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978-0-521-80319-9 - The Psychology of Cultural Experience

Edited by Carmella C. Moore and Holly F. Mathews

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The Psychology of Cultural Experience

The essays in this volume focus upon the relationship of individual experience to culture, and chart a new research agenda for psychological anthropology in the twenty-first century. Drawing upon fieldwork in diverse cultural settings, the authors use a range of contemporary perspectives in the field, including person-centered ethnography, activity theory, attachment theory, and cultural schema theory, to describe the ways in which people think, feel, remember, and solve problems. Fascinating insights emerge from these fine-grained accounts of personal experience. The research demonstrates that it is possible to identify cross-cultural universals in psychological development and mental states, and that individual psychology is not determined solely by unique cultural patterns.

CARMELLA C. MOORE is Assistant Research Anthropologist in the Department of Cognitive Sciences at the University of California (Irvine). Her work has been published in the *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology* (1996) and the *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (2000), as well as in a variety of anthropological journals.

HOLLY F. MATHEWS is Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Anthropology at East Carolina University. She has previously edited two books, *Women in the South: An Anthropological Perspective* (1989) and *Herbal and Magical Medicine: Traditional Healing Today* (1992). Her work has also been published in major anthropological journals.

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Frontmatter

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 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

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The Psychology of Cultural Experience

Edited by

Carmella C. Moore

University of California, Irvine

Holly F. Mathews

East Carolina University



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Frontmatter

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To Ruth Munroe (1930–1996)

– Scholar, mentor, and friend

Yet all experience is an arch where-thro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.

Tennyson,
Ulysses

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978-0-521-80319-9 - The Psychology of Cultural Experience

Edited by Carmella C. Moore and Holly F. Mathews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	page xi
<i>List of tables</i>	xii
<i>List of contributors</i>	xiii
<i>Preface</i>	xix
Introduction: the psychology of cultural experience HOLLY F. MATHEWS AND CARMELLA C. MOORE	1
I Theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of experience	
1 Beyond the binary opposition in psychological anthropology: integrating contemporary psychoanalysis and cognitive science DREW WESTEN	21
2 Developments in person-centered ethnography DOUGLAS HOLLAN	48
3 Activity theory and cultural psychology CARL RATNER	68
II Acquiring, modifying, and transmitting culture	
4 The infant's acquisition of culture: early attachment reexamined in anthropological perspective ROBERT A. LEVINE AND KARIN NORMAN	83
5 The remembered past in a culturally meaningful life: remembering as cultural, social, and cognitive process LINDA C. GARRO	105
III Continuity and change in cultural experience	
6 The psychology of consensus in a Papua New Guinea Christian revival movement STEPHEN C. LEAVITT	151
	ix

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-80319-9 - The Psychology of Cultural Experience
Edited by Carmella C. Moore and Holly F. Mathews
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

x	Contents	
7	God and self: the shaping and sharing of experience in a cooperative, religious community SUSAN LOVE BROWN	173
IV A reinvigorated comparative perspective		
8	Cross-cultural studies in language and thought: is there a metalanguage? EVE DANZIGER	199
9	Comparative approaches to psychological anthropology ROBERT L. MUNROE AND RUTH H. MUNROE	223
	<i>Name index</i>	238
	<i>Subject index</i>	240

Figures

4.1 How the social development of infants can be culturally shaped	<i>page</i> 92
8.1 The Route-Completion task	203
8.2 Various arrangements of man “beside” tree for the Man and Tree Game	207
9.1 Alternative spellings for <i>balam</i> “jaguar”	228

Tables

9.1 Correlations between father presence/absence in the home and children's attention to males in their immediate social environments	<i>page 225</i>
9.2 Climate and CV scores	230

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-80319-9 - The Psychology of Cultural Experience

Edited by Carmella C. Moore and Holly F. Mathews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contributors

SUSAN LOVE BROWN received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of California, San Diego in 1992 and is Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology, Florida Atlantic University (Boca Raton, Florida). She has done ethnographic fieldwork on the study of change at Ananda Village, a New Age religious community in Nevada City, California, and on national identity in Cat Island, Bahamas. She is a psychological and political anthropologist with special interests in intentional communities, individualism and communalism, anarchism, gender, ethnicity, and culture change in the Caribbean and the United States. She is the co-author (with Robert Bates Graber *et al.*) of the new text, *Meeting Anthropology Phase to Phase* (Carolina Academic Press, 2000).

EVE DANZIGER received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1991, and is Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology, University of Virginia (Charlottesville, Virginia). Since 1986, her research has been informed by ethnographic and linguistic fieldwork with the Mopan Mayan people of Belize, Central America. Her interests revolve around the three-way interface of language, social identity, and thought, and include publications in the areas of social practice and social organization, the linguistics of Mopan, and the role of language in cognition. Her work has appeared in *Ethos*, the *International Journal of American Linguistics*, and the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (NS)*, and she is the author of *Relatively Speaking: Language, Thought, and Kinship Among the Mopan Maya* (Oxford University Press, 2001).

LINDA C. GARRO received Ph.Ds. in Cognitive Psychology from Duke University in 1982, and in Social Sciences, Anthropology, from the University of California, Irvine in 1983. She is Professor in the Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles (Los Angeles, California). She has been a National Institute of Mental Health Research Fellow in Clinically Relevant Medical Anthropology at

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-80319-9 - The Psychology of Cultural Experience

Edited by Carmella C. Moore and Holly F. Mathews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv List of contributors

Harvard University and is a past recipient of a five-year National Health Research and Development Program Scholar Award in Canada. Her research in medical and cognitive anthropology focuses on intracultural variation in the representation of cultural knowledge. Her field research sites include a Purépecha (Tarascan) community in Mexico and several Anishinaabe (Ojibway) communities in Canada. Among other journals, her work has appeared in the *American Anthropologist*, and *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry*, and she is co-editor (with Cheryl Mattingly) of the recent volume, *Narrative and the Cultural Construction of Illness and Healing* (University of California Press, 2000). She is also the 1999 recipient of the Stirling Award from the Society for Psychological Anthropology.

DOUGLAS HOLLAN received Ph.Ds. in Anthropology from the University of California, San Diego in 1984 and in Psychoanalysis from the Southern California Psychoanalytic Institute in 1997. He is Professor and Luckman Distinguished Teacher in the Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles (California) and senior instructor at the Southern California Psychoanalytic Institute. He has done extended fieldwork among the Toraja of South Sulawesi, Indonesia, and is the author of numerous articles on the relationships between cultural and psychological processes, which have appeared in various journals including the *American Ethnologist*, *Ethnology*, and the *Journal of Anthropological Research*. He is co-author (with Jane Wellenkamp) of two monographs, *Contentment and Suffering: Culture and Experience in Toraja* (Columbia University Press, 1994), and *The Thread of Life: Toraja Reflections on the Life Cycle* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1996).

STEPHEN C. LEAVITT received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of California, San Diego in 1989, and is Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology, Union College (Schenectady, New York). In ethnographic field research among the Bumbita Arapesh of Papua New Guinea in 1984–86, he focused on individual reactions to a local Christian revival movement. He has also written on Bumbita sexuality, adolescence, and bereavement. He is co-editor (with Gilbert Herdt) of the recent volume, *Adolescence in Pacific Island Societies* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), and guest editor (with Karen Brison) of a special issue of *Ethos*, "On Coping with Bereavement." His most recent field research is with ethnic Fijians in Fiji.

ROBERT A. LEVINE received his Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from the Department of Social Relations, Harvard University in 1958. He is currently Roy E. Larsen Professor of Education and Human Development,

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-80319-9 - The Psychology of Cultural Experience

Edited by Carmella C. Moore and Holly F. Mathews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

List of contributors

xv

Emeritus, and Professor of Anthropology, Emeritus, at Harvard University (Cambridge, Massachusetts). During the early 1960s, he did ethnographic fieldwork among the Nyansongo, a Gusii community in Kenya, in collaboration with John and Beatrice Whiting's Children of Six Cultures study. He has continued to study Gusii culture, as well as to do fieldwork in other areas of the world including Asia and North and Central America. He has written about topics as diverse as witchcraft accusations, demographic transition, political authority systems, and psychoanalysis that have been published in many journals including the *American Anthropologist*. He is co-author of the monograph, *Child Care and Culture: Lessons from Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), and co-editor of *Parental Behavior in Diverse Societies* (Jossey-Bass, 1988). He was chairman of the Social Science Research Council, 1980–83, and served as president of the Society for Psychological Anthropology, 1980–81. He received the Distinguished Career Contributions award from the society in 1997.

HOLLY F. MATHEWS received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from Duke University in 1982, and is Professor in the Department of Anthropology, East Carolina University (Greenville, North Carolina). She has done ethnographic fieldwork with the Zapotec in Oaxaca, Mexico, among Afro-Caribbean peoples in Costa Rica, and in rural communities in the southeastern United States. Her research interests include cultural models, cognitive processes of reasoning and decision-making, medical anthropology, and gender roles. Her work has appeared in numerous journals including the *American Anthropologist*, the *American Ethnologist*, and the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

CARMELLA C. MOORE received her Ph.D. in Social Sciences, Anthropology from the University of California, Irvine (California) in 1991 where she is currently Assistant Researcher in the Department of Cognitive Sciences. Her research interests include the study of personality change in neurological dysfunction, the study of intra- and intercultural agreement and variation in cultural knowledge, and the development and use of quantitative methods for anthropology. She has done fieldwork at clinical sites in Orange County, California, and in Ensenada and Guadalajara, Mexico. Her work has appeared in a number of journals including the *American Anthropologist*, *Current Anthropology*, and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

ROBERT L. MUNROE received his Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from the Department of Social Relations, Harvard University in 1964. He was a member of the founding faculty at Pitzer College (of the Claremont

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-80319-9 - The Psychology of Cultural Experience

Edited by Carmella C. Moore and Holly F. Mathews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi List of contributors

Colleges, Claremont, California), where he is currently Research Professor in the Department of Anthropology. He has carried out fieldwork in East Africa, Central America, North America, Nepal, and American Samoa. His work has appeared in numerous journals including the *American Anthropologist* and *Cross-Cultural Research*, and he is co-author (with R. H. Munroe) of the monograph, *Cross-Cultural Human Development* (Waveland Press, 1994). He served as president of the *Society for Psychological Anthropology* from 1995 to 1997.

RUTH H. MUNROE received her Ed.D. in Human Development from Harvard University in 1964. A member of the founding faculty at Pitzer College (of the Claremont Colleges, Claremont, California), she was Research Professor of Psychology there at the time of her death in 1996. Her work was published in numerous anthropological and psychological journals, and she served on the editorial boards of the journals *Cross-Cultural Research*, *Ethos*, and the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*. In 1971 she introduced to the literature the spot-observation technique, a systematic observational tool designed for use in naturalistic research. Central use of that technique was made in her last major publication, a monograph on time use among the Newars of the Katmandu Valley, *Newar Time Allocation* (R. H. Munroe *et al.*, HRAF Press, 1997).

KARIN NORMAN received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from Stockholm University (Stockholm, Sweden) in 1991 where she is currently Associate Professor in the Department of Social Anthropology. Her research interests concern issues on children's lives and socialization; displacement and refugee studies; and problems of method. She has conducted fieldwork in Sweden and Germany, and is planning research in Kosovo, former Yugoslavia. She has published on various topics in English and Swedish and has recently published a monograph in Swedish on cultural ideas about children and childhood. She is currently working on a book of essays (in English) on different experiences and interpretations of exile from the vantage point of two Kosovo Albanian families in Sweden.

CARL RATNER received his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the State University of New York, Buffalo in 1970. Recently retired from the Department of Psychology, Humboldt State University, he continues to write and do research from his home in Trinidad, California. Early in his career, he spent two years as a visiting scholar in China, teaching psychology and editing a social science journal. His research interests include cultural psychology and qualitative methodology. His work has appeared in a number of journals including *Culture and Psychology*, and the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. He is author of the

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-80319-9 - The Psychology of Cultural Experience

Edited by Carmella C. Moore and Holly F. Mathews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

List of contributors

xvii

monograph, *Vygotsky's Sociohistorical Psychology and its Contemporary Applications* (Plenum Press, 1991), and of the forthcoming work, *Cultural Psychology: Theory and Method* (Plenum Press, 2001).

DREW WESTEN received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Michigan in 1985, and is Research Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology, and Director of the Adolescent and Adult Personality Programs at the Center for Anxiety and Related Disorders at Boston University (Boston, Massachusetts). His primary areas of research are personality disorders, emotion regulation, and integrations of cognitive neuroscience and psychoanalysis. His work has appeared in many journals including the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, and *Psychological Science*. He is author of the monograph, *Self and Society: Narcissism, Collectivism, and the Development of Morals* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), as well as of the recent introductory text, *Psychology: Mind, Brain, and Culture* (Wiley, 1999).

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

The idea for this collection originated at the 4th Biennial Meeting of the Society for Psychological Anthropology held during early October, 1995 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. At the meeting, SPA President and Program Chair, Naomi Quinn, chose the sessions and selected the papers to be presented, with the goal of assessing the state of the field of psychological anthropology. One thematic interest emerging in several sessions was the relationship of individual experience to culture. We identified key contributions by authors Brown, Danziger, Hollan, Leavitt, LeVine and Norman, and the Munroes and asked them to revise and expand their meeting papers to address this theme more explicitly. Author Westen was the featured speaker at the meeting banquet, and he agreed to develop a contribution for this volume based upon his presentation. Finally, we invited papers from Garro and Ratner because their research on individual experience derived from theoretical perspectives different from those of the other contributors to this volume.

Our aim in developing this volume was to represent the theoretically diverse and methodologically sophisticated analyses emerging from the study of culture and experience and to demonstrate that a renewed commitment to careful, empirical analyses and the comparative perspective can yield important data essential to outlining an agenda for research in psychological anthropology in the twenty-first century. We also hope these chapters will demonstrate to graduate students with psychological interests that there are many “researchable” questions to be both asked and answered, and that the research process is both contemporary and cumulative.

These chapters have necessarily undergone numerous transformations since their original inceptions as kernels of ideas presented at a meeting, and we thank our authors for their efforts and tolerance during the revision process, as well as the three anonymous reviewers who made very helpful comments and criticisms on the manuscript. We especially thank SPA Book Series Editor, Naomi Quinn, for her guidance through this process and for her assistance in revising the manuscript. We also thank Professor Roy G. D’Andrade and Professor Robert L. Munroe for their suggestions and

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-80319-9 - The Psychology of Cultural Experience

Edited by Carmella C. Moore and Holly F. Mathews

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xx Preface

encouragement during the preparation of this volume, as well as Ti-lien Hsia, Sarah Miller, and Amy Willoughby for editorial assistance. In addition we thank Jessica Kuper and Cambridge University Press for invaluable help in the publication process. We also appreciate the support for the volume provided by our respective universities as well as assistance from National Science Foundation grant SBR-9730831 to C. C. Moore.

During the course of producing this volume, one of our authors, Ruth H. Munroe, a distinguished psychologist, passed away after suffering from a long illness. Ruth was a dedicated scholar and scientist, as well as a mentor and friend to many contemporary psychological anthropologists. She will be greatly missed. We hope that her message of sensitivity to the cultural context, coupled with an openness to the comparative method, will provide an example and an inspiration to all of us as we move into the twenty-first century and into the next century of psychological anthropology.