**Assignment #2:** ***Summary***

In the article “Being WEIRD: How Culture Shapes the Mind” by Ethan Watters, discusses the importance of the need to reconsider “human nature” in which social scientists have studied. The trio; Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan concluded that Americans are the most “weirdest” of all.

To back up the claim from the findings of the cross-cultural research that Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan have compiled up in their weird paper that has touched on the misconception that Western psychologists concluded that what we value in American culture is what others value as well. To prove that what we as Americans thought to be universal is not necessary true from the experiment that Henrich did at Peru among the Machiguenga who live north of Mahu Picchu in the Amazon basin.

According to Henrich who decided to run a behavioral experiment through a game called ultimatum to see whether the West and isolated culture shared the similar instinct for fairness, it resulted in that “Machiguenga behavior was dramatically different from that of the average North America” (Watters, pp. 493). Watters goes on to say that although the ultimatum game was a very small instructive of the different tendency in the social sciences, it has strongly emphasized the impact that culture has on cognition.

According to Watters, the trio suggested that social scientists focused mainly on “one small slice of humanity”, as described in the weird paper. The paper also pointed out that the thinking of “weird” western is the most self-centered on the planet, Americans tend to perceive things only in the what we value instead of considering the cultural differences that influence cognition.

Even in this small experiment that Henrich did, he brought up important thoughts concerning literature in social science, especially in economics and psychology and how that will challenge the assumption of universality. On Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan’s compiled paper in the topic of an acronym WEIRD (Western, Educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic), in the end they titled their paper “The Weirdest People in the World?”

Ultimately, Watters concluded that because of culturally shaped minds of Western researchers, they fall short in considering the exchange between culture and cognition.

**Citation:**

Watters, Ethan. "Being WEIRD: How Culture Shapes the Mind." *Emerging*   
     *Contemporary Readings for Writers*, by Barclay Barrios, Third ed., 2010, pp.   
     492-504.