Culture and Brain: a new journal

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Published online: 20 April 2013
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Humans have created the most complicated social environments on the earth. On the one hand, these social environments reflect the consequences of human behavior which is guided by the mind and brain. On the other hand, social environments and experiences strongly shape both the mind and brain. Traditional neuroscience research has shown evidence that multiple-level neural mechanisms in an animal's brain are profoundly influenced by environments and experiences and indicates that plasticity is an essential nature of the brain that enables an animal to fit well into environments. Studies of the humans have to further take into account of effects of social environments in order to reveal the sociocultural nature of the human brain.

Human societies share common features, yet they differ in important ways. People in different cultures have produced their own ways of living, social structures, values, and social norms. Cross-cultural psychological research (usually employing self-report and behavioral observations) has provided ample evidence that there is a strong cultural imprint on the human mind. These findings raise the question whether the human brain is shaped by culture, and if so how? Until recently, studies that employ brain imaging techniques to investigate neurocognitive processes in the humans have not paid much attention to the role that culture might play in cognitive and affective processes. However, in the past decade an emerging literature has documented cultural differences in neural activity associated with a variety of cognitive and affective processes. This line of research has challenged the notion that we can have an accurate or complete picture of how the brain works without taking culture's influence into account and has generated increasing interest in exploring the mutual relationship between culture and the brain. A platform is necessary for communicating new empirical findings, theories, and questions regarding the relationship between culture and the brain. And thus, this journal, *Culture and Brain*, was born.

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The relationship between culture and the brain is very complicated and cannot be addressed by an individual discipline. Understanding the mutual constitution of culture and the brain is a major endeavor that will require an interdisciplinary approach. To succeed in this undertaking will require participation from those in the natural sciences, and also in the social sciences and humanities. This journal aims to provide a platform for researchers from different traditions, including psychology, neuroscience, brain imaging, epigenetics, evolutionary biology, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy, to share their findings, to generate new ideas and questions that will guide the study of the interplay between culture and the brain.

As interdisciplinary studies of culture and the brain begin to blossom, it is a great honor to serve as the founding editor of this journal. I look forward to contributions from researchers around the world and from a wide variety of disciplines. It is my hope that this journal will be an outlet for cutting edge research and theoretical advances in the study of culture and the brain, that it will encourage lively discussion and debate, and that ultimately it will bring us one step closer to understanding the human nature and experience.