Psychology & Globalization -
The Question of Indigenous Psychologies

1. The Cultural Perspective
   i. Questions and Concerns for Psychology
      b. Does psychological research and testing reflect a Western, even American bias?
         i. In conducting research, is there a way to be ‘culture free’ (a test free from cultural influence) or ‘culturally fair’ (a test that is neutral to cultural beliefs)?
            (1) Ellis Island and IQ testing
         ii. What “constructs” (and construct theories) are primarily a function of cultural factors and practices, not objective culturally free “events”??
   c. Is it possible to speak of “Psychology” as one thing, as representing a universal syntax for human conduct?
      i. Or, are there only local “indigenous psychologies”?

2. The Cultural Perspective
   a. The proliferation of Western/American Psychology could be seen as part of a process of "colonialization": the subjugation of a culture or group by another, who determines the discourse and practices that define a particular topic (e.g., Europe’s colonialization of Africa).
   b. How does Psychology proceed then? How do we test, measure, and understand the forces that operate on our lives?
      i. Should psychology continue to base itself on a natural science model of research, which is universalist, or a cultural sensitive model that incorporates the role of language and other culturally specific practices?

3. The Rules of Culture
   i. Non-verbal communication
   b. Body language and facial expressions have ‘universal’ and culturally specific aspects.
      i. Eg., Posture, gesture, eye contact
   c. Cultures differ in terms of how attentive they are to body language.
   d. Genders differ in terms of how attentive they are to body language (in the West, Women > Men).

4. The Rules of Culture
   i. The Organization of Time
   b. A culture’s way of organizing time stems from its economic system, social organization, political history, and ecology.
   c. Monochronic cultures: time is organized into linear segments (eg., North American, Northern Europe).
      i. Time commitments are taken seriously (time is money)
      ii. Series of short-term relationships
   d. Polychronic cultures: time is organized along parallel lines
      i. People are valued rather than time
      ii. More interruptions, less organized

5. The Rules of Culture
i. The self and identity
b. All people develop identities based on individual traits and their unique personal history.
c. All people also develop identities based on their social and cultural context (ethnicity, nationality, religion, etc.).
d. Individualism and collectivism
   i. Individualist cultures are characterized by independence and personal autonomy
   ii. Collectivist cultures define self in context of society and relationships.

6. The Three Worlds of Psychology
a. 1st World: United States. Far and away, the world’s major producer of psychological knowledge. Exports “psychology” to 2nd and 3rd world countries with hardly any reciprocal influence.
b. 2nd World: Canada, England, Australia, etc. Their own indigenous psychology has some influence in their own country, and some influence on 3rd world countries.
c. 3rd World: Cuba, India, Nigeria, etc. “Psychological knowledge” is imported from 1st and 2nd world countries.
   i. often divided in modern (wealthier) and traditional (poorer) sectors.

7. Postmodernism & Multiculturalism
   i. One Truth or Many?
b. Transcending modernism through a redefinition of what defined it:
   i. No single or absolute Truth; truth is made rather than found. Truth is a social construct, not an objective property of the world.
   ii. All social discourses are value-laden with perspectives and biases that seek legitimacy. Cultures seek to defend or prove their discourse as objectively true.
   iii. Many versions of truth: as a social construct, local truths exist, but no one cultural discourse is more valid than another.
      (1) Recall Gergen and his bottle of water.

8. Cross-cultural Psychology
   i. 3 Orientations
b. Absolutism: human nature and conduct is essentially the same across cultures; depression is depression, etc.
c. Relativism: culture constructs and determines the meaning of human nature and conduct; impossible to evaluate one culture using another culture’s methods.
d. Universalism: there are some fundamental features of human conduct common to all cultures, but culture can modify the expression and specific meaning of these.
   i. E.g., behavior is a function of its consequences: different effects in individualist vs. collective cultures.

9. Cross-cultural Psychology
   i. Methods
b. Emic: a culturally specific dimension of conduct, not studied across cultures.
   i. *philotimo* = in ancient Greece, how well you conformed to the expectations of your group.
c. Etic: a dimension of conduct that is characterized as universal and compared across cultures.

d. Imposed (or assumed) Etic: treating an emic as an etic

e. Most cultural and cross-cultural psychologists believe that developing emic approaches will produce measures that satisfy etic research requirements.