



**Roy G. D'Andrade**  
1931–2016

BIOGRAPHICAL

*Memoirs*

*A Biographical Memoir by*  
*Richard A. Shweder*

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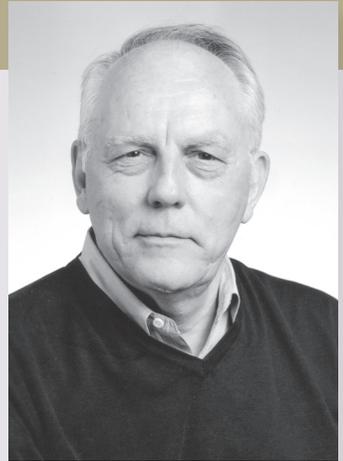
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

# ROY GOODWIN D'ANDRADE

November 6, 1931–October 20, 2016

Elected to the NAS, 1998

Roy D'Andrade was one of cultural anthropology's most renowned theorists and a meticulous quantitative investigator of the structure and distribution of cultural models.<sup>1</sup> He did innovative and pioneering work on heuristics and biases in judgment, human thought processes (such as categorization and reasoning), the nature of social facts, and the comparative study of beliefs, motives and values. It would not be far-fetched to describe him as "The Father of Cognitive Anthropology." He grew up in Metuchen, New Jersey, attended Rutgers University, dropped out to do army service and went on to receive his bachelor's degree from the University of Connecticut. In 1962 he received a Ph.D. from the social anthropology wing of Harvard University's interdisciplinary Department of Social Relations. Over the next several years D'Andrade taught at Stanford University, conducted field research in West Africa and then chaired an experimental anthropology program in Livingston College at Rutgers. In 1970 he returned to California to teach at UC San Diego, where he spent the next three decades, including three stints as chair of their anthropology department. After resigning from UCSD in 2003 he joined the University of Connecticut anthropology faculty for five years before retiring. He died of prostate cancer on October 20, 2016 in El Cerrito, CA at age 84.



*Roy D'Andrade*

By Richard A. Shweder

## When He Spoke, You Listened

Three years after his death there may be just as many people having conversations with Roy D'Andrade as there were when he was alive. Despite the painful reality of his physical absence, his character and charisma have not been displaced. Many of his colleagues and former students continue to engage with his voice and distinctive way of thinking. They find comfort and pleasure in their enduring sense of his vicarious

<sup>1</sup> For example, see his essay titled A Folk Model of the Mind in [Dorothy Holland and Naomi Quinn (Eds.) *Cultural Models in Language and Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), pages 113-147. The original use of the expression "cultural models" has been attributed to the anthropologist and former Duke University professor Naomi Quinn. She was one of Roy D'Andrade's first PhD students (at Stanford University). She died recently at age 79 on June 23, 2019.

presence, which feels contemporaneous and near at hand. They think of him. They recall a significant encounter or some imparted insight. They discover that their personal dialogue with him lives on.

This is not surprising. Throughout his career, when Roy D'Andrade spoke, you listened. When this famous cultural anthropologist, social theorist and quantitative methodologist published an essay, you read it. When he gave a talk at a national meeting (or even just appeared on the program as a commentator) you got to the room early, just to be sure you had a good seat. If you were organizing a conference at the interface of anthropology and psychology, you invited him, for he always had something innovative and eye-opening to say: Not only about how all human beings think, reason and make decisions, but also about the parochial things human beings know, feel, want, value (and hence do).

### **A Cultural Model**

Each of us grows up in an ancestral group where the dead continue to have an influence on what we know and how we think. Learning occurs through social communication and thus, inevitably, we confront (inherit, internalize, habituate ourselves to, come to terms with, or resist) some local and distinctive cultural model. A cultural model is a received tradition of belief and value passed on across generations. It is conveyed, tacitly and explicitly, one generation to the next, through local ways of talking and customary ways of acting. It summarizes the “received wisdom” or orthodoxy of one’s ancestral in-group. It encapsulates what “normal” members of your self-defining heritage community believe to be true of the world, what they should prize in life, and how they ought to behave in the world, as locally pictured and valued.

Consider, for example, the American cultural model of “success”, which Roy D'Andrade described this way: “A class of culturally created entities I have been attempting to analyze involves the domain of *success*. This domain includes a number of elements referred to with terms such as *accomplishment*, *recognition*, *prestige*, *self-satisfaction*, *goals*, *ability*, *hard work*, *competition*, and the like. In American culture, success is a personal characteristic of great importance to most people. Such daily events as the organization of daily effort, the evaluation of task performance, and the marking of accomplishment through self-announcement and the congratulations of others are closely attended to and much discussed. A number of elements of the world of success appear to be connected to each other through putative causal relations. Certain things are thought to lead to success, whereas other things are thought to result from success. Based on the initial data

I have collected, it seems to be the case that Americans think that if one has ability, and if, because of competition or one's own strong drive, one works hard at achieving high goals, one will reach an outstanding level of accomplishment. And when one reaches this level one will be recognized as a success, which brings prestige and self-satisfaction." He goes on to say: "In success the boundary line that divides a high from an ordinary level of accomplishment is not precisely specified. Often people do not know if they are really a success until some special award or position has been granted."<sup>2</sup>

Roy D'Andrade was one of anthropology's most renowned and successful culture theorists and (notably) a meticulous quantitative investigator of the structure and distribution of cultural models. He was also the best of teachers, especially if you wanted to learn about the impact of language on thought, the measurement of values, the representation of knowledge in everyday life or the way human beings classify things and organize their portrayals of the world. His publications included analyses of cultural models of kinship relationships, of individual differences in personality, of the structure of the emotions and of the color spectrum, of achievement and career success and other folk classifications of various sorts, for example, of sex differences, of mental and physical illnesses.<sup>3</sup>

The same was true on the mentoring front. He was always up-to-date on the latest trends in social and psychological theory (for example, the study of heuristics and biases in judgment, social script analysis, consensus theory, network analysis).

### **Graduate School at Harvard (1957-1962)**

He himself came of academic age as a graduate student (1957-1962) in the social anthropology wing of the now defunct (but legendary) interdisciplinary Department of Social Relations at Harvard University. His Ph.D. advisor was the famous psychological anthropologist John W.M. Whiting, who included him in the activities of a lively and influential interdisciplinary working seminar and research group which met regularly in a Harvard building known as Palfrey House.<sup>4</sup> His skills in quantitative social science were

2 D'Andrade, R.G. (1984) Cultural Meaning Systems In [R.A. Shweder and R.A. LeVine (Eds.)] *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion*. Page 95.

3 See the appended selective bibliography of his publications. His book *The Development of Cognitive Anthropology* (Cambridge University Press 1995) summarized the contributions of cognitive research in anthropology and is a well-known introduction to that research tradition.

4 At that time Palfrey House was the physical home of the Laboratory of Human Development, which was itself the research component of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. There are many prominent anthropologists and psychologists, all of them now long retired or deceased, who participated as graduate students in that working seminar during that era. Of those of them I have known personally they remember their Palfrey House experiences with great affection and view them as significant and formative in their research careers. They

immediately apparent and he apprenticed as a research assistant to the world-renowned statistician Fred Mosteller.

Roy D'Andrade entered graduate school in the early days of the so-called cognitive revolution in the disciplines of psychology, anthropology and linguistics. That critical uprising was a rebellion against some of the philosophical strictures of scientific behaviorism, especially its prohibition against mental explanations of observable behavior, and its related injunction against postulating any subjective (and hence unobservable) causal influences on behavior (causal influences such as thoughts, beliefs, values, intentions or desires). It was not long before Roy was recognized as a major voice in what came to be known as cognitive anthropology: The study of what people in different groups know, and how what they know affects the way they think and how they behave.

Many years later, thinking back to the late 1950s and 1960s, he offered this reflection: “When I was a graduate student, one imagined people in a culture; ten years later culture was all in their heads. The thing went from something out there and very large to something that got placed inside. Culture became a branch of cognitive psychology; it was the content of cognitive psychology. We went from ‘let’s try to look at behavior and describe it’ to ‘let’s try to look at ideas.’ Now, how you were to look at ideas was a bit of a problem—and some people said ‘Well, look at language.’ That notion, that you look at idea systems, was extremely general in the social sciences. On, I think, the same afternoon in 1957 [at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Science] you have papers by [Noam] Chomsky and [George] Miller and in anthropology, Ward Goodenough. All signal an end to the era of ‘Let’s look at people’s behavior and see what they do.’ Before 1957 the definition of culture was primarily a behavioral one—culture was patterns of behavior, actions and customs. The same behavioral emphasis was there in linguistics and psychology. The idea that cognition is where it is at struck all three fields at the same time—it has a slightly different trajectory in each discipline—whether you do experiments or whether you look for intuitions or whether you talk to informants. I think it was a nice replacement.”<sup>5</sup>

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invariably index and reference those experiences by the location where they occurred, as “Palfrey House.”

5 The quoted comment was made during informal discussions at a planning session for a conference on theories of culture held in the early 1980s and was published in the conference volume titled *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion*, edited by Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. LeVine (Cambridge University Press, 1984), page 7. Roy D'Andrade concluded his comment noting that by the 1980s the cognitive revolution seemed to be “breaking up.”

And that replacement had implications for the way cognitive anthropologists such as Roy D'Andrade conducted research with their informants, whether in the United States, Mexico or Nigeria. They relied less on the naturalistic observation of customary behavior and more on the administration of cognitive and linguistic tasks and structured and semi-structured interviewing to investigate the organization and distribution of the knowledge and cultural models in the heads of the members of designated groups.

### **Career Trajectory: From Northern California to Southern California via New Jersey**

During his graduate student years at Harvard Roy D'Andrade conducted summer field research (1961 and 1962) in Chiapas, Mexico under the direction of Stanford University anthropologist A. Kimball Romney, who was also a quantitative cognitive anthropologist (and later in his career an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences). In the thick of the cognitive revolution they shared an anthropological interest in what they called "Transcultural Studies in Cognition". Perhaps not too surprisingly, Roy's first faculty position was as an assistant professor in the Stanford University Department of Anthropology (1962-1969). Together he and Romney organized a foundational interdisciplinary conference on that topic, which, in 1963, was held in the Yucatan in Mexico. They co-edited the conference papers and published them as a special (and influential) issue of the *American Anthropologist* in 1964.<sup>6</sup>

The cognitive revolution was in full swing. It was a time in cultural anthropology when semantic and pragmatic approaches to the study of meaning in linguistics were being heralded as models for the study of cultural representations (such as kinship terminologies and origin myths) and cultural performances (such as a cultural group's social script for performing a religious ritual.) It was a time when formal linguistic analysis was viewed as the royal road to the study of folk knowledge (for example, about local flora, fauna, status and social role relationships, medical diagnoses and therapies, or about anything else). It was a time when investigations of native "ethnoscience" (ethnobotany, ethnomedicine) became a rage in the discipline, in part because of pioneering work being done in the Department of Anthropology at Stanford University.

During his years at Stanford Roy engaged in field research (1966-1967) in Nigeria on cultural belief systems, intelligence testing and education. The project was part of a Carnegie Corporation field investigation in both Nigeria and Ghana, organized by the psychological anthropologist and African specialist Robert A. LeVine. The violent Biafran

6 Transcultural Studies in Cognition. *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 66, no. 3, 1964.

civil war in Nigeria cut short Roy's field research, although, fortunately not his interest in transcultural studies of local beliefs and values, including cultural models in the United States (and he later investigated American beliefs about several topics: individualism, abortion, welfare, personal success).

Roy did not feel entirely at home at Stanford. Perhaps because of conflicts between the old guard and the new guard in his department, in 1968-1969 he decided to go on leave and try his hand at chairing an experimental anthropology program in Livingston College at Rutgers University (where he had spent his Freshman year in college, 1950-1951) in the State of New Jersey (where he had been born, grown up and had family).

Then along came an offer he could not refuse (described below). Returning to the West Coast (this time to Southern California) he commenced his long residency (1970-2003) in the then newly created Department of Anthropology at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). There, over the next decades, he networked with cognitive scientists in several UCSD departments (the department of communications: Michael Cole, political science: David Laitin, psychology: Don Norman, sociology: Aaron Cicourel). He became the valued colleague of many local faculty interested in human thought processes and social learning. And he began to participate in debates about the character, mission and research methods of the social sciences.

### **The Semiotic Sciences and the Study of Cultural Objects and Social Facts**

In a parsimonious but misleading formulation, the novelist and physical chemist C. P. Snow once famously suggested that the intellectual life of the academy is divided between "two cultures"—the humanities and the sciences. Roy D'Andrade, the cultural anthropologist and quantitative methodologist had a somewhat more differentiated view of the academic cultural scene and the variety of scientific world views and distinct research communities within our leading universities. So-called science studies later became a popular field of investigation in cultural anthropology but in 1986 he presented a prescient account contrasting the core beliefs, values and criteria of scientific success of physicists versus biologists versus what he labelled the semiotic scientists. Semiotic scientists are those in the interpretive social sciences (including cultural anthropology) who study the meaning of things and seek to either bridge the gap, or place hyphens between, various humanistic and various scientific approaches to human understanding.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> D'Andrade, R.G. (1986) Three Scientific World Views and the Covering Law Model. In [Donald W. Fiske and Richard A. Shweder (Eds.)] *Metatheory in Social Science: Pluralisms and Subjectivities*. University of Chicago Press. Pages 19-41.

In his own semiotic science pursuits, he was an innovator in the application of mathematical models (for example, multidimensional scaling) to the study of cultural knowledge. He spent much of his career developing formal methods for the study of cultural objects and other social facts. Cultural objects or social facts (such as those indexed in the English language as an “uncle”, or a “touchdown“, or the “Christmas season” or a “high holy day”, or “The National Academy”, or a “successful scientific career”) possess the following distinctive ontological characteristic: They are real things but they don't exist independent of a particular interpretative community's collective mental involvement with them. Because they are socially constructed (yet also in some important sense “real” and “factual”) such objects and events are arguably ontologically different from the objects and events studied by physical and biological scientists. The social construction of reality (and the cultural, social and psychological processes that make such reality-construction possible) became a major focus of Roy D'Andrade's theoretical interests during the last decades of his life. He was inspired in that regard by the work of the philosopher John Searle. He edited a special issue of the journal *Anthropological Theory* focused on Searle's theory of “social ontology.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Impact on Colleagues and Students**

It should be noted that the quality of Roy's mind (including the impact he had on his colleagues and students) went way beyond the scope of his topical interests. What he had to say (in his lectures, his commentaries, his published and unpublished essays, his informal dialogues, his dinner conversations) was always precise, clear and jargon-free, which is an achievement in an academic culture where obscurantism (and even fuzzy thinking) can be all too commonplace. You listened to him because he knew how to make abstract ideas concrete and operational. You read him because he knew how to think big and research narrowly; and to do so with rigor, always figuring out some way to measure and quantify this or that speculative hypothesis about the connections between culture and mind. You learned from him because he knew how to conduct evidence-based evaluations of presumptive (but often over-generalized) claims about human nature. He even had an appealing (often ironic) sense of humor—in the midst of one particularly contentious academic dispute I can recall him saying (fittingly, with a sardonic smile on his face) “With enemies like that who needs friends!”

It is not at all surprising that he was the recipient of the National Academy of Sciences Award for Scientific Reviewing (2002), which is one tiny measure of his academic range and grasp of the central issues in the social and behavioral sciences. In the late 1970s and

8 *Anthropological Theory* Volume 6, no. 1, 2006.

early 1980s I served with him on the Social Sciences Research Review Committee of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), an interdisciplinary study panel where research proposals from sociology, psychology (social, developmental and cognitive), and cultural anthropology were meticulously reviewed (reviewers typically prepared ten to twenty-page evaluations of their assigned proposals). The sociologists on the panel were experts on survey research, questionnaire development, sampling procedures and race, gender and social class. The psychologists on the panel were experts on experimental design and were always up-to-date on the latest “hot” (and often counter-intuitive) findings coming out of psychology labs in North American and European universities. In that interdisciplinary setting Roy D’Andrade, the cultural anthropologist, social theorist and quantitative methodologist, was especially impressive because he not only talked the talk but also walked the walk of all those disciplines. His reviews were always incisive, penetrating and authoritative. Preparation for NIMH study panel meetings was quite labor intensive, but one always looked forward to the interdisciplinary gathering, in part just to listen to his evaluations and to have the opportunity to engage him in informal conversation. I was not the only one who felt that way.

Whether one agreed with him or not, Roy was widely known as a charismatic leader in the profession. In mid-career he was on the 1980 ballot in a three-way contest to become President of the American Anthropological Association, although, despite his popularity across several branches of anthropology, that never came to pass. In 1990 he became a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2005 he received a Life Time Achievement Award from the Society for Psychological Anthropology. That same year he received an Honorary Degree from the interdisciplinary Department of Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago. He also served as an advisor on migration and cultural contact issues to the Russell Sage Foundation and was a panel reviewer for the Anthropology Program at the National Science Foundation.

Roy was one of the relatively few cultural anthropologists who could speak to (and be understood and appreciated by) audiences outside his own specialty. And his voice was taken seriously even by antagonists within the profession, perhaps because he never shied away from engagement with the more contentious contemporary debates in his profession: For example when the “skeptical post-modernists” in cultural anthropology wanted to dump the concept of culture, including the idea of a cultural model; or when social and human rights activists wanted cultural anthropology to become a moral discipline (in the service of various political agendas) rather than an intellectual or strictly scientific discipline of the sort he himself, as one of anthropology’s great positive

scientists, much preferred. He was deeply troubled by what he viewed as the erosion of respect for science in the discipline and the rise of skeptical postmodernism and moral anthropology.<sup>9</sup> His intellectual disposition was always that of an interdisciplinary cognitive anthropologist or semiotic scientist. He played a part in the formation of the Cognitive Science Society and published a major theoretical statement on “The Cultural Part of Cognition” in an early issue of the society’s new interdisciplinary journal.<sup>10</sup>

### **Heuristics and Biases in Judgment: The Systematic Distortion Hypothesis**

I myself first encountered Roy’s voice in a provocative 1965 essay titled “Trait Psychology and Componential Analysis” published in the journal the *American Anthropologist* (although I only discovered the essay in 1968)<sup>11</sup>. The following two opening lines of that publication set the agenda for my own research for the next ten years (including my own PhD thesis research). “One of the hazards of science is the ease with which it is possible to confuse propositions about the world with propositions about language. Such a confusion appears to have occurred with respect to personality and behavior classifications in the field of psychology.”

Two years later I first met the person. We had arranged to meet at his new home in LaJolla, California. He had recently joined the anthropology department at UCSD after his year at Rutgers. I was returning from my own journey to the East after fifteen months of fieldwork in India where I had been researching (and raising critical questions about) the implications of his “Trait Psychology” essay. After an exchange of letters, I had proposed that we meet. That was the beginning of a collaboration on what came to be known as “the systematic distortion hypothesis.”<sup>12</sup> From that point on for several decades we continued a correspondence about the study of cultural mentalities, which ended shortly before his death with an exchange about the last essay he ever published. That essay, titled “From Values to Life Worlds,” is a summary of his thoughts about the study

9 D’Andrade, R.G. (1995). Moral Models in Anthropology. *Current Anthropology* 36:3: 399-408.

10 D’Andrade, R.G. (1981) The Cultural Part of Cognition. *Cognitive Science* 5:179-195. Also see D’Andrade, R.G. (1990) Some Propositions about Relations between Culture and Cognition. In [James Stigler, Richard Shweder and Gilbert Herdt (Eds.)], *Cultural Psychology: Essays in Comparative Human Development*, (Cambridge University Press). Pages 65-129.

11 D’Andrade, R.G. (1965) Trait Psychology and Componential Analysis. *American Anthropologist* 67:5:215-228. Also see D’Andrade, R.G. (1974) Memory and the Assessment of Behavior. In [T. Blalock (Ed.)], *Social Measurement* (Aldine Publishers), Pages 139-186.

12 Shweder, R.A. and D’Andrade, R.G. (1980) The Systematic Distortion Hypothesis. In [R.A. Shweder (Ed.)], *Fallible Judgment in Behavioral Research: New Directions for Methodology of Behavioral Science*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

of human values and contains a promising suggestion for a way to move things forward, by moving beyond the study of abstract, stand-alone, context-free value words such as liberty, justice or equality (see below).<sup>13</sup>

In a nutshell, Roy D'Andrade had argued in his 1965 "Trait Psychology" essay that global personality trait typologies in psychology were more fictive than real. He posited that they were the result of a systematic bias unwittingly generated by the research procedures (for example, memory-based ratings on personality inventories) used by personality psychologists to gather evidence on individual differences in personality and behavior. His core hypothesis was that subjects who are asked to remember the behavior of others and make judgments about them using global personality trait terms are prone to conflate judgments about what is like what in the meaning of the words and phrases used to describe behavior with judgments about what goes with what or correlates in actual behavior.

He suggested that the underlying highly generalized behavior tendencies posited in the personality psychology literature (for example, "extroversion") were illusory, because they were grounded in systematic judgmental errors. His identification in 1965 of a judgmental confusion generated by an over-reliance on a semantic similarity heuristic anticipated later waves of interest among cognitive and social psychologists in judgmental biases under conditions of uncertainty.<sup>14</sup> He demonstrated that personality trait words such as "talkative", "adventurous" and "sociable" cluster together in the minds of English speakers to form the ideational stereotype labeled "extroversion" primarily because those words are similar in meaning, and not because the actions they index correlate across the behavior of individuals. He implied that a valid and reliable objective behavioral record of individual differences will reveal that people who are reclusive in their social life may well be talkative at a dinner party, that those who are more adventurous than others are not predictably expressive about their feelings. The implication of his critique was that people who typically get angry when someone contradicts them in an argument do not typically get more angry than others when someone cuts in front of them in a line; that people who are physical risk-takers are not typically social risk takers or intellectual risk takers.; that people who are more anxious than others when flying in an airplane are not typically more anxious than others when sitting in a dentist's chair.

13 D'Andrade, R. G. (2017) From Values to Life Worlds. In [Julia L. Cassaniti and Usha Menon (Eds.)], *Universalism Without Uniformity: Explorations in Mind and Culture* (University of Chicago Press) Pages 60-78.

14 That wave of interest was largely inspired by a famous 1974 essay by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman titled Judgment Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases, *Science* 185:1124-1131, September 27, 1974.

His claim, which, as noted, came to be known as the systematic distortion hypothesis, converged in its implications with a highly visible contemporaneous critique of personality psychology by the psychologist Walter Mischel, which launched a debate, still on-going, about the shortcomings of context-free “global trait” approaches to the study of individual differences in behavior.<sup>15</sup> The following claim was common to both D’Andrade’s systematic distortion hypothesis and Mischel’s critique of personality trait theory in his 1968 book: The closer one gets to ecologically valid on-line evidence of mental functioning and behavior the less it looks broadly trait-like in its organization and the more various “situational” or “contextual” influences on behavior become apparent.

Mischel’s critique brought to our attention the rather low or insignificant inter-correlations in actual behavior among different supposed indicators of the same abstract stand-alone mental state. (An example might be the abstract and global mental state labelled “dependency”, where it has been shown from direct observational research that children who are inclined to seek help from their teacher in a classroom are not typically the ones who are inclined to seek attention or inclined to seek physical nearness.) D’Andrade’s systematic distortion hypothesis was the complement to Mischel’s critique. Roy discovered that the supposed indicators of abstract global personality trait concepts (for example, that personality trait of “dependency”, indexed with phrases such as “seeking help”, “seeking attention”, “seeking physical nearness”) tended to display rather high positive inter-correlations when personality psychologists collected data relying on memory-based personality rating forms. He viewed those high inter-item correlations with suspicion. His systematic distortion hypothesis interpreted those findings as a fascinating example of a methodological artifact produced by a cognitive bias.

### **The Auspicious Crossing of Two Rising Stars: Roy D’Andrade and Melford Spiro**

The systematic distortion hypothesis was just one of Roy’s several claims to fame. He grew up in Metuchen, New Jersey. He attended Rutgers University for his Freshman year in college but then dropped out to serve two years in the U.S. Army as a commissioned Second Lieutenant. He resumed his academic career by transferring to the University of Connecticut (1954-1957). There the brilliant undergraduate student met the brilliant assistant professor, Melford Spiro, who (after briefly studying to become a Rabbi) was himself already a rising star in anthropology as a result of a famous essay he had published in 1951 titled “Culture and Personality: The Natural History of a False

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<sup>15</sup> Mischel, Walter (1968) *Personality and Assessment* (Stanford University Press).

Dichotomy".<sup>16</sup> It was Roy's professor, Mel Spiro, who first introduced the promising undergraduate student to the disciplined empirical investigation of cultural mentalities. It was Mel Spiro who suggested to him that he go to graduate school at Harvard University to work with the famous psychological anthropologist John Whiting.

At that point in their lives neither D'Andrade nor Spiro knew that one day they would both be elected to the National Academy of Sciences. Nor could they have known that some years later their careers would be joined, and they would become life-long academic colleagues. In 1968 Mel Spiro single-handedly created the Department of Anthropology at the University of California at San Diego. He fashioned a brand new American cultural anthropology department into the global intellectual Mecca for researchers in psychological anthropology.

Psychological anthropology is the comparative study of similarities and differences in the mentalities of the many peoples of the world. It has a long history in the annals of comparative inquiry, stretching back at least to the fifth century B.C. ethnographic observations by the Greek historian Herodotus recounting the ideas and customs of peoples in the ancient Persian world. Psychological anthropology has been a sub-field within the academic discipline of American anthropology ever since Franz Boas created the first anthropology PhD program in the United States at Columbia University in 1902—a program which spawned many famous psychological anthropologists, including Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict.

Contemporary psychological anthropology of the sort practiced by Roy and others at UCSD is the person-centered study of the goals, values and pictures of physical, psychological, social and spiritual reality of diverse cultural communities. It begins with the documentation of what individuals in different ancestral groups know, feel, think, want, and value. It seeks to empirically identify that which is uniform and that which is variable in psychological functioning across human societies. It seeks to explain how differences in beliefs and values are acquired and develop, for example through family life interactions and various processes of informal and formal socialization and education.

Mel Spiro recruited to his emerging anthropology department at UCSD recognized eminences in psychological anthropology and several rising stars, including his former University of Connecticut undergraduate student. At the time, as mentioned earlier, Roy was on leave from his position at Stanford University and residing in New Jersey, but he shifted his residency to southern California. He later served as Chair of the UCSD anthropology department three times (1975-1978, 1985-1986, 1991-1994).

<sup>16</sup> Spiro, Melford (1951). Culture and personality: the natural history of a false dichotomy. *Psychiatry* 13:189–204.

For over three decades he was an inspiration for numerous UCSD graduate students who went on to carry the torch of research in psychological and cognitive anthropology and the study of cultural models (for example, Daniel Fessler, Douglas Hollan, Edwin Hutchins, April Leininger, Steve Parish and others). In 2003 Roy resigned from UCSD and returned for a few years to his undergraduate alma mater as a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut (2003-2008), and then retired to Berkeley, CA.

I once asked him why he left UCSD. Reflecting on the highs and lows of his many years in the department of anthropology created by his teacher, colleague and friend Mel Spiro he sent me the following terse but poignant response: "...the high degree of solidarity turned to the normal nasty departmental infighting after Mel retired in '90. I still bear some scars." (Personal Communication).

In 1958 Spiro and D'Andrade co-authored a research paper, published in the discipline's flagship journal, the *American Anthropologist*, titled "A Cross-Cultural Study of Some Supernatural Beliefs." In the history of academic research on the religions of the world theorists tend to come in three kinds—those who define religion by focusing on the concept of the soul, those who define religion by focusing on the concept of the sacred, and those who define religion focusing on the way human beings think about and interact with an imagined or "projected" reality of supernatural beings (so-called Gods and Goddesses). The soulful, the sacred and supernatural beings are the three "S's" of religion.

Spiro and D'Andrade focused on theistic beliefs about supernatural beings. They taxonomized images of the Gods around the world, their perceived benevolence or malevolence, their degree of perceived involvement in everyday life, and the various strategies (prayer, ritual, obedience to commandments) used by members of different groups to secure divine intervention into human affairs. The young student and the young professor sought to explain cross-cultural variations in human depictions of supernatural beings. They theorized those depictions as imaginative psychological projections or fantasies originating in childhood experiences with parental behavior. Influenced by the work of psychoanalytic thinkers such as Sigmund Freud they statistically analyzed comparative evidence to assess whether cross-cultural variations in early childhood relationships with one's parents predicted variations in adult beliefs about supernatural beings. For example, they hypothesized that the greater the degree of parental inconsistency during socialization (that is, the same behavior of the child is both rewarded and punished by his or her parents), the greater the degree to which supernatural punishment will be viewed as arbitrary and not contingent on human behavior (such as rituals, obedience to rules, or prayer).

## **Anthropology and Psychology: How Cultural Codes and Mental Processes Make Each Other Up**

That was Roy D'Andrade's very first publication. By the early 1960s his star was rising. It became especially visible with the publication of the special issue of the *American Anthropologist* mentioned earlier ("Transcultural Studies in Cognition", edited by A. Kimball Romney and Roy D'Andrade). The conference that preceded that publication had put psychologists, linguists and anthropologists in conversation with one another. In the subsequent journal issue D'Andrade and Romney summarized those conversations and presented transcripts of some of their colloquies.<sup>17</sup>

Most significantly, they tried to comprehend the disciplinary tensions and cross-talk that had emerged between the anthropologists and the psychologists. They drew a distinction between the study of "codes" (associated with anthropological research) and the study of "intellectual processes" (associated with psychological research). They imagined a hypothetical research project in which anthropologists and psychologists cooperatively go off to study ordinary game playing behavior such as chess, checkers or baseball. They imagined that the anthropologists and the psychologists would end up parting ways by asking very different questions (for example, "what are the rules of this game?" versus "which intellectual abilities differentiate winning players from losing players?") and developing two very different theories of psychological functioning and methods of research.

The anthropologists, they suggested, tend to study socially learned codes, rules, and meanings for the interpretation of a behavior; and for the anthropologist "behavior" gets treated as a symbol or message that requires interpretation of its meaning, often in relation to codes, rules or norms of some sort. Psychologists on the other hand tend to study intellectual processes such as categorization, inference or memory and view socially learned codes, rules and meanings as mere content (or even as "noise") that should be ignored or filtered out in any study of the "basic" or "fundamental" elements of mental functioning.

D'Andrade and Romney pointed out that in any interdisciplinary research project on game playing behavior an anthropologist "would probably come to distrust generalizations made about human behavior across all classes of games, since for him most behavior is 'determined' by the code in use, which varies by the game." They note that research designed to discover the empirically uniform features of human mentalities is

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<sup>17</sup> D'Andrade, R.G., and A.K. Romney. 1964. Summary of participants' discussion, *American Anthropologist* 66(3):230-242.

likely to bracket the existence of (and hence underestimate the behavioral significance of) the local, socially learned “codes” that are definitive of social life in human groups and dismiss them as mere content; thereby ignoring one of the great sources of mental differences between the members of different code-dependent groups (cultures).

They then drew several conclusions, which in retrospect seem to have anticipated future directions in the study of culture and intellectual processes: That local systems of meaning, cultural codes, (what later was dubbed “cultural models”) are not so easily separated from intellectual processes; that what you think about and with (the meaning or content of ones thinking) can be decisive for how you think; that culture and psyche make each other up. This was one of their key remarks: “The relationship between the codes an individual learns and the intellectual processes of the individual is apparently very complex. Such processes as categorization and inference, for example, appear to be built into codes, providing the individual with a ready-made set of categories and inferences for use. However, to allow the individual to use these cognitive maps which are built into codes also demands the exercise of other complex intellectual processes.”

### **The Study of Human Values**

During the decade or so just prior to his retirement Roy did creative (and potentially frame-altering) work on the study of human values. His most brilliant and provocative work on the topic is published in a book that has been little read, titled *A Study of Personal and Cultural Values*.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately his most significant ideas on the topic have remained underappreciated for lack of a wide readership, which may be one of the reasons he ultimately decided to retire. He felt he was well treated during his five years (his sunset years) at the University of Connecticut, but he did not want to become a ghost, what he referred to as a figure “greying out” and becoming invisible, while still there. Anyone interested in the study of human values and social norms should read that book, especially the section on what he called “institutional values.”

A standard quantitative method for studying human values relies on a questionnaire and asks subjects or informants from different cultural groups, ethnic traditions or social categories to make personal ratings or rankings of abstract words indexing context-free stand-alone value concepts (or “goods”), for example, “which is more important to

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18 D’Andrade, R.G. (2008) *A Study of Personal and Cultural Values: American, Vietnamese and Japanese* (Palgrave MacMillan). Also see D’Andrade, R. G. (2017) From Values to Life Worlds. In [Julia L. Cassaniti and Usha Menon (Eds.)], *Universalism Without Uniformity: Explorations in Mind and Culture* (University of Chicago Press)

you, beauty or wealth, freedom or equality, security or privacy?” or “How important is ‘honesty’ on a five point scale? How about “loyalty”? How about “justice”?

Being Roy D’Andrade, he was fully aware of all the problems with the use of questionnaires in social science research. Yet he remained sympathetic to the use of human values questionnaires in anthropology. He wrote:

*The same words mean different things to different people. Translations are imperfect. People, however honest their report, do not always respond to the words for things the way they respond to things themselves. Someone may think they value something highly when presented with words—for example, how much do you value peace and quiet?—yet when presented with lots of peace and quiet may find they do not value it as highly as they thought. [In selecting that example, I suspect he had himself in mind and his experience with his move to the peace and quiet of suburban life in Connecticut] And people may simply not be able to answer some questions—they just do not know how much they value X and may never know. Or they may be profoundly ambivalent about something, and both value it and disvalue it, so that no single rating covers the situation. Despite all these problems, with respect to efficiency and efficacy, there is much to be said in favor of questionnaires for the study of values. Observation of the choices someone makes cannot tell us what that person thinks or what he or she feels is good. The most efficient way to find out what people think is to ask them. One can observe people smoking cigarettes but they may or may not think smoking is a good thing.<sup>19</sup>*

So, he launched a comparative research project on human values using a values questionnaire. Given all the attention in the cultural psychology literature to the contrast between Western and Eastern values (for example, individualism versus collectivism, self-reliance versus interdependency) he expected to find differences in the personal values of American undergraduates at the University of California versus Vietnamese refugees to the USA versus Japanese respondents living in Japan. Strikingly, he discovered that not only were the same set of value dimensions (individualism versus collectivism, altruism versus self-interest, industry versus leisure) salient in all three populations, but also that there were very few significant cultural or group-based differences in the value profiles

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, page 13.

of his informants. Between group variance in values was minimal and there was nothing much to write home about for anthropologists or psychologists interested in culturally based “East versus West” psychological differences.

But he did not stop there. He was very well read in the ethnographic literature and fully aware of all the anthropological reports about cultural differences in judgments about what is right and what is wrong. He wondered how to square all that attention to “difference” with the uniformity of value responses across groups in his values questionnaire study. Being Roy D’Andrade, he decided to think outside the box. He introduced a theoretical distinction between the study of personal values (tell me: Which is more important to you, liberty or justice?) and the study of what he dubbed “institutional values.” He theorized a new and more inclusive unit of analysis for comparative studies of human values.

In a study of “institutional values” one does not restrict oneself to asking an informant to evaluate the relative importance of abstract, context-free, stand-alone goods (such as liberty, justice, loyalty, and personal sanctity). Instead, the study of institutional values is the study of all the ideas about what is true, good and instrumental (the whole cultural model) expressed by informants when they are questioned about the specific obligations and expectations associated with particular institutional roles or social statuses (such as being a mother, or a professor, or a second lieutenant in the US Army). Institutional values are those goods made manifest and embedded in the local customary practices of the informant’s particular heritage community or historically evolved society—for example, all the beliefs, obligations and values associated with being a widow in a Hindu temple town in India versus being a widow in a secular enclave on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Personal judgments about abstract context-free goods, he concluded, are not all that revealing of what it is like to live in different cultural life worlds. But shift your unit of analysis, he suggested, and you will achieve a deeper and more accurate understanding of the role of beliefs, local social norms, and values in the persistence of cultural differences.

### **Who is Roy D’Andrade?**

On April 20, 2008 I received an e-mail from Roy. It began: “I have a minor puzzle for you (*no, not a puzzle I know the answer to*).” (My emphasis)

Roy was a puzzler. He loved puzzles and he loved puzzling his friends (often over lunch or dinner) with mind-boggling and often frame-challenging puzzles and questions, the

solution to which he already knew. The particular element of self-awareness revealed in that parenthetical aside to me (“no, not a puzzle I know the answer to”) was both endearing and disarming.

The remainder of the message was an example of the creative semiotic scientist puzzling his way through an empirical challenge. It read as follows:

*“...For the last couple of years I have had grad students and undergrads do some survey work on UConn. We have used the standard subjective well-being scales (Emotional Stability from the big five, Positive and Negative Affective States, and four simple items to measure overall physical health). They are strongly intercorrelated (around 0.80) and we combine them into a single scale and try to relate them to student self-descriptions and various demographic variables. The correlations are not large, but about the same as everyone else gets for subjective well-being.*

*Positively related to subjective well-being are the self-descriptions ‘will graduate,’ ‘am motivated,’ ‘have a healthy diet,’ ‘feel satisfied with UConn,’ ‘have an ok sex life,’ ‘have many good friends,’ ‘have hobbies,’ ‘am physically fit,’ ‘am well rounded,’ ‘work hard,’ ‘party,’ ‘manage time well,’ and ‘laugh a lot.’*

*Negatively related are ‘volunteer a lot,’ ‘find classes stimulating,’ ‘help others,’ ‘female,’ and ‘intend to go to grad school.’*

*Unrelated ( $r$ 's around + or - 0.01) are ‘am in a frat/sorority,’ ‘enjoy academic life,’ ‘am goal oriented,’ ‘have good access to teachers,’ ‘high gpa,’ ‘am organized,’ ‘am spiritually devoted,’ ‘am open-minded,’ ‘know what I want to do,’ ‘am spontaneous.’*

*Sometimes I think I see what what’s going on - other times I don’t get it.*

What do you make of these data? he was asking. What is your hypothesis? Such questions were his *modus vivendi*. That was one of the many ways he spawned and sustained an interdisciplinary scientific community. His communications were irresistible. Who would ever want them to come to an end? Must they come to an end?

Some readers of this biographical memoir may already be familiar with the wry and affecting story about the five stages in any professional career, including academic careers.

That career-stage chronicle goes like this:

Stage 1: Who is Roy D'Andrade? (A question the admission committee at Harvard in the Department of Social Relations might have asked when he applied to graduate school in the late 1950s).

Stage 2: What can you tell me about Roy D'Andrade? (A question the search committee in the Department of Anthropology at Stanford University might have asked in the early 1960s before they decided to recruit him as an assistant professor).

Stage 3: I want Roy D'Andrade! (Mel Spiro certainly felt that way when he recruited Roy to UCSD in 1970 and that was a prevailing sentiment in several corners and institutions of the social sciences throughout much of his career).

Stage 4: (Here the story of the five stages turns heart-rending) I want someone just like Roy D'Andrade!

Stage 5: (And then it turns tragically ironic) Who is Roy D'Andrade?

Who is Roy D'Andrade? Three years after his death we are still in Stage 3. And, as I suggested at the very beginning of this biographical memoir, there may be just as many people having conversations with Roy today as there were when he was alive. That certainly deserves to be true.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Surviving him are Roy's four children, Nina D'Andrade, Amy D'Andrade, Hugh D'Andrade and Janet Holmes, his two siblings, Hugh D'Andrade and Patricia D'Andrade, and three grandchildren. Roy's first wife, Diane D'Andrade, survived him as well but died on December 26, 2018.

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