appeared to be an interest in himself and his own personal success and advancement. The others wanted to go back and help their villages. In my school in the highlands of PNG, Kave reminded me of an ambitious North American. Maybe he was modelling himself on westerners he had come into contact with; maybe there were other reasons. In the PNG environment, to me, he seemed different.

Difference is always placed in a context. In many cases, it may be a context we are unaware of until the 'difference' comes to our attention. Any such noting of difference points to an expectation that has gone unmet, a norm that has been violated.

Over the course of my first year in PNG I developed an expectation of my students. It was hardly a cultural profile, but it was there. Kave didn't fit. Yet, he did fit because the students accepted him. He was one of the student leaders. He wasn't violating their norms; he was violating mine. When I think about Kave I think also of his intimidation of some of the Papua New Guinean teachers who supervised a school trip that Kave took part in. The issue was segregation of the boys from the girls for sleeping arrangements. Yet, Kave was caught sleeping with one of the girls. He threatened the teachers into keeping this information away from the English headmaster. In PNG the education system was pretty much in the control of foreigners, mainly English or Australian, whether the schools were run by Papua New Guineans or not. The high school inspectors, for example, were largely foreign. The year before I came to the school there had been a different, Papua New Guinean, headmaster. The next year, my first year at the school, he had been replaced by an Englishman. The previous year Kave had been told he would be head boy. The new English headmaster chose someone else. Surely, it's possible that part of what Kave was doing was fighting back against the colonial masters. In terms of what I saw as his 'look at me' style behaviour with the students, it may have been again a reaction of some sort to the intervention of the new headmaster. To me, Kave stood out and made sure he

stood out. Yet, the students acknowledged him, not apparently because of this but because he had some rights to be their leader. Perhaps they identified with this rebellion against the legacy of colonial times: white superiority. I was a white man, different from the headmaster and not from one of the former colonial powers, but a white man nonetheless. I don't know what I might have represented, or not represented, to Kave. Who I really was would make no difference in this instance. In fact, the more that I didn't represent the accepted view of a white man the more, potentially, dangerous I could be since the truth is that I, as a white man in PNG, did not represent the norm. Although I wasn't unique, either.

In my opinion, Kave was angry at the headmaster (quite justifiably so from what I understood). I felt caught in this battle. Like the headmaster I was a foreigner; the Melanesian Pidgin word used is 'whiteskin' or 'master.' I was, also like the headmaster, in a position of authority over him. However, I had my own problems with this man. From my point of view, there were more differences than similarities between us. I doubt Kave would have noticed this, and I doubt, if he had, he would have cared. He was angry at the headmaster and what this headmaster represented (colonial domination). In my own dealings with this man I also felt this representation quite strongly. I didn't share

these views, but if Kave had been able to see me for my own individuality he might have found it necessary to reassess his views of the 'white man' group, possibly even of the headmaster himself. It was, I speculate, easier not to do this as it is easier for people, in general, to ignore information that challenges such cultural categorizations.

Our research could explore these issues. In this situation with Kave there are certainly differences of culture, of race, of nationality, of historical experience. What do these mean, to all of us and each of us, when such apparently contrasting experiences are brought together? What do we believe about each other, anyway, that we're not even aware that we believe? When do we stand alone, as individuals, and when are we members of a group collectivity? This would be a question worthy of research called individualism-collectivism. These are just some of the human dilemmas we each of us face no matter where in the world we are. Culture plays a role in how we come to our solutions.

I am reminded of two stories about standing out above the group, something that tends to be encouraged in North America. Also in the highlands of PNG there was a businessman who did very well for himself and had become rich, but he was attacked by members of the tribe he was

from because he wasn't helping them, only himself. His vehicles were attacked and one of his stores was burned. Pearl Buck talks about learning not to stand out above the crowd. Speaking of her tutor of Chinese she writes that "the important lesson which he taught me was that if one would be happy he must not raise his head above his neighbor's" (Buck, 1954, p.51).

In describing this same tutor's concerned statement to her that there would come a time when she would have to leave China forever and never return she writes that:

> We had only just come back from America and the year in my kindly grandfather's house, and I wept because I knew that if Mr. Kung and my grandfather could meet and talk things over they would understand each other and agree together. But how could they meet when one lived in China and the other in America, and even if they could have met, what common language could they have spoken? And yet I knew and know to this day that could such men as they have met and could they have found a common language...all that has happened need not have happened. Pearl Harbour would never have happened, and the atomic bomb would not have fallen and American prisoners of war would not have come back wounded and dying from a Communist China, for Chinese would not have yielded to Communism had they known there was hope in the white men of the West. ...
>
> All this in some dim foreseeing way I think I vaguely understood that day when I leaned my forehead down upon the oval dining table in the mission house and sobbed because of what Mr. Kung had just told me. For what he said in his

beautiful polished Peking Mandarin was something like this:

"It will be peaceful for you here again, Little Sister, but not for long. The storm is still rising and when it breaks, you must be far away from here. You must go to America and stay there and not come back, lest next time you be killed with all your kind."
...

And I could say nothing for I knew that his ancestral home in Peking had been destroyed by German soldiers, men to whom the German Kaiser had given the imperial command in some such words as these: "Germans, so behave that forever when a Chinese hears the name of Germany he will quake with fear and run to save himself." And the Germans had obeyed their Kaiser.

Yet, as the days passed, I forgot my fears as a child forgets, and I still took comfort because we were Americans. Surely, I argued, my Chinese friends could see how different we were from other white people. For a long time it seemed they did perceive our difference. (ibid, pps. 53-54)

This may be the pain of the experience of cultural difference, once the barrier has been erased: its continued resurrection. The differences are inescapable, seemingly, because so much maintains them. Pearl Buck, raised in China, could never be other than a foreigner, no matter what connections she formed. To those who knew her, of course, this was not true. Unfortunately, in a foreign land, to that majority who did not know her, this was true.

For me, this was exactly the case. While it may not have been my intention to spend the rest of my life in PNG this was not true, for me, of Asia. In PNG I thoroughly enjoyed my work, but declined to continue on partly out of a growing homesickness which I found surprising and partly because its wasn't a society in which I felt truly comfortable. Asia, for me, was another situation. Had I spent the five years in PNG somewhere in Asia instead, the return might never have taken place. The time I came back to Canada from Sri Lanka and India, I was returning to make the decision of whether or not to return to Asia to live. Events took place that led to my staying, although I still left to live what turned out to be the five years in PNG. Whether in PNG, or some place in Asia, however, I didn't fit in. No matter how good my language skills might have been, no matter how 'Asian' I might have become, even had I lived in a community as a monk; I would still have stood out because I would always have looked different. In Canada, I didn't look different; I felt different. Again, I turn to Pearl Buck. Here, she speaks of returning to America to attend college.

> When I look back from this distance upon those four college years, I see them as an experience, divided by my different worlds. I had grown up in Asia, a region of the globe in which my college mates had not the slightest interest and certainly of which they had no knowledge and this fact lent me an aura of strangeness, more unkindly called queerness, which after a short time I

> perceived well enough in their attitude toward me. With some fortitude I saw that unless I did something about it, I would spend four lonely and unhappy years, for no one is more cruel than the young American female unless it be the young American male, and that it was carelessness rather than conscious cruelty only made the cruelty seem the more severe, especially as I had been reared in a culture where human relationships were the first concern. It took some weeks of thinking to orient myself in this new culture of complete individualism. ... Girls came in groups to stare at me, and I soon began to understand the detachment of the only Chinese girl in the student body, a senior, who came and went with friendly indifference to her fellow students. In their way they were even fond of her, but while she accepted their good intentions she never yielded herself. I was not satisfied with her position. I wanted to belong to my own kind and to belong, as I soon saw, meant that I must separate my two worlds again. I must learn to talk about the things that American girls talked about... and I must look like them, and above all I must conceal the fact that inside me was a difference that I could not escape, even if I would.
>
> ... Externally I became an American. I learned the proper slang and exclamations, and by the end of my freshman year, I was indistinguishable from any other girl of my age and class. And so I joined my world. (ibid, pps. 103-105)

Pearl Buck is a human being whose life situation allowed her, possibly required her, to cross cultural boundaries. Her writing conveys these experiences and, also, her feelings. It evokes responses in those who read her words.

For me, the evocation is of sadness. In order to survive in her new world, Pearl Buck separated herself from her other world. There was loss and there was pain. The research, for no equivalent reason, does the same. The results, loss and pain, are the same as well.

What would a cross-cultural researcher do with Pearl Buck, or John Hersey, another American who, like Pearl Buck, was raised in China of American missionary parents and who, also like Pearl Buck, spoke Chinese before English? An obituary notice for Hersey, "An All-American Foreigner," quotes him. "'I was born a foreigner'" (Gates, 1993, p. 70).

Where does a cross-cultural researcher place someone like Pearl Buck or John Hersey on their cultural continuum? During their lifetimes these two might, indeed, have been exceptions. As the twentieth century draws to a close, however, their cross-cultural worlds are becoming much less unusual. The cultural frame, itself, even for those whose lives are geographically no broader than their national boundaries, is broadening as more people from outside come inside and the boundaries begin to broaden to the edges of our planet rather than the edges of the specific region, or nation, on the planet.

What is distressing is that there is no discussion of the

meaning of cultural difference. Yet, it underlies everything done in this entire field of cross-cultural psychology. The meaning of cultural difference lies at the heart of the work. It's the view 'in our head.' It certainly, knowingly or unknowingly, informs everything done in the area of individualism-collectivism. Cultural difference supplies the relationship used by the researchers in the field. Its usefulness, unfortunately, is problematic given that it describes a stance of separation. For me, it simply isn't acceptable since I don't feel the separation for this 'other.' The separation I feel, and which causes great emotional distress, is with that group, dominant in my field, who impose this view.

Belonging

As human beings, few of us seem to want to admit the possibility of the other as ourselves when such characteristics as race, nationality, ethnicity, culture, gender form a part of the differences between us. Every group develops its expectations of values and normative behaviour. All of these groups are cultural in nature. For their members, all groups form in-groups. The researchers in individualism and collectivism tell us that collectivists have few in-groups with strong ties while individualists

have many in-groups with loose ties (Triandis, Bontempo, Betancourt, Bond, Leung, Georgas, Hui, Marin, Setiadi, Sinha, Verma, Spangenberg, Touzard, & de Montmollin, 1986). This would appear to be true. In North America people are aware that the culture is generally experienced as individualistic (whatever that may really mean). People move from group to group without, apparently, large attachments made. The cultural values are of independence and self-reliance. Distance and alienation might be additional terms to use when describing the experience of life. Indeed, given that life is lived within a capitalist market economy, there may be danger of becoming commodities without humanity. Erich Fromm describes a marketing orientation toward life that can be found in the industrialized, capitalistic western world (Fromm, 1976). Fromm views people as having differing character orientations "produced" by different societies stressing differing goals. The research in individualism and collectivism is, of course, proceeding along similar lines; it's looking for character orientations. However, where Fromm would seem to maintain his focus on both the human being and the society in interaction together, the research in individualism and collectivism seems to not care about the relationship of context, concentrating instead on trying to find out what it is inside that makes these individualists and collectivists who they are. Indeed, the thinking, easily and quickly,

turns into such 'individualist' and 'collectivist' scenarios, type-casting people depending on the societies they are from. Context is important only initially in so far as it places the person. Once placed, the context 'known,' the person is then seen to be 'known,' the categorization selected, the limits imposed. This is problematic for me, but not for this particular area of research or, indeed, the wider arena of cross-cultural research which, by and large, accepts, and adopts, positivistic empirical research formulations.

I recently had a young boy tell me that a neighbour, in Canada from India, had told him that in India the man's teenage daughters would not be in school. In Canada, of course, they were. The young, Canadian, boy repeated to me that in India these girls wouldn't be in school, the conclusion being that in India this is what takes place. My response was to tell him of Indira Gandhi. In neighbouring countries, I think of Benazhir Bhutto and Srimavo Bandaranayke. These three women - Indian, Pakistani and Sri Lankan - not only went to high school but also became Prime Minister. The assumptions about a society, even when told by one of its members and possibly true on a generalist basis, don't apply to everyone. I should point out that these three societies would also be considered collectivist. Whether this moniker would apply to thse three individuals I don't

know.

Membership in a group, any group, even the groups we claim membership in, may have a much broader meaning than we are prepared to allow. Where we draw the line of demarcation is arbitrary. We can all be all together. For me, I must recognise that one of my locations and belongings is North American. This forms a part, a very large part of who I am (and is difficult for me to acknowledge since I feel so 'different' from much of what being North American appears to represent). Yet, this is not all that I am (or, presumably, anyone else). This forms the basis and the personal complexities and experiences radiate out from there. The reflection back does affect the base, however. It changes too so that such terminology becomes, effectively, useless in terms of locating/placing identity.

Herder, mentioned earlier in these pages, spoke of the importance of belonging, treating it, virtually, as a human psychological need. "To be human meant to feel at home somewhere, with your own kind" (Gardels, 1991, p.19). From my initial experience in Thailand I came away with a feeling of acceptance which for me, somehow, became translated into a feeling of belonging. On two subsequent occasions of re-contacting Thai colleagues the attachment was still strong, surprisingly strong. At an emotional level, this is what

continues to lie at the base of my interest and curiosity, as well as my criticism of the path taken by the research.

Two years in Thailand made a long, and enduring, impact. Part of that impact was the sense of belonging I felt was present for most Thais, something I felt absent for most Canadians (so the thoughts of individualism). For me, while I clearly did not belong, there was an acceptance and a warmth extended, partly, in truth, because of the warmth extended by me. Yet, it wasn't simply a question of being a reaction to me. I do this in Canada, but the response isn't the same and the longer that I live in my country the less I find that I do it. In what is for me a 'natural' reaching out towards people I am not encouraged at 'home.' There I was, and it grew. Time spent in India and Sri Lanka, followed by the period in PNG, with only relatively short periods in Canada over the next decade allowed this inclination. It was allowed to such an extent that I seriously considered living permenantly overseas. However, the strength of this need to belong brought me back to Canada, a place where I wondered if I really did 'belong.' Had those years been somewhere in Asia, the outcome might have been otherwise since in Asia I felt at home. The roots go deeper in Canada, however. In Asia, someone can always spit in my face, tell me to go home, and produce an insecurity. They can do that in Canada, too, but as there's

no insecurity to uncover the incident has, for me, no further ramifications.

(It is a pity that such human concerns have no apparent place in cross-cultural psychology.)

This wondering led me, at first, in many directions. Underneath it all, I was hoping to know, as I believe a part of us as psychologists hopes to know, how to 'produce' people like the people where I had lived. This, however, isn't possible because we can't ever, really, fully replicate another. One of the 'differences' between Canada and Thailand was that Thailand, when I was there, was a 'religious' place whereas Canada wasn't. That doesn't necessarily imply that Canadians should convert to Buddhism. Part of the experience of the 'Third World' regions of the world is that importing some other place's tools does not produce the life of those other places. Buddhism, alone, doesn't ensure a compassionate society, a place where the focus is human relationships.

I wanted to be able to account for the feelings of warmth, acceptance, comfort and security I met with in my years in Thailand that I hadn't met with in the same way in my home country. For a long while the unarticulated premise was that Thais really were different from me. That's the premise with

which I began my exploration, the same premise adopted in research in cross-cultural psychology. I assumed Thais had imbibed something 'different' growing up in Thailand from what I had growing up in Canada; although, in order to both recognise this way and even to prefer it, there were clearly many similarities in my own Canadian upbringing. My continued, false, assumption was that once this character was developed it was 'set' for life. It's the same premise that the literature in cross-cultural psychology continues to explore. Character, psychological make-up, call it what you will gets developed and set. Yet, it was in Asia that I first came upon the statement that the only constant in life is change. The ability to change is the ability to adapt, adaptation being closely linked to survival. In Asia, too, I first came upon the belief that the reed bends in the wind, allowing the stronger force to pour over it, submitting, but rising up again once the wind has passed. In Canada, and I believe the West, I imbibed the idea that the goal is to be an oak, strong and resolute and able to stand up straight and tall against whatever odds. Oak trees break more easily than reeds, however.

Different societies, different cultures, different parts of the world offering different advice, different guidelines, different paths for human development. No place offers one path exclusively, although preferences are clear. In truth,

the difference seems simply to be where the emphasis is placed. However, an individual needs the support of others as well. In my forty years as someone from North America the emphasis of my home 'culture' simply hasn't been on human relationships. In Thailand, Sri Lanka, India and Papua New Guinea life was lived more in this manner. My own, personal, dilemma was where did I fit? The need to answer this underlay my initial approach to what has now become my area. I wanted to understand what made my experience of 'Asia' different to my North American world - since I had come to the conclusion that I was more likely to spend my life in a North American frame of reference than an Asian one, how could I bring the 'other' inside? In the research I was confronted with a view of the other that I found unacceptable. In addition, there was an assumption of the meaning of individualism that seemed questionable, at best. If individualism is going to be taken to have a certain meaning, it is, surely, best to be certain of what that meaning is, especially when individualism's attachment seems quite clearly to be to a very specific, and dominant, part of the world.

Individualism

What we are repeatedly told about differences between the

East and the West is that the role of the individual is different. The mythology is that the West encourages the freedom of the individual whereas the East encourages the harmony of the group. In the West we expect the individual to stand out. In the East we expect the individual to fit in. These are contextual differences and the foundation for what has grown to be the field of individualism and collectivism. They are not personal human differences, however, in the manner in which the literature, and the conventional wisdom, would have us believe. This is the primary mistake the research is making. Individualism, and collectivism, are not personality traits. Rather they are traits, or orientations, that describe social organization and control. They are ways of relating. They exist primarily between rather than inside. But belief in the primacy, and importance, of the individual is what looms large in the West. Since it's the cultural beliefs and practices of this West that dominate the social sciences, and most certainly psychology, very much a child of the West, it's these beliefs and practices that dominate the research in individualism and collectivism. The problem becomes the understanding of individualism. Individualism doesn't value relationships. Since, supposedly, the individual lives their own life independently of those around them relationships cannot really be of much importance. The individual is not supposed to care about the other but about themselves. It's

understandable that the research would try to anchor itself in what appears to be the relative stability of the individual rather than in the between of relationships coming as it does from this individualist perspective.

Yet, the belief in individualism seems to ignore the reality of how life, even by so-called individualists, is really lived. For years this puzzled me and was a part of my continuing preference for the 'ways' of these other places. Life was less forced in these other contexts. There seemed to be an acceptance of being a part of a stream rather than a determination to be the stream itself. Experience, life, view of self, 'personality' were all fluid and moving. But from my cultural background I had been influenced to try to structure experience in a more rigid and categorical manner. That my own life experiences didn't necessarily 'fit' into this manner of understanding wasn't something I was particularily, consciously, aware of. Over the course of the years since first going to Thailand I have become more aware.

In the writings on individualism one finds commentary about 'rugged' individualism (Hsu, 1983) and 'ensembled' individualism (Sampson, 1988). This same Edward Sampson (1987), in discussing 'self-contained' individualism, also points out the justification of the need for governmental

intervention and control in a "society [that] nurtures a character who requires societal intervention in order to sustain a social bond that is threatened by the very nature of this character" (p. 90). If my interest is only going to be myself, then some larger force (government) will have to hold me in check and protect those others I wouldn't consider. John Ralston Saul (1993) writes of the trivialization of individualism in the present historical era where "much of modern individualism has been confined to superficial and personal matters" (p. 466). This view is also reflected in the 1985 publication, Habits of the Heart (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton), which considered Locke's thesis of a society composed of individual voluntary contracts as it plays itself out presently in the lives of individual Americans. "Individualism lies at the very core of American culture" (ibed, p. 142). Yet, "in the course of our discussion, we have seen that however much Americans extol the autonomy and self-reliance of the individual, they do not imagine that a good life can be lived alone. Those we interviewed would almost all agree that connectedness to others in work, love, and community is essential to happiness, self-esteem, and moral worth" (ibed, p. 84).

As practiced, individualism is, apparently, a contradictory ideal, a position supported also by Edward Sampson (1987).

Students of cross-cultural psychology have taught us that most cultures make distinctions that can be placed along dimensions similar to those I have called freedom -- which deals with self-control versus external control -- and independence -- which deals with the self-nonself boundary.

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Every analyst of the historical transformation of the western world from its traditional to its modern forms, has emphasized as a central feature of this change the process of individualization. .....most analysts agree that individualization is the basis for freedom and independence. We usually trace the course of individual freedom socially from the time at which persons were dislodged from those networks that bound and defined them in terms of their family, tribe, community, local village, and so forth. And we apply much the same treatment in our psychological theories of development, seeing individual freedom to be coincident with the dislodging from embeddedness that occurs with growing separation and individuation.

Contrary to this common cultural formulation, I will argue that the process of individualization is better understood in terms of a different form of societal control rather than the substitution of self-control for societal control.

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Yielding to the group -- presumably a sign of being externally ruled -- or following one's own personal desires are not positions along a dimension of unfree to free once we clearly understand that our personal desires reflect a different system of societal power. Only from the standpoint of self-

> contained individualism and its masking of power, is it possible to define external control as yielding to the group, while viewing the internal alternative as the only form that is freeing. This understanding distorts the realities of western history and cross-cultural evidence even as it participates in further masking the regime of power that calls upon internalization and self-control as its essential elements.
>
> ...I have described a fundamentally contradictory ideal of personhood. I believe that the contradictions built into this western/American ideal help undermine the social bond and encourage totalitarian intervention in order to achieve order (Sampson, 1987 pps. 84-89).

For me, Sampson is convincing in seeing the concept of individualism as a political dogma, rather than a psychological construct. Yet, there are psychological implications stemming from political dogma. The contradicting of 'natural' experience is one. To the extent that I acknowledge my need and dependence on another I am not conforming to the individualistic outlook of separateness, autonomy and independence. Yet, independence is a quality of Thai culture, too, at the same time that this culture is labelled collectivist in outlook. A return is made to the recurring issue of how experience is conceptualized by those laying claim to the ability to illuminate human experience. The categories don't fit. They limit our exploration, and of course our understanding, of

human life experience, both by the 'we' of the direct experience and the 'we' who analyse these experiences.

Collectivism, like individualism, can also be seen as a manner of social control, simply of a differing nature. We return to the idea that the difference, to the extent that difference really exists, appears to lie in the societies rather than the individuals. The societies, however, also are in flux. Their boundaries, and differences, may, too, have more to do with what we seem to need to place rather than what, really, exists. There seems to be an inherent need in human experience always to divide. There seem always to be outsiders and always to be insiders. It is, perhaps, in this manner, if this can be sustained, we, each, know where we belong. The assumption here, of course, is that we cannot, all, belong together. I am reminded of my high school days and Shakespeare: If you cut me, do I not bleed? Cutting into the other has to be the same as cutting into the self. Cutting off the other, what we do when we divide, is cutting off a part of the self. The need of division would appear to serve other purposes. It most certainly does not serve the development of humanity.

Taking/accepting the stance imposed by cultural difference, which makes sense through a view of the world that separates individuals anyway, is, quite simply, dangerous. It reflects

the same problems inherent with individualism, as lived by people willing to accept such a description of themselves, once its implications are fully comprehended. Neither concept is what, at first, it appears. The ends served by each appear to support the promotion of a social-political status quo that is sustained by separations and divisions. As psychologists, we must be free of these needs of other interests to shape our understandings of each other. We must be aware of our own culture and its implications for our abilities to see and understand both ourselves and others.

Chapter 4

Arrival

Departure Out

It is 20 years on. I sit in Toronto anticipating departure along a part of the route of that first journey to Asia. This time, rather than the company of newly-made friends en route to Thailand, participants in Canadian 'aid,' I travel in the company of my wife and our small son. Rather than Asia, our destination is Greece, a border area, now, with Asia. Indeed, a border area, now, with Europe and the 'West.' The 'cradle,' so we are told, of western civilization is a crossroads, possibly what it always was.

I remember Istanbul, through a haze of malaria, learning that this place spanned the divide, the Bosphorous, between Europe and Asia. I think of Singapore, spanning many divides, though not the geographical ones, and even of my old/new home, Toronto, itself beginning to span divides, the so-called 'cultural' divides. I think of places, of people, of 'I' and 'thou,' of respect, belonging, of the future and of possibility. I wonder if I do this for the future, for my son, though the beginnings are rooted in the past, in a desire to offer on what has been offered to me. The most precious gift is the gift you give to someone else, the same that has been given to you. This makes the most merit, although the true intention cannot be the making of the merit or, in Buddhist terms, the attitude will be wrong,

full of self instead of empty of self. The cycle of pain and suffering cannot be broken when the action and the intention are not as one.

Days later and I write on a back balcony of a house on Crete. A modern house. A modern balcony. The Greece I meet is a modern place. The Greece I see a mixture of the past, partly from an ancient world, and partly of the present.

I come to Greece and am reminded. Of northern India by the dryness of the Athens landscape. Of the tropics by the plantlife - jasmine, frangipani, bougainvillea. The flowering bush that stood outside my bedroom window in Thailand all those years ago I finally learn, here, is oleander. The noise and haste of Athens is reminiscent of Bangkok. In Greece I see 'the East' as place. The people I do not know.

At the acropolis they were all American, by sight. The tourist dress is, to me, American casual: summer dress of shorts, T-shirts, running shoes, sandals, light dresses. Yet the languages are international: English - in its American, British and Australian forms; French; German; Eastern European languages I do not know; Greek; Japanese.

I later move to another Cretan house, another relative. This

house is not modern, more 'traditional' in style. Though traditional in town, different from the village where I have also seen traditional houses. Crete and Athens are not the same. Yet, together, they form a part of Greece. The unity is there to choose or reject, depending on the need.

Orientalism

It has been of interest to me, as I have made my way through this process of thought and investigation, to have arrived at the point of wondering what underlies the ideas that, themselves, form the basis of this scholarship I have been exploring. These foundations appear to be a view of humanity that is, fundamentally, one of denial. This denial is of the reality of all people as human. To return to the idea of James Baldwin, introduced earlier, this attitude is also one of superiority. The work in individualism and collectivism differentiates between people, as though life can be classified as an either/or experience, rather than among the range of human possibilities. Interestingly, these divisions reflect power and wealth distinctions as well as cultural ones. From this point, one can move in several directions. Any direction taken reflects a choice, conscious or unconscious. Within the published literature itself lie statements that individualism is seen to be a 'better' orientation for humanity (Kagitcibasi, 1987). As can easily be understood, such an outlook is both problematic (in terms of scholarship) and contentious (in terms of bias). Still, it is there, an assumption of cultural superiority.

My contention, that reflects my choice of path, is that out of the West, that I do share membership with, has come a

myth about peoples outside this western world that has been sustained through the body of produced scholarship. Edward Said calls this "orientalism" (1978). However, it seems to be broader than an orientalism alone since this attitude of standing apart and looking at is the approved stance taken by work in the social sciences in general. Berger and Pullberg (1964/65) call it mystification. This attitude, indeed, can be classified as 'cultural' in nature. This is how most of western social science scholarship goes about viewing/understanding self as well as other. In reference, again, to Edward Said, this forms the 'received knowledge.' This, after all, is how the idea of culture is both understood and used: as a view, an outlook, handed to each of us, at first, and possibly for the full course of our lives, without question. It is received and it is the basis from which we move out. It is how we relate, how we understand, how we make meaning in the world. It is what we carry around 'in our head.'

To present Dr. Said in his own words:

> I shall be calling Orientalism a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience. The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe, it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural constant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. (Said, 1978, p. 1)

> I have begun with one assumption that the Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not merely there, just as the Occident itself is not just there either, ... such locales, regions, geographical sectors as "Orient" and "Occident" are man-made. Therefore, as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. (ibid, pps. 4-5)
>
> Orientalism depends on the flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand. (ibid, p. 7)

With respect to beginnings, Dr. Said writes that

> beginnings have to be made for each project in such a way as to enable what follows from them. ... The idea of beginning, indeed the act of beginning, necessarily envolves an act of delimitation by which something is cut out of a great mass of material, separated from the mass, and made to stand for, as well as be, a starting point, a beginning. (ibid, p. 16)

Calling himself a humanist, he points out

> the main intellectual issue raised by Orientalism. Can one divide human reality, as indeed human reality seems to be genuinely divided, into clearly different cultures, histories, traditions, societies, even races, and survive the consequences humanly? By surviving the consequences humanly, I mean to ask whether there is any way of avoiding the hostility expressed by the division, say, of man into "us" (Westerners) and "they" (Orientals). For such divisions are generalities whose

> use historically and actually has been to press the importance of the distinction between some men and some other men, usually towards not especially admirable ends. When one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and the end points of analysis, research, public policy ... the result is usually to polarize the distinction - the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western - and limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions and societies. In short, from its earliest modern history to the present, Orientalism as a form of thought for dealing with the foreign has typically shown the altogether regrettable tendency of any knowledge based on such hard-and-fast distinctions as "East" and "West": to channel thought into a West or East compartment. Because this tendency is right at the centre of Orientalist theory, practice, and values found in the West, the sense of Western power over the Orient is taken for granted as having the status of scientific truth. (ibid, pps. 45-46)

Ideas are lodged within an historical, cultural stream of experience. They may be wide streams, but they are defined streams. They are, also, of course, differing streams.

> My principal operating assumptions [are] that fields of learning, as much as the works of even the most eccentric artist, are constrained and acted upon by society, by cultural traditions, by worldly circumstances, and by stabilizing influences like schools, libraries, and governments; moreover, that both learned and imaginative writing are never free, but are limited in their imagery, assumptions, and intentions, and finally, that the advances made by a "science" like Orientalism in its academic form are less objectively true than we often like

to think.

.....

So Orientalism aided and was aided by general cultural pressures that tended to make rigid the sense of difference between the European and Asiatic parts of the world. (ibid, pps. 201-204)

In comments, referenced earlier, found in work within cross-cultural psychology, this same analysis is made: the work in comparing 'developed' and 'developing' nations (other expressions for East and West) is highlighting differences. It is, as well, of course, my own non-Western experiences that have formed the basis of my own objections to this work. Yes, these places are different (France and England are different), but, no, this is not how one understands the meaning of such difference. Setting up a difference among humans seems always to involve setting up an alien outsider. You are Muslim (by your own statement or by my own judgement), so you must, therefore ..... hate Jews (or whatever trait I have decided to assign to Muslim-ness). But I most certainly do not, you protest. How dare you tell me what I am like because of what group I am connected with. Or, conversely, I assign, or try to assign, to myself traits that are seen to be indication of group membership in order to establish my sense of kinship/belonging. The truth, however, is that one can be different and still belong, except that, for most, unity does not inform world view.

Most people seem to want these divisions in place, do not want a common identity. As well, of course, there is a reluctance to consider the responsibility of each of us in shaping, and continuing to shape, a world in which acknowledged injustices and inequalities remain constants. Simply put, most people don't want to allow the 'other' to become known, truly known, for then it would be necessary to recognise the common humanity of us all. Then, the problems of one world become the problems of all. As social scientists, the tradition has been to fall back on the buttress of so-called scientific objectivity. "I'm not here to take a stand/make a judgement. I'm just here to record." Scholarship (this kind at least), apparently, has no responsibility to protest at the acceptance of an alienated view of humanity.

Some, I am discovering, of course, do. Edward Said continues to demonstrate this point.

> As a collective entity, then ... we are to assume that if an Arab feels joy, if he is sad at the death of his child or parent, if he has a sense of the injustices of political tyranny, then those experiences are necessarily subordinated to the sheer, unadorned, and persistent fact of being an Arab. (ibid, p. 230)

Underneath this view of humanity rests another view of humanity. Edward Said refers to this as 'origins.' The research in individualism and collectivism, in its attempts

to define these types, is following this same, origins, logic.

> The point to be emphasised is that this truth about the distinctive differences between races, civilizations, and languages ... went to the bottom of things, it asserted that there was no escape from origins and the types these origins enabled; it set the real boundaries between human beings, on which races, nations, and civilizations were constructed; it forced vision away from common, as well as plural, human realities like joy, suffering, political organization, forcing attention instead in the downward and backward direction of immutable origins. (ibid, p. 233)

The types, collectivist or individualist, superscede all else - if we allow this. They become, essentially, a masking of cultural or national or racial difference, not distinction, another concept, but difference. Thai-ness, Papua New Guinean-ness, Indian-ness, Sri Lankan-ness, Canadian-ness form the barriers within which lives are lived. Of course, we all know that, within these barriers, lie other barriers. For Canada, black - non-black, French - English, visible - non-visible are terms describing some of these other internal, but strongly defended, barriers. Yet, if one steps back, there is no, necessary, logic to this approach. To draw, yet again, on Dr. Said, first I am a Canadian and only then do I love my child. The implication is that the love of one's child is different if one is Thai or black or whatever the categories are the anonymous

'others' (of which many of our research scholars are members) are assigning. What we end with is the situation in which a Toronto school teacher informs my psychologist wife that black children from Jamaica living in Canada with family other than those they have known from birth do not feel the pain and loss of such separation, as Canadian children would, because that's what 'they' do, it's part of their culture. Since Canada has participated in both of the world wars, presumably Canadians are (or were) used to the deaths of loved ones and would suffer differently (less, in fact) than people from a country that did not participate in war. The divisions are created, structure is assigned, supporting evidence is found, and this becomes the world, the reality/truth. That's all that is seen, and so, that's all there is to see. By this we all, of course, each one, become estranged from self, other and the possibility of, truly, human lives. To the extent that we raise no voice in challenge with this dominant view, we are a party to it. As well, of course, I, at least, share membership with those who affirm, even by default, such a world view. There is a responsibility to myself, but there is also a responsibility to my community of psychologist-scholars to speak.

The Monkey King

My little boy is playing. He is scrambling on and off the couch. He is giggling, laughing, running, grabbing, squirming. This forms his play. We call him, my wife and I, a little monkey.

Today, I am telling him a story. About the monkey king and the Minoan princess (we are on Crete). Hanuman, I call him, remembering the 'real' monkey king of the Ramayana and the Ramakien. Hanuman who wears the green monkey-face mask.

And I start to weave a story of what the monkey king is like and why he is, today, a monkey king, guarding his princess. For the door to the hallway is pulled closed, though remains partly ajar, with his mother in an adjoining room, and he is continually going, calling, looking and returning to me. He is on guard, checking for his mother's safety. So I tell him about himself and his role as guardian and it is harmless. Because this is play. But it starts me to thinking.

My wife and I share an understanding of why a child might be called a monkey. Being a monkey is being cute, rascally, chattery, full of movement and dash. And perhaps more. It is a classification, but it is not rigid.

Since my wife does not recognise Hanuman I must tell her he is a mythical figure in classical Indian and Thai mythology. Hanuman rides a chariot, wears a monkey-face mask and is a warrior. He is a protector. This is who Hanuman is. This is what it means for an individual to be like Hanuman. It means to be strong and like a leader. It means to wear the monkey-face mask. This is the outer symbol, the easy-to-note identification. But it is not the mask, alone, if one takes the time to look for more. For the mask may be deceptive. It may be merely that, a mask. And underneath lies someone else. Or, it may be the real Hanuman who lies inside. From the mask, alone, there can be no certainty.

We classify. We identify. We place. And this placement and classification are innocent if we allow for variation, for change, as well. No harm is done. For in the one lies the many. Hanuman lives in everyone, at times. And that is all we need to know. For even Hanuman, himself, is not always the strong and powerful leader-warrior. Sometimes, he, too, is other. He is we and we are he.

Multiplicities

I sit on the island of Crete in a mountain village where we have been visiting. We are eight around the outdoor table. And we are all distinct. It is not a question of Greek and non-Greek because there is no relevance to this type of thinking. Nor is it an issue of collectivist (Greek) and individualist (Canadian). It is, simply, a gathering of people, speaking, mostly, Greek, except for me, who speaks nothing beyond greetings and my little boy, who speaks nothing in any recognisable language.

The members of this group are all related. My wife is a second/third cousin of the household we are visiting. I am related by my marriage to her. I wonder about the Greek/non-Greek type of analysis, what purpose it serves.

Greece is a new place for me. My time in Greece, however, is spent mostly as one connected rather than one estranged/outside. I see the range of people because I am shown the range of people. I am admitted. At the country table my wife's aunt is teasing one of the women in the household, a daughter visiting from Athens. She is saying that the woman is too kind, too thoughtful. She does not stand up for herself and, at her work, people take advantage of her. This is not a Greek problem, if problem it is at

all, but a human situation. Beside her sits her mother, in black head kerchief and black dress. She looks like pictures I have seen of village women, except that she is real. She speaks no English but, for some reason, uses the phrase "never mind."

The evening before I have been at a family dinner where one of the members, like me, is also foreign. This woman has just finished a degree at a Greek university. She awaits her diploma, and it is taking time. The particular professor she needs to reach cannot be located. At her university, no one knows where he is or when he will return. She has telephoned one of his other offices to find no reply at all, even from a secretary. She hopes he is returning the following month when classes begin. Her comment to me is that, in Greece, if the thing doesn't have to be done today, it won't be. It will be delayed until tomorrow or the next day. Clearly this is frustrating, for her as it would be for anyone in this situation.

Another relative goes early to her work to be aware what time her staff arrive because sometimes some staff arrive later than the anticipated time. With another relative I discuss the apparent apathy, and lethargy, of so many government workers here in Greece and there in Canada. This is connection. It is similarity. It is not difference,

although differences there are, as there always are among people.

I write in a taverna in the main public garden of a Cretan city. I look up at people at the tables around me. Probably Greek, I decide, but I have no need of the classification. I remember other public writing I have done, in the common area of a Quebec resort where I felt able, from style of dress, to decide who, most likely, was French (from Montreal) and who English. It struck me there how superficial, and useless, are these determinations. They tell one nothing about the people, what they are like. They may tell about affiliations. They may tell about understanding, even knowledge, that is already in place. This then becomes re-confirmed. I don't have this knowledge of these people in this taverna. They are, simply, people. There is no need for more. I'm not confirming my pre-determined conclusions because I have none. What is more, I realize that I really do need none. It is, truly, possible to approach and come to know without reliance on categories. Images, perceptions, intuitions, feelings form and lead to formulations, possibilities. The categories do not serve the purpose of facilitating enquiry; rather, they serve the purpose of imposing order (contrived or not) on chaos. Unfortunately, these categories not only de-contextualize, they remove/cut off. They also cut off from self, from human

response to human situations. The desire, curiosity to understand the other is the same as that to understand the self. This, too, lies at the root, or heart, of work in the social sciences, most particularily any work cross-cultural in nature. Surely, the goal is to better comprehend humans in our many situations.

So, I come to this idea of multiplicities. By assumption, multiplicities speaks, as well, to the commonality of all. We come, all, from the same beginning, and we develop differently.

> There are no individual statements, there never are. Every statement is the product of a[n].. assemblage, in other words of collective agents of enunciation (take "collective agents" to mean not peoples or societies but multiplicities). The proper name (nom propre) does not designate an individual: it is on the contrary when the individual opens up to the multiplicities pervading him or her .. that he or she acquires his or her true proper name. The proper name is the instantaneous apprehension of a multiplicity. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 37)

From a Buddhist perspective, where does the 'table' object lie? Is it the legs? The top? The polishing if it is of wood? The use that is made of it? It is an assemblage. Together, all are the table. Different legs, top, polishing, usage might form a desk.

Each society, each culture contains the complete world. Its members are humankind. The dominant voice, the dominant outlook, however, is what appears to lend the mass its determining shape. Other shapes are always possible. How else do we understand the idea of change but as latent, meaning already lying within, possibility? Women are but one example of another voice within the individualist, non-relationship-attentive culture of North America. The so-called ethnic minorities are others.

Where is it we want to find the similarities, the differences? They are always in existence, though their existence may have more to do with our own subjective, cultural requirements than any that can be seen, truly, as objective, as existing whether we see/find them or not. It depends what we ask, how we think, how we see, what possibilities/multiplicities we, ourselves, are capable of.

> I have attempted to raise a whole set of questions that are relevant in discussing the problems of human experience. How does one represent other cultures? What is another culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilization) a useful one, or does it always get involved either in self-congratulation (when one discusses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the "other")? Do cultural, religious, and racial differences matter more than socio-economic categories, or politicohistorical ones? How do ideas acquire "normality," and even the status of "natural" truth?

.....

> I consider Orientalism's failure to have been a human as much as an intellectual one; for in having to take up a position of irreducible opposition to a region of the world it considered alien to its own, Orientalism failed to identify with human experience, failed also to see it as human experience. (Said, 1978, p. 325-328)

It is a pity, and a waste, that this inability to identify with, and through this thereby comprehend, human experience affects so thoroughly the work known as individualism and collectivism. It offers so much, it is so knowledgeable, and, yet, its relevance toward human understanding is negligible because the foundation of its knowledge, its categorizations, are meaningless, and most fundamentally not reproducable in human existence. As human beings, we are not mannequins. We move, we change. We think. We reflect. And, perhaps most germane here, we re-think. The people made the 'object' in the studies that go unchallenged in the cross-cultural research community are ourselves. Is this how we want ourselves represented?

Departure Back / Arrival

We have arrived home, the family. Days pass and the trip comes into focus. It changes. It re-emerges. Differently formed, though essentially the same, its significance alters.

Departure holds within it the act of leaving and the beginnings of the act of arriving. This trip is a metaphor on so many levels. In a small way it is like the departures and returnings of the past. It is also like the exploration that has formed my work here. I started out in one direction and have returned in another; yet, the place can be seen to be the same. The relationship to the place, however, is different. I am not 'different' because of a vacation taken in Greece. But this vacation has offered me the opportunity of completion. It has allowed the final movement into position. I have departed, but I have also arrived. The former has enabled the latter.

Where do beginnings and endings really lie? And what of boundaries? We think of these as thresholds, dividers, but there are the places leading up to, and away from, these points of demarcation as well. Departure and arrival together form an act of completion. From V.S. Naipaul I am reminded of 'the enigma of arrival.' This enigma has

unfolded, now, though.

In order to understand there must be thought. In order to think, conceptualization. With this comes, too, attention paid, and not paid. With this comes order, classification, a weeding out.

We identify. In order to communicate we label. We describe. Language. But language, alone, is not the issue.

The issue is communication. What requires to be stated. What lies implicit, understood within, or below the surface. Culture, in fact.

I feel different upon the return. I always do. We've lived a month in Greece. I come back with different eyes. Free, in the sense that this journey is coming to an end. I have arrived at what is, finally, the understanding that has always been in place. Though now it is elevated, placed at the centre. This focus is relationships, linkages, commonality. In the first, 'Memory,' included here I wrote of New York and Calcutta linked together. For me, in Greece, I see, constantly, the linkages. The similarities. Differences there are, of course, but my fascination is with this other side.

I am reminded of a colour continuum as one colour shades into another so that each is distinct yet also related. Blue and purple more similar. Blue and yellow more different. In coming to know one, you come to know parts of them all. A family.

When I depart I also bring within me the possibility of arrival, though not, indeed, the assurance of it. Still, each holds within the possibility of something else.

I am in the state of arrival, and it is a multi-textured event.

Belonging as Emotion

The idea of belonging carries with it an emotional sense of attachment. It conveys identity. It is what we inhabit, "our habitus (that which we inhabit and that which inhabits us)" (Bromley, 1991, p. 33). It informs our sense of place, our sense of self. It is a relationship. There is belonging and there is not-belonging, ideas which convey the same meaning and intentionality as insider and outsider. To consider belonging is to speak of placement and location. It is, also, to speak of emotions, feelings strongly held, feelings strongly influencing.

The literature of individualism and collectivism does not address this idea of belonging. The culture it grows out of, a culture that divides and categorizes, does however. To members of this culture it is known who belongs and who doesn't. As human beings, we, also, all know the emotional pain of not belonging, of being distanced, placed outside, exiled. We, also, all know what it is like to be on the fringe, on the boundary area of some group. The experience, and issues, though, are the same: where we place ourselves in relationship with others and how we feel about this, and where others place us in relationship with themselves and how they feel about us. All groups, all cultures/societies, all individuals place people in situations of belonging and

not-belonging. What varies is the changeability of these classifications and the possibility of acceptance of these outsider/others.

Cultures place the emphasis, and attribute the generally-accepted meanings of the many neutral objectively-observable differences that exist among human beings. The dominant research paradigm of choice in cross-cultural psychology, and individualism-collectivism, uses these differences to structure and lead the research, research directed toward understanding the range of human experience as it manifests itself in differing cultural environments. This idea of pre-determined leadership is problematic. As well, this idea of difference is problematic since, somehow, this idea of range, meaning variance/different manifestations, becomes lost and the idea of difference as fixed/immutable is substituted. The categories become iron shackles. People exist as either one entity or another. They become fixed, like insects pinned by a needle and stuck on a corkboard, as though who any of us is can actually be so confined and confining. In this manner this type of psychology research reduces and trivializes all of us.

To consider belonging is to consider a richness, a wealth of emotion that anchors us, as humans, making us feel safe, secure or, by its lack in our lives, cutting us adrift,

leaving us alone. With belonging come kinship and peace. With not-belonging come isolation and loss - of kinship and peace. Belonging is a surrounding. It's an inclusion of people and of place. While it may be expressed interiorly it is most meaningfully expressed, and first encountered, between. This idea of belonging is hard to comprehend for someone whose attention is directed toward separation and individuation, the direction encouraged by the culture stemming from North America. Yet, even in North America, the senses of belonging exist since they are human senses, human needs. Even in North America, I have discovered, one can live as a human being included in the world around.

It is this view of separation as a sign of, almost, moral superiority that disturbs me. Partly it is, of course, the intensity of the emotional attachment, belonging in a sense, that I have come to know elsewhere, most strongly in Thailand, that moves me to this view. Partly it is the experience of having separated myself from the world around, so becoming individuated, independent and 'free,' that moves me to this view for, in my experience, this freedom and independence were ultimately meaningless. It was lonely. It included no one else. Yet, wasn't this what my culture encouraged me to do? Certainly, it didn't tell me to leave, but this leaving just accentuated the separation, drew more attention to it thus making these values clearer, in both

their positive and negative manifestations.

Secretly, I think, many things bother many out of the West who hold to this view of separated selves as the desired goal of human development when people are encountered whose lives are lived differently. There seems to be a need, conscious or not, to see these others as less-than in some way. The very terms collectivist and individualist can be viewed in this light. We are all members attached to situations larger than ourselves as well as individuals who are, by the very fact of our physical bodies, separated from others. What is of interest from a cultural perspective is how we, as individual human beings, come to terms with these circumstances, and how our location in the world appears to influence the ways in which we accomplish, or don't accomplish, this coming to terms. The research could simply talk about variations of the expression of individualism, such as the "ensembled" and "rugged" types previously noted, or variations of the expression of collectivism since all people and all societies have to deal with both these issues. But the literature does not do this; it separates the two so that, as a reader, even a thinker, I must separate as well. I can identify with one, or with the other, but not with both since both are not, really, seen as equal. It's an exclusionist view of humanity. It hurts us all since the investigation of 'cultural differences' can

offer us not just an understanding of different manifestations of human life but also ideas of possibilities for all of us, possibilities that we may be unaware of since, for everyone, thought and possibility are always, to some extent, limited. We need to understand different ways of living in the world as though they offer possibilities to all of us. The fundamental life issues are the same: birth, death, love, hate, freedom, enslavement, independence, attachment, compassion, disregard .....

But the dominant view of the world, from the West, is not inclusionary and that is our, every human our, loss. Speaking out of the West, as my primary location, this division seems always to be there, set within virtually all of the terms used throughout the text presented here: East, West, Asia, Europe, North America. These are geographical locations, but they carry with them meanings of personality as well as place. Edward Said has amply demonstrated this in considering the term orientalism. These geographical names also present similar problematics - for me, as well as others.

> the word Asia was invented by Europeans ... The concept did not exist among Asian civilisations and even now the Chinese use a character which simply denotes the sound A. To talk of Asia at all may even be to talk in Eurocentric terms. That does not necessarily invalidate the word but it does make it necessary to ask: what does it mean?

> Asia in simple geographic terms encompasses Europe. So if the two are to be set apart from each other, there must be sufficient common denominators on each side of the Ural line which do not exist on the other. Does Asia have such a common identity, some positive denominators? Or is it too big, the home of too many civilisations? If so, Asia exists only in the negative sense of being non-European - which is the European definition.
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> .....
> ....
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> Asia would have been no more than a geographical concept but for Europeans deciding they were something different. ....in their era of expansionism and technical superiority they virtually invented the catch-all term Asians...for all non-Europeans on the landmass. The term started with a negative connotation, and still has it. Asia only developed a common identity in reaction. (Bowring, 1987, pps. 30-31)

Within such long-held and determined views that over and over and over again divide the world and the humans who inhabit it, talk of a world view that includes us all seems naive, even innocent in a manner reminiscent of children dreaming. Such stuff is utopian. Experience shows that barriers are continually placed, separating us each from the other, thus not allowing any view that begins with the ideas of connection and belonging. But who dictates that we must accept such a 'reality' as the only possibility, even when we are in accordance with the truth of it as people's experience? It doesn't mean that even this experience cannot

still come to be different to what it is, even different to what it always has been up to now.

Central to moving me, to affecting me, I realize is this concept of belonging. It invokes an emotional power that runs deep and, indeed, true in me and, I believe, in others. It informs everything that I bring to the work that has unfolded here. It allows me to claim proudly those years abroad, now lying in the past, and link them with the present and future, the task undertaken here. I remember and I find that I use these memories, these experiences, to lead me on. For me, as well, "remembering is a cultural necessity which presupposes a wound and a loss, a work of mourning, of which the writing is the transformation into a metaphorical positivity" (Bromley, 1991, p. 33). The dislocations of my own life during the period of movement between these differing worlds have been the foundations for loss both expressed and unexpressed. Loss unexpressed primarily because of the denial, 'at home,' of the possibility that any loss could be sustained since that would assume a connection, a caring, that, itself, was not seen to be possible. There is the loss of what is lost as well as the loss of the expression of the emotion itself.

The result was that, for years, I viewed my place as on the edge, between worlds, such that the need for the expression

of this influenced both the work undertaken here as well as its expression, to the extent that my story enters into the text in the manner that it does.

> If autobiography can be seen as a way of creating a relationship with severance and separation, this may explain the preponderance of autiobiographical writings among those who experience multiple distances from hegemonic 'belongings': women, blacks, gays and lesbians, the disabled, exiles and emigres. Those who, in the terms of individualist, patriarchal and nationalist paradigms, are always 'others', outsiders/losers. Perhaps it is through the articulation of loss as a continuous experience that new, emergent cultural belongings are made. (Bromley, 1991, p. 35)

New belongings are possible. It's a question of creating them.

Movement On

I began this exploration anchoring myself in my experiences living in other cultures, 'other' from a Canadian perspective, and the literature that was available in the area in cross-cultural psychology known as individualism-collectivism. I came to this research area because it seemed to me that the societies in which I'd lived in the Asian and the South Pacific regions of the world placed less importance on the role of the individual, as the main orienting focus of their worlds, and more importance on the

worlds themselves, meaning the people who make up these worlds. Logically, there seemed to be implications for psychological functioning of individuals nurtured in these differing cultural contexts. I wanted to know more about this because, frankly, I thought that these societies were more enhancing of human values, meaning caring for one another, than was the case in North America. In fact, the literature, itself, contains references to a suspected relationship between extreme forms of individualism and social problems ranging through suicide, emotional stress and mental illness (Triandis, Bontempo, Betancourt, Bond, Leung, Georgas, Hui, Marin, Setiadi, Sinha, Verma, Spangenberg, Touzard & de Montmollin, 1986). I wanted to know what it was that accounted for these differences, partly because then I could participate in reproducing them at 'home,' assuming others shared my views.

Along the way a number of things changed. It, also, became necessary to deal with a number of issues, lying between myself and the work I was looking to for direction and clarification, in order to establish what it was I wanted to accomplish. In the end I have arrived, although it is not the end I would have anticipated six years ago when the first start was made. I know now where to move onto from here because the beginning, this text, has now been accomplished. The vision is clear. The accompanying movement

is clear, too.

Cultural difference presents a problem since the very concept, itself, contains within it some norm/expectation against which some thing is being compared in order for the view of 'different' to have any meaning. It involves the adoption of a perspective, so this perspective must be considered as a part of the process of considering what cultural difference means. The term cross-cultural is also awkward since implied within it are boundaries or barriers or gaps or even bridges (spanning gaps) that need to be crossed in order to accomplish ..... what, linkages? The assumption, built in, is that these cultures being compared must be pretty separated from one another, pretty different, if they have to be crossed over to in order to make contact.

We must consider, any and all of us, the context in which our work is placed when we first begin. It, and we, lie within, and are certainly influenced by, cultural frames. I, as earlier stated, have come to the conclusion that I am not contributing work, really, in the field of cross-cultural psychology but in the field of cultural psychology, akin to the field of cultural anthropology. So, the placement was determined. The location, where the on-going work is found, was the next determination to make.

A complaint I voiced in the opening pages of this text was that the literature did not address real people, "real .. persons who live and breathe" (p. 7). We need this. How else do we identify with the other, the culturally different 'other,' unless we are able to see ourselves as them and them as us? A part of the work presented here has been an attempt, small in scope, to demonstrate this, primarily through my own memories and reflecting upon my experience. The depth of human life experiences, human joys, human fears, human hopes, are nowhere in the literature that only accomplishes a skating across the surface while trying, vainly, to locate the richness of inner psychological functioning. There are no fully realized human lives. This presents a problem because the research does not come to know what any of these others, classified as different, really are like. Culture presents a wealth of meaning; this wealth is not apparent from this research. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe, fundamentally, we really are irreconciliably different depending on where in the world we live, or come from. But this literature, I am sorry to say, is too superficial to allow such a conclusion to hold. And even if there is such a thing as fundamental difference traceable to differing origins, what does this difference signify? I remember reading about a group of people somewhere in the South Pacific who didn't recognise right angles, or angles at all, as brought to light by a test they had been given.

So they don't include angles/corners in the structuring of their world. Does this make them different, meaning alien, from a person who does recognise these angles? Can this perception, for that seems to be what it is, be learned, particularily if they moved to a place with, or their culture began to include, a view that included angles? What's the relevance of this difference in terms of human experience and the ability to form relationships with others who view the world in other ways is what I would want to know.

I want to know about people, other people, all people. In order to do this I must encounter them, meet with them, share with them, give to them of myself in return for a giving and sharing from them. I am the tool for this type of search. But even in those works where some other structure is the tool the investigator/researcher is still the main tool for it is this person who interprets what it is that is brought to light. This must be brought into the open in these human sciences. We have a responsibility as researchers to discuss our views, our beliefs, our cultures when we engage others. The way this is done is through relationships, through interaction. As mainstream an organization as the American Psychological Association in its published study guide for the psychology registration examinations recommends this in its 'cross cultural issues'

section addressing the personality and clinical aspects of psychologists' work.

> At a therapist level, recommendations have until recently focused on techniques: be directive with one group, be non-directive with another group. Focus on feelings and individual emotions with some groups but with others re-frame issues in terms of medical problems so the clients can more easily accept the psychological issues. These recommendations began to have a cook-book feel to them as they ignore both the individuality of the patient and the training and integrity of the therapist. Instead of this now-discredited focus on particular techniques, therapists are instead encouraged to focus on the individual relationship between themselves and their patients.
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> .....
> .....
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> Thus one would focus more on the interactive process between therapist and patient and less on the imperative of being culturally responsive, less on designing a pre-meditated fit, and less on devising a singularily appropriate technique. While these are important, it is in the human interaction where one find [sic] both the stage upon which psychotherapy is played out and the mutative factors for positive change. (Academic Review, 1992, pps. 158-159)

Prior to this, should any more support be required, this same publication discusses the research in the cross-cultural area.

> Until recently research and theory regarding providing optimal mental health services to ethnic-minority populations assumed a homogeneous

> grouping for each minority population. Thus, for example, saying that blacks are generally undisclosing to white counselors compared to black counselors, assumes that all blacks have pretty much the same responses and behaviours in counselling and therapeutic situations. That really isn't the case, but the literature makes that assumption. Keeping in mind that we are talking about "averages" which probably don't work in any individual case... (ibid, p. 158)

Being in the 'West,' even a specific country in the West isn't enough to be allowed membership in the culture, one must be 'of' the West and this being of is pretty strictly defined so that so-labelled ethnic, or visible, minorities are placed outside despite the larger cultural surround now inhabited or the length of time, possibly generations, that this habitation has been taking place.

It is for me a continuing shock and disappointment that so many of my fellow psychologist-researchers simply refuse to entertain the possibility of the other as a part of themselves. The divisions, the hatreds, the barriers, the stereotypes, the racism devolve from world views which limit who belongs by defining who does not. To counter this, it becomes necessary to, virtually, force the identification by demonstrating it in texts that tell stories about people, supposedly differing people, from all over the world. But these are not superficial stories, they are detailed stories, emotionally rich stories which may, or may not,

require a commentary/analysis.

In such a manner will we, as human beings, come to know whether, psychologically, we are different or not. For it is not an issue, as I had wanted, of coming to know in order to reproduce, but coming to know in order to encounter and, possibly, incorporate. This reproduction cannot be accomplished because with something as nebulous as culture, it seems, one can never really be sure one knows what are the pieces that sustain it; all one can do is meet and then move on. Wordsworth plucked his flower out of the ground, it died, and he moved on. Basho lent down to smell, and moved on. Both encountered the flower. They simply did it in differing, cultural, ways. Knowing these ways allows us, as humans, to judge, something no researcher supposedly does but how does anyone avoid it?, decide which view we want, and move on. We learn about the possibilities available to all of us. It enriches all of us. This is why the study of human culture is so important.

Endings and Beginnings: At Last

During the ending process of this dissertation my attention was drawn to an article in the 1993 Annual Review of Psychology entitled, "Cultural Psychology: Who Needs It?" In

the course of my own movement through these years of reading-reflection-reading-reflection-discussion-reading-reflection..... I have found myself placed differently from those in the field of cross-cultural psychology, in an area that I have identified as 'cultural psychology.' While it seemed, to me, that the goals of each, cross-cultural and cultural psychology, might be quite similar, the habitation, I felt, was sufficiently different to warrant another, distinguishing, term. It was only later that I was made aware that the field in which I would see myself contributing work has been already, to some extent, marked out:

> An interdisciplinary subfield called "cultural psychology" has begun to re-emerge at the interface of anthropology, psychology, and linguistics. (Shweder and Sullivan, 1993, p. 497)
>
> Cultural psychology is, first of all, a designation for the comparative study of the way culture and psyche make each other up. Second, it is a label for a practical, empirical, and philosophical project designed to reassess the uniformitarian principle of psychic unity and aimed at the development of a credible theory of psychological pluralism. Third, it is a summons to reconsider the methods and procedures for studying mental states and psychological processes across languages and cultures. (ibid, p. 498)
>
> ..for a diversity of reasons, in a variety of contexts, cultural psychology seems to be in the air at the permeable boundaries of several disciplines and at the place where social science concerns, social policy concerns, and real life

concerns deserve to intersect. (ibid, p. 505)

As I considered this review article of what I had identified as my 'final' field location, I was both excited and, once again, ill-at-ease. Where I have indeed found myself placed is at, what this literature terms, an interface - multiple interfaces, to be exact. Elsewhere in this text I have talked about boundary areas (permeable boundaries, as just mentioned). Certainly anthropology, or some aspects of it, is included in my place of habitation. With respect to a 'scientific' or 'academic' field of social sciences I reinsert my position of what I have termed a 'human/humanistic' perspective as well as a deep scepticism of what objective, positivistically-oriented, scientific, empirical research paradigms really do allow. In the explanation referenced above of what forms cultural psychology the very term empirical is inserted almost immediately, along with the term practical. While 'philosophical' forms the third descriptive, the thrust of the ensuing article is towards these gods Practical and Empirical, not the goddess, Philosophical. (I draw on my own, cultural, understanding of gender in assigning 'god' status to one principle and 'goddess' status to another.) My view, as demonstrated throughout this text, is personal. Personal of self. Personal of 'other.' The exploration of the culture concept is done through human interaction. This

is the 'methodology' I choose. As outlined by the authors of this article, such a view does appear to have a place.

> In anthropology there has been a resurgence of interest in person-centered ethnography, the study of local psychologies, and discourse-centered conceptions of mind, self, body, gender, motivation, and emotion ... It should be noted, however, that some scholars..have nurtured the flame of person-centered ethnography and kept it alive for well over half a century. (ibid, p. 499)

Yet, my disquiet persists. This is a minor theme. For me, it is my major voice. My relationship with this field, as described, seems already reflective of yet another 'interface,' another 'permeable boundary.' I am fortunate to be comfortable in boundary areas, otherwise the potential dissonance could be overwhelming.

What I am looking to assist in creating is a literature that explores the connection of human whole person and human cultural environment, always in connection with human others. I may wish to decompose a cultural environment, which I believe I have also done earlier in this text when I explore what sustains the view taken in the literature of individualism-collectivism, but I do not wish to decompose the human person, myself or another. Reflection, the analytic tool I would, and do, use I view very differently from the decomposition into component parts this cultural psychology, as indicated through this published review, is seen to require.

> The cultural psychology of the emotions investigates where cultural groups are alike or different in their emotional functioning by dividing that question into several more specific ones. ...
> 1. Environmental determinants: .....
> 2. Self-appraisal: .....
> 3. Somatic phenomenology: .....
> 4. Affective phenomenology: .....
> 5. Social appraisal: .....
> 6. Self-management: .....
> 7. Communication: .....
> .....
> .. Given this decomposition of an emotion into its narrative slots, the cultural psychology of the emotions becomes, in part, the study of whether the variables from each of these slots display the same pattern of relationships across human groups. (ibid, p. 516)

I, simply, don't believe the categories can be put in place yet. We are still too ignorant at this historical point to limit the possibilities of true understanding by presetting the modalities of analysis and so limiting real human encounter. All we really have available for theories turn out to be sets of 'mystifications' (as defined by Berger and Pullberg, 1964/65) that do not translate well to real human experience. These review authors do acknowledge this point.

> Our readers are well aware that the social sciences are rife with invidious distinctions and divisive (arguably false) dichotomies....that greatly facilitate the process of placing things in pigeonholes but all too often do so by short-circuiting the process of intellectual curiosity. In such an intellectual climate it is easy to misunderstand the aims and methods of a renewed cultural psychology ... (ibid, pps. 505-506)

I admit to the view that I will wait and see, meanwhile continuing along my own path. For a, virtually entrenched, theme in everything that I have encountered, be it in the literature of individualism-collectivism, comments on cross-cultural psychology, or this review of cultural psychology is that, with reference to both concepts and theories, the future is in no manner determined. So be it. I will follow with interest developments in this, 'new,' field of cultural psychology as I continue along the lines of development that grow out of the work articulated here.

As to the current work in individualism-collectivism, the field I entered when I first began long ago, my view is that inappropriate questions are being asked, primarily because researchers are going about the task (human understanding) in inappropriate ways. To rephrase Mr. Bucktrout, the speaker on page 20, the conclusions appear to come out 'right' because the field has been crammed and constrained into accepting the current research's operating premises. Judged differently, while the answers would remain correct, the entering premises would appear crazy. Accepting an inclusive, rather than exclusive, view of humanity will take this research area, one of which I am a member, in very different directions. This assumes the interest to do this, but then I believe the interest is there. I have read in both cross-cultural and, now, cultural psychology; I believe

our goals are the same, although our expressions may, still, be different.

To return to the beginning, were I to be starting out my exploration of the meaning of individualism-collectivism today, my entering questions would be: who are we, when are we individuals and when are we group members, how do we decide, what are the contexts we draw on in deciding, and what does this all say about placement and identity? I would engage in conversations with 'others' the literature, and North American society, view as culturally different and I would show how such 'others' and I can encounter each other, meet together, share and explore our, supposedly, differing worlds. There would, no doubt, be many similarities and differences, but, as they exist, my expectation is that these similarities/differences will exist on a human to human scale only. While group memberships claimed by us, or assigned to us by others, inform our experiences they do not necessarily, in the human to human encounter, define what we can create together. And, surely, what some can create all can create. For if categorizations truly do both sustain and inform our experiences of both ourselves and the world, with different experiences leading to different categorizations we can create both different selves and a different world.

The field location for such exploration is clearly

determined as are the tools/approach for the work to be done. This place of arrival has been long in getting to, but, in the end, it has been reached.

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