Part 1 Thinking and Reflecting

Chapter 2. Theoretical thinking: Four Perspectives in Studying Psychology in Sociocultural Contexts

Additional questions for discussions and evaluation

1. Ask students to compare the theoretical perspectives presented by Van Langenhove (1995) and D'Andrade (1986).
2. What are the historical roots of the *Homo Mechanicus* theoretical perspective?
3. Compare the *Homo Mechanicus* approach to culture with the understanding of culture within cross-cultural psychology described in Chapter 1.
4. What is culture reification? Provide examples and articulate the dangers of this type of thinking about cultures.
5. How is causality treated within *Homo Mechanicus* perspective?
6. Ask students to reflect on the methodology of this perspective and compare it with the variable-based design presented in Chapter 7.
7. How do the ideas of evolution and natural selection enter into the thinking of the *Homo Bios* perspective?
8. Eckensberger noted that "this [*Homo Bios*] theoretical perspective . . . is considered to represent a real paradigm shift [in comparison to the *Mechanicus* perspective] because it took a totally new look at the adaptive processes of organisms in their environment" (pp. 419–420). What new ideas are presented by the *Bios* perspective in comparison to the *Mechanicus* one?
9. What is the Standard Social Science Model? How does this model correspond to the modern understanding of human cognitive development? Is the human mind a "general-purpose computer" or a "computer with a set of domain-specific mechanisms and modules"?
10. How do the *Bios* and *Socius* perspectives differ in their understandings of culture?
11. Why do psychological anthropologists criticize the *Socius* understanding of culture? How does the theory of cultural models address this criticism?