

What Ever Happened to Cross-Cultural Psychology

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As psychology developed in this country it drew on wider and older traditions. It is not my purpose to review these but to concentrate on one era and one strand, cross-cultural psychology, as it developed at Victoria, from the 1940's to the '60's. To do so I will concentrate on two major figures, and some minor ones as well, and the surrounding context of ideas, locally and internationally, some opportuni-

ties taken, some lost. Finally, the current intellectual climate here has continuities back into what has come to be called encounter history - the fascination which Maori ideas about the person and human process exercised for early writers and thinkers here in New Zealand.

We do not have an intellectual history of this latter topic. I have always regarded Thomas Kendall as the first European

psychologist here. He came to the CMS mission to the north as a school-teacher in 1814, and so immersed himself in Maori lore that he ran foul of Marsden, who feared that he was joining the 'other side'. Marsden had other reasons as well - Kendall's somewhat public adultery with a Maori woman of some charm; his gun purchases for Hongi which complicated the social situation in the Bay of Islands more than somewhat; and a rebelliousness of spirit that added to the disturbances. But Kendall had an intrinsic interest in the reo and a compelling urge to

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outstanding contributors for awards in applied psychology from the Trust that was set up in his memory.

I am glad to find that the new President, Judith McDougall (1997), has just declared that the goal of the Society is to provide a professional and academic organisation which acknowledges the diversity of the discipline, and maintains the unity and identity of the profession. Dare I say that the goal would be easier to attain were members to rediscover the respect for diversity which their founders had for those who chose to practice, research, and teach psychology?

May present members identify with those forebears, introject their values, benefit from hindsight, make good use of present opportunities, resources, training, technology, and a supportive social climate, to advance the subject and its application - they are indeed fortunate in having much to live up to.

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understand Maori cosmogenic thought, its expression in carved images (shock, horror, IDOLS!) and a rebellious refusal to suppress the native religion and its associated thought. As a missionary Kendall burnt his bridges, which was a pity. Mrs Kendall burnt his manuscripts - for us an even greater loss. Marsden fired him and he left New Zealand and never revealed the outcome of his fascination with Maori psychology, except in a few surviving letters. There is enough to know that Kendall was on to something. We do not exactly know what it was but with no great stretch of imagination can make some informed guesses.

There were others who followed the same tracks and did leave records. William Colenso, another missionary with a taste for sexual adventure, collected and published whakatauki, the proverbial wisdom as a window into the psychology of Maori. Governor Grey edited a large body of mythology and tradition into his *Polynesian Mythology* regarded by many as the masterwork in that area. We now know how he massaged this material to make it seem unitary and tidy. The manuscripts he had collected from Maori scholars have survived and they are the real texts, as are the accounts written by scribes of the last great Schools of Learning. New Zealand has a larger body of written Maori text than is available for any other Polynesian language, including Hawaiian, a great deal of it written by Maori themselves.

The ethnic psychology of Maori was never written as such. The source materials are still there. Add to that the contemporary accounts, available still from oral sources as well as the extant body of cultural information in current custom and commentary, in song and poetry and you will appreciate my concern that we reserve a place in our discipline for future Maori scholars to explore this unique opportunity to foster and develop understanding of human conduct as Maori see it. Currently, Cleve Barlow is the leader in this matter.

Returning to our own field, within our own profession we should remember that Wilhelm Wundt wrote his programme for our discipline in three great works, the *Experimental Psychology*, the *Principles of Physiological Psychology* and his *Folk Psychology*. It was, of course, the early translation and promul-

gation of the first two which became the foundations of our world as we see it, as it came to be constructed. The hard bright stuff of brass instruments appealed to the Western empirical ethos and the ideology of 'science'. The folk psychology has been neglected and ignored. These days it does not read well. It is superficial and discursive but constituted a sweeping consideration of social influences and processes, of morality and ethics, therefore of religion, folk religion and custom. Translation did not appear in English till well into this century. Doubtless social psychology derived from it in devious ways, competing for attention with the emergent discipline of sociology. Our immediate concern is that it had an immediate audience and effect here.

At Victoria the writings of Wundt were an early concern of Thomas Alexander Hunter who came there as lecturer in mental and moral science in 1904. Caught up as he was in the excitement of the times, Hunter the hunter was soon off to capture the new psychology for himself at Leipzig (Wundt), Cambridge (Rivers) and Cornell (Titchener). Rivers had just returned from his expedition to Papua New Guinea where he and Haddon 'tested' natives on a variety of dinky little psychological tricks, susceptibility to illusions and such, our very first cross-cultural experimental exercise. When Hunter returned from his trip to the Northern world he demonstrated to an excited audience at home the lab gear he had snaffled from Titchener. Then he miraculously extracted from his struggling University fifty pounds to buy more! Thus came about the first psychological laboratory in the southern hemisphere. Later with the help of his friend von Zedlitz, he read the Volkpsychology and enthused over its balance and utility. It suited his breadth of vision and his magpie attraction to interesting scraps of human quirkiness, but also here was the basis for the synthesis he needed to complete a programme for the study of human affairs.

For Hunter veracity was at the heart of morality, and veracity required a basis in what was verifiable, testable for consequences and otherwise empirical. Also one had a moral obligation to be forthright and outspoken; but to speak

one's mind without thought is immoral, and thought itself is based on perception, founded on sensation and not merely notional. Hunter the rationalist was also a humanist with a practical passion for applying what is known for human betterment. He was a brilliant, if overly Socratic, teacher with a strong capacity to inspire others to research and scholarship rather than himself to become involved. Thus his mark was through his students.

I happen to recall him because when I returned to Vic. in 1951 to enrol I met a man at the foot of the stairs. From him I sought directions to my interview with Ernest Beaglehole with whom I was determined to study. This scruffy looking, cherubic, apple-cheeked person who I presumed to be the cleaner or caretaker, cheerfully directed me on, saying, "Good bloke Beaglehole. Stick with him and you'll be right!". He was. I did. And here we are. The "cleaner" was of course "Tommy" seeing in the last crop of students before he retired.

Under his tutelage emerged the two great founding scholars of our discipline here in New Zealand, I.L.G. Sutherland and Ernest Beaglehole. Both were dedicated to cross-cultural psychology but in very different ways. Sutherland followed the Kendall trail, seeing in the Maori world an alternative view of human nature, the origins of thought, judgement, morality, different experience, another cosmology, here before us, a territory to be explored, a print-out of the Wundtian model of folk psychology.

For Sutherland the physiological and experimental psychologies were of great interest and moment but it was the ethnic psychology which captured his attention. He spent the inner moments of his adult working life contemplating the 'great work' he never wrote. Shortly before his death he explained it to me: it was to be the definitive exposition of Maori thought, beginning with the reo, encompassing the world view, exploring the epistemology and ending with the logic! I was in my first year as demonstrator, in charge of the laboratory, struggling to pass a course in the traditional formal logic. I wasn't ready for all that.

This was Sutherland the visionary, in his reflective, maybe romantic mood, heir to a strong presbyterian background, passionate about human rights,

seeking moral answers to social questions. Sutherland the companion and friend of Ngata, defender (some say architect) of his policies for Maori social and economic development, Sutherland promoting child-guidance and a clinic to which parents might come with problems, busy with the WEA, building a core group of advisers to government. In the thick of things, involved. All his life he moved to bring mental and moral philosophy out of the ivory tower and into the service of people in their ordinary lives and in every possible way. Under Hunter's tutelage he was fashioning a New Zealand psychology, of this place, for its people and standing in its own space, not palely reflected in the light of some other.

He and Beaglehole were not great friends, indeed there may well have been a certain rivalry. Beaglehole never sought to become an informal advisor to the Department of Maori Affairs as did Sutherland. He thought Sutherland's writings superficial and his fundamentally religiously based view of human nature and conduct, irrelevant. Had Sutherland lived longer (he died in 1952 aged 55) he might well have written the book on Maori mentation of which he spoke to me so shortly before his death but the enterprise got caught up with other preoccupations. He was appointed professor of philosophy and psychology at Canterbury, where he had gone from Victoria, in 1937. After his death the chairs were separated. Canterbury espoused the British model for the development of psychology there.

Ernest Beaglehole was tutored by Sutherland in his undergraduate years and, like him, went overseas on a travelling scholarship to the London School of Economics and Political Science (though Sutherland's PhD was from Edinburgh). There he undertook a study of the psychology of property. What could be more pertinent to the critique of capitalism than that!

The empiricism of LSE required that he examine some body of data. He chose to make a comparative examination of the economics of a number of non-western peoples. This drew him towards, and to the attention of George Murdock who was establishing at Yale a laboratory of cross-cultural comparison that eventually became the famous Human Relations

Area File - that extraordinary compendium of detailed cross-references, an inventory of all known world cultures and their materials. This contact drew him to Yale, which also was negotiating a privately sponsored field station at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. Te Rangihiroa (Sir Peter Buck) was about to take up the Directorship at that Museum and the Associated Stirling Professorship of Anthropology at Yale. If New Zealanders were not taking over the world, the anthropological world was about to hear from several New Zealanders, Raymond Firth at LSE, Felix Keesing at Stanford, Buck in Honolulu, Reo Fortune at Cambridge and Ernest Beaglehole footloose in the USA and soon to move into a career in fieldwork in the Pacific.

For our story the important feature of this was that Beaglehole turned away from the arid, descriptive functionalism of Malinowski and British social anthropology. He found the 'study of custom' anthropology of Franz Boas just an endless round of description, going nowhere. His search for greater intellectual and theoretical content led him towards a new movement, centred on Yale and Columbia, which was attempting to merge that field of anthropology with the new and exciting theories in psychology. What emerged was the new study of culture and personality and Beaglehole was to become a leader in it.

What had happened was this: anthropology was gravely in need of some theoretical sinew. British social anthropology had adopted the crude simplicity of Malinowski's need theory. How does this tribe satisfy its need to reproduce, feed its people and so on? Go that way and you have a hard time to explain the complexities of Dobuan sorcery or any other tribal belief system, let alone the rise of Nazi Germany. American cultural anthropology had almost negated the need for explanation at all and was simply preoccupied with custom the stranger the better. Yet here was psychology bursting with explanatory concepts, wrestling with Jamesian consciousness, trying to swallow Freudian ideas, developing dogmatic notions of determinism, boiling over with energetic formulations of what being a person means and how you get to be one.

Beaglehole found himself in the very centre of the intellectual effort to restruc-

ture anthropology with a more adequate formulation of the person, how culture moulds the stuff of human nature, what indeed cross-cultural comparison might tell us about our assumptions concerning humanity. Ralph Linton, Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, John Dollard, Dorothy Lee, Benjamin Worf, Otto Klineberg, Clyde Kluckhohn and many others were full of the fire of reformulation, pioneers carrying a new message that the science of 'man' was about to achieve new breakthroughs. The centrepoint of this revolution was an ongoing seminar which Edward Sapir promoted at Yale and to which all these young firebrands were invited.

For Sapir, language was to be the royal road to understanding. Enter a person's language and you will understand not just what that person is saying, but the thought behind the words, the mind behind the thought, the culture behind the mind. Language had become already the touchstone for philosophers as they wrenched themselves out of the glutinous morass of traditional thought about thought. Now it was to be seen as even more than that. How was language learned? What were the other messages about what could be said and what was never spoken of, not because of taboo but because there was no need to examine that which everyone knew. Was there an equivalent in language to the unconscious of Freud?

Freud was everywhere in the writing and the thinking of this network. Could culture really be seen as reaction formation? Were the mechanisms Freud employed universal? Why was incest universally prohibited (even though it clearly did occur)? Were mechanisms of defence to be found everywhere? What of Benedict's notion of patterns of culture? Did it really add anything of explanatory power? Suddenly also there was a new set of techniques to be employed and explored. Collect life histories. Analyse cultural materials, myths and so on, in psychological terms. What of the new exciting projective tests which a few adventurous souls were tucking into their kits as they ventured into the field. Watch how people interact? How are the emotions patterned by culture? What experiences are children permitted? From what are they shielded? And why? How are they taught correct behaviour?

The HRAF now had codified cultural practices into its first *Outline of Cultural Materials* - that enormous inventory of everything everyone could ever possibly do. Cross-culturally what went with what? We were on the edge of knowing.

Fired up with all of this, Beaglehole went off into the Pacific to do his field-work for Peter Buck and the Bishop Museum. He and Pearl Malsin (or Pam as she preferred to be called and whom he was to marry) had been working together since early days at LSE. She was as excited as he by the new ideas. As part of this new wave he wrote of character structure, later of national character, of the impact of one cultural paradigm on another, of mental health, of culturally patterned madness and much else. Together, he and Pam wrote of child-rearing in several cultures. She was also the better linguist of the two and helped him with the gathering and understanding of myths, and legends particularly in Pukapuka. Of the love songs they collected there he wrote that the world was not yet ready for their precise and explicit sexual metaphors. They are a Freudian's phantasyland and are still unpublished.

In 1937 he answered Hunter's call to return to New Zealand, but no one here had any idea at all of how far in the vanguard he really was. Then, of course came 1939 and the war; later 1942 and the war in the Pacific. With Benedict and Mead and others of the new school he became part of a project to study the enemy at a distance. Classified secret mail came to Victoria, drafts of Bateson's analysis of the nature of nazidom through their nationalistic films and of their propaganda, the CIMA project which sought to advise the Pacific Command on how the island peoples of the Pacific might be governed once the Japanese were ousted.

For a year or two Beaglehole tried to include the new anthropology in his courses but the overall curriculum was still oppressively governed by the Senate of the University of New Zealand. Hunter's efforts to liberalise things had gone some distance but anthropology was firmly gripped by the Otago tradition of material culture and archeology, and there it was to stay till the 1950's, replete with bones and stone adzetypes, some physical measurements and little

else. Even Frazer's *Golden Bough* was too radical, much less Mead's *Sex and Temperament*. When anthropology did arrive in a New Zealand University it was to the University at Auckland. There Ralph Piddington built a Department so drenched in the social anthropology of Malinowski that one critic considered that his approach defended positions Malinowski had abandoned twenty years before.

Thus Beaglehole, known in Britain and the USA as an innovative and influential member of the new wave school of culture and personality, and more as an anthropologist than a psychologist, could not crack the curriculum grid that gripped the new Department of Psychology he had come to lead. True, it did include more personality and social psychology than any other but it was only at the graduate level that he could continue to think his way through the development of the new field with his students. Not all were interested and the honours programme contained only four courses - everyone take all. He began his own research seminar for a few of us who were interested and might do theses in the new field - the group concentrating on cross-cultural psychobiography and the use of personal documents. How he must have mused nostalgically on those other truly seminal seminars of Sapir and Kardiner and longed to be amongst the intellectual excitement again!

The other focus of this seminar was on the developing theory of primary and secondary institutions, their roles in cultural transmission and expression, and therefore on what came to be called basic and social personality - the antecedent of modern identity theory. All this had to be contained in but a single course, and not even for credit. Each of us presented our analysis of a person, in my case Te Kooti, my first attempt to overlay my Maori experience with psychological analysis. I did my best, but to really understand that man, to tear aside the overlay of pakeha historical personification and distortion, more was needed. What more? Better understanding of the language and of the rituals of the Ringatu Church. Better history for another thing (Judith Binney has at last provided that); some framework of Maori psychology, of Maori understanding of the person,

was the more debilitating lack.

We had a real sense of working at the frontier of a new field especially as the effects of the Kardiner-Linton seminars which followed in the tradition of the Sapir think-tank had consolidated a theoretical base. Beaglehole was writing in the new journal *Psychiatry*. He and Pam were also continuing their studies of social change in the Pacific. Ernest had become interested in the mental health movement, and sustained his international connections through the UNESCO Race Project, and with the ILO. When Otto Klineberg finished his term as Director of Social Sciences at UNESCO Ernest was offered that post. Victoria refused to release him - yet another demonstration of the parochialism of the times.

His chief problem was that as psychology grew at Victoria, and did so very fast, he had to appoint staff to teach the basic courses in that subject and there just were not many candidates around. So obsessed was he with fairness that he gave other psychological fields priority over his own deepest personal interest, that is, what he was then calling ethnopsychology. Then, too, there was still the tight restrictive unit structure of the degree and the lockstep requirements of the Curriculum Committee of the University of New Zealand maintaining uniformity. When I turned up, with an odd interest in studying things Maori, knowing of Beaglehole only from his writings about modern Maori, at a University with neither anthropology nor Maori studies in its curriculum, with the equivalent of field experience before I ever had the means to deal with it intellectually, Ernest very quickly moved to establish my career both as an academic and in research. A job, first as Demonstrator, then later as a Junior Lecturer kept me around while I finished my undergraduate and Masters degrees.

Ernest found funding for research on the effects of rapid change in Kaingaroa Maori communities even before I had completed my Bachelor degree. That fed my enthusiasm more than feeding the laboratory rats and keeping one chapter ahead of the third year class that no one else wanted to teach. Co-teaching his ethnopsychology course kept me in tune with the development of the field, and in touch with his mind. He and Irving Hallowell were writing to each other

about cross-cultural approaches to the study of the self, ideas that he had carried forward from his association with Harry Stack-Sullivan, and prefiguring modern identity theory. Even now, I think of self as a transforming, negotiated process rather than a structure, essentially a Beaglehole position.

A post-doctoral Rockefeller Fellowship took me further into the mainstream of cross-cultural studies as I went to work with the Whitings at Harvard. Gordon Allport was there, also Cora Dubois, Erik Erikson, Harry Murray, Talcott Parsons and the General Theory of Action group; E.C. Tolman, Florence Kluckhohn continuing the study of values in five cultures which she and Clyde had been immersed in for years, and many others. Their students were to become the next generation who shaped psychological anthropology.

The culture concept had been wrenched out of the grip of anthropology, had become essential to psychological theory making, but thought had outstripped technique. How do you operationalise the notion of culture? What tools could be used cross-culturally to inform the idea of personality? How were competing theories of personality to be resolved if the study of other peoples was to be advanced? At Palfrey House the HRAF people were refining the Sears approach to child-training and using the dimensions arising from it to seek correlational associations with cultural variables. There the theme was, count, correlate and connect (down the street at Morton Prince House it was turn on, tune in and drop out! Yes, it was the 'sixties already.) Still, nearly forty years on, Jane and I are employing the same basic instrument on which that work was based, even though we never exploited the HRAF when, later, we acquired it for Waikato.

With Margaret Mead at Columbia one was simply swept along with her energy and enthusiasm for the new psychological anthropology, child training at the core, the Benedictian notion of patterns providing the integration and the linkage, the techniques wide open to everything that everyone everywhere was using. Children's drawings, doll play, games, texts of love songs, chants of challenge, personal documents, art styles, indeed everything 'cultural' was

open to psychological interpretation. Every new idea in the flourishing psychologies of the time, from ethology and animal behaviour to the most florid post-Freudian excesses was to be dragged into service in the exercise of cultural interpretation. Try everything, test every hypothesis, challenge every received notion. Let the cultures of the world be your laboratory. The records are in. There will never be any new cultures in the old sense, only old cultures made new.

With all that behind me I returned from leave to Victoria. Well, things did seem a bit flat! The new psychology could not, in fact, flourish in the climate there. My fieldwork days at Murupara were behind me and nothing new was offering. I toyed with matters of attitude and race relations, urban Maori adjustment, but the soil was arid. Jane completed her PhD and we plunged into the first of our child-rearing studies, with Maori and Pakeha samples, urban and rural. The only departmental development while I had been away had been within the programme of psychology for BSc, experimental psychology and the behavioural analysis of learning and, methodologically in entrenching factorial analysis. Jane and I wrote up our research, hers on urban Maori adjustment, ours on Murupara. These were strangely busy, indeed productive but unfulfilling years. So when the chance to shift to Waikato arose I took it, not without some regret but with great expectations. There, we could at last break out of the 9 unit degree, offer alternative tracks and I could begin to look towards a synthesis of the Sutherland as well as the Beaglehole approach to cross-cultural psychology.

In the 21 paper degree at Waikato, we included cross-cultural material in one half of the first year Human Behaviour course and in 2 full courses at levels II and III (well bedded down in a solid stream of social psychology). In addition I tried to get cross-cultural perspective into other courses where possible and sensible. The cross-cultural critique of psychological testing, for example, had serious racist implications which could not be ignored. We tried to promote the Queensland Test as a more culture-fair alternative, not, I confess, with great acceptance in a Wechsler-

ridden world. Nicky Hamid began teaching a course in non-western psychologies, respected by those students who took it, misunderstood by most others - staff and students alike. For a while I offered an honours course in cross-cultural psychiatry; others added honours options as the staff increased. But it was years before we had Maori students in any numbers and, as the Department grew it was hard to find staff with a cross-cultural background, except, of course from one's own graduates, but then they mostly moved away.

The basic team however, Nicky Hamid, Mike Hills, Dave Thomas, Jane Ritchie and I were all students from the Beaglehole years at Victoria and over two decades helped give Waikato its particular flavour. We moved away from the grand-theory paradigms of Culture and Personality, the system making of the 'fifties, towards empirically based comparative studies, attitudinal and other cognitive studies, the social psychology of ethnic relations, and for Jane and myself, the continuing child rearing studies on which we based *The Next Generation*. Each of the books we wrote together contained cross-cultural comparison, particularly *Growing Up in Polynesia*.

Elsewhere cross-cultural psychology had become established in many centres, (but not in New Zealand) with its own journals and conferences and we kept in touch, but the real challenge was to relate what we were thinking and doing to our own situation and place. Many other things were happening in psychology at Waikato. We had become both large and diverse, at one stage the largest single department in the whole University, probably in the country.

The contraction of course offerings over the last few years has reduced the identifiably cross-cultural components of the Waikato. That 'old gang' will soon have passed either to other places or to retirement. But phoenix-like, and at last, there is now the kaupapa Maori programme and Maori staff to support it. We are now approximately where Sutherland wanted psychology to be, gazing with inquisitive and respectful regard at the accumulated cultural wisdom of both traditions, and embarking on new voyages. The oceans of thought are vast and unknown but the waka is our own.