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*A Critical
Introduction to*

PSYCHOLOGY



ROBERT K. BESHARA
EDITOR

NOVA

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*This book is dedicated to the memory of two pioneers
in critical psychology:
Tod S. Sloan (1952-2018) and Fernando González Rey (1949-2019)*

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PREFACE

A Critical Introduction to Psychology is the first scholarly book, in which fifteen critical psychologists analyze chapters from popular Introduction to Psychology textbooks. In their critiques of mainstream (Euro-American) psychology, the authors of this edited volume also envision a pluriversal, transdisciplinary psychology, which is inclusive of critical voices from all over the world.

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Chapter 1

TOWARDS A PLURIVERSAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Psychology literally means the *logia* of *psykhē*, which can be translated as the *discourse of psyche* along the lines of the linguistic turn (cf. Parker 2002). While psychologists study psyche, critical psychologists study psychology, and psyche *qua* subjectivity, in an effort to question taken-for-granted notions in mainstream (Euro-American) psychology, such as the ‘birth’ of psychology as a scientific discipline in 1879, which is when the first experimental lab was established in Leipzig, Germany by Wilhelm Wundt (the ‘father’ of psychology). This historical cut signifies the discipline’s bifurcation from philosophy (the ‘mother’ of psychology), which is looked down upon by psychologists for its inability to back up its claims empirically since it lacks a positivist scientific method.

While psychology has come a long way methodologically from this simplistic (or scientistic) way of thinking, “physics envy” (Fish 2000)

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continues to plague the discipline. Physics envy describes psychology's insecure attempt to legitimize itself as a scientific discipline by imitating the positivism of the natural sciences through employing *the* experimental method, which is the only scientific method that can answer questions of causality (e.g., $A \rightarrow B$). However, ethical questions aside—for the history of psychology is full of unethical experiments (e.g., the Little Albert experiment, the Milgram experiment, and the Stanford prison experiment), wherein research participants, or 'subjects', were essentially tortured, not mentioning the collusion of some psychologists, from the American Psychological Association, with the U.S. military to develop 'enhanced interrogation techniques' like water-boarding—, *explaining* things in psychology is most likely doomed to fail, for how can one explain psyche when it is *inherent* to both the psychologist and the psychologized? This power dynamic framing the researcher/researched dyad is, of course, a variation on old dualisms—the Cartesian mind/body problem and the Kantian subject/object problem—, and is akin to the measurement problem in quantum physics, or how the act of observation changes what is being observed.

To put it in simple terms, the move to separate psychology from philosophy, in the name of science (or scientism, rather), is a form of denial because it is impossible to do psychology without philosophy. In other words, whether psychologists like it or not, they are first and foremost repressed philosophers, for unconscious philosophical concerns implicitly inform their research questions, but these concerns are disavowed in the name of objectivity or neutrality. Psychologists defensively cling to their methods, therefore, out of insecurity. Nevertheless, if they come to realize that they are lovers of wisdom (or philosophers), they will view science as the systematic production of knowledge, and then they will be able to see that hypotheses are nothing but *beliefs about truth*, which are tested or falsified through a valid and reliable (or trustworthy) method, be it theoretical, descriptive (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods), predictive (e.g., correlation), or explanatory. According to the narrow view of science, only through an experimental (or explanatory) method can a hypothesis (or belief) become

a theory/fact (or knowledge). Notwithstanding, truth is much larger than human knowledge, which is why philosophy remains important for psychology because it raises questions about this larger-than-human-knowledge truth. While philosophical approaches to truth are not empirical *per se*, they are still inherently methodological.

This second methodological approach in philosophy/psychology (i.e., rationalism), which is also epistemological, ontological, and axiological, speaks to the other meaning of the word ‘theory’ (associated with the continental philosophy tradition): a belief about truth that is tested or falsified experientially, rhetorically, and/or logically. The prevalent understanding of empiricism, among mainstream (Euro-American) psychologists, is certainly a misnomer because it has less to do with direct embodied experience (as in phenomenology or contemplative practices) and more to do with indirect disembodied abstraction that claims to be doing the exact opposite thing. To put it differently, rationalism as a critical method is not positivist (i.e., focusing only on what is there), but negativist and dialectical.

This book is *A Critical Introduction to Psychology*, and not an introduction to critical psychology (e.g., Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin 2009), and it is inspired by the negative dialectics of rationalism as a critical method. As such, it is the first scholarly book to critique introductory textbooks on mainstream (Euro-American) psychology from a critical psychological perspective with a special emphasis on Global Southern alternatives (e.g., feminist, post-/de-colonial, and liberation psychologies).

The Global South is both a politico-economic and a geographical designation, which refers to “transmodern” (Dussel 2012), or non-aligned, cultures in the continents of South America, Africa, and Asia that are exterior to (but not outside) Euro-American (post)modernity. Furthermore, the Global South also refers to “extimate” (Miller 1988) others—that is, “decolonial” (Mignolo 2007) subcultures—interior to Euro-America, such as Pueblo tribes in northern New Mexico, where I am based. In fact, I am honored to teach at Northern New Mexico College: “a Hispanic- and Native American-serving comprehensive institution.” In terms of cultural

sustainability (one of the four college-wide student learning outcomes at Northern), I find *Native American Postcolonial Psychology* (Duran & Duran 1995) and *Writings for a Liberation Psychology* (Martín-Baró, 1996) to be valuable pedagogic resources for teaching psychology critically, or from the borders.

Introduction to Psychology is such an important course because it is a general education requirement, for undergraduate students, in most colleges and universities in the United States, so I feel a moral obligation (along with my fellow scholars) to think critically about the content of this course, as both a teacher and a researcher. The inspiration behind this book came to me while teaching Introduction to Psychology over the last five years, first at the University of West Georgia and then at Northern New Mexico College.

While teaching, I noticed at least two things: (1) the course is called Introduction to Psychology and not Introduction to Mainstream (Euro-American) Psychology and (2) many of my minority (e.g., African American, Hispanic, and Native American) students did not feel represented by the introductory psychology textbook because of obvious differences in terms of class, ‘race’/ethnicity, sex, and/or culture, which gave them the impression that the typical psychologist is bourgeois, ‘White’, male, and Euro-American. To correct this (mis)representation, along the lines of what Sara Ahmed (2013) calls “the politics of citation,” I believe that we, critical psychologists, have a responsibility to put forth a global, inclusive (i.e., North-South) vision of psychology and to do this by citing Southern Theorists, psychologists or otherwise, particularly from the margins (i.e., proletariat, non-‘White’, female, and indigenous/African/Asian/Latinx). In other words, the question of a global, or “pluriversal” (Mignolo 2008), psychology is not to be dismissed, but the ‘dirty work’ of critique must take place first. This was my challenge to the contributors, and it is also an active challenge to the reader.

To fulfill this ambitious aim of marking the coordinates of a global, or pluriversal, psychology, I invited fourteen critical psychologists to contribute chapters according to the following “delinking” (Mignolo 2007) logic: (1) critiquing and decolonizing the typical chapters that

undergraduate students in an ‘introduction to psychology’ course are usually exposed to (e.g., neuroscience, consciousness, development, identity, etc.) and (2) proposing a critical psychological alternative, which takes into account theories, philosophies, and/or histories from the Global South—that is, transmodern and/or decolonial alternatives (cf. Adams & Estrada-Villalta 2017; Bhatia 2017; Burton & Osorio 2011).

For example, if assigned the ‘thinking and intelligence’ chapter, the author would show how mainstream (Euro-American) psychology operationally defines *thinking as problem-solving* from a cognitive perspective and what that definition implies both theoretically and practically inside and outside of psychology. This abstract and reductionist notion of thinking can then be contrasted with another more nuanced and complex conceptualization of *thinking as embodied and discursive*. In other words, thinking cannot be reduced to the mind because it takes place in the body and occurs in between subjects or speaking beings.

As for intelligence, the author would then show how Daniel Goleman expanded our traditional understanding of intelligence through notions like emotional intelligence (1995) and social intelligence (2006) as well as how mainstream Euro-American culture informs our ‘traditional’ understanding of intelligence through its ideological emphasis on standardized testing and its preference for two particular forms of intelligence (linguistic and logical-mathematical) over other forms of intelligence (e.g., musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal), as illustrated by Howard Gardner (1983).

This ideological emphasis on two specific forms of intelligence speaks to mainstream (Euro-American) psychology’s subservient role within capitalism, and how intelligence-testing functions in relation to job placement to produce ‘intelligent’ workers that are interpellated by “ideological state apparatuses” or ISAs (Althusser 2001). In other words, those who are considered ‘intelligent’ are valued and rewarded by the hegemonic culture through ISAs, while everyone else is oppressed in one way or another. To put it differently, intelligence is much more than a biological or genetic fact, it is a socio-cultural reality (or a discourse) that is inherently hierarchical, if not racist (cf. Richards 1997).

The book aspires to target (under)graduate students, as well as scholar-activists, in the humanities and social sciences, who are interested in a critical and transdisciplinary approach to psychology that is limited by neither a narrow understanding of psyche as behavior, cognition, or neurochemistry nor an exclusive focus on ‘major’ research perspectives like behaviorism, cognitivism, and neuroscience. The contributors come from different backgrounds and represent a diversity of knowledge and of being; in other words, their contributions signify the wisdom (sophia) that is missing in most introductory textbooks on mainstream (Euro-American) psychology. This epistemic and ontic diversity, or pluriversality, is an expression of love (philos), which is voiced in the ‘minor’ (i.e., transmodern/decolonial), but transdisciplinary perspectives adopted by the authors throughout the book, which include: cultural-historical activity theory (González Rey, chapter 2), philosophical psychology (De Vos, chapter 3), humanistic-transpersonal psychology (Atlas, chapter 4), critical race psychology (Whitehead, chapter 5), dialogical psychology (Bertau & Roberts, chapter 6), liberation psychology (Deligio, chapter 7), feminist psychology (Skott-Myhre, chapter 8), discursive psychology (Korobov, chapter 9), psychoanalysis (Bell, chapter 10), critical social psychology (Amedeo Marquez, chapter 11), poststructural psychology (Beck & Glazier, chapter 12), and decolonial psychology (Kessi, chapter 13).

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Chapter 2

**THE RESCUE OF SUBJECTIVITY FROM
A CULTURAL-HISTORICAL STANDPOINT**

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter is oriented toward discussing why the concepts of subjectivity and subject have remained restricted to an individualistic and rationalistic tradition during the modern period, being absolutely rejected by different philosophies during the 19th and 20th centuries, including that philosophy that has strongly influenced the critical movements in the social sciences and psychology since the second half of the 20th century. Together with this, the chapter advances a new proposal of subjectivity from a cultural-historical standpoint capable of integrating social and individual processes into a new qualitative representation that permits an understanding of individuals, groups, institutions and human sociality in

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their reciprocal subjective configuration. These instances are qualitatively configured within this new proposal of subjectivity, the emergence of which transcends external relations of determinism between them. All of these human instances are sources of unpredictable behaviors and phenomena that simultaneously affect the others at the subjective level.

The above-declared purposes can only be achieved through a cultural-historical approach to the topic of subjectivity. However, due to a set of different facts, many of them examined in previous works (González Rey, 2009, 2014a, 2016, 2017), the cultural-historical approach in psychology, which had its genesis in Soviet psychology, even creating important premises for advancing the topic of subjectivity on a new basis, only began to draw attention to this topic in the 1970s.

In psychology and the social sciences, the topic of subjectivity has been referred to, above all, as a specific process and a phenomenon without a more general theory being advanced about it (Teo, 2017). In the meantime, subjectivity was excluded from philosophy throughout the 20th century in favor of language, structures, action, and discourse, which were the main theoretical bases on which the philosophies of that century were advanced. Finally, the chapter defends the idea of the relevance of a theory of subjectivity for advancing new critical options in psychology and the social sciences in general.

SOME ANTECEDENTS OF THE REJECTION OF SUBJECTIVITY IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

Intellectual movements are always historical and, as such, they maintain subjective processes related to their historical periods, which makes science a human matter while, at the same, making the relative character of science unavoidable. Thus, the theoretical devices according to which the main expressions of human thought advance in each historical period are, in fact, the resources through which the different institutional social movements, including science, have advanced throughout history. In

this chapter, a brief picture will be drawn of some of the main facts that, in philosophy, science and, even psychology, have conspired since the beginning of Western modernity to treat subjectivity as separate from the different arenas of human knowledge.

Firstly, I will refer to the way in which the Cartesian tradition treated the topic of consciousness, mainly as the rationalistic intrinsic capacity of human beings to produce a knowledge, whose the divine origin of which represented a link between humans, God and nature. That philosophy represented the beginning of a philosophy of consciousness that mistakenly marked most references to subjectivity in both philosophy and the social sciences. In turn, Kant overcame the link between reason, God, sociality and nature. In any case, despite transcending the omnipotent place given to reason by Descartes, Kant continued to focus on reason as the main resource for his representation of human beings as epistemological agents. Kant, unlike Descartes, defined the incapacity of human beings to know reality as it is; however, he located human capacity to find a moral path within the capacity to reason. That rationalistic and individualistic orientation to understand a universal human essence, in fact, led to the separation of human reason from human sociality, historicity, and emotionality.

The Kantian subject was, above all, a moral and an epistemological agent. Paradoxically, that orientation toward an individualistic, solipsist, and rationalistic understanding of the human being that integrates the modern philosophy of consciousness and of the subject, for some unexplained reason, gradually came to be represented in both philosophy and common sense as subjectivity.

The French Enlightenment, mainly through Rousseau, attributed responsibility for the nature of individuals to government. However, Rousseau also agreed with the existence of a human essence that preceded, and was independent of, society (Hawthorn, 1987). So, the goal of government should be to guarantee a social contract, oriented toward achieving a balance between individual expression and its rejection on behalf of a social order. That conflict continued the same rationalism that dominated Cartesian philosophy and the classic German philosophy

inaugurated by Kant. The theoretical model of human beings that was hegemonic in European philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries was rationalistic and universal, something that has strongly influenced so-called modern psychology from its beginning in the 19th century up to the present day. The narrow comprehension of sociality in the Enlightenment led to the maintenance of individuals and society as two systems that were external to each other. This was a result of the absence of theoretical resources to advance alternatives to that dichotomy, which remained in psychology until the 20th century, despite the important step forward in transcending it put forward by Marx in the 19th century.

A second remarkable fact associated with keeping subjectivity outside of the main traditions of modern thought was the development of science, particularly with the emergence of Newtonian physics in the 17th century. Newton brought about a turning point toward the prevalence of empiricism as the basis of science, relegating rationalism to a secondary place (Cassirer, 2009). That radicalization excluded subjectivity and the subject as sources of noise and distortion in science. Facts were separated from ideas and the observer was excluded from observation. Induction and description became hegemonic in the search for an objective science, a position that was associated with the genesis of positivism in the 19th century, becoming the absolute model of doing science until the emergence of quantum mechanics at the beginning of the 20th century. Despite replacing rationalism as the way of doing science, empiricism became a source of new rationalistic expectations in both common sense and science, as in the illusions of human control over nature, and the illusions of progress and prediction. These illusions left no room to advance the topic of subjectivity, the reformulation of which demands a transcendence of both of them.

The fact of science becoming dominant as the expression of certainty, progress, and truth during three and half centuries has strongly influenced a social subjectivity for which imagination, fantasy, and desires were secondary compared to the powerful intellectual machine on which the hope of humanity was focused. The combination of rationalism and empiricism that characterized philosophy was inseparable from the model

of science that has become dominant since the 17th century, becoming a powerful intellectual model for thinking about not only the sciences, but also culture. The mechanical model of thinking that resulted from physics strongly influenced some of the main strands of psychology in the first half of the 20th century. So, for example, behaviorism was strongly influenced by a savage empiricism, that was even more empirical than positivism, giving a narrow interpretation of what science should be. Freud, meanwhile, even attempted to overcome a rational representation of human beings and could not avoid appealing to reason as the main theoretical device for conducting psychotherapy, and being deeply realistic in his idea of the need to repair the original experience that was distorted through repression.

Nonetheless, it is curious the lack of attention in the history of psychology to a sequence of German philosophers from the 19th century, namely: Dilthey, Windelband, and Rickert. According to Hawthorn (1976), Rickert advanced on Dilthey's ideas, making an association between culture and the idiographic methods on one side, and the science and nomothetic methods on another. The relativity of cultural phenomena and its implication for the study of the subjective nature of human phenomena gained epistemological relevance in the very interrelated works of Heinrich Rickert and Max Weber. Weber opened a new epistemological path for the social sciences, rejecting the possibility to enunciate general laws in history. Weber also questioned the capacity of the sciences for coming to a final explanation. Psychology, based on a crude empiricism, completely ignored these discussions until the works of Kurt Lewin and his group in the 1930s and Gordon Allport in the 1950s.

Weber discussed the subjective side of socioeconomical processes, as it was clear in his famous writing about the role of morality and religion in the advent of the capitalism (Weber, 1992). The attention of those German thinkers, from Dilthey to Weber, has never been studied in its relevance for the phenomenology of Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl. This last philosophical stream, following the transcendental positions of its predecessors in the German philosophy, advanced one important further step: the transcendental ego was an active and thinking substance that

expressed itself in intentional human beings. The transcendental ego is no longer understood as a priori to active intentions instances.

Phenomenology, however, did not give continuity to the sequence of the above-mentioned thinkers either theoretically or epistemologically, returning back to the erroneous identification between subjectivity and metaphysics. Only Merleau-Ponty (1962) broke down this identification in the *Phenomenology of Perception*. Husserl was an important antecedent to Heidegger's radical rejection of subjectivity and epistemology. In fact, the pretension of psychology in becoming a natural science led to its dominant a-theoretical character (Koch, 1999) and to its cult of the method (Danziger, 1990), ignoring the epistemological demands of its own development. Nonetheless, it was not Wilhelm Wundt who excluded philosophy from psychology. In his definition of "Völkerpsychologie," he clearly took a position in regards to the limitation of the experimental method in the study of complex processes that result from the integration of culture and psychology. It was his disciples, James McKeen Cattel, G. Stanley Hall and Edward B. Titchener among others, who turned experiments and tests into the core of an instrumental psychology, which has so strongly impacted our discipline from the 20th century to this day.

Finally, among the facts that made it difficult to advance on a new representation of subjectivity in the psychology of the 20th century, it is important to refer to the turn made by psychology toward social and linguistic facts in the 1960s in reaction to the hegemonic empirical, individualistic, and instrumental psychology of the first half of that century. That stream of thinking emerged in psychology through the concepts of social representation (Moscovici, 1961) and the social cognitive approach to prejudice (Tajfel, 1981), the latter beginning a line of thinking that led Tajfel, together with Turner, to the concept of social identity in 1986. In his first and foundational work, Moscovici (1961) also expressed a rather cognitive approach in his first definition of social representation. However, the analysis of the concept as a social symbolical production, inseparable from human communication, represented an important advance for the comprehension of the social psychological

processes behind a rationalist or individualistic reductionism (Moscovici, 2000).

Nonetheless, that important turn toward the social processes, which decisively contributed to introducing a new revolutionary angle in the comprehension of the social side of human psychology, excluded the individual and its psychological processes as inseparable from those processes involving relations organized on the basis of social representations (González Rey, 2015). The relevant matter of how individuals and social processes integrate with and reciprocally configure each other in new qualitative processes specific to human beings and human culture did not find a place in the Moscovici agenda. As a result, a new strand began in psychology, one oriented toward replacing psychological processes by social ones, as was evident in the split supported by Farr (1998) between a sociological social psychology and an individual social psychology. This new orientation of psychology represented another fact to be considered in its abandonment of the topic of subjectivity, commonly associated with an intra-psychical individual mind. The theory of social representation brought to light the relevance of symbolical social processes, quickly evolving from its beginning into a comprehension of social representation as a symbolical social production (Moscovici, 2000). The development of the theory of social representation was the first step in social constructionism – a psychology deeply oriented toward dialogue and discourse that has advanced on the basis of French post-structuralism since the second half of the 1980s.

Despite the fact that Moscovici was advancing forward the consideration of social representation as symbolical processes intrinsically related to human communication, the new theoretical critical wave, as represented by social constructionism since the 1980s, was deeply critical of the concept of social representation. The main focus of that criticism was the epistemological realism that the concept still maintained (Gergen, 1985; Ibañez 1988). The critique of the cognitive character of social representations was another important topic of criticism (Potter & Edwards, 1999). Nevertheless, some of the pioneers of social constructionism attempted to integrate the French post-structural legacy

with the more instrumental and cognitive Vygotsky and with the American cognitive revolution, as the basis of a new discursive psychology. In this regard, Harré (1995) stated: “Since discourse is primarily public and only secondarily private, so cognition, the use of various devices for mental tasks, is primarily public and social and only secondarily private and individual... The second cognitive revolution is nothing other than the advent of discursive psychology” (p. 144).

Both the theory of social representation and social constructionism shared a non-recognition of individual psychological processes and their inseparability from the social systems of relationships. The idea, as stressed by Harré, and originally emphasized by Vygotsky, that any mental operation is always primarily social and only secondarily private and individual, represented the comprehension of individual psychical processes as mere epiphenomena of social operations, leading to an instrumental-functional representation of the human mind that denies any creative and generative capacity of individuals. The world of human fantasy, imagination, motivation, and creation was completely detached from both the theory of social representation and social constructionism. Even so, social constructionism monopolized the representation of a ‘new psychology,’ which at the same time also became the main version of a critical psychology. In fact, as a result of this process, social constructionism became a kind of mainstream critical psychology. In this way, such critical theories have omitted the heuristic value of subjectivity for the study of processes that can be exhausted neither by language nor by discourse.

That new psychological movement eclipsed the emergence of other important critical movements that appeared during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s in the non-Anglo-Saxon world. I refer to the critical movements represented by German Critical Psychology (Holzkamp, Osterkamp, and others) that, from its criticism of mainstream psychology, came to be centered on advancing a psychology of the subject, overcoming any kind of social and linguistic determinism, as well as the critical psychoanalytic Argentinian movement of the 1960s (P. Riviere, J. Bleger, among others) and the Latin-American critical social psychology of the 1980s (Martín

Baró, Montero, Salazar, Jiménez, Lane, González Rey, among others). It is interesting that all of these movements, unlike social constructionism, attributed an important place to individuals and their psychological processes, attempting to advance a new psychology capable of integrating a new definition of the human mind as inseparable from social and political processes (González Rey, 2019).

Subjectivity, as the concept is proposed in this chapter, is neither private nor individual, nor is it secondary in relation to other human phenomena; subjectivity is a new qualitative phenomenon that results from the social, cultural, and historical character of human existence, and is characterized as a new ontological definition presented in all human phenomena, whether social or individual. Subjectivity expresses the human capacity to generate emotions as symbolical processes, which leads to new dynamic units, the integration of which is qualitatively different from what traditionally have been defined as psychological processes. Psyche and subjectivity do not exclude each other but are deeply interrelated. However, they are irreducible to one another; each process has a different genesis and functioning, even when they are configured to each other. So, for example, a human perception can only be a cognitive process, but it is also a subjective one when emotions emerge as symbolical devices that actively participate in that perception.

SUBJECTIVITY FROM A CULTURAL–HISTORICAL STANDPOINT: ITS RELEVANCE FOR ADVANCING A NEW CRITICAL PATH IN PSYCHOLOGY

Although the last three centuries have not represented the best intellectual grounds upon which to advance the topic of subjectivity, there have nevertheless been important philosophers during the 20th century who, while not having referred specifically to the topic of subjectivity, have made interesting theoretical contributions that remained little known and fragmented. The absence of subjectivity as an intellectual reference

was, to some extent, responsible for this fragmentation and lack of recognition of such contributions. In any case, those contributions permit the envisaging of the need for subjectivity as a topic in the human sciences in order to advance new theoretical and practical paths in regards to human phenomena (González Rey, 2019).

Philosophers like Marx, Dewey, Merleau-Ponty, Cassirer, and Foucault developed important ideas at different stages of their work, which unfortunately were not compatible with the different philosophical mainstreams within which their works were predominantly classified. In their works, it is possible to find fragments that are oriented toward new questions and that represented important antecedents for the need to introduce the topic of subjectivity in both philosophy and the human sciences (González Rey, 2019).

Our proposal on subjectivity started from a principle that was not incorporated within the dominant intellectual strands during the 20th century. Subjectivity is not a reflection, nor an internalization, nor a rational construction; it is a new kind of phenomenon that results from the on-going evolution of *Homo sapiens*. That new capacity that distinguished *homo sapiens* in relation to other animal species was its broader use of symbolical devices, the use of which led to the interrelation of different kinds of human activities and forms of sociality. The use of tools for work deals with the emergence of social aggrupation that made it possible for the emergence of language, which was inseparable from other symbolical activities like painting, that is, activities that were inseparable from each other in the endless capacity for development of *Homo sapiens*. The endless development of these resources was the basis of the development of human culture.

A new era had begun in the development of animal species; subjectivity is the quality of human processes that is co-produced with culture. Humans have killed each other on behalf of symbolical reasons that are historically located. Historically, the reasons for these endless rivalries motivated by symbolical values have disappeared from one historical period to another, making it evident that the rationalities that served as the bases of such rivalry were relative and, as such, historically

located; human beings, rather than being rational creatures, have been subjective animals since the beginning of humankind. There are no objectivities in human existence that are separated from subjective productions. This is what characterizes human phenomena. Reality and fiction are inseparable from human processes; this is the strongest and weakest trace of human existence.

Nonetheless, subjectivity is what defines us as human and is inseparable from the cultural, historical, and social character of human existence. It would be impossible to talk about a cultural, historical and social character of human beings without giving an explanation of what kind of phenomena made the relative, creative, and endless human condition possible. The specific ontological character of human subjectivity is based on the symbolical genesis of emotions; the symbolical-emotional units that are always beyond conscious representations and intentional language are continuously in process like flashes of snapshots that are impossible to be grasped by consciousness. These units, which never become isolated entities, and which exist within a very dynamic flux that has configured itself in lived events, defining how these events are singularly experienced by individuals and different social instances, are named in our theoretical proposal as subjective senses.

Subjective senses embody a new theoretical phenomenon according to which a new ontological definition of human subjectivity is proposed as capable of expressing how a social cosmos, historically and culturally located, appears as subjectively experienced. From the flux of subjective senses emerge new units of a higher order, the subjective configurations, which become sources of subjective senses that gain a relative independence of immediate experiences.

This definition of subjectivity allows advances in three important topics that, in my view, are important for a critical psychology that is culturally, historically, and socially located. These topics are outlined in what follows:

1. This definition of subjectivity represents a new way of treating human motivation. In fact, subjectivity is a motivational system,

since human motivations are subjective configurations that include multiple subjective senses (González Rey, 2014b). This definition transcends the rather extended comprehension of human motivations as entities with the function of driving human behavior toward a particular action, a function that is separate from others, thus maintaining the fragmentation between affective and cognitive processes. Motives have been understood on the basis of specific needs that define emotional orientation to one or other psychological function or behavior; thus, for example, motive is understood as different from thinking when it is really the subjective configuration of thinking about its own motivation (González Rey, 2012, 2014b).

The implications of this definition of human motivation for a critical psychology are the following: a) Human motivation does not depend on the facts involved in a concrete activity or relationship. Any human motivation, as a subjective configuration, integrates a social constellation of experiences through which individuals' social lives can be deciphered. b) Institutional processes and social symbolical constructions, objectified in normative systems and in informal systems of relationships, appear configured in individual and social motivational processes that are beyond the current lived experiences of both individuals and groups, making possible subversive positions in opposition to immediate institutional processes. Many political readings can be drawn from individual and group motivations. c) Motivation understood as subjective configurations allows a rethinking of human practices, stressing its emancipatory character since there are no external influences that can model human motivation. Human motivation emerges as individually and socially generative of experiences of individuals and groups, a fact that leads to an understanding of the human capacity to generate subjective development even in the face of adverse conditions.

2. This comprehension of subjectivity is inseparable from human activity. Actions appear as subjective configurations in process,

not as external to subjectivity. This fact transforms actions into permanent sources of subjective senses, which actively involve agents and subjects of actions, either individual or social. This malleability and continuous involvement in actions allow subjective senses and configurations to capture the multiple and simultaneous ways in which individuals, groups, and institutions experience social networks within which they are each interwoven with one another, allowing the identification of how social and individual subjectivities support the current dominant systems, even when they are verbally criticized and apparently rejected.

The importance of this fact for advancing a critical psychology is the understanding, through actions, of complex subjective configurations. As such, human actions of any kind are the path toward advancing knowledge of subjective configurations, which never appear explicit in human actions. This approach to human actions overcomes the rationalistic character frequently attributed to political movements, as well as the myths created around their leaders as being guided only by justice, two of the main reasons for the failure of revolutionary movements in the 20th century.

3. The proposal of subjectivity expresses a cultural-historical and social character since it is historically located, expressing itself through actions that are subjectively configured by the cultural symbolical devices of a particular epoch and generated within the specific forms of sociality of that epoch. Their malleability and continuous involvement in actions allows subjective senses and configurations to capture the multiple and simultaneous ways in which individuals, groups, and institutions experience the endless social symbolical productions within a single concrete life trajectory. Both individuals and groups understand social symbolical constructions like health, illness, race, gender, physical appearance, disability, and nationality in the way they are subjectively experienced. Never before in psychology, even within the positions taken by Soviet psychology, has it been possible to

advance the idea of human beings as configured by the ways in which social realities are experienced by individuals and groups within complex social networks, within which social and individual processes are reciprocally configured to each other.

The relevance of this fact for a critical psychology is to advance our capacity to put ourselves in the place of the Other, something that is frequently repeated as an ethical principle, but one that is little understood theoretically in order to facilitate paths toward new professional and social practices. In fact, this frequently applies to the ideas of emancipation, decolonization, and liberation are developed from world centers of political and economical power, becoming an expression of colonizing thinking when are a-critical imported to different contexts, as for example, Latin America, whose culture and problems are quite different from those that characterized the countries where those ideas were engendered. It is impossible, or at least conservative, to think that the main position oriented to political and social changes in one context, should be considered as having the same value in other contexts. The current theoretical proposal is a device to advance not only in the social sciences and philosophy, but also in terms of a system of social and professional practices in which the protagonists would be considered as active agents and not a mere epiphenomenon of ‘scientific authorities’ independently of the merits from which this authority has been gained.

CONCLUSION

This proposal on subjectivity is an attempt to put forward a cultural-historical psychology in its critical compromise, making it possible to understand the inseparable integration of individuals and social contexts, while understanding the reciprocal subjective configuration of both instances beyond the conscious intentions of individuals and groups. These conscious intentions can become important sources of subjective senses, but never as a result of the intentions of the protagonists. Conscious

productions never completely rule the unpredictable and malleable paths of social and individual change.

The inclusion of subjectivity in a psychology monopolized by the symbolical, whether through language, discourse, or conversational systems, allows individuals and motivation to be integrated in a critical psychology that has predominantly excluded individuals and their subjective processes from social functioning. In fact, to consider subjectivity as generalizable to human phenomena, whether social or individual, opens up new paths toward explanations of phenomena, which have previously been narrowly understood in terms of their communicative and linguistic expressions, consequently leading to new practices. Subjectivity is not contrary to social symbolical productions; it represents a new ontological definition that is inseparable from symbolical processes, but is not reducible to them.

Power, colonization, and hegemony are not simply intentions. They are subjectively configured as an expression of dominant social subjectivities, the implications of which are beyond individual consciousness. These could be considered “collateral effects,” using Beck’s language, that are configured in social subjectivity without the consciousness of its more progressive agents. Such collateral effects have been perceptible throughout history in multiple historical and scientific events, such as the cult of Stalinism through the positions of progressive Western figures, the abandonment of Latin-American critical social psychology due to the influence of social constructionism, and many other historical examples.

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Chapter 3

NEUROSCIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY TEXTBOOKS: RECLAIMING OUR NON-PSYCHOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION: IT'S ALL IN THE BRAIN

(Re)-imagine your typical first day at the university. You want to become a psychologist. The dean of the psychology department addresses the vast crowd you find yourself in, whilst at the front row your future professors are seated. You all hear the dean slowly pronounce the following words, he wants to be fully understood: “Anyone who is here for her or her own problems should now better leave.” Everybody freezes, no one dares to look at each other (at least you think), the first row turns around, no one leaves. Upon which the dean continues with a little smile,

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enjoying having had such an impact. Perhaps only afterwards, after finishing your study, you might be able to think that those freshman students who thought they had absolutely no reason to leave were most likely the worst cases truly in need of help. At least, those who stayed knowing they should or could have left, have had the chance to learn something on psychology. They might have come to understand something, despite themselves, despite having lacked the courage to stand up and challenge the self-complacent dean, or for that matter, any professor at the front row.

A caricature? Of course, but perhaps very recognizable for some of you. At least the words of the dean are based on a true story, as they were exactly the ones I was addressed with, now some time ago. But although they were uttered in a very typical psychologizing way, they might serve to make you think: why would you want to study psychology? If it is not that there is something wrong with you, why then? You want to understand? But what? Yourself, the Human being, the World? You want to help, if not yourself, then what? Those in need of your help? You want to change? But what? If not yourself, the World? The least what one can hope is that at the psychology department you find yourself in, there might be one lecturer (as I had the chance to have) who makes you think beyond the typical psychology textbooks, who puts this splinter in your mind: is psychology not most suited as a way *not* to know yourself, as a way *not* to understand the world, nor to help it or to change it?

In this respect – and here I want to come to the core theme of this chapter— the recent neuroturn in psychology might be very significant. Let me approach this with yet another anecdote: a while ago I was attending a meeting with a big gathering of PhD-students in the psychology department. As the doctoral candidates explained their “research subject” I couldn’t ward off the impression that I was in a medical faculty as each of them –literally without any exceptions— referred to brain scans, brain chemistry or brain regions. Which made me imagine a contemporary Diogenes, not running around in the city with a torch in broad daylight proclaiming desperately, *I’m looking for a human*, but running around the psychology department proclaiming, equally

desperately, to look for the psyche. Some statistical evidence from a typical psychology textbook “Psychology. A concise introduction” (Griggs, 2010): the word count of terms containing “psych” is 743 (of which 52 instances referring to “antipsychotic drugs”), whilst the words containing “neur” or “neuro” amount to 521, to which one can add 684 words containing “brain.” The war on the psyche seems settled. Hence, learn about the brain in order to not know yourself or the world? Just look at the current psychology textbooks: the traditional first chapter is one trying to make the case that psychology is a science while the second chapter is about neuroscience and the brain.¹ As if the claim that psychology is a science needs to be backed up with arguments from biology: turning thus psychology into a mere sub-discipline, if not a mere sub-science and thus signaling its de facto disappearance?

At the least, we have seen the advent of a hegemonic neuromonoculture. If once there was a, perhaps modest, panoply of approaches, visions, models if not ideologies within psychology, then surely since the 1990’s we are witnessing the “one ring to rule them all” situation. The 1990’s were proclaimed by President George H. W. Bush, via a presidential declaration, as “The decade of the brain” to raise both public awareness and funds. At the very least, this is the message that should be spread: *it’s all in the brain!* It is drummed home in the media, at work, in our schools: everybody up to the teenagers and even toddlers are told that they have a brain and actually coincide with it. Why is this the case? Why do psychology and the neurosciences lead to this massive interpellation: *hey you, this is what you are?*² At least one can observe that psychology and the neurosciences are inextricably linked to the phenomena of psychologization and neurologization, which, as I documented elsewhere (De Vos, 2012, 2013, 2016), are basically about the neurosciences delivering the coercive discursive coordinates for us to understand ourselves and the world. Could it be that the human species is the only species that must be told what it is, so that it would not wander off to other paths? “This is what you are” and “this is what the human is

¹ This is for example the case in Griggs (2010).

² The reference here is to Louis Althusser’s (1971) concept of interpellation.

about” are arguably the most powerful weapons of modernity shaping and colonizing the human being, shaping and colonizing the world. What then, and this is the scope of this chapter, are the chances of criticality vis-à-vis the arguably hegemonic neuroturn in the psy-sciences? I will approach this via a little excursion through some psychology textbooks as these are a prime example of how the neurosciences establish their firm but not unproblematic claim to be able to put its finger on the human and humanity.

MIND THE GAP

Textbooks are the place where the supposedly neat scientific results are proposed, where disputes are skimmed over, the consensus is taught and the road to a bright future is sketched. The underlying struggle for hegemony, that is, the struggle for which signifiers that will function as the central coordinates of the debate (cf. Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) is kept out of sight. Hence, it is always interesting to look in textbooks for the stitches and the short-circuits that are used to unify a field. With this I don’t mean that in psychology textbooks there is no room to describe disputes or opposing views but that all these are presented from the perspective that psychology, although a relatively young discipline, is as such a valid scientific field heading toward ever more progress and more unity. And, guess what, it is precisely here that the brain comes in as the great unifier, the great pacifier of the psychological field.

Hence in the same way as popular psychology is able to reveal some fundamental characteristics of mainstream psychology (De Vos, 2015) also psychology textbook simplifications are perhaps not just secondary as they might teach us something about psychology proper. Put succinctly: the necessary simplifications of textbooks might show us the essential simplifications within psychological science as such. Or phrased in relation to the brain as the great unifier of psychology: textbooks might reveal to us that the attempt to unify the field of psychology cannot but lead to paradoxes and anomalies. In this respect one sometimes wonders which

work and which energy must be devoted by both the lecturers and the students to gloss over these paradoxes and problems, which are so obviously present. One could understand these paradoxes as symptoms in a genuine psychoanalytic way, if I am allowed to do so: they are not concerning some kind of unbeknownst depths (as in the typical pseudo-Freudian understanding), but rather they are located at the very surface of a discourse: as being hidden in plain sight.

Let us start with the intriguing introduction in Richard A. Griggs's (2010) *Psychology: A Concise Introduction*: "Why are psychologists interested in how neurons work? Isn't this biology and not psychology? The answer is that it's both. Humans are biological organisms" (Griggs, 2010). Strange conclusion, no? Given the first premise that it's both biology and psychology, should there not be stated: "Humans are biological and psychological organisms"? But this is not what we read, we read: "Humans are biological organisms": end of the line, no psychology involved any more. Thus, is not the claim: the psychological is fully traceable within the neurological? And here we might already be able to track down a first problematic slope in the mainstream attempt today to ground psychology in neuroscience: if psychology is but the reflection of neurology, then it is essentially but an epiphenomenon of the biological and hence in the end collides with the neurological. And this is precisely what is stated there: "Humans are biological organisms." The brain as the black hole of psychology: "How we feel, learn, remember, and think all stem from neuronal activity. So, how a neuron works and how neurons communicate are crucial pieces of information in solving the puzzle of human behavior and mental processing" (Griggs, 2010, pp. 39-40).³

However, at the end of the day this collapse of psychology into neuropsychology seems to result in a lack of understanding. As Griggs's textbook testifies when dealing with neural transmission:

We have a fairly good understanding of how information is transmitted, but we do not have as good an understanding of exactly how

³ Or as in Coon & Mitterer (2012): "Although these neurons may seem far removed from daily life, everything you think, feel, and do begins with these tiny cells" (p. 52).

these vast communication networks of neurons oversee what we do and make us what we are. (Griggs, 2010, p. 40)

Faced with this vast not-knowing, invariably one can discern a great leap forward to close this gap:

After delivering their message, the molecules go back into the gap. Some are destroyed by enzymes in the gap, but others undergo reuptake—they are taken back into the axon terminals of the sending neuron to be used again. Because synapses are the channels of communication between neurons and the means by which the brain accomplishes most of what it does, they are vital to our well-being. (Griggs, 2010, p. 44)

In the last line we see how the gap between the psychological and the neurological is closed in one sweeping movement: connecting “well-being” directly and without much ado to the neurons. And to make sure, the issue is not only that we yet do not know how neurotransmitters truly affect our well-being, but, rather, the first and foremost left unexplained issue is *what is well-being?* How do you define that? Here the paradox comes in full force: although psychology is swallowed up by neuroscience (e.g., reducing well-being to neurological conditions) one still needs it as an independent variable to correlate to the neurological. Or, as we read in Coon and Mitterer’s (2012) *Introduction to psychology*: “What parts of the brain allow us to think, feel, perceive, or act? To answer questions like this, we must localize function by linking psychological or behavioral capacities with particular brain structures” (p. 61).

Localization depends on correlation: we map the brain with psychology. The colorful brain scan testifies that it is with psychology that the brain is colored in. Of course one could argue: are not *thinking, feeling, perceiving* or *acting* basic human activities? But one should not miss here that such categories cannot but be based on the assumptions, models and theories of psychology. Any claim on what *thinking, feeling, perceiving* or *acting* is (from which experiments are devised to study the brain), stems from particular psychological theories. Just consider how ‘thinking’ would

not be operationalized in the same manner by a behaviorist, a cognitivist or a psychoanalyst. The choice hence, with which psychological theory you color the brain, obviously becomes more crucial when it comes to pathologies or ‘disorders’: “PET scans suggest that different patterns of brain activity accompany major psychological disorders, such as depression or schizophrenia” (Coon & Mitterer, 2012, p. 62).

Again, depression or schizophrenia is not the same for a behaviorist, a cognitivist or a psychoanalyst. But of course, one could take recourse to the short-circuit and claim that now we can transcend the old theoretical disputes on what pathology is as brain research can show the biological ground of depression or schizophrenia. But is it not clear that here the tautological circle threatens to come in? The correlational move, linking psychological categories and ‘disorders’ to the neurological, risks to rest on an unacknowledged circularity; i.e., to establish the first term of the correlation there is proof sought within the second realm: this is where psychological research claims a ground in neuroscience, while the latter needs to rely on the supposedly independent knowledge of psychology. This is why “what is psychology” is always the first chapter in psychology textbooks. Albeit this is far from logical: if the brain is the base of all behavior and thoughts, as it said, a textbook ought to start from the brain, to then move to a chapter 2 dealing with psychology. In the psychology textbook of Hockenbury, Nolan, and Hockenbury (2015) we read: “This chapter will lay an important foundation for the rest of this book by helping you develop a broad appreciation of the *nervous system*—the body’s primary communication network” (p. 42).

Nevertheless, this is written in chapter 2. In psychology textbooks, the chapter on the brain and the neurosciences cannot but be the second chapter. One needs a prior chapter giving us the shaky grounds of psychology to correlate the brain to. So if Hockenbury et al. (2015) announce: “We’ll then move on to a guided tour of the brain,” we should understand this as follows: psychology guides the study of the brain whilst the brain itself is supposed to legitimize the guiding principles.

This paradoxical intertwining of psychology and neuroscience, or if we would use some more psy-lingo, this *folie-à-deux*, this *double bind*, further

allows us to see that the so-called reductionism of the neuroturn actually relies on a prior reduction: of reducing the human being to some simple psychological categories. These categories, such as well-being,⁴ are not only considered as straightforward, natural and theory-free, but are also meant to be easily operationalized to use in neuroscientific experiments. That is, if you want to see what part of the brain lights up or not (which is dichotomous model), a simple model of the human using black and white categories is what gets the easiest results. Considering this prior reduction, reducing the human to some simplifying, dull or even sad categories, is this not what textbooks are good at?

TEXTBOOK INFANTILIZATION

Textbooks address students, actually mature adults, in a infantilizing and pampering way. “Key issues” are often at least three times repeated: once in the text, once with an illustration, once in a highlighted side column, and then it possibly returns yet another time in the “recap” section. That “recap” section almost invariably contains “fill in the gap-questions,” as if the students are still in primary school. Overall, textbooks convey information in a light-hearted and entertaining way, using teasers and fun-to-know items (e.g., *did you know that “runner’s high” concerns the release of hormones in your brain*). Most typical are the following phrases in which facts are presented in an engaging, if not sensational way, including the use of attention demanding headlines:

Neurons, or nerve cells, are the basic elements of the nervous system. Their quantity is staggering—perhaps as many as 1 trillion neurons throughout the body are involved in the control. (Feldman, 2015, p. 51)

Your 3-pound brain is wrinkled like a walnut, the size of a grapefruit, and the texture of tofu. The next time you are in a market that sells beef brains, stop and have a look. What you will see is similar to your own

⁴ See for example Longo, Coyne, and Joseph (2017).

brain, only smaller. How could such a squishy little blob of tissue allow us to become neuroscientists? To make music of exquisite beauty? To seek a cure for cancer? To fall in love? Or to read a book like this one? (Coon & Mitterer, 2012, p. 51)

The Cerebral Cortex—My, What a Wrinkled Brain You Have!
(Coon & Mitterer, 2012, p. 64)

Textbooks used to be dry and dull. It was up to the lecturer to bring some life to it: his or her enthusiasm and his or her occasional humorous note could make the subject matter engaging or not. Now this task seems to be outsourced, or should we say, the textbooks themselves mimic this spicing up of dull course matter. But while of course a good lecturer also has his or her tricks, one could argue that textbooks plainly go for pimping the learning material and using the methodologies of the glossies and the current media formats.

A central example of the latter is the use of personalized stories and anecdotes: “When Vicky visited her neurologist, she was desperate,” opens the Chapter “Neuroscience and Behavior” of Feldman: “Her frequent and severe epileptic seizures weren’t just interfering with her day-to-day life—they were putting her in danger” (Feldman, 2015, p. 50). Chapter 2 of Hockenbury et al. (2015), also titled “Neuroscience and Behavior,” begins with “The headaches began without warning. A pounding, intense pain just over Asha’s left temple” (. 40). The “teasing” factor of the opening sentence of the chapter “Brain and behavior” in Coon and Mitterer (2012) is even more greater: “One morning Bryan Kolb lost his left hand. Up early to feed his cat, he could not see his hand,” only a few lines further it is explained that he suffered a stroke (p. 51). Of course, the use of these little vignettes with which the reader is supposed to easily connect is a format widely used in the media such as the daily TV news. The aim is to make science or the news more accessible by connecting it to a story, a concrete, anecdotal and personal story to which the reader or viewer is supposed to emotionally connect so as to, arguably, assess easier the bigger picture. This emotionalization and anecdotization could also be connected to psychologization: news and scientific issues are approached from a

personal, emotional level to get the message across. Hence this would mean that, in relation to the psychology textbooks, we learn psychology and neuroscience in a psychologizing way!

At the very least, should we not ask: if textbooks pose as glossies and easy going infotainment are we not heading to a kind of “teaching light” or “education light”? And if so, where will this commodification if not outright infantilization of higher education lead? If textbooks take students by their hand, then psychology textbooks seem the ultimate example of “the good mother”, giving you guidance and life advice. Or would it be that after all, as my dean of psychology suggested, this is what a lot of psychology students are after? “Don’t hide in your room or apartment—seek out social interaction (except when it interferes with studying). Remember, the brain thrives on social stimulation” (Hockenbury et al., 2015, p. 81).

What moreover should not remain unnoticed here – again the issue hidden in plain sight – is that the students are prompted to have social interaction, not because it’s nice to have, but because it’s good for their brain! So go to that party, even when the company does not interest you, it will stimulate your brain! Before the neuroturn your parents and the psy-experts prompted you to go out and meet people because it was good for you, or good for your social development, now the target of social stimulation is the “soft, spongy, mottled, and pinkish-gray”⁵ thing in your head. But, while the brain thus is your precious *agalma* that you should train and take care of, is this in the end not being pictured as something outside of, or at least external to, yourself? That is, when you should (and shouldn’t) do a lot of things just for your brain, *you yourself* are in the end the issue that drops out of the equation:

“Learn to play a musical instrument. If you can’t afford music lessons, join a singing group or choir.” (Hockenbury et al., 2015, p. 81)

What is the message here? Don’t worry if you are poor! So you are not prompted to use your brain to get out of poverty or, even, to change your

⁵ Such is the brain described in Feldmann (2015, p. 68).

(or others') particular social conditions, just use your brain to enjoy your poverty! Don't raise your voice; use your voice to sing a song to take care of your brain! This neuropsychology discourse thus turns out to be conservative and pushes you to accept social and economic inequalities:

The action of epinephrine and norepinephrine is a good illustration of the long-lasting effects of hormones. If you've noticed that it takes a while for you to calm down after a particularly upsetting or stressful experience, it's because of the lingering effects of epinephrine and norepinephrine in your body. (Hockenbury et al., 2015, p. 59)

The message is: it's neurobiology, stupid! Don't bother with or to try to deal with what might affect your life in a political, social, economic way: stay calm (the meme of our times?) and just sit out the lingering effects of epinephrine and norepinephrine.

But here it is important to think the positionings through: at first sight it appears as if the neuro-discourse deprives you of your potentially being upset or of your stress, it deprives you of your "perceptions, feelings, memories, and thoughts" as these are "given" to us, as we read with Griggs, by the nervous system.⁶ But can we not argue that this precisely shows that the true human feature is not about having perceptions, feelings, memories, and thoughts, but about taking one step back, to contemplate (to think, theorize, marvel about) perceptions, feelings, memories, and thoughts? Put simply: while the *homo neuro-psychologicus* depicted by the neurosciences is the one who from time to time feels bad, the real or the concrete human being is the one who thinks; *gosh I feel so bad*, the one who sings about it or writes about, the one who urgently has to tell someone about it (or not), the one who takes recourse to the neuropsychosciences to make sense of it. The problem, however, is that these neuropsychosciences, for structural reasons, can only deal with the *homo neuro-psychologicus*, they are unable to account for the fact that the human, as an encultured being of language, inevitably redoubles and for

⁶ "It is this chemical communication that allows the neurons to transmit and integrate information within the nervous system, giving us our perceptions, feelings, memories, and thoughts, as well as our ability to move" (Griggs, 2010, p. 50).

that reason never coincides with him or herself. As we read in Griggs's textbook: "This neuronal chemistry is the source of all of our behavior and mental processes, but we are only aware of its products (our behavior and mental processing) and not the intercellular chemistry itself" (Griggs, 2010, p. 50).

This misses the fact that the layperson, as a rule, is informed (through education, through the media and different other sources) of his or her intercellular chemistry. One could even argue: if the layperson is aware of his or her behavior and mental processes, then this is only for the same reason: his or her being instructed on his or her behavior and mental processes by the same apparatuses. At the very least, the human is that strange creature that needs to be told what he or she is (by religion, by ideology, by science). In times of neuropsychologization this means: the layperson needs to be brought in contact with his/her "emotions," his/her true self, s/he has to be informed on his or her psychology and the neurological underpinnings of all that.

The neurosciences however cannot but negate this paradox of subjectivity (being in the end nothing more than a promise of itself, of subjectivity as the very failure of subjectivation). This subject, as ever receding, as ever taking a distance from itself, would defy the mainstream scientific aspirations of the psy-sciences to pin down the human being. Hence the attempts in the textbooks to gloss over the paradoxes and to negate them with their "check your understanding" boxes, their "study alerts," their "engaging stories." However, as said, this muffling away from the messy, paradoxical parts of being human cannot but lead that they return through the cracks of the discursive edifice (for the Freudians amongst you: *the return of the repressed*). So we should look for the symptomatology: look for all the strange twists of (textbook)psychology, concealed as they are in broad daylight. This is perhaps what a formation in psychology is about: to make you immune to all these kind of paradoxical twists, to make you blind to what is 'hidden in plain sight'. Let me give yet another example:

[L]et's consider the physical component of emotion. In emotional situations the autonomic nervous system increases our physiological arousal. The sympathetic nervous system goes into its "fight-or-flight" mode—our heart rate and breathing increase, our blood pressure surges, we start sweating, our pupils dilate, we begin trembling, our digestion stops, and so on. This aroused state prepares us to react emotionally to the situation, whether our reaction is to run from an attacker, hug a loved one, or laugh at a roommate's joke. (Griggs, 2010, p. 56)

Wait a minute: fight or flight: in relation to love and jokes? In order to make sense of this you would need a non-mainstream theory on love and jokes. Perhaps a psychoanalytic approach would help us here to understand why one would flee or fight the ones we love, or to understand how much aggression can be involved in humor. But, as we repeatedly have referred to psychoanalysis, can we truly hold strong that this theory would be able to resist the turmoil of (neuro) psychologization and be a viable path for a critique of (textbook) psychology?

CRITICALITY: CONCLUSION

The psychology textbooks, as any other contemporary textbooks, take over the activity of the student: they make side-notes, draw summaries and even devise memory bridges which once the student him or herself had to concoct! In short, textbooks are thinking in your stead, they are not devised to make you think critically. Consider in this respect an astonishing sexist passage in the Feldman textbook:

[T]he hormone oxytocin is at the root of many of life's satisfactions and pleasures. In new mothers, oxytocin produces an urge to nurse newborn offspring. The same hormone also seems to stimulate cuddling between species members. And—at least in rats—it encourages sexually active males to seek out females more passionately, and females to be more receptive to males' sexual advances. (Feldman, 2015, p. 65)

But to make sure, in the Hockenbury et al. (2015) textbook, this kind of “neurosexism” is actually criticized. Referring to Jordan-Young and Rumiati, they state: “the hardwiring paradigm erases the effect of the social world in producing sex/gender differences, so that sex/gender hierarchies appear natural.” A bit further this argument that we need to consider “environmental factors” is stated as follows:

[B]iological factors themselves are strongly influenced by environmental factors, ranging from the food we eat to the stressful circumstances we experience...Thus, sex differences in structures or function might well be the result of the different life experiences of men and women, rather than the cause. (Hockenbury et al., 2015, p. 72)

Here we have a ‘critical’ perspective, leaving space for environment and experience. But is this not yet another naturalization and essentialization? Even if it brings back sex to the social, this is done by referring in the last instance to biology: the environmental factors that influence the biological ones mentioned are food and stress situations (remember the fight or flight biology): a critique hence of biologicistic arguments.

How, then, could we bring in a true criticality? Let me hereto consider the following “recap” exercise from the Feldman (2015, p. 67) textbook:

Maria saw a young boy run into the street and get hit by a car. When she got to the fallen child, she was in a state of panic. She was sweating, and her heart was racing. Her biological state resulted from the activation of what division of the nervous system?

- a. parasympathetic
- b. central
- c. sympathetic

However, could one not ask, who is the young boy? Who is Maria? How does she see the young boy in that very moment, or afterwards? But is not the primordial question: *what are the scenarios in the mind of the*

author here, depicting a caring mother figure? What is the fantasy, the ideologies at play in these scenarios? As I wrote elsewhere, don't study psychology, study psychologization. Or, mainstream psychology should not be opposed with one or another "critical psychology", but with a genuine *critique of psychology*. Consider in this respect another fragment, featuring another Mary, but this time from the Zimbardo-Johnson-McCann textbook, where a seemingly critical position is being taken against mirror neuron enthusiasm:

For example, if you see Mary grasp a cup, you might infer from the way she grasps it that she intends to drink from it (rather than, say, give it to someone else). Mirror neuron enthusiasts have assumed this type of action-understanding comes with the mirror neuron package, so to speak—in other words, that mirror neuron activity promotes deeper understanding of the person's motives and actions, leading to conclusions that mirror neurons underlie empathy and social understanding. But research outside the area of mirror neurons clearly shows that understanding others' motivations can occur outside a mirror neuron system, in part as the result of analytical thinking skills. (Zimbardo, Johnson, & McCann, 2012, p. 71)

Is this not a reasonable criticism, which is not evident in most textbooks? It says, wait a minute, does the mirror neuron explanation really explains something, *what about ...* But of course, there it only gives another model: the cognitive one: *we understand Mary reaching for a cup because....* But is this enough, do not the questions remain, who is Mary and who is she to the observer? And who might be the "someone else" evoked in the fragment? But of course the really interesting question is where we ask why Zimbardo, Johnson, and McCann set up this particular scenario and, subsequently, which are the original scenarios and fantasies mounted by the inventors of the mirror neurons?⁷

⁷ See, in this respect, the critique of Karin Lesnik-Oberstein (2015).

Perhaps one could take recourse here to psychoanalysis as the latter takes fantasies very seriously. Just consider the following quote, a joyful description of the brain in the Feldman textbook?

It is not much to look at. Soft, spongy, mottled, and pinkish-gray in color, it hardly can be said to possess much in the way of physical beauty. Despite its physical appearance, however, it ranks as the greatest natural marvel that we know and has a beauty and sophistication all its own. (Feldman, 2015, p. 68)

With a little formation in psychoanalysis one might be rapidly struck with the similarity of this quote with typical utterances regarding the sex organs: are these also not often been said to lack such physical beauty? Is the brain worship of Feldman, hence, not similar to a worship of the sex organs? Be that as it may, from where does this need to aestheticize the brain, to even celebrate it come from? In Flanders we have “I-Brain”,⁸ a yearly celebration of the brain. In The Netherlands there is an equally yearly “Breinfestijn” (Brain Festival),⁹ Singapore has its annual “Brain Fest”,¹⁰ and worldwide there is the “Brain Awareness Week” “to increase public awareness of the progress and benefits of brain research.”¹¹ Is the brain a new totem that needs its yearly carnival?¹²

We should perhaps refrain from psychologizing this as this would lead us to yet another false knotting of the social and the subjective. So let us stick to the formal issues at play: of the human transcending itself, as if in a “out of body” experience” to contemplate in marvel or in awe (*fascinans et tremendum*) his own being, in the meantime, redoubling of course in the person who marvels about him or herself. Perhaps to then multiply again: to marvel about the fact that one can marvel about oneself. This is where I claim psychoanalysis can offer some crucial theoretical tools: if we refrain from turning it into yet another psychology, psychoanalysis can help us to

⁸ <https://www.breinwijzer.be/i-brain/>

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIBlqBHFdnY>

¹⁰ <https://www.littledayout.com/event/brain-fest-2018/>

¹¹ <http://dana.org/BAW/>

¹² See, for a more elaborate analysis, De Vos (2016).

theorize subjectivity as always escaping itself.¹³ And precisely here, one could argue, at the point of the impossible closure of subjectivity, the social and the collective come in.

But to go deeper into the latter would lead us far. Let us, for the purposes of this chapter, keep it to the point that, in the end, criticality is about refusing the short-circuits that cover up how subjectivity always escapes itself, that deny the impossible closure of (inter)subjectivity. These short-circuits, as argued, are particularly visible in psychology textbooks, of which the prime example today is the short-circuit of thinking that something is explained when it is (arguably) located in the brain. Or thinking, in relation to my former dean's words, about the short-circuit of telling students that psychology is not about solving one's issues. Putting forward, on the one hand, that there would be something as a "non-pathological choice for studying psychology," and, on the other hand, suggesting that psychology would be as such an unproblematic, valid science.

Let us try to make this point for a last time with a final quote from a psychology textbook (Coon & Mitterer, 2012, p. 74):

"You might also be interested to know that music you would describe as "thrilling" activates pleasure systems in your brain. This may explain some of the appeal of music that can send shivers down your spine... (It may also explain why people will pay so much for concert tickets!)

This neuropsychological take might be criticized for explaining away your own explanations, your own meanings why a certain piece of music thrills you. But is the opposite not at hand? That is, is this neuropsychological reduction not about taking away *the very lack of meaning, your lack of understanding*, why for example a certain piece of music touches you so much? Hence it is only here that the mainstream neuropsychologies are potentially desubjectifying: not precisely by taking

¹³ In the words of Slavoj Žižek (2006b): "the subject is correlative to its own limit, to the element which cannot be subjectivized, it is the name of the void which cannot be filled out with subjectivation."

away subjective knowledge, meanings and stories, but by taking away *the lack* of subjective knowledge, meanings and stories. If subjectivity can be defined as the issue of trying to be the subject of one's own desubjectivation,¹⁴ then the neurosciences threaten to short-circuit this, precisely by filling this gap with general knowledge and meanings: the neuropsycommodities which entice you to become an “informed consumer of psychology” as it formulated in the Feldman textbook (Feldman, 2015, p. 81). We should therefore not reclaim our psychology, but rather, reclaim our non-psychology.

EPILOGUE

If psychology could be said to concern the theories and practices that negate the human non-psychology, could we then not after all turn to the neurosciences and its mitigation of “psychological” issues to biological factors? However as argued, neuroscience cannot escape psychological theories and models: psychology is the necessary ‘other’ to neuroscience. Suffice to take a quick look at one of the much used neuroscience textbook, as we read:

[W]hy some things feel good and others hurt: how we move; how we reason, learn, remember, and forget; and the nature of anger and madness. Neuroscience research is unravelling these mysteries. (Bear, Connors, & Paradiso, 2015, p. 4)

Arguably, the main supplier of these mysteries are the psyciences: they provide the supposedly objective issues for which to neurobiological base is sought. In this way the neurosciences are the culmination of what Ignacio Martín-Baró denounced as the combination of positivism with methodological idealism in psychological research:

¹⁴ I am borrowing here the words of Giorgio Agamben (2002).

It is an idealistic scheme that puts a theoretical framework first, ahead of its analysis of reality, and goes no further in its exploration of things than what is indicated by the hypotheses it has formulated. (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 22)

Hence, I argue, the positivism of the neurosciences gets bogged down in an obscured idealism via its unquestioned reliance on psychologistic assumptions which are never ‘objectively’ investigated. It is precisely this which leads to a whole array of problems and paradoxes which become visible in for example the psychology textbooks that we discussed, as these testify of how contemporary psychology itself takes recourse to the neurosciences precisely in order to try to escape the unruly and insubordinate non-psychological ground of subjectivity.

In this respect I started out this chapter sketching out how textbooks — together with the mainstream discourse in the psychological departments all over the world— engage in a specific interpellation of psychology novices so that these adopt the allegedly stable, sane, external, positivist perspective of science from which they become blind to the tautological psychology-neuroscience-psychology circle and which makes them numb to the paradoxes that are clearly and objectively hidden at plain side. However, we should add here that these *objective* epistemological problems only become visible, from our, particular, engaged and even partisan point of view, from where we, as critical psychologists, or better, as critics of psychology mount our critique.

To clarify this disclaimer, I need to rehearse my plea for a non-psychology once again (I am engaging in a kind of re-cap movement here, but rest assured, no exercises or rehearse questions are awaiting you). As the human speak-being is always at a distance of what he or she is said to be (or of what he or she believes him or herself to be) his or her psychology always escapes him or herself. The most important claim I make here is that there is not some kind of basic, underlying psychology that is out of reach for the mainstream neuropsychiences and which would be potentially really touched upon by critical psychology, decolonized or indigenous psychology. Rather, I argue, the true defining characteristic of

the speak-being lies in the escaping itself from any discursive (or ‘objectified’ discursive) designation. In this way I consider the speak-being as fundamentally non-psychological: from the moment it is interpellated within a psychological discourse, it takes the external position to look upon itself and thus elevates and distances itself from any possible psychologistic assignation. Most remarkably it is precisely here that the layperson meets the psychologist: both assume the point of view from nowhere! Albeit that is it in the first place the professional psychologist who succumbs to a major mistake: that is, he/she takes the human being for the “homo psychologicus,” missing and negating the non-psychological subject that always recedes and eludes itself.

In this respect, the problem is not only that psychology searches for the external position and aspires the objectivist meta-perspective (Martín-Baró, 1994; Pavón-Cuéllar, 2015), perhaps the crux of this is that psychology denies the layperson this very position. And from here, failing to acknowledge the non-psychology of the layperson, the psychosciences condemn the layperson to be directly itself, to coincide with the homo psychologicus. This is the interpellative, coercive, if not totalitarian move of psychologization that psychology engages in: it tells people what they are and should be. Psychology thus denies the fact that the human being is that being that is always at distance from its being, only through this negation psychology can pretend that a knowledge is possible, only in this way it can claim a closure of its theories and practices, only thus it becomes a tool for those powers that parasitize on the human precisely by shaping and thus colonizing their concrete lives and their concrete circumstances.

From here the question is, is there a theory, or, for that matter, a praxis possible which could call itself a non-psychology, a psychology (if one could still call it that way) that acknowledges the full weight of the non-psychology of subjectivity? For me, psychoanalysis, at its best, could relate to such theories and practices, but surely there are other possible candidates here, these could be found in the various attempts to deconstruct and to decolonize the neuropsychic complex (the world-wide conglomerate of

psychology, psychiatry, the neurosciences, and any other connected theory and practises).

For, as I hope will be clear, as such my critique targets the globalized *Euro-American* (neuro)psy-disciplines, in fact, I would argue, there are no other than the Euro-American ones. Hence, in line with my overall argument, I do not plead for a “global psychology” to be the alternative, but, rather, what should be envisioned is a “global non-psychology.” This should be the decolonizing move to make: not to promote alternative or indigenous psychologies, but, rather to engage in a global rejection of psychology, a universal or objective critique of psychologization and its colonization of minds both in the North and in the South and its mission to subject everybody to that other basic “one rule to rule them all,” that is, capitalism.

From here it will be clear that I also reject the possibility of a decolonized-depsychologized *neuroscience*. A non-psychology in the end has nothing to offer to the correlationism of neuroscience. In the end a critique of the *Euro-American* neuropsychy-disciplines cannot but deconstruct and empty out the psychologizing categories that tell the human being what it is in order to control and guide his or her being, colonizing and making it fit the capitalist modes of production and consumption.

So while the liberal economy presents itself as serving the real needs of the people, as these allegedly are assessable by the (neuropsychy)-sciences, we should oppose this false universalities with, to use the words of Slavoj Žižek, the “real people and natural objects on whose productive capacities and resources capital’s circulation is based and on which it feeds itself like a gigantic parasite” (Žižek, 2006a, p. 566). And to make sure what the real people and natural objects are, I argue, should not be regarded in an essentializing or naturalizing way. In the same way as according to Laclau ‘the people’ should be considered as having no meaning as such as it is the outcome of the struggle of how and with which signifiers to define ‘the people’ (the struggle for hegemony) (Laclau, 2005), also *what the human is* cannot but be understood as the outcome of a struggle which in the end is a social and political struggle. Or with Martín-Baró (1994): “truth...can become a task at hand: not an account of what has been done, but of what

needs to be done” (p. 23). Hence this issue is not merely to be conscious of one’s partiality, but rather to be consciously partial, to take sides, to be partisan, that is what being objective is about. Reclaiming our non-psychology, hence, cannot but be a political project.

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Chapter 4

EXPLORING CONSCIOUSNESS: OLD HABITS AND NEW HORIZONS

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“No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.” – Albert Einstein

THE PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

There may be no question more fundamental to the study of psychology than, “What is consciousness?” After all, without consciousness, psychology as a discipline would not exist, nor would any other science. Without consciousness, we would lack the ability to inquire. While we are certainly not the only species on the planet with

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consciousness, the innumerable gifts it affords us are what make us uniquely human.

Unfortunately, tackling this foundational question, often referred to as the “hard problem” of consciousness (Chalmers, 2007), has proven extremely difficult. As contemporary philosopher David Chalmers notes, “‘Consciousness’ is an ambiguous term, referring to many different phenomena. Each of these phenomena needs to be explained, but some are easier to explain than others” (2007, p. 225). In contrast to the hard problem, which not only addresses *what* consciousness is, but also *why* consciousness arises at all, there are several “easy” problems.

Among the easy problems are questions such as, “How do we focus our attention or deliberately control our behavior?” “How do we integrate information, and discriminate, categorize, and react to our environment?” “What is the difference between wakefulness and sleep?” And, “How do we access our own internal states and report on mental events?”

While many of the easy problems may be explained scientifically by way of quantitative measures and, most often, in terms of biological mechanisms, neither methodology sheds sufficient light on the hard problem. The hard problem is the problem of *experience*. In other words, “How is it that we may experience a ‘self,’ and an accompanying ‘inner’ life, at all?” It is the problem of *subjectivity*, or, *what it’s like* to be something (Nagel, 1974).

Further complicating the matter is the multitude of ways people tend to define consciousness. For example, sometimes we refer to a conscious action as one that is performed deliberately. As you read these pages with care and attention to detail, you would likely conclude that you are doing so consciously. We might also say that an organism is conscious when it is awake rather than asleep. In this example, we may deduce that a single-celled organism, such as an amoeba, is conscious insofar as it is performing its life functions in a wakeful state, as opposed to a vegetative or sleep state. However, would we further conclude that the amoeba is conscious of its actions (in the same way you are conscious as you read carefully), or that it is conscious of itself? Probably not, at least not in the way we think of so-called higher organisms—such as humans, primates,

dolphins, whales, elephants, etc.—as conscious, or, *self-aware* (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2016).

If an outside observer were to watch you while you were asleep at night, they might say that you have lost consciousness. Rather than being completely blank, however, you may be deeply immersed in vivid dreams. Likewise, a jarring sound from outside may instantly wake you up. How would that be possible if not for some aspect of wakeful consciousness, albeit a reduced version, remaining alert to your surroundings while you explore the dream world? Are you not also conscious of your dreams in the sense that you perceive them, haphazard as they may be? If you are fortunate, you may even become aware that you are dreaming in the midst of a dream, as in a lucid dream, which grants you *agency* within the dream. As you can readily see, the lines between what does and does not constitute consciousness are exceptionally blurry.

The challenge of sorting out the various aspects and attributes that we associate with the term ‘consciousness’ only mounts upon examining a wide array of contemporary psychology textbooks.

By and large, psychology textbooks written for introductory-level students do a lackluster job of defining consciousness and generally neglect the hard problem altogether. Instead, they tend to focus on the easy problems, devoting their pages to explaining the neuroscience of wakefulness and sleep, demonstrating the ways in which waking consciousness is attentionally deficient (Meyers & DeWall, 2015), glossing over a slew of theories as to why we dream, and outlining a variety of drugs and their so-called effects on consciousness (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2016; Coon & Mitterer, 2015; Meyers & DeWall, 2015; Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2016).

In short, the standardized, introductory psychology textbook—insofar as one exists—does little to inspire creative thinking or experiential, embodied understanding. With rare exception, such textbooks provide trivial knowledge that, while valuable for the burgeoning scientist, leaves the big questions untouched. Furthermore, the texts frequently resort to homogenizing language that pits a wide range of conscious states against a presupposed, ‘normal’ waking consciousness. In doing so, the texts

ostensibly disenchant the phenomenon of subjectivity altogether, dwelling instead on the ways in which first-person experience is ineffable, mundane and, ultimately, inferior as a science. Anecdotal and statistical examples are drawn almost exclusively from a Euro-American viewpoint and little to no attention is given to Eastern and indigenous psychologies, existential-phenomenological and transpersonal psychology, parapsychology, nor any other perspective that would otherwise challenge the Western, materialistic paradigm.

A beneficial first step toward revisioning the uniform approach to teaching consciousness at the introductory level would be to adequately delineate between the different ways consciousness is defined cross-culturally and trans-disciplinarily, as has been alluded to above. Laying all the cards on the table, so to speak, might seem daunting at first, but will almost certainly foster rich, expansive dialogue and refined comprehension. Additionally, the contemporary textbooks reviewed for the purposes of preparing this chapter—which by no means constitute an exhaustive list—make no mention of *phenomenology*, or, the study of the first-person experience of consciousness. This points to a larger, systemic bias within the scientific community—namely, the privileging of quantitative data and third-person observational, or, behavioral science, over subjective, qualitative reporting constitutive of human science. Similarly, there is very little discussion about our potential to develop our faculties of consciousness by way of mindfulness, meditation, and other forms of experiential learning, all of which can contribute to a drastically different way of perceiving the world.

In the same way that you would not use a hammer to hit a baseball, a good scientist ought to acknowledge that different tools are appropriate for different circumstances. In this case, objective science and replicable, experimental methods are sufficient for observing an individual's behavior and their correlative neurological and physiological functions. Only subjective methods, however, can yield insight into what it is like to experience that behavior—to experience consciousness *itself*. Ideally, the two approaches ought to co-exist parsimoniously, each one serving a generative function and fueling inquiry into the other. Sadly, the latter of

the two—specifically, first-person investigation—as well as a global, integrative approach to psychology, are noticeably absent from contemporary psychology textbooks, thereby painting a fairly opaque picture of psychology and suppressing much of what makes it extraordinary.

CRITIQUING THE WAY CONSCIOUSNESS IS PRESENTED IN INTRODUCTORY PSYCHOLOGY TEXTBOOKS

Defining Consciousness

The first significant challenge for any introductory psychology textbook attempting to educate about consciousness is to adequately define the term itself. But, as alluded to above, the ambiguity of the term ‘consciousness’ complicates such efforts and is frequently exploited by philosophers, psychologists, and scientists. “It is common to see a paper on consciousness begin with an invocation of the mystery of consciousness”—or, the hard problem, writes Chalmers (2007, p. 226)—only to find that the author’s own theory “turns out to be a theory of one of the more straightforward phenomena,” such as the brain states that correlate with wakefulness and sleep, for example. This bait-and-switch approach is especially prominent in contemporary psychology textbooks, perhaps in an effort to maintain a certain air of authority. In other words, introductory psychology textbooks tend to be written matter-of-factly so as to convey the impression that they are a definitive source on the subject. To the critical eye, however, these texts fall prey to the same issue of avoiding that which we do not know in favor of focusing exclusively on that which we do know. This trend reinforces a particular worldview or dominant paradigm Kuhn (1970) described as “normal science.” The crux of this concept is the notion that scientists not only operate from their preconceived biases and conditioned ideologies, as is demonstrated by the

phenomenon of inattentional bias (Meyers & DeWall, 2015), but also wish to avoid rocking the boat so as to maintain business as usual.

Case in point, Meyers and DeWall (2015) casually define consciousness as “our awareness of ourselves and our environment” (p. 92). They note that at its onset in the late-1800s, psychology was essentially devoted to “the description and explanation of states of consciousness” (Ladd, 1887). During this period, *introspection*—a technique pioneered by Wilhelm Wundt, widely considered the father of modern psychology—relied on experimental self-observation to study the workings of the mind and was considered a viable, albeit tenuous method of investigation. With the rise of the scientific method and psychology’s yearning to be taken seriously as an empirically-grounded discipline on par with the natural sciences (e.g., biology and physics), introspection and similar, first-person methods were chastised in favor of strict, repeatable, third-person observation. This shift led to the rise of behaviorism and psychology’s new role as “the science of behavior.” During this period, which lasted roughly from the 1930s through the 1960s, at which point behaviorism was joined by cognitive science (and, ultimately, cognitive neuroscience) as the two major forces in scientific psychology, the study of consciousness suffered a setback from which it has yet to fully recover. According to Meyers and DeWall, “today’s science explores the biology of consciousness” (2015, p. 92) and their vague definition of consciousness presages a chapter devoted almost entirely to this theme.

Similarly, Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo (2016, p. 130) define consciousness as “the feelings, thoughts and aroused states of which we are aware,” and quickly launch into an examination of the “levels or gradations” of consciousness, also referred to as states of consciousness. Not surprisingly, they take up the topic primarily through biological and sociological lenses as well, tending toward descriptions of neural activity during wakefulness and sleep (e.g., pp. 134-138), for example, as well as by providing statistical averages across largely Euro-American demographics (e.g., p. 132).

Griggs (2017) restricts his conversation on consciousness to five pages at the end of a chapter on Neuroscience, and further confines it to a

discussion of “Consciousness and the Sleeping Brain” (p. 86). He defines consciousness as “a person’s subjective awareness of his inner thinking and feeling as well as his immediate surroundings” (p. 86). “What is consciousness and what underlies it?” writes Griggs (2017, p. 86), are “the most intriguing questions” “left for neuroscientists to answer about the brain and its many functions.” This example clearly illustrates the dichotomy between studying consciousness itself—which he adequately defines in terms of subjective experience—versus studying the biological mechanisms that support consciousness via an objective lens.

For Coon and Mitterer (2015), whose textbook offers concise “Modules for Active Learning,” “Consciousness consists of your sensations and perceptions of external events as well as your self-awareness of mental events, including thoughts, memories, and feelings about your experiences and yourself” (pp. 186-187). Speaking candidly to their readers, the authors acknowledge that their descriptive definition is “based on your own subjective, *first-person* experience” and, in doing so, give a nod to the hard problem of consciousness—specifically, “what it feels like to be you” versus what it feels like to be someone else (p. 186). Despite their promising start, the authors fail to explore the quandary further, yielding instead to the prevailing forces within scientific psychology and concluding that “psychologists adopt an objective, *third-person* point of view” on account of “the difficulty of knowing other minds.” “A key challenge of psychology,” they suggest, “is to use objective studies of the brain and behavior to help us understand the mind and consciousness” (p. 187). While the authors are not off base in their remarks, by quickly pivoting away from the hard problem in favor of the easy ones, they avoid broaching the issue of subjectivity any further, deeming it an impossible endeavor and therefore, unworthy of psychological inquiry.

Of the textbooks reviewed, Cacioppo and Freberg (2016) do the most thorough job of defining the various nuances surrounding the term ‘consciousness.’ Despite devoting little more than two pages to this endeavor, they begin by stating that “Consciousness refers to knowing or being aware of ongoing experiences occurring both internally and in the

world around us” (p. 194). The authors then take the further, useful step of explaining that “the term *consciousness* has multiple meanings” (p. 194). Using sub-headers to delineate between “Consciousness as Variations in Alertness,” “Consciousness as an Awareness of Ongoing Sensations,” and “Consciousness as Self-Awareness,” the authors succeed in orienting readers toward this expanded perspective (p. 195). The authors even invoke William James (1890), the father of American psychology, who coined the term “stream of consciousness” in his attempt to describe the workings of conscious awareness, which he believed is perpetually in flux. James’s contributions to the study of consciousness are noticeably absent from the other chapters reviewed herein.

In summation, each textbook has its strengths and weaknesses when it comes to defining consciousness and, as with most things, an integrative approach would be ideal. The lack of consensus among the authors is particularly troubling seeing as instructors often choose introductory psychology textbooks, of which there are countless versions and editions, arbitrarily. Thus, students exposed to one textbook may potentially proceed with a different though, in most cases, equally substandard understanding of what consciousness means versus comparable students exposed to another textbook. One would hope that, at the very least, future textbooks will acknowledge the difficulties in defining consciousness, similar to Coon and Mitterer’s (2015) approach, while also providing nuanced, alternative examples, such as in the case of Cacioppo and Freberg (2016). Additionally, ample attention ought to be paid to representing alternative perspectives on consciousness as have been espoused by marginalized branches of psychology and, specifically, non-Western groups, some of whom have been studying consciousness for thousands of years. This approach will be revisited later in this chapter.

Presupposing “Normal Waking Consciousness”

Along with the complications that arise via a widespread deficiency in the ways that consciousness is defined, are the consequences that result

from presupposing the existence of “normal waking awareness” (Meyers & DeWall, 2015, p. 92) that functions “much like yours and mine” (Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2016, p. 129). To be clear, this critique is not intended as an affront on the authors of contemporary psychology textbooks that employ homogenizing language. Rather, it is the acknowledgment of the shortcomings of largely standardized, biologically-and-statistically-driven, Euro-American approaches to the study of psychology. Such language not only ‘others’ certain aspects of consciousness that are not deemed ‘normal’ or ‘average,’ but potentially alienates readers that do not adhere to the authors’ definition of the status quo.

Case in point, each textbook reviewed both implicitly and explicitly juxtaposes so-called normal consciousness versus altered states of consciousness. Beyond overt, normative declarations such as those noted in the previous paragraph, the chapters in question focus almost exclusively on deviations from the norm, thereby reinforcing this ideology. As we will consider in the next section (“The Big Four”), contemporary psychology textbooks, with little exception, follow a particular formula that includes an investigation of wakefulness and sleep, attention (or, typically, inattention), dreaming, and drugs and their purported effects on consciousness. This structure serves the purpose of positioning the reader as ordinary, perhaps in an effort to inspire conviviality between author and reader. Simultaneously, altered states of consciousness are described as fluctuations and are generally grounded by way of neural markers and percentage points.

For example, the examination of consciousness versus unconsciousness in relation to waking and sleeping is invariably centered on a discussion of the circadian rhythm and stages of sleep, including non-REM and REM sleep (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2016; Coon & Mitterer, 2015; Meyers & DeWall, 2015; Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2016). Readers are taught that their biological propensity for alertness shifts as they age, such as the transition from “being [night] owls to being [morning] larks” (Meyers & DeWall, 2015, p. 101). “Most 20-year-olds are evening-energized ‘owls,’” write Meyers & DeWall (2015, p. 100), “with performance improving across the day.” The authors reinforce their claims

with statistically-driven ‘facts,’ though they fail to include the details of the studies they cite. Intend, they frequently rely on words like ‘most’ and ‘tend’ to imply statistical significance.

Meyers and DeWall write, “Night owls tend to be smart and creative” (Giampietro & Cavallera, 2007), while “Morning types tend to do better in school, to take more initiative, and to be less vulnerable to depression” (Meyers & DeWall, 2015, p. 101; Preckel et al., 2013; Randler, 2008, 2009). It is not our intention to debate whether these and similar studies cited by the authors are reliable—this is not the point. Rather, the authors have established standards that the readers, the vast majority of whom are undergraduates, must now compare themselves against. They may try to conform to the norms prescribed by the authors, or rebel against them. Meanwhile, their individual experience goes entirely unacknowledged.

Likewise, a typical description of consciousness (or lack thereof) during sleep is described almost entirely in biological discourse and looks something like this: “When we are awake and alert, our brain (as measured by an EEG) emits *beta waves*”; “*Stage I sleep* is a light sleep and is characterized by *theta waves*”; “*Stage II sleep* is characterized by *sleep spindles*”; “*Stages III and IV sleep* are referred to as *slow-wave sleep*” during which “you begin showing *delta* brain-wave patterns” and “Heart rate, respiration, body temperature, and blood flow to the brain are reduced” (Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2016, p. 136-137). Again, the issue here is not whether these biological markers are accurate—they most definitely are—or whether such information is useful for burgeoning psychology students—it is. The problem is that, in this example, sleep and sleep-related phenomena are dehumanized and described exclusively via the language of third-person observation of EEG reports. The reader learns little to nothing about what the experience of sleep is like from the first-person perspective. Granted, the experience of sleep is typically inaccessible to self-awareness and, therefore, is colloquially regarded as inferior to wakefulness, lucid dreaming and related phenomena demonstrate that this is not always the case.

Sadly, overreliance on biological and statistical analysis as devices for describing consciousness prevents us from describing consciousness from

the perspective of consciousness itself. Were we to do so, we would likely realize—much as James (1890) did—that consciousness is always in flux, such that the dichotomy between waking and sleeping is entirely too crude (Atlas, 2017; Gackenbach & LaBerge, 1988), and the notion of ‘normal waking awareness’ is fallacious. What suffers most of all is the recognition that each person’s experience of psychological phenomena, or, *qualia* is utterly unique. When the language of psychology serves the purpose of perpetuating a herd mentality and deflecting attention away from the individual’s own experience and investigation, the richness of psychological diversity present in any given classroom is squandered and an opportunity to learn more about the hard problem of consciousness is lost.

The Big Four

Contemporary psychology textbooks approach the study of consciousness in strikingly similar ways. With the exception of Griggs (2017), each chapter reviewed herein presents consciousness vis-à-vis four major sub-categories. They are: 1) the psychology of wakefulness and sleep; 2) the study of attention; 3) theories as to why we dream; and, 4) a survey of drugs and their so-called effects on consciousness, including tolerance and addiction. Though the order in which these themes are displayed varies from text to text, as does the nuanced language used to describe each category, the general impression each chapter creates is virtually identical.

As has been previously alluded to, the vast majority of the content in these chapters is written from a biological and/or sociological perspective, bolstered by statistics, and largely ignores first-person experience. To reiterate, this particular, uniform approach to teaching and studying consciousness is not completely irrelevant. On the contrary, the Big Four, as we are calling them, are valuable corollaries of consciousness and ought to be included in a survey of consciousness studies. But, by attending to these themes exclusively, little to no attention is paid to the study of

consciousness *itself*, nor to disparate or applied perspectives on consciousness. Consequently, the implicit biases of materialistic science are reinforced (Kuhn, 1970).

For example, in their section, “What happens to consciousness during waking and sleep?,” Cacioppo and Freberg (2016, p. 199) state that “Varying states of awareness can be described using electroencephalogram (EEG) recordings, which provide a general measure of overall brain activity” (p. 202). While technically correct, the authors have defaulted to the neuroscience of consciousness and neglect to mention that varying states of awareness may also be described by way of qualitative, self-reporting and other subjective, introspective practices such as mindfulness meditation (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). The message to readers is clear: the science of psychology is synonymous with the observation of behavior, be it physical action or neural mechanics.

The same authors begin their discussion on dreams by proclaiming, “From the earliest times in our history, people have searched for the significance and meaning of their dreams” (Cacioppo and Freberg, 2016, p. 209). The authors go on to cite the ancient Egyptians, who “believed that dreams predicted the future,” as well as Freud, “who argued that the unconscious mind expressed itself symbolically through our dreams.” Rather than exploring this topic that, admittedly, has captivated people for eons, the authors quickly pivot. “These are interesting ideas,” they conclude, “but what does science have to say about dreaming?” The authors then proceed to devote two additional paragraphs to the ways in which dream behavior correlates with brain activity and physiological arousal.

Unlike Meyers and DeWall (2015) and Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo (2016), who make no mention of lucid dreaming, Cacioppo and Freberg (2016) define lucid dreaming as a state in which “dreamers become aware that they are dreaming and may use this awareness to control or direct the content of the dream” (p. 210). Unfortunately, their definition is inherently flawed (Atlas, 2017; Hurd, 2012)—the popular notion that lucidity is synonymous with dream control is a distinctly Euro-American ethos. Furthermore, the authors expediently reduce this quirk of consciousness to

the byproduct of the brain's frontal lobe "inexplicably 'wak[ing] up'" during a dream (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2016, p. 210). As a dream researcher, it is particularly troubling to see the topic of lucid dreaming treated in this way. On the contrary, lucid dreaming is a trainable skill that is far from inexplicable. It is not simply the brain that wakes up in a lucid dream, it is the person! Lucid dreaming is especially relevant for psychology as it offers us unparalleled access into the study of consciousness, both subjectively and objectively.

To their credit, Coon and Mitterer (2015) devote an entire module to "Exploring and Using Dreams," and include sections on "Dream Work" and "Dreams and Creativity." In the latter section, they describe lucid dreaming as the "rare but fascinating experience" of being "fully awake within the dream world and capable of normal thought and action." While their definition leaves room for improvement, they rightly suggest that lucid dreaming "makes it possible to explore dreams with firsthand data from the dreamer's world" and "can convert dreams into a nightly 'workshop' for emotional growth" and "enlightening experiences" (p. 224). Lucid dreaming is not the only area worthy of consideration when it comes to teaching psychology students about consciousness. Applied, experiential approaches such as Coon and Mitterer's are far more aligned with the hard problem at the root of psychology than the peripheral and, in many cases, dehumanizing efforts of other texts, and ought to be included in any survey on the subject.

Another area worthy of critique is that of drugs and their so-called effects on consciousness. Once again excepting Griggs (2017), each of the introductory psychology textbooks reviewed provides a survey of various psychoactive substances and a discussion on tolerance, withdrawal, and addiction. The tone of these writings is, without a doubt, driven by a moralistic imperative. For example, sections on amphetamines are complimented by disparaging imagery of addicts suffering from withered skin, lesions and tooth decay (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2016; Meyers & DeWall, 2015; Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2016). Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo (2016) employ thematic headings such as "Caffeine: Java Jitters" (p. 158) and "Nicotine: A Really Bad Habit" (p. 159). Similarly, Meyers

and DeWall (2015) describe alcohol in terms of “Slowed Neural Processing,” “Memory Disruption,” and “Reduced Self-Awareness and Self-Control” (p. 119-120).

In stark contrast to the neurological and physiological methodologies favored throughout the remainder of their chapters, the language employed by the authors in their respective sections on drugs—particularly in the case of Myers and DeWall (2015)—overwhelmingly emphasizes the subjective experience of intoxication and its detrimental effects, while neurological explanations are relatively underrepresented. In other words, the authors are both implicitly and explicitly discouraging drug use. Though the authors may have their readers’ best interests at heart, the use of such rhetoric is hardly scientific, especially in light of their pre-established bias toward biologically-and-statistically-driven data.

More troubling is the authors’ depiction of hallucinogens and, in particular, LSD and psilocybin. According to Meyers and DeWall (2015), under the influence of hallucinogens people frequently “experience dreamlike scenes so real that they may become panic-stricken or harm themselves” (p. 124). Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo (2016) write that “On good trips, [LSD] users experience enjoyable sensations, but bad trips produce terrifying thoughts and feelings, including fears of insanity, death, or losing control” (p. 165). They add that “rare yet serious documented long-term effects of LSD are *persistent psychosis* and *hallucinogen persisting perception disorder*,” as well as side effects such as “short-term memory loss, paranoia, nightmares, and panic attacks” (p. 165; see also Gold, 1994).

Despite their covert warning, Meyers and DeWall (2015) whimsically introduce LSD as having been created by the chemist Albert Hoffman “one Friday afternoon in April 1943” when he “accidentally ingested” the substance while working in his lab (p. 124). In the seven lines of text they devote to the subject—versus six paragraphs on marijuana and more than one page each on alcohol and nicotine—the authors describe how Hoffman’s experience “reminded him of a childhood mystical experience that had left him longing for another glimpse of ‘a miraculous, powerful, unfathomable reality’” (p. 125). However, in the ensuing sentence the

authors conclude that the experience “may vary from euphoria to detachment to panic” (p. 125).

Despite Meyers and DeWall’s claim, Cacioppo and Freberg (2016, p. 219) write, “In 1938, researcher Albert Hoffman reported some unusual sensations” while working with LSD. “Hoffman deliberately ingested some of the chemical,” suggest the authors—in contrast to Meyers and DeWall—“and reported vivid, colorful visual hallucinations.” Also departing from Meyers and DeWall, the authors remain somewhat neutral in their reporting, stating that “LSD’s ability to produce hallucination remains poorly understood” and “Further research is necessary to identify the mechanisms for this experience.”

As has already been established, Coon and Mitterer (2015) have adopted an alternative, applied approach to teaching psychology as evidenced by their module on “Exploring and Using Dreams.” Subsequently, they title their comparable section on drugs, “Hallucinogens—Tripping the Light Fantastic.” Contrary to their intriguing moniker, the discussion that follows is exceedingly grim. They write, “LSD can produce hallucinations and psychotic-like disturbances in thinking and perception” (p. 219). The authors make no mention of mystical experience nor do they attempt to describe what they mean by “Tripping the Light Fantastic,” perhaps assuming that readers are already familiar with popular notions of psychedelic experience. Of all the authors reviewed, Coon and Mitterer are the only ones that mention psilocybin, the active compound in ‘magic’ mushrooms, or mescaline, the narcotic found in the peyote plant. Still, the authors only allude to these substances alongside a list of other hallucinogens and do not describe them at all.

Collectively and without exception, these accounts are sorely antiquated and culturally insensitive. While it would be too tedious to describe at length the many attributes of hallucinogens, including several others (e.g., ayahuasca, san pedro, iboga, soma, etc.) considered sacred among indigenous cultures, as well as the important roles they have played throughout human history (Luke & Friedman, 2010; Walsh, 2007), suffice to say they are misrepresented and underestimated. Our intention herein is not to offer a full-fledged endorsement of hallucinogens, nor to encourage

experimentation among introductory psychology students. Rather, it is to advocate for a more neutral and thorough presentation of these and other substances, as well as the ‘non-ordinary’ experiences (Grof, 2000) they frequently catalyze.

For example, none of the contemporary psychology textbooks reviewed mention anything about the 1960s countercultural revolution, of which LSD was an integral part. This cultural shift redefined America and led to tremendous intercultural exchange, including the Western adoption of a host of holistic, mind-body and indigenous practices and therapies, such as yoga, meditation, mindfulness, acupuncture, etc. The investigation of such practices and their effects on consciousness gave life to and, unfortunately, has been relegated to transpersonal psychology, which remains obscure and marginalized among mainstream academic psychology. The groundbreaking work of Charles Tart (1969) and Stanislav Grof (1976), for instance, who conducted many years of empirically-driven, psychedelic-and-related research deserves mention, as does the work of Ralph Metzner (2005), Roger Walsh (2007), and a host of other scholars. Future editions of these and other introductory psychology textbooks might also consider referencing emerging studies on the significant psychological benefits of psilocybin use amongst terminal cancer patients (Ross et al., 2016).

Lastly, as Albert Hoffman would likely attest to and as several of the textbook authors (Coon & Mitterer, 2015; Meyers & DeWall, 2015) hint at but ultimately avoid, there is extensive literature (e.g., Grof, 1976, 2000; Metzner, 2005; Tart, 1969) describing the potential of hallucinogens to induce profound mystical states, psychological healing and psychospiritual realization—sometimes referred to as ‘exceptional experiences’ (Atlas, 2017; Broad, 2002, 2003; White, 1997). Rather than “Distorting Reality,” as Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo (2016, p. 163) contend, in some instances hallucinogens may serve the opposite purpose of clarifying reality and revealing more of it than we are typically capable of perceiving. Though hallucinogens are certainly not the only way to alter consciousness and foster insight, such an admission and subsequent investigations could ultimately revolutionize the way we approach the study of consciousness.

REVISIONING THE WAY CONSCIOUSNESS IS TAUGHT

In light of our critique of the ways in which contemporary psychology textbooks treat the subject of consciousness, it is only fitting that I propose an alternative vision. As has been duly noted, the approach taken by the authors whose chapters have been reviewed herein is not irrelevant to the study of consciousness, yet it is incomplete. A more integrative approach would acknowledge and investigate the hard problem of consciousness—that is, the problem of consciousness *itself*—in addition to the easy ones. Such a curriculum would examine both first-and-third-person observations of consciousness, coupling the generalizability of quantitative data and neurological inquiry, for example, with rich, qualitative, highly valid descriptions of conscious states and subjective experience. Working in tandem, the two methodologies would give life to a holistic approach that not only vindicates the historical roots of Western psychology, but also acknowledges an array of global perspectives on consciousness and charts an exciting course for the future of psychology.

Firstly, it is imperative that a revised textbook adequately defines the notion of consciousness, carefully attending to the nuanced ways in which the term is employed both academically and colloquially. For guidance, we might revisit Cacioppo and Freberg’s (2016) thorough definition—“Consciousness refers to knowing or being aware of ongoing experiences occurring both internally and in the world around us” (p. 194)—and draw from their delineation between “Consciousness as Variations in Alertness,” “Consciousness as an Awareness of Ongoing Sensations,” and “Consciousness as Self-Awareness.” An important next step would be to devote adequate time to each sub-category, rather than favoring one over the others on account of convenience or in keeping with the status quo. Current texts lean heavily on the first category, favoring the objective study of states of consciousness over inquiry into what it is like to be self-aware, for example.

Despite the criticisms noted above and several revisions that ought to be made (i.e., avoiding homogenizing language, monitoring for implicit biases and moral imperatives, etc.), by and large the existing texts do an

adequate job of presenting this objective approach by way of the Big Four. I am not proposing that those sections be omitted from future chapters on consciousness—they are indeed valuable. However, the larger issue of what is missing—namely, the subjective approach, including anecdotal evidence, marginalized viewpoints and experiential exercise, all of which might be inserted alongside the Big Four or even in a separate chapter—is worth further consideration.

Phenomenological Psychology

One area deserving of inclusion and employment is phenomenology. Phenomenology is a human science methodology that focuses on the study of consciousness and the objects of direct experience. The roots of phenomenology are often traced to German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who “argued for a new approach to human knowledge in which both the traditional concerns of philosophy (such as metaphysics and epistemology) and the modern concern with scientific causation would be set aside in favor of a careful attention to the nature of immediate conscious experience” (Phenomenology, 2007). Though Husserl was not a psychologist by trade, his first-person approach to studying consciousness, which he called “transcendental phenomenology” (Husserl, 1970), shared much in common with Wundt’s introspection, yielded insight similar to James’s notion of the stream of consciousness, and even influenced Freud’s psychoanalytic theory (Wertz et al., 2011). According to Husserl, the underlying tenet of phenomenological inquiry is that it attempts to return to “the things themselves” (Husserl, 1901, p. 7). In other words, phenomenological inquiry requires the investigator to identify his-or-her presuppositions so as to avoid pandering to the data.

To practice phenomenology as a method, a phenomenologist must assume an “attitude of consciousness that transcends the orientation toward the human mode of being conscious and that is also free from worldly and empirical assumptions” (Husserl, 1913/1962; Giorgi, 2006, p. 92). The key features of this attitude are the performance of the *epoché*—or,

bracketing—and the phenomenological reduction. To bracket is to put aside all knowledge of the phenomenon that is being explored, including knowledge derived from readings, secondary sources and previous, personal experiences, prior to examining the phenomenon in question. Subsequently, the phenomenological epoché is practiced both theoretically—for example, when setting aside what the investigator already believes about the subject under investigation, insofar as this is possible—and experientially by directly perceiving a given state of consciousness, experience, or piece of data with a beginner’s mind.

The phenomenological reduction refers to the investigator’s refraining from positing that the phenomenon in question actually exists—that it is objectively real—as opposed to it merely being present in his or her subjective consciousness. In this sense, Husserl distanced himself from the natural scientific, positivist attitude in favor of genuine introspection. He did not claim that it was impossible to arrive at objective conclusions; rather, he cautioned that phenomenologists should not mistake their subjective conclusions for fact. Finally, Husserl suggested that in formulating an interpretation of a given phenomenon, the phenomenologist employs “imaginative variation”—an intuitive faculty that delineates between “which aspects are essential to the appearance of the phenomena and which aspects are contingent” (Giorgi, 2006, p. 93).

Phenomenology requires us to not take appearances for granted and to be cognizant of our biases lest they influence our perception. For example, if we were to employ phenomenology to try to discern what an apple is, we would have to search for the qualities the apple possesses that make it distinct from any other object in existence. We could say that the apple is red and round, though those features alone do not make it an apple. If observing it from a distance, it would be necessary for us to bracket what we know about how apples taste. After all, we do not know for certain that everyone experiences the taste of an apple in the same way, nor do we know what this particular apple tastes like (or if it has any taste at all). We could not revert to a description of the chemical composition of an apple, as our consciousness does not have immediate access to this information. This exhaustive process of reduction would continue until we arrive at

something akin to a common denominator—a rich description of what an apple is, or its *apple-ness*.

This might sound utterly abstract and, in the case of an apple, fairly ridiculous, but when it comes to understanding what an experience is like for ourselves or for another person, it is as refined a method as there is. Phenomenology may not yield generalizable results similar to the kind that a brain scan might offer us, but it can produce highly valid, *intersubjective* interpretations—that is, psychological interpretations that gain consensus amongst other researchers and the experiencers themselves. Phenomenology is capable of examining “*what a subject matter is in all its real world complexity*” (Wertz et al., 2011, p. 2)—it is a microcosmic perspective that honors nuance and exceptionality. Conversely, a brain scan tells us nothing about the nuanced experience itself, thus the two methods ought to be thought of as complimentary, rather than exclusive. In fact, the emerging field of neurophenomenology (Thompson, 2015; Varela, 1996), which examines the physiological responses of the nervous system *during* nuanced experiences, explicitly attempts to bridge the divide between subjective and objective description.

Transpersonal Psychology

Another area of psychology deserving of inclusion in any chapter on consciousness is transpersonal psychology. Born out of Maslow’s humanistic psychology, which pushed back against behaviorism in an effort to both study and honor the whole person, historically, transpersonal psychology has examined the spiritual dimension of the human psyche (Grof, 2008, p. 47). Transpersonal psychology focuses on experiences in which “the sense of self expand[s] beyond (*trans*) the individual person or personality to encompass wider aspects of life and the cosmos” (Walsh, 1995, p. 25). According to Grof, one of the movement’s figureheads, transpersonal psychology arose in response to “The renaissance of interest in Eastern spiritual philosophies, various mystical traditions, meditation, ancient and aboriginal wisdom, as well as the widespread psychedelic

experimentation” of the 1960s (Grof, 2008, p. 47). Transpersonal psychology attempts to study “the entire spectrum of human experience, including various non-ordinary states of consciousness” (Grof, 2008, p. 47).

An early contributor and anthropologist who conducted groundbreaking fieldwork on shamanism, Harner (1980) suggests that Western psychology suffers from both ethnocentric and cognicentric bias. It is ethnocentric insofar as it relies heavily on scientific materialism, or a self-fulfilling, reductionist belief that matter is primary in the universe, with consciousness and intelligence arising as byproducts. Within the materialist paradigm, spirituality is frequently dismissed as ignorant of scientific facts and indicative of “superstition, child-like gullibility, self-deception, and primitive magical thinking” (Grof, 2008, p. 47; Walsh, 1995). Similarly, the theories espoused by Western, mainstream psychology suffer from cognicentric bias in that they are based solely on observations of ordinary states of consciousness. Western psychology and psychiatry “have systematically avoided or misinterpreted the evidence from non-ordinary states,” including potentially paradigm-shifting data from research on psychedelics, experiential therapies, meditation, and related areas (Grof, 2008, p. 48).

“The issue of critical importance,” writes Grof (2008, p. 49), “is the ontological nature of the spiritual experiences” in question. In other words, many transpersonal experiences—such as the experience of cosmic or unitive consciousness as described by mystics cross-culturally since time immemorial (e.g., Otto, 1923; Kelly & Grosso, 2007; Huxley, 1995; Hunt, 2007; Smith, 1976, Walsh, 1995)—directly challenge the core assumptions of scientific materialism. Based on Newtonian physics and Cartesian dualism, modern science has entrenched Western psychology and, arguably, the ontological purview of most human beings, in naïve realism. Naïve realism (Ross & Ward, 1996) is a fundamental, common-sense perspective or way of being that takes for granted the belief that the universe is necessarily governed by predictable, physical laws and *is* as it *appears* to be. Conversely, “Quantum-relativistic physics”—the basis of a new scientific paradigm that has not yet diffused into mainstream

conception yet contradicts naïve realism—“has shown that matter is essentially empty and that all boundaries in the universe are illusory” (Bohm, 1980; Grof, 2002, p. 49). In other words, we may perceive ourselves as separate from one another, but at the quantum level, there is no separation between us or anything else, including our bodies and minds.

Though it is not our explicit intention to lobby for a paradigm shift in physics and related disciplines (virtually all of the natural sciences), it is important to point out that many Eastern and indigenous spiritual philosophies suggest *consciousness*—and not matter—is the fundamental principle of the universe, or that the two co-arise from emptiness (Wallace, 2007). Likewise, *panpsychic* and animist traditions posit that all objects are imbued with consciousness (Skrbina, 2005), and that awareness itself is the fabric of existence inextricably woven through everything and out of which matter emerges. These views coincide more closely with the emerging quantum paradigm than they do the existing, physicalist one.

Ultimately, we may never know for certain whether these and similarly marginalized perspectives on consciousness are fundamentally correct. Ferrer’s participatory philosophy (2000, 2011), which has gained favor in transpersonal circles since its publication, proposes that the potential accuracy of a particular ontological stance, insofar as it may be ineffable, is less important than its “emancipatory and transformative power on self, community, and world” (2001, p. 1). Still, as contemporary psychology textbooks make no mention of these alternative theories, there is no ground for exploring them or their efficacy at the level of the individual, and the distinctly Euro-American presuppositions of mainstream psychology are perpetually reinforced. Such wholesale adoption is more akin to a faith-based religion than a pure science founded upon falsifiability (Popper, 2002).

Consciousness and Dreaming

Take, for example, our complicated relationship with dreams, which neither neuroscience nor psychology understands well. Around the 4th

century BCE, the whimsical Taoist sage Chuang-Tzu—renown for his parable of the dreaming butterfly—further mused that “...someday there will be a great awakening when we know that this is all a great dream” (Walsh & Vaughn, 1992, p. 196). A virtually identical sentiment has been echoed by Tibetan Buddhism, which asserts that the physical reality we ordinarily perceive is ephemeral—essentially a collective dream—while a vacuous (empty), pure or primordial awareness beyond all appearances is fundamental (Wallace, 2007; 2009; 2012). Indigenous Australians posit a similar belief through their notion of the “Dreaming” or “Dreamtime” (Elkin, 1938) as the formlessness that precedes and persists beyond the life of the individual. More recently, a notion of coexisting relative (explicate) and absolute (implicate) realities has also gained traction within quantum physics (Bohm, 1980), lending support to these and other ancient cosmologies. As such, the empirical identification of lucid dreaming in the West—wherein dreamers frequently report experiences that seem *more* real than waking life—forces us to re-examine our crude definitions of consciousness and the complexities of our interrelationship with ourselves, the Earth and the universe (Atlas, 2017).

In spite of the movement towards philosophical pluralism incited by post-modern critiques of science, as well as advances in neuroscience, physics, and an increased interest in spiritual technologies from the East and indigenous, shamanic cultures, present-day Western society continues to operate within a distinctly modernist, naïve, *monophasic* paradigm. As noted above, Westerners tend to believe that so-called “ordinary” waking-life is the sole, real world. Similarly, Westerners presuppose that dreams, as well as hypnagogic (Maury, 1848) and hypnopompic (Myers, 1903), or, *liminal* phenomena—such as hallucinations that occur during the onset of and emergence from sleep—are unreal, thereby quickly dismissing their events as “*only a dream*” (Boss, 1958; 1977; 1982; Craig, 1987).

Conversely, a *polyphasic* paradigm (Laughlin, 2011; Walsh, 1993)—such as those assumed by the vast majority of indigenous traditions throughout the world—allows for the inherent existence and validity of multiple, non-ordinary and contemplative states of consciousness and subtle dimensions of selfhood, as well as for their impactful significance

upon one another. This type of ontological distinction has traditionally subsisted by way of a society's mythopoeic structures (guiding myths and associated rituals) (Laughlin, 2011). Historically, myth and ritual not only shaped the way people and cultures dreamt but also influenced their ethical and existential concerns and rippled throughout their daily lives and activities.

Polyphasic cultures view exceptional experiences as the embodied reification of myth that upholds a virtuous society, places the individual in the cosmos, assuages fears of death and provides a sense of life purpose (Eliade, 1971; 1975; Laughlin, 2011). It has been suggested that such ritualized practices and structures are desperately missing from our contemporary Western (and increasingly global) monoculture (May, 1991), replaced instead by second-hand, scientific ideology. Hence lucid dreaming—ostensibly, a substance-free method of inducing exceptional experience on par with psychedelic experience—and the experiential lessons it imparts may be invaluable assets in our intra-and-interpersonal pursuit of meaning and wholeness. Correlatively, the recognition and potential replication of lucid dreaming in laboratory settings may ultimately lend itself to a wealth of neurophenomenological discoveries that further refine our understanding of dreaming, the self, consciousness, and human flourishing.

In short, science and, subsequently, contemporary psychology textbooks, excel in transmitting ideologically-driven information that, in most cases, the reader has no way of contesting and must accept (and, likely, regurgitate on an examination) at face value. Likewise, the information that is presented necessarily furthers the goals of the existing scientific paradigm, or, normal science (Kuhn, 1970). Meanwhile, there is little to no emphasis placed on self-discovery, particularly in relation to the first-person experience of consciousness. An experiential approach to studying consciousness, where students learn to *see* for themselves, could potentially shake the foundations of psychology, yield tremendous insight into marginalized areas such as dreaming and non-ordinary, transpersonal states, and instill in students a deeply embodied appreciation for psychological life and its myriad mysteries.

Experiential Learning and Personal Growth

Thus far, what has been proposed is not a complete overhaul of the largely standardized approach to teaching consciousness that appears in a wide range of contemporary, introductory psychology textbooks. Instead, our critique is calling for a revisioning of and expansion upon the existing framework. In addition to the ubiquitous, information-driven component I have described herein, future textbooks would be wise to consider not only acknowledging marginalized psychological perspectives—such as phenomenological, transpersonal, Eastern and indigenous psychologies, to name a few—but also incorporating an experiential component into their curriculum.

Rather than surveying a wide array of experiential practices and theoretical contributions, which would be valuable but has surely been done (e.g., Goleman, 1996; Walsh & Shapiro, 2006), I would prefer to move one step further by sharing a specific, contemplative practice that can be applied in virtually any classroom setting, either indoors or outdoors, as well as privately. Our thinking here is that enactive, embodied realization—much in the way Ferrer proposes—necessarily paves the way for deeper self-inquiry and an expanded perspective on consciousness and psychology, more generally. There is also no shortage of data on the innumerable benefits of practices such as mindfulness meditation (e.g., Davidson et al., 2003; Lazar et al., 2005), and contemplative education is certainly on the rise in higher education. In addition to being utilized as an all-purpose coping mechanism for stress management, I propose that such methods may also be utilized to study consciousness, as has been the norm in contemplative cultures—most notably, Tibetan Buddhism (Wallace, 2007)—for generations.

The basis for this practice presented below is progressive relaxation, a distinctly human activity that does not pander to, nor is it dependent upon, any particular set of spiritual beliefs or ideologies. It is simply the experience of being human. I encourage you to take your time with it (for example, five to fifteen minutes at minimum, there is no maximum), and perhaps to record it—or, ideally, have someone record it for you—so that

you may listen to it without distraction. The words and accompanying embodiment should be read slowly and patiently with a meditative attitude, so that the instructions are *felt* in the body, rather than conceived solely at a rational/intellectual level. You may practice while sitting, standing, walking, or lying down, but make sure you are not operating heavy machinery, driving a car, etc. The practice begins:

“Open your senses wide to receive. Engage your sense of sound, without any strain. Feel the sensation of you ear canals, and the sound vibrations traveling through them... Your sense of sight, and the sensation of your eyes, even if they are closed. Engage your faculty of vision... Your sense of smell, and the sensation of air gently caressing your nasal passageways... The gentle rise and fall of your belly... Your sense of taste, and the sensation of your tongue... and your sense of touch, the air against your skin, and the feeling of your body against the surfaces that are supporting it... All five senses wide open. Feel your whole body alive with sensation, without any effort. [Pause momentarily before proceeding.]

“Imagine a relaxing sensation welling up beneath the soles of your feet, pervading your toes... soles and tops of your feet... your heels, ankles... calves and shins... knees, in back and in front... thighs... hips... and hip sockets... Imagine feeling into the marrows of your bones, the very centers of your bones, everything soft and slack. Welcome the sensation of your entire right leg... your left leg... and feel both legs completely released and relaxed, as if separate from the rest of your body. [Pause momentarily before proceeding.]

“Welcome sensation in the tips of your fingers... traveling upward through your palms and backs of your hands... softening your wrists... forearms... elbows... upper arms and shoulders... relax your shoulder sockets... soften the marrows of your bones... everything soft and heavy... both arms soft and slack, as if separate from the rest of your body. [Extended pause.]

“Feel your pelvis... the weight of your pelvis... welcome sensation in your root... groin... tailbone and sacrum... the base of your spine...

lower abdomen and belly... feel your lower back... middle back... and upper back... feel your spine like a thread of silk... your solar plexus and sternum... ribs... chest... and collarbone, in back and in front... the back of your neck and your throat... imagine your throat opening like a flower... releasing the weight of your head... all the muscles and bones of your face... soften your jaw... and the bones of your cheeks... the orbits of your eyes... centers of your eyes... soften your brow... forehead... temples... and your scalp... feeling your whole body, soft and slack. [Extended pause.]

“Imagine softening the space all around your body... beyond left and right... above you... and beneath you... beyond the crown of your head... and several inches beneath the soles of your feet. Imagine everything open, expansive and receptive. Offer your weight down into the ground. Feel the Earth supporting you. You may feel heavy, as if you are sinking, or light as a feather. Whatever you feel is ok—simply allow it to unfold in its own way without interference... Notice the quality of your breath, and the gentle rise and fall of your belly as you breathe effortlessly. Rest here as long as you like.”

CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to describe the ways in which contemporary, introductory psychology textbooks overwhelmingly rely on a standardized approach to presenting the study of consciousness. In doing so, they perpetuate the implicit biases of the dominant, materialist paradigm operating within psychology since the rise of behaviorism in the early part of the twentieth century. While the third-person, observational data these chapters present is consistent with the overarching viewpoint and aims of academic psychology, the authors fail to integrate marginalized perspectives on consciousness that otherwise threaten to upend normal science.

Definitions of consciousness are generally found to be incomplete and lacking a nuanced understanding of the term, particularly with regard to the

notion of subjective experience, which goes largely unacknowledged. Homogenizing and, at times, inaccurate language serves to reinforce these implicit and explicit ideologies, and alienates not only the unique, individual experiences of readers, but also discourages disparate perspectives. Also lacking are experiential approaches to the study of consciousness that would otherwise serve the purpose of inspiring students to explore their inner, psychological world rather than simply imbibing and regurgitating second-hand information at face value.

As such, I propose a new vision for the future of psychology that serves the integrative function of examining and rectifying the damaging presuppositions of the dominant paradigm, while making space for a wholistic approach that honors both objective, behavioral science and subjective, human science. Rather than focusing exclusively on the correlates of consciousness, which has been the norm, it is high time psychology returns to the things themselves, and attends to the elephant in the room—namely, the experience of consciousness *itself*. Such a turn will galvanize students to enact an embodied understanding of psychology, and will encouraging them to further the discipline fearlessly and in innovate ways.

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Chapter 5

SEEING RACE: TOWARDS A CRITICAL RACE PSYCHOLOGY OF PERCEPTION

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INTRODUCTION

At 10:44 PM on November 10, 2018 in Albany, GA, a female was shot in an attempted carjacking and died shortly thereafter. The following afternoon, the local news station published a press release describing the suspect as follows: “Surveillance¹ video showed a black male, dressed in dark clothing, wearing a hoodie, a mask and blue gloves...”.

The details of the report imply that the suspect’s skin color is self-evident to the viewer: the surveillance video *gives* this to the viewer, despite the reported veils of hoodie, mask, and gloves. The surveillance

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¹ Footage of the surveillance tape can be viewed at WALB.com [<http://www.walb.com/2018/11/11/apd-victim-dies-after-fleeing-attempted-carjacking/>]

video plays a seriously important role in understanding what may have happened. In addition to determining what was an otherwise inscrutable skin-color of the suspect, it also resolves the illusion of color-constancy: when a color appears to remain the same in shadows as it is in the direct sunlight—a phenomenon that has been described by psychologists for over 100 years.

Supplying the race of the suspect is not an arbitrary detail. Like the alleged sex, which narrows down the suspect pool by approximately half, the suspect's race in this region narrows the pool nearly by half once more. This allows law-enforcement to zero in more specifically on the suspect. Perhaps more importantly, the profile fits neatly into the political and racial ideology in the American southeast—namely, that black² males are to be feared.

Through the middle of the 20th century, the United States still upheld the Jim Crow “separate but equal” laws. These kept persons of color separate from white persons in matters of education, transportation, housing, service, legal representation, and so forth. While many areas of the American south struggled with desegregation during the Civil Rights movement, few cities could admit to being as distinguished in this regard as Albany, GA. It was here during the infamous Albany Movement (1961-1962) where Martin Luther King Jr. was twice incarcerated, and left only after admitting the movement had failed.

Rather than living in a post-Civil Rights and post-racial world, racist ideology continues in the form of an expectation about fundamental differences between white persons and persons of color. It is only upon the background of this ideology that the aforementioned article is able to assert that the suspect in the gas-station parking lot shooting was black. To make any ideologically-invalidating assumptions would have required more careful journalism. The racist ideology may be seen as follows: if an observer has already decided in advance that it is more believable that a shooting suspect is black, then he or she will have to overcome this bias in

² Editor note: The reader should understand that the words race, white, black, etc., have no scientific or biological basis. ‘Race’ is a social construction, but racialization (a function of perception) and racism are real in an empirical sense.

perception in order to see a suspect as anything other than black. The implicit burden of proof would not be on determining the skin color of the suspect (assuming, of course, that this is a relevant detail), but in determining that the skin color is *not* black. The skin color is black unless proven otherwise.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement began in the summer of 2013, and was based on the social perception that black persons suffer unevenly from systematic racism and are targeted unequally by the use of state force. The movement followed a series of incidents where police had shot and killed black boys and men—a notable example being 17 year-old high school student, Trayvon Martin, in 2012. Recent examples are also not hard to come by. In Early March, 2018, Stephen Clark (22), a young black father of two, was shot eight times in the back by Sacramento police who thought he was holding a gun (but turned out to be a cell phone). Days later, a Houston deputy shot and killed Danny Ray Thomas, a 34 year-old black man who had a history of psychopathology. In the introduction to the 20-year anniversary edition of her book *Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria* (2017), psychologist Beverly Daniel Tatum spends the first 70 pages listing statistics that suggest that the problems she described in 1997 haven't gotten any better.

In response to BLM, a white nationalist movement that called itself “White Lives Matter” (WLM) emerged, arguing that white persons also deserve protection from the law. WLM is based on the perception that racism is *not* a continuing problem, and that it would be unfair to grant special consideration to one race while not also extending it to others. It is worth mentioning at this juncture that the concept of race was invented and not discovered. Its invention occurred within the context of colonialism, and must be viewed within that context (See Omi & Winant, 2014). The dilemma is twofold, and may be stated as follows: a) is there discrimination based on the invented concept of race; and, if so, b) is this discrimination an individual issue (which varies person to person), or is it a national one?

It is in light of this dilemma that we may now turn our attention towards the discipline of psychology, and how well it prepares students for

evaluating evidence and arguments claiming whether or not racism is still a problem. More specifically, we consider whether psychology is even capable of addressing such problems. In this chapter, I evaluate the orthodox presentation of the psychology of perception from the vantage point of Critical Race Theory (CRT). This is accomplished by examining a recent study on race-based biases in perceptual judgment (Wilson, Hugenberg, & Hule, 2017). Next, CRT is applied to an orthodox introduction of psychology chapter on the psychology of perception (Griggs, 2017). Both fall short.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND PSYCHOLOGY

CRT is an interdisciplinary approach that aims to examine and re-examine trends in academic, scientific, legal, and social discourses. More specifically, CRT scholars focus on racial power relations and the degree to which inequalities are reinforced by the orthodox practice of these disciplines. For the purposes of the above discussion, CRT would require an examination not only of the ways in which racism is experienced and reinforced in the United States, but also the degree to which the orthodox psychology of perception is equipped to understand it.

In order to develop a psychology that is adequate to the dictates of CRT, psychologists Glenn Adams and Phia Salter (2011) argue that psychological science must “reveal and dismantle disciplinary conventions that constitute racial power” (p. 1361). They provide three clues about what this might look like, and six theoretical orientations within psychological practice that they have found are amenable to a *Critical Race Psychology*. It is worth mentioning that the positivistic orientation which describes orthodox psychological science is not listed among the six. Consequently, their assessment is that orthodox psychological science is insufficiently critical.

In order to demonstrate how orthodox psychological science falls short of being adequate to CRT, the present chapter uses one of the clues supplied by Adams et al. (2011) to examine (1) an article on a study of

racially biased perceptual judgments (Wilson, Hugenberg, & Rule, 2017), and (2) a chapter on perception from an orthodox introduction to psychology textbook (Griggs, 2017). Both examples are given for the purposes of evaluating the potential for a CRP within the orthodox practice and instruction of perception—the first is directed at methodological application, and the second at how perception is introduced to future psychologists.

In academic discourses of the Global North, racism begins with the perceptual recognition of a person's racial identity. This means that the psychology of perception plays an important role in the construction of what it means to see the race of an Other. Orthodox psychology of perception becomes the authority of whether or not one can even *see* a person's race, as well as how this might influence judgments about one's environment. In these ways, psychology promotes an awareness of what Adams et al. (2011) call "Identity Consciousness". In order to do this in a sufficiently critical manner, psychology must recognize the role that "identity and subjectivity have in both (a) construction of everyday realities and (b) academic production of knowledge about those everyday realities" (p. 1362).

MAINSTREAM PSYCHOLOGY OF PERCEPTION IS EURO-CENTRIC

Euro- and North American-centric trends in the history of metaphysics have resulted in the orthodox psychology of perception. Sensation has been understood as the point of contact between body and world, and perception has been understood as the meaningful organization of sensations in the person's mind. The world interacts with the body, the body interacts with the mind.

This World – Body – Mind understanding of perception maintains that the mind belongs to its own special ontological category. The precise interconnection between world and mind is still uncertain. It is something that philosophers have begun calling the *hard problem* (Chalmers, 1996). The belief that the human mind belongs to its own special category is a remnant of the Biblical body-soul division of Catholicism—a religious belief system popular in Europe during the 17th century when Modern Science was in its infancy. The belief is that the body is finite and of the world, while the soul is of an altogether separate and infinite spiritual world and, consequently, belongs to its own special category. The metaphysical leap from one category to the next, that is, the *hard problem*, is only necessary when the two are believed to be fundamentally separate. But Catholicism is not the only rendering of human experience available.

A metaphysical framework that does not begin with the division of mind from body would evolve a very different psychology of sensation – perception. Indeed, it would be unnecessary to use a mysterious hyphen of separation; it would just be a nondualist psychology of perception, such as those described by American professor of Buddhist philosophy David Loy (1988). He writes,

Therefore [a nondualist psychology of perception] has sometimes been described by denying (as Buddhism does) that there is a subject perceiving and sometimes by denying (as Vedānta does) that there is an external, objective world which is perceived. In such perception there is no longer any distinction between internal (mind) and external (world), or between consciousness and its object. (p. 40)

A psychology of perception developed upon the nondualist metaphysical frameworks of, among others, Buddhism or Vedānta would look very different from the psychology of sensation and perception we have today. To begin with, it wouldn't need to divide the process in two.

Cognitivist Model of Racism: A Review of Wilson, Hugenberg, and Rule (2017)

Shifting the discussion to the topics germane to CRP, consider the perception of race. For this, psychologists have generally adopted a cognitivist model of perception. This model assumes that stimuli in the environment interact with the bodily sense organs, and the human *perceives something meaningful*. The jump between sense-organ and perception is still unclear. Indeed, it is not uncommon to hear psychologists say for example that *the brain sees*.

A cognitivist approach to perception would maintain that racial discrimination is a consequence of the interaction-effects of independent variables. There is no space for cultural ideology there, unless it has been operationalized into variable-format. As it pertains to the problems presented in the literature review, shape, size, muscularity, as well as whichever sense-stimuli that could be associated with race (such as skin color) can each be understood as independent variables. By controlling the combinations of these variables, psychologists can presumably determine whether or not an irrelevant variable (such as skin color) interacts with other variables (such as size and muscularity). This is precisely what Wilson, Hugenberg, and Rule (2017) have done.

Wilson et al. hoped to demonstrate how the independent variables that constitute race influenced the perception of unrelated variables. Their article, titled “Racial Bias in Judgments of Physical Size and Formidability: From Size to Threat,” accomplishes exactly this. The authors asked nearly 1,000 participants to make judgments about the height, weight, strength, and formidability of pictures of young black men and young white men. Given the publicity of American football recruiting, the researchers were able to access profiles of thousands of young men who were prospective college and professional football players, complete with height, weight, and weightlifting statistics. These statistics could be compared with the participants’ judgments of height, weight, and weightlifting based on the athletes’ pictures.

As indicated in the title of their article, Wilson et al. found that when controlling for additional factors,

people perceive young Black men as taller, heavier, more muscular, more physically formidable and more capable of physical harm than young White men of the same actual size; and that this bias in physical size perception can influence the decision to use force against them. (p. 60)

The authors generate this set of results by independently testing participant-perceptions of height and weight based on race, testing participant-perceptions of muscularity based on race, testing participant-perceptions of formidability based on race, and finally testing participant-perceptions of threat based on perceived formidability and the perceived likelihood of the need to use force. This demonstrates a series of interactions beginning with the independent variable of perception of race and ending with the dependent variable of the likelihood to use force.

The impact of their article can be seen in the public's response to it. The American Psychological Association (2017) published a press release about it titled "People See Black Men as Larger, More Threatening Than Same-Sized White Men." In the next two days, articles were published in *The Washington Post* and the *Canadian Broadcasting Channel*.

The sensational response it received was because Wilson, et al. captured a new *misperception*. Throughout history, the psychology of perception has nearly always been the psychology of misperception. In 1860, Gustav Theodor Fechner was trying to understand how a subject can differentiate between loud and soft sounds, but cannot determine a sound as exactly twice as loud as another. Instruments that objectively measure length, decibel, and intensity can be used to compare subjective measures of length, loudness, and brightness. The famous Müller-Lyer illusion (1889) demonstrates how, for example, an arbitrary contextual detail can change subjective perceptions of length. Now Wilson, et al. have discovered a new common misperception. However, instead of being understood as an optical or auditory illusion, which refer to mistakes in vision and hearing, the new misperception is not something that can be

confirmed with photometers or decibel meters. Indeed, it can only be understood within the context of colonialism, the impact of which is difficult to assert. It is only through such so-called misperceptions that it can be understood.

Consequently, the goal should not be to *correct* the perception, but to better understand it. This is the argument that is made by W. J. T. Mitchell in his book *Seeing Through Race* (2012). In it he argues that the idea of a post-racial world is a dubious one, and, furthermore, that it should not be an objective. It is in phenomena like Wilson et al. (2017) have demonstrated that we can better understand the social world we live in.

Falling Short of CRP

On the surface, it seems as though the Wilson, et al. study has succeeded in demonstrating the influence that an irrelevant independent sense-variable (such as skin color) has on the perception of size, formidability, and threat. Like the hash-marks on the lines in the Müller-Lyer Illusion, the independent variable of race is found to influence perceptual judgments. Have Wilson et al. demonstrated racism? It seems they have. However, within the confines of the cognitivist model of perception, this still falls short of CRP as it has been described by Adams et al. (2011, 2013). There are three problems that stand out with the design and discussion of this study: (1) By isolating variables, the authors contribute to the problem of atomizing the problem of racism; (2) in their discussion of the race-based differences in perception, it is assumed that the perception of the young white man is the standard; (3) the voice of the young black male, who is ostensibly the subject of the study, is noticeably absent from the data.

Atomizing Racism

As it is introduced by Adams et al. (2011), the atomization of racism occurs when it is assumed that the latter is a result of a few bad apples. It isn't that social perception in general is racially biased, but that a few individuals, harboring racist ideologies, perpetuate racism. This has the effect of minimizing the depth of structural racism (See Ture & Hamilton,

1992) by hiding it away in a small handful of scapegoats while the rest of the public is free to conclude that they are not themselves part of the problem. Wilson et al. (2017) escape this criticism, demonstrating that the perceptual bias is generalizable across a broad participant base. However, they are guilty of a second form of atomism with similar problems for establishing CRP.

The metaphor of “atomization” comes from physics and chemistry, and is an example of the metaphysical framework called smallism: the assumption that the best way to understand an object or phenomenon is to break it down to its smallest observable units (Harman, 2018). While racism might seem to have a complex historical, social, political, and ethical construction, smallism maintains that whatever it is, it has a finite number of factors, and each of these factors can be isolated and understood by themselves. This can actually be seen in the design of the series of studies by Wilson et al. They first demonstrate a bias in size-perception; then they demonstrate that perceived size is related to perceived formidability; then that perceived formidability is related to threat; and so on.

By operating within the methodological framework of orthodox psychology of sensation and perception, the authors are forced to isolate variables that are not so easily isolatable. Race, which has been described above as skin color, cannot be reducible to a discrete stimulus. For example, the Wilson et al. (2017) admit how

the race biases we have observed thus far may unfortunately be more difficult to control than biases rooted in top-down social category effects. ...[R]ace-based threat perception... is multiply caused, strikingly robust, and partly based on low-level perceptual elements of racial phenotypicality. (p. 74)

This means that there is no simple category known as ‘young black male,’ because within such a category, there are still differences that are important to the study of racial discrimination. The categories of ‘young black males’ and ‘young white males’ have important intra-category

differences. For example, these categories can be further subdivided into young males that are ‘white’ and ‘prototypically white;’ ‘black’ and ‘prototypically black.’ To this end, Neuroscientist Steven Rose and sociologist Hilary Rose (1972) have explained how the majority of genetic diversity has occurred within populations, and not between them when separated by traditional race categories (in Cole, 2016).

Moreover, to isolate the detail of race is to reduce an American and European history of racial discrimination and subjugation—not to mention individual realities—to a 1 (White) or a 0 (Not White). Rather than *promoting* the CRP goal of identity consciousness, this reduces racial identity to independent variables. It is as if blackness might reside somewhere between the skin color and racial phenotypicity of facial features. There is no attention paid to the construction of these everyday realities. The construction of racially biased perception is instead understood as a phenomenon at the level of the information processor. It would follow that the solution to racial discrimination would be re-programming or re-conditioning, which would fail to address racism as a systemic problem.

Ignoring the Subjectivity of the Subject of Investigation

Wilson et al. have caught the general public with their proverbial hand in the cookie jar of racial discrimination, but this conclusion is not *only* about the general public. There is an important demographic for whom this study is also consequential: young black males. It is curious that the authors have systematically removed black persons from the participant pool on each of the studies. “We did not analyze the data from 14 participants who identified as Black...” (Wilson et al., 2017, p. 64); “we recruited 30 non-black US residents...” (p. 64); “we excluded 5 Black participants from the analysis...” (p. 65); and so on. Not only have the Black participants been excluded from the study, we also do not hear from them in the discussion.

By turning the focus of the study on racism towards the lived experiences of the young black males who are the target of this discrimination bias, there would be an opportunity to learn a great deal

more than whether or not racial discrimination occurs. The Martiniquais scholar Frantz Fanon has courageously blazed a path for subsequent scholars to follow. His book *Black Skin, White Masks* explains the change that occurred in Algerian men and women after they traveled to Paris. They would return home with a new way of speaking, dressing, and interacting with one another. The problematic assumption that was implicit in this change of behavior was that the traditional Algerian way of being was somehow deficient—less than that of the Parisians.

Such a methodological shift would be decidedly qualitative, and would feature the perspective and identities of the young black males. Such a shift would be unlikely in a field that is deeply suspicious of the subject's vantage point and of the veracity of their words.

The Role Played by the Psychologists in Hiding Racism, Privilege

The final concern about the study in question is so large that it is difficult to see except through the lens of CRP. It has to do with how psychological science contributes to the construction of everyday realities of racism. In the media coverage of the problem of racial discrimination, there is an implicit belief that the general public is good, discerning, and just. It is only the instances in which persons are *not* good, discerning, and just that are seen as aberrations. Moreover, the unspoken standard of such judgments are those made about white persons.

In their study, Wilson et al. (2017) have concluded that (non-black) people perceive young black males as bigger and more threatening than young white males. It is implied that the perception of young white males is accurate, and may be used as the standard against which other perceptions are compared. Wilson et al. explain:

Americans have thus struggled to understand these sustained patterns of force decisions by police. ...[W]e proposed that the stereotype of young Black men as physically threatening... may create conditions that prepare perceivers to show distorted perceptions of Black men's physical size and formidability. (pp. 59-60)

The hypothesis is that problematic police force occurs as a consequence of *distorted* perception. The assumption of the authors, as well as those periodicals that have reported on this study, is that normal perceptions result in normal uses of police force, but *distorted* perceptions result in unnecessary use of police force. Notice what happens if we were to reverse the standard: What if the perception of young black males was the standard, undistorted perception? The assumption would be that police officers *normally* overestimate the formidability of the suspect they are pursuing, except in those cases where the suspect is misperceived as being smaller than s/he actually is. The conclusion would be that *fewer* police should carry guns, clubs, and tasers, and that they would need to be trained to be less combative.

This would also mean that young white men are perceived as less formidable and threatening than they actually are, and that police would be encouraged to *increase* the force and suspicion directed towards them (and white persons in general).

While the authors have made important waves in the discussion about implicit racial discrimination in the general US public, it has still fallen short of CRP.

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF AN INTRODUCTORY PSYCHOLOGY TEXT: RICHARD GRIGGS'S “SENSATION AND PERCEPTION” CHAPTER

The previous examination of the study on race-based biases in perceptual judgment suggests that an orthodox psychology of perception is ill-equipped to critically handle matters of race and racism. But that could very well be an isolated phenomenon. In this final section, I will evaluate a chapter on human perception that has recently been published in an orthodox introduction to psychology textbook—*Psychology: A Concise Introduction, 5th Edition* (Griggs, 2017).

Not only has *Psychology: A Concise Introduction* been a popular introductory textbook among undergraduate psychology instructors (achieving five editions), but its author is an important figure in the evaluation of introductory psychology textbooks—publishing articles in the *Society for the Teaching of Psychology* flagship journal *Teaching of Psychology* for many decades. This includes a recent pair of articles on the quality of the recent influx of open-access textbooks (Griggs & Jackson, 2017a; 2017b).

In the first page of the chapter, Griggs clarifies the many-century old sensation – perception problem discussed in the introduction, above: “We perceive what our brain tells us to perceive. This means that sometimes our view of the world is inaccurate”, and “Beauty is not in the eye of the beholder,” he explains, “but rather in the brain of the beholder” (p. 101). The chapter goes on to outline three common ways in which sensation and perception are related—detection, difference, and scaling.

According to Griggs, perceptual judgments are consequences of brain activity, and this includes race-based biases. Such a viewpoint is demonstrated in the *Canadian Broadcasting Channel* heading for the Wilson et al. study: “Our Brains see Black Men as Bigger, Stronger than White Men of Same Size.” Admitting that *I* have race-based biases in perceptual judgment takes responsibility for the role that *I* am playing in racial discrimination. Saying that *my brain* makes race-based biases in perceptual judgment does not. Conveniently, it seems as though race-based biases in perceptual judgment are part of the neurological packaging of adults in the US. If it is understood that racism is a neurological issue, then it would not be a stretch to hypothesize that a certain level and location of neurological stimulation (or injection of neurotransmitter) might correct this problem.

The view that racism is neurobiological is an example of what Adams and Salter (2013) call the “view from nowhere” where racism is as abstract a concept as the activation potential of a neuron (citing Nagel, 1986; p. 789). Both are descriptions are at the level of pure objectivity, viewed in detachment from personal meaning. Moreover, the neurobiological perspective applies equally to racism as it does to depression, development,

or personality—each a lens through which human neurobiology may be understood.

It is clear that orthodox psychology of sensation and perception not only falls short of CRP as described above, but actually stands in conflict with CRP. Adams et al. (2013) maintain that a CRP “emphasizes a self-critical, identity-conscious, reflexive form of inquiry that illuminates the operation of racial power and ideology in theory, application, and method” (p. 790). The neurobiology of perception is self-less in that it takes self and racism to be consequences of neurobiology; identity-less in that identities lived or perceived are understood as combinations of various and discrete independent variables; and unreflexive because the neurobiological method of inquiry and the metaphysical framework upon which it is based are understood to exist independently of the process of inquiry.

In sum, the assessment of Adams and Salter (2011; 2013) that CRP has not yet come applies to the orthodox practice *and* instruction of the psychology of sensation and perception. Moreover, these may even contribute to the problem of racism.

AN ALTERNATIVE PATH TO PERCEPTION

Fortunately, a psychology of perception that is adequate to CRP would not have to start from scratch. Psychologies of perception that emphasize subjectivity, using descriptions of concrete experience as data, already exist such as those of Spinelli (2005) and Whitehead (2017)—neither of which, it should be noted, address their potential for CRP. These alternatives adopt a phenomenological orientation. Rather than adopt what Nagel (1986) calls a detached and impersonal view from nowhere, phenomenology recognizes that all perception is necessarily personal and meaningful, and this is because we play a role in this process.

Kant has argued that the Universal Stuff are *noumena*—always just outside the reach of our complete perceptual access. You and I can only ever perceive a given object or person *from a particular vantage point*, or as it appears (*phai*) to you and I at a particular moment. We do not

encounter the totality of things in our experience, but *phai-noumenal* or phenomenal things. Phenomenology studies these.

Consequently, our vantage point transforms our perception of the thing that we are seeing. An outdoor light is helpful at night to see what is going on in the backyard, but it is an impediment to star-gazing. We are not indifferent to the outdoor light, but our relationship to it also is not unidimensional. In order to understand outdoor lights, we need to examine the varieties of relationships people take up with them.

The same goes for race-based biases in perceptual judgment. The probability of the anonymous “people” or “brains” having such biases has been demonstrated by Wilson et al. (2017), but it does not examine the manner through which such perceptions occur. In the study, these perceptual biases are occurring *without* context. To examine these biases phenomenologically, participants would have to describe how these perceptions emerge in terms of the relationship between self and other. The judgments are not products of brain activities, but meaningful ways of engaging with the world. Such an examination would bring identity, subjectivity, and reflexivity into the discussion of racial discrimination. Readers who are interested in exploring the phenomenology of race and racism are encouraged to read Fanon (1952), Polizzi (2003), Gordon (1995), and Parker (1999).

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Chapter 6

LEARNING: A SOCIAL AND COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY IN DIALOGUE WITH OTHERS

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Learning Is Central to the Human Condition

A newborn is helpless and highly dependent on others in order to develop into a person with skills and knowledge to navigate everyday life. Learning processes in humans take much longer than in animals; in this sense human beings are delayed. Moreover, human learning does not have limits in terms of age, although there are sensitive periods for specific skills (e.g., language). In general though, learning can take place the whole life. Being vulnerable and in need of extensive time to learn allows for rich complexity and variability: humans are able to acquire manifold complex

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skills, such as collaborating with others on practical tasks (constructing objects, working, raising children), using language in oral and written forms, interacting with others, and thinking through abstract problems (mathematics, philosophy). “Delay” shows thus to be positive, allowing for fine-grained adjustment and an amazing flexibility to greatly different environments. Actually, humans *create* their own environment and become largely independent of natural ones: this is where culture and society come into play. Specific cultures and their societies are the contexts for human learning, and it is *for and within* specific cultural and social contexts that humans learn: learning is always situated.

As indicated, others are key players. At the beginning of life in particular, others introduce us to the socio-cultural contexts we are expected to learn how to handle. Others regulate our activities and emotions, they model how things can be and are to be done, they teach us the specific language in use; they teach us concepts (“freedom”; “triangle”), categories (“furniture,” “birds”), and procedures (calculating, cooking); interacting with “our others,” we learn how to evaluate every object, every action, and every person we experience in terms of the socio-cultural values of the specific culture and society we live in. In short, others introduce us to our common reality and its understanding, and that guides our social behaviors and psychological experiences. Worth noting, this process is reciprocal: we teach, and learn from, each other – teaching is always also learning; the children teach their parents, the students teach their professors, and importantly, peers teach each other, too. Hence, humans are bound to each other by reciprocal teaching and learning and this is exactly how cultures live and how human beings are persons to each other.

Learning is indeed central to the human condition, since it happens all the time and everywhere as a result of everyday life and the experiences people make in their environments. This pervasive type of learning, which happens outside of formal education is called *informal learning*—people learning without even realizing that they learn. In contrast, *formal learning* “has learning objectives and is intentional”; it is organized and institutionalized (Werquin, 2008). The institutionalization of learning is a

characteristic of the dominant Western industrialized countries and is thus seen as the most important form of learning. However, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it became important for educational policy to recognize and for research to address informal learning (Werquin, 2008, 2010). Including informal learning that is deeply situated in everyday, socio-culturally specific practices into the notion of learning opens up an important perspective on cultural and social differences in learning cultures that are different from the default model of Western societies—but also broadens the scope within these societies. In times of extensive migration and global exchanges, it seems particularly appropriate to acknowledge the depth and richness of learning outside institutional arrangements.

1.2. Learning Is Mediated

A further element to human learning is the usage of tools as provided by a culture. Of course, the tool usage itself has to be learned before it can be applied to the learning process: we learn how to write an essay on a computer on the basis of literacy (knowing how to read and write), or to construct a bed frame with a hammer and nails after having practiced the hammer's weight and handling. The most important tool for human learning is language (Vygotsky, 1987; Mercer & Sams, 2006). Among others, we use language to explain and understand concrete as well as abstract objects of knowledge, to solve problems, and to memorize. Communicating with others, having access to and learning to use different tools *and* learning to use them for learning processes is crucial for learning. This is to say that learning is a *mediated process*, which is mediated by tools, in the first place by “semiotic tools” (i.e., tools made of signs such as language, numbers, graphs, and charts).

The key elements to learning are hence certain others, time, mediating tools, and a specific socio-cultural context. Following from this, we define learning as

a time-sensitive, socio-culturally situated and reciprocal process that involves all participants in a specific way and needs the usage of mediating semiotic tools, where language (e.g., as dialogues with others or as texts to read and understand) plays a core role.

With these key elements and the definition, we adopt an alternative view to the one advanced by general psychology (Shweder, 1990) that is widely found in textbooks introducing psychology. The focus of general psychology in explaining learning is on behaviorism (with different forms of conditioning) and on cognitive aspects of learning. In both cases, learning is treated exclusively on the individual level—it is an isolated individual that learns. Moreover, the individual is reduced to its organism (behaviorism) and brain (cognitivism) as the sites where learning takes place. Our alternative aims at re-situating learning within human-specific environments as described previously: socio-cultural contexts shared with others, where certain tools are employed and specific languages used. Importantly then, brain and organism belong to a living person in a context with others. As a consequence, learning takes place *between* several individuals and is acquired by individuals on this basis. For this alternative view, it matters *with whom*, *where* and *by what kind of tools* we learn, and also according to what kind of *agenda*. An agenda is always tied to certain societal and cultural aims for the learners to reach; this is known as a developmental task (Havighurst, 1956).

This alternative view links to contemporary critiques of general psychology as formulated for instance by cultural psychology (Shweder, 1990), transnational psychology (Bhatia, 2007), and cultural-historical activity theory (van Oers et al., 2008), all aiming at de-colonizing general psychology, its theories, research, and methods. In this vein, we aim at de-colonizing learning and to shift the picture that views learning executed by an organism and brain bare of context and without any others. De-colonizing learning means to open it to its whole situation with its agents, practices, and conditions for learning. It means to acknowledge power structures; in particular those given by socio-culturally dominant forms of formal learning that territorialize learning arrangements. It means to

recognize the power dynamics between agents according to gender, race, and ethnicity. And it means to recognize and to be aware of learning agendas promulgated by the specific society learners and teachers live in.

In this chapter, a major shift in order to de-colonize learning is in particular to de-individualize it. This is not to say that nothing happens on the individual level. Rather, it is saying that *not everything* happens on the individual level. Why is this important, and why is this a critique? It is important because it makes our social and cultural life visible: we are not single individuals living in a neutral context with our learning brain. On the contrary, we are specific persons to other specific persons, and we live together in specific communities and societies; this extends to the situation when we are alone: we still live with our others in our imagination – talking to them, arguing, listening, rehearsing, memorizing the words we exchanged and the activities we did together. It is a critique because it shifts responsibilities and uncovers the implicit assumptions of general psychology.

1.3. Responsibilities

If everything happens strictly ‘inside’ on the individual level, the only responsible person is the learner herself. If she fails, *she* fails and is to blame. *She* will feel ashamed, *her* self-esteem will be damaged, and the social and economic consequences for *that person* can be far reaching. In contrast, when saying learning happens in the first place inter-individually, responsibility is de-located from the single learner and distributed to the whole system of interacting individuals within a societal and (often times) institutional context.

1.4. Implicit Assumptions

Typically, implicit assumptions follow ideals serving specific societal interests. Key assumptions are that everybody learns at the same pace, has

the same access to learning tools such as language skills, books, computers, and all the practice needed to use them effectively for learning; differences in social and economic status, in gender and race do not matter because it is all about the context-free individual. In contrast, we view learning as happening in a context and towards a context, which is shaped by power structures specific to cultures and to historical and social settings. So the critical point of view we offer aims at specifying learning as an inter-individual process in the first place, where the individuals are specifically positioned towards each other. An important element to our critical take is illuminating how learning is conceptualized in psychology, that is: learning *is* not simply a certain process. Rather, learning is *conceived as* a certain process within a context of scientific and political ideas. This results in taking into account psychology as a science, which has both perspectives and a history of ideas about human beings—in our case: about learning.

The next section takes a historical point of view in order to elaborate conceptions of learning in psychology from the critical point of view just mentioned. The chapter expands then on the alternative view of learning as an inter-individual process by articulating its different aspects, which leads to the notion of learning as a dialogic and socio-cultural process. A brief summary recapitulates our main points and emphasizes the critical, de-colonizing, and de-individualizing view we here propose.

2. HISTORY

Though learning has achieved a somewhat naturalized status within our psychologized contemporary milieu, this was not always the case. As Hacking (2002) argues, psychological theories simultaneously describe *and* constitute the objects of their domains; however, although both gloves and viruses enjoy a certain undeniable reality, viruses do not depend on us for their existence, unlike gloves. Because psychological categories such as learning, personality, or motivation are not – strictly speaking – natural kinds, their reality is captive to the socio-historical and spoken conditions

of their appearance, as well as to their specific uses within these contexts. On this basis, we ask how learning appeared in psychology and how it was treated within certain historical contexts.

2.1. Empirical Psychology Seeking for Natural Laws

More remotely, within late eighteenth and nineteenth-century philosophical understandings of fundamental mental faculties – which privileged a conscious, agentic subject aiming at an ethical life – the prospect of a purely empirical psychology uncovering naturalistic laws of learning was disturbing. More proximately, however, the emergent field of empirical psychology in the nineteenth century, with its somewhat fragmented research programs (i.e., sensation, perception, memory, industrial psychology, clinical psychology, etc.) would come to require a unifying and suitably naturalistic construct that would link all of these diverse pursuits. The initial response to this quandary would be the foregrounding of *behavior*, and later learning as an inferred outcome (Danziger, 1997). Along these lines, Danziger reconstructs the historical emergence of behavior as an integrative possibility for empirical psychological research and follows the vicissitudes and fluctuations of the discourse of behavior across several fronts. In its earliest contexts, *learning as behavior* is discursively situated within comparative psychology and animal studies (Jennings, 1906) before making its way into general psychology (Angell, 1913); within psychology, learning as behavior was then part of several specific but related approaches: classical conditioning (Pavlov, 1932; Watson, 1913), operant conditioning (Thorndike, 1911; Skinner, 1938), and social learning theory (Bandura, 1973). The cognitive revolution of the late 1950's and 1960's (Neisser, 1967; Chomsky, 1965) challenged the continuing ascendancy of learning as the consequence of discrete behavioral events and introduced the paradigm of the *information processing brain*, hereby supported by quickly developing information technologies which took the human brain and the computer as basically explaining each other; however, methodologically behavioral technologies

have continued to underpin much of what passes under the rubric of psychological science.

2.2. The Private, Invisible Mind

Across the historical trajectory of behavior as a category relating to the *visible effects* of learning, several theoretical dimensions may be discerned: neutral observation, mind as conjecture (the problem of other minds), positivistic description, and laws framed through causality working through external, material events. Because the researcher's participation would problematize the spectatorial form of observation borrowed from the Newtonian paradigm in physical sciences, any attention given to the intentional, shared, social, and linguistic experiences of learning remains within the implicit ground of these studies. Such an ideal of neutral observation, thus, requires a bracketing of other minds (as analogous to the seemingly speechless lives of non-human animals) and of the institutional context of the experiment itself: the laboratory as a peculiar, non-naturalistic site with the (passive) subject participant regulated and observed by the researcher controlling the situation. As Pavlov meticulously catalogued the salivation of dogs in response to a conditioned stimulus such the ringing of a bell, or Watson noticed the cries of fear from Little Albert in his conditioned response to the presentation of a harmless white rat, mind was increasingly depicted as unnecessary to a rigorous program of observation and of determining physical events in the world. For Skinner, whose operant conditioning brought the organism's own actions into view (such as a rat's pressing of a lever for food, or a student's study for a passing grade) mind was expressed as epiphenomenal (i.e., mind was a by-product of the organism's conditioned learning). Experiences of will, desire, intention were ancillary or collateral to the conditions responsible for causing behavior, which – invoking psychology's historically Darwinian entanglements – merely had survival value.

Though interiority has a much longer history within Western thought and culture, within psychological programs of research into learning as manifested in behavior, mind became increasingly privatized as an inner sphere whose reality was unavailable for expression, and unaccounted for as a matter of intersubjectivity or dialogue. Assuming the causal regularity of the shaping of behavior, and its adaption, experimentation would seek to uncover the laws of learning that would manifest directly (positively) in the visible world as a material event. Consequently, the timing of conditioning, acquisition/extinction of behavior, stimulus generalization /discrimination, and reinforcement patterns would all find their abstractions confirmed in the specific findings correlating with an external world. For instance, in operant conditioning, the relative response rate in a variable ratio schedule of reinforcement (such as feeding coins to a slot machine) or in a variable interval schedule (such as giving students a pop quiz) would be ascertained as measurable, quantifiable, and apparently impersonal. Nonetheless, as with the problem of other minds, important aspects of externality – such as the context and socio-economic embeddedness of these technological procedures – remained outside the ken of their implantation as tools, or as instrumentations in orchestrating certain forms of sociality. For instance, it was not reflected upon by these researchers that seemingly straightforward research, such as how to reinforce “good” behavior in unruly children, might silently mirror an already existing political and economic understanding of mind. That is, such behavioral interventions would strengthen an understanding of a private, interior mind that would express itself as behavior, which was devoid of meaning, or intrinsic relationality, other than what might manifest as objective and controllable.

2.3. Engineering Learning

Until the turn to cognition and more recently to evolutionary psychology, behavior as learning would become the cornerstone of an increasingly naturalistic social science, which emphasized a certain

methodological pragmatism conjoined with programs of social improvement within an industrial culture. As to methodological pragmatism, it would matter less that laws of learning or behavior related to specific biological determinants (such as instinct or reflex) and more that the quantifiable patterns of learning (such as reinforcement schemes in factory or school settings) could be discerned as ways of explaining human action—this was seen as pragmatic, i.e., useful. Other than explanation, the social ends to these inquiries, of course, had their sights set on prediction and control. Bandura's (1973) theory of observational or social cognitive learning – where learning occurs through observing others rather than by direct reinforcement – provides a contemporary illustration of both the deficits of classical and operant conditioning as well as its bent towards social engineering. An obvious example in our contemporary scene for application of social learning theory concerns the issue of whether exposure to violence in media (i.e., film, television, internet, and video games) leads people to behave more aggressively (i.e., learn through observing aggressive behavior). Significantly, the apparently benign address of media violence as a public health concern (Bushman & Huesmann, 2001) disguises or hides the historicity of the behavioral technologies to shape forms of human being and subjectivity through practices that replicate socio-economic instrumentalities.

2.4. Alignment to the Efficiency Agenda

From a larger historical perspective, American social science has been marked by its alienation from historical forms of subjectivity and consciousness; that is, social science has separated itself from how the dominant capitalistic culture and its history shapes forms of subjectivity and consciousness and has thus masked the role of history in conceiving subjectivity and consciousness by setting both these phenomena rather as “naturally given.” In contrast, as Danziger (1997) observes, social science research is pervasively connected with the uncovering of natural laws of learning while being always intertwined with various forms of schooling

(whose agenda would be to prepare students to occupy workplaces governed by the rule of efficiency) and industrial psychology (whose task had been research and transmit skills).

In addition, throughout the twentieth century, clinical psychology as an expanding field of application out of these settings governed by the agenda of efficiency, sought to extinguish irrational fear and anxiety through conditioning as well to reinforce behaviors aligning with workplace values of production and compliance with authority. In this way, clinical psychology aligned itself with the agenda of efficiency for schools and workplaces. This all was done while relegating the mind to an inner and private realm untouched by such experiences as solidarity with others, and not addressing the unavoidably present language and voice of the therapist or manager who directed such treatments. As Rose (1996) argues, behaviorist theory and therapy symbolize the vocation of psychology as an administrative discipline, whose aim is social control. From training courses in managerial techniques that promise more motivated workers, to manuals on classroom management, or in the extinction of behaviors giving rise to depressive symptoms, such fields of application recall Foucault's (1995) well-known metaphor of the prison for the operation of disciplinary power. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, such disciplinary power regulated the production of individuals in schools, asylums, barracks, and prisons, and these sites became regularized according to surveillance, examination, and correction. Observation, explanation, and intervention (as laws of learning formalized and as validated under the standards of natural science inquiry) become, thus, refinements of a historically preexistent bent towards calling into being a subject whose movements may be tracked and corrected; a subject whose consciousness remains distanced from implicit forms of learning emanating from others, and in relation to others as well as to a commonly lived socio-cultural context.

Summing up, we argue that contemporary general psychology does not address, and even negates the role of the key elements to learning we noted in section 1: others, mediating tools and language (dialogues with others), and the specific context in which learning takes place. Rather, it is the

isolated individual that is focused upon, understood as a disembodied and neutral (with regards to race, gender, and social class) organism that needs to be educated for the sake of the overarching agenda of efficiency aligned to the dominant economic system. Being efficient at school, college, and in the work place, functioning as an autonomous individual without visible external problems, and agreeing in principal to be tracked and controlled is in accordance with this overarching agenda belonging to WEIRD societies (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic societies; Heinrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010).

The next section provides an overview to four main learning theories. The first two – behaviorism and cognitivism, addressed in this historical section – are faithful reflections of the individualistic, non-situated, and disembodied view of learning prevalent in general psychology and widely found in textbooks introducing psychology as the *only* theories of learning. The overview adds two theories – constructivism and dialogism – that reach into the context of learning by including its situation, language-in-use, and others. In section 4, we opt for the framework of dialogism as a basis for a dialogic notion of learning.

3. INTERMEDIATE STEP: OVERVIEW

3.1. Behaviorism

For behaviorism, learning is a change in behavior where the process of change itself is not researched, since it cannot be observed. As mentioned in section 2, classical conditioning was introduced by Pavlov (1932); a previously neutral stimulus (a tone) is changed into a conditioning stimulus for an organism (a dog) by being paired repeatedly with a second unconditioned stimulus (food): the neutral, now conditioned, stimulus becomes a sign for the arrival of the second stimulus (food). North American psychologists followed this lead: among others, Watson (1913) worked on emotional conditioning, and Skinner (1938) on operant conditioning. These approaches share the understanding of learning as

being a concrete input-output relation. *Learning* aims at the reproduction of responses (output), which were previously conditioned; *the brain* (as an organismic container) is viewed as a container that accumulates and retrieves fixed knowledge; *the teacher* is the authority who controls the situation and the learner and is responsible for setting up the input-output relation; finally, *the learner* is a passive receiver whose brain is subjected to the input-output mechanisms and produces the responses expected from the teacher (not any other). Clearly, the type of learning exclusively focused on is *formal learning* (see sect. 1).

3.2. Cognitivism

With the cognitive turn in psychology in the late 1950's, the core notion of "information" superseding "meaning" made its appearance, strongly supported by growing information technologies. The shift from taking into account the observable outside exclusively (behaviorism) to address inside processes exclusively (cognitivism) was achieved through the key terms of information processing and problem-solving – both explaining basically all psychological processes. *Learning* is thus problem-solving, for instance in Bandura's (1973) social cognitive learning theory as well as in Bruner's (1961) discovery learning; *the brain* is considered a computer or information processing device; *the teacher* has a supportive and observational function, giving feedback to facilitate learning; *the learner* is still an isolated subject, though much more active than in behaviorism. With this theory, the type of learning mentioned as *informal learning* (sect. 1) begins to come into view.

3.3. Constructivism

At the end of the twentieth century, a third approach developed where learning is seen as auto-regulated process of constructing knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge is a deeply constructive process, so the idea of

retrieving ready knowledge (as in behaviorism and cognitivism) did not hold any more. For the first time, context and situation as sources of experience were considered, and – in the variant of *social constructionism* (Gergen, 1973) – also the language used while learning (in speaking and writing). In this way, learning theories extended to where the learning activity takes place; as such, learning becomes viewed in a broader scope that integrates external and social aspects with individual and internal aspects (or phases) of learning. Piaget's (1983) developmental stage model and Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development (Chaiklin, 2003) – leading further into the development of Vygotsky's theory of language and thinking as in Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT, van Oers et al., 2008) – are well-known contributions of the two major scholars within this approach, although distinctively different with regard to the role of language. *Learning* is an auto-regulated process; *the brain* is a highly dynamic system; *the teacher* is a collaborating partner (as along with peers, although in a different role). Specifically in the Vygostkian framework, *the learner* is culturally and socially situated and thus not isolated anymore but related to others in a significant way, and a clear emphasis is put on the so-called semiotic tools: signs and symbols employed for learning, such as spoken and written words, numbers, graphs, and maps – they act as mediational means (they mediate between the learner and the task). So here, for the first time, it starts to matter *how* the learning process takes place, i.e., *with whom*, *in which context*, and *with what kind of semiotic tools*. In this way, learning expands into the very process of learning instead of being focused on the outcome alone.

3.4. Dialogism

Dialogism is an epistemological framework to understand human meaning-making (Bertau, 2019). In the context of learning, it draws partly on constructivism and social constructionism, and challenges traditional views of the individual, of the teacher-learner relationship, and of language-in-use. The challenge is threefold. First, it resides in the fact that

at least two individuals must necessarily be considered for learning – learning does not occur in one isolated subject; second, not only the learner but also the teacher will be changed and affected by the learning situation – learning is a *bidirectional* process; and third, language is not information retrieved from one head and poured into the other but a specific social activity between people talking to each other as whole persons (gender, race, social class, historical context, and situational context). This activity has its peculiar forms and experiences (do we hear a lecture?, do we participate in an interactive discussion?, do we write an essay or a blog?, etc.) – and these forms, and how we experience them *matter* for how we use language for ourselves while learning. *Learning* is a language mediated, dialogic activity that is culturally and socially specific and that needs common social activities in order to occur on the individual level; *the brain* as a processing organ is not as much a focus as mind and consciousness are: these are highly complex cultural and social psychological phenomena embodied, and lived, by individuals with their others; *the teacher* is a sensitive and flexible partner in a dialogic conversation with the students, being time and again a facilitator of “exploratory talk” (Mercer & Sams, 2006), a navigator through hindrances and possibilities, or a fellow co-investigator; *the learner* is the teacher’s partner in dialogic conversations, also a partner to peers with whom there might be shifts in positions (knowing more, sometimes less than another), and a collaborator in the construction of questions, hypotheses, and answers – that is, of knowledge.

4. DIALOGIC LEARNING

The last step into dialogism and dialogic learning allows us to conceive the individual as related to others in learning and development; dialogism is a framework that enables us to go beyond the individualism prevalent in the learning theories of behaviorism and cognitivism and at least in some of the learning approaches in social constructionism. In contrast, dialogic learning situates the learner explicitly within a net of certain significant

others, of cultural, symbolic, and dialogic practices, and of material and psycho-social conditions. Dialogic learning acknowledges the complexity of this holistic system and in particular the inter-dependency of teachers and students, without negating the social reality of their power relations. We elaborate the idea of dialogical learning through four basic themes that all embody the foundational principle of dialogical learning: Learning *starts* in common social and verbal activities – be it in classroom interactions and conversations, or be it with peers on the playground, at home, etc. As we argued in section 1, learning happens all the time and everywhere, and dialogues with others are a key aspect of it. In a nutshell, human learning starts by thinking together with fellow others through talking, listening, and carrying out activities – this talking-and-doing-together leads to learning.

4.1. The Illuminating Cycle of Address-Reply-Understanding

In talking to another, an individual forms an idea and expresses it to a listening other who will reply, adding his or her understanding of the idea and giving it back to the first speaker. In this way, the original idea gets reflected through a different point of view, and this is exactly what enables the first speaker to grasp her own idea more clearly for herself –

No, this is not what I was saying! Or – Yes, this is exactly what I mean and I can now understand better what I was talking about!

This is especially true for ideas that are hard to grasp, such as one's feelings and emotions (e.g., talking to a friend and *thereby* getting a clearer notion of what is going on), and also for abstract concepts such as "semiotic tool." In talking to each other, students and teachers can elaborate the meaning of abstract concepts by passing them through each other's understanding. The basic idea of the cycle is that a listening and replying other person will contribute to our own understanding – it is through others that our thinking becomes clearer to ourselves (Humboldt,

1999). Thus, speaking in learning contexts is closely linked to understanding *our own understanding*: to sharpen, change, or to elaborate it. This extends to understanding our own not-understanding, understanding our question, or the issue we have in grasping an item to learn. Learning occurs on this basis in an exchange between different speaking-listening-replying individuals with their varied understandings and stances to reality – learning is from the start made of *different voices* speaking to each other about something. These voices are perspectives, and they are linked to each person’s views, values, and evaluations of the subject at stake and expressed in what they say to each other (Bertau & Tures, 2019).

For dialogism, dialogue is more than a simple to-and-fro, and more than the transmission of information from the knowledgeable teacher to the not-knowing students. As Skidmore and Murakami (2016) put it, it is rather “an encounter with standpoints other than our own” (p. 29), and it permits “the kind of inter-mental border crossing that enables ... to transcend the limits of [one’s] own current consciousness” (p. 30). Learning then crucially needs such dialogical conditions to explicitly allow for these encounters, which need to be open to the multiple voices of different standpoints.

4.2. Multi-Voiced Interactions

With two people in interaction, there are already two different voices and perspectives on reality. With more people interacting, there will also be more voices. However, a single person might already have different voices because she can have different standpoints on a subject topic. Take for instance “learning” as a topic: a student who has kids might understand it and speak of it from a parent’s perspective and in the next moment switch to her own learner’s perspective; these two perspective are different, learning is experienced and conceived differently and talked about, voiced, in different ways.

Similarly, a teacher might speak according to a textbook information, with the “textbook voice”; in the next moment, the teacher might switch to her own perspective, taking a more personal voice and speaking differently, even in contradiction with the textbook voice. This is to say that one single person can speak with different voices and that each has its legitimate perspective. Thus, learning encompasses different voices within and between individuals in interaction. And it is precisely the ongoing negotiations of their perspectives in interaction that matter for learning – constructing one’s voice in relation to other voices (those of significant others; the voice of a teacher, of peers, of the textbook) is a core aim in dialogic learning; it means to acquire our own voice, while being aware of other voices and perspectives. A dominating voice linked to a textbook, a syllabus, or to any authority becomes visible *as* a voice of power and can thus be questioned and asked for its grounds. This means that learning is taking position and becoming aware of one’s own standing in relation to others who are less or much more powerful, the latter one having the power to shape the people’s voice – even to silence it.

In this sense, dialogic learning acknowledges and maintains multiplicity, “to keep side by side opposite perspectives and points of view,” and also to allow “for some unknowledgeable components, both concerning the concepts to be learned and the self-development” (Ligorio, 2013, p. xxxi). In fact, dialogical learning praises the unexpected voice in others and oneself, and it invites divergent voices that might arise in the dialogic encounter (Skidmore & Murakami, 2016). It is explicitly not the aim of dialogic learning to have everybody aligned to one single, fixed knowledge item in one single dominating perspective but to construct and hold a multiplicity of different voices and perspectives and to become able to navigate these (Ligorio, 2013). How such open, structured and simultaneously highly flexible and improvised dialogues can look like in classrooms is demonstrated by the empirical studies reported in Skidmore and Murakami (2016).

4.3. From Social Speech to Thinking for Oneself

Dialogical encounters with others that generate thinking together need to be transformed into individual thinking and learning activity. The basic, highly complex process is interiorization as put forth by Vygotsky (1997) and elaborated by Bertau & Karsten (2018): social speech is interiorized and thereby transformed into inner speech (a silent, often very abbreviated and fast type of internal speaking). Inner speech acts as a mediator for non-verbal thought processes in generating ideas and words that can be said to others in social speech. So social speech and common activities are the source of inner speech and the thinking activity; we start by thinking-together while talking about a problem to solve and this models the ways we will subsequently use language in our inner speech and thinking – interiorization has taken place, allowing the single individual to continue the social activity of thinking-together for herself and himself. Teacher-student and student-student dialogues are at the origin of the formal learning process: it is here that this type of learning starts and thus these dialogues must be thoroughly taken care of. Further, any problem-solving dialogue between individuals of different skills and knowledge in everyday life is already a seed to informal learning. Dialogues between parents and children, siblings, friends, and even casual others are core moments to learning that will fuel the dialogues taking place in formal settings.

Taking care of the dialogues: this is exactly what the project of *Thinking Together* does (Dawes, Mercer & Wegerif, 2000; Mercer, 2000; Thinking Together [Homepage]). Assuming with Vygotsky that our social speech will lead to and affect our thinking capacities, this program devotes great attention to how language can be used effectively as a tool for thinking: together, then for oneself. For this, all participants have to, in the first place, become aware of language as such a tool for thinking and to learn how to dialogue with others in order to think together (“explorative talk,” as opposed to arguing or unrelated parallel talk). All participants: the teachers are trained first to observe and then to speak in a dialogically-related, thinking-facilitating way in order to model this type of verbal

interaction for their students who will then practice which each other and finally be able to think in an effective way by themselves.

4.4. Liberating Learning

Dialogic learning aims at working in a border-crossing way, generating awareness of our own and others' perspectives and self-conscious knowledge; it seeks to stay open to the unexpected voices; it is alert to different voices of different power statuses and works with this multi-voicedness explicitly. With this ethical standing, dialogic learning is closely linked to dialogic pedagogy not only as its logical counterpart but also regarding its ethical tradition. Indeed, there is a small, yet important strand of dialogic pedagogy that starts with Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and Freire and Shor's *A Pedagogy for Liberation* (1987).

The work of the Brazilian activist Paulo Freire makes clear that learning is always occurring within a political context. We can and should ask: Who is supposed to learn, and to learn *not*? (Poor people? Workers? African-Americans? Native Americans? Women? Immigrants? Disabled?). What types of tools and language skills (written as well as oral) are made accessible or not for whom? What kind of education is provided for whom in any given country? This returns to the historical considerations about the learning agendas of societies (sect. 2), especially for the dominant societies of WEIRD capitalistic countries. Freire distinguishes between two forms of education with two very different attitudes to dialogue. In what he calls *banking education*, "knowledge is considered a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (1970, p. 58); in contrast, in *problem-posing education*, teachers enter into a dialogue with the students, they consider their students as fellows and as co-investigators into a common reality. Here, learning and education are an important moment in liberation from oppressive conditions, from authorities pretending to 'possess' the real truth, and from those who speak to students as empty vessels for selected information.

In concluding, we would state that any engaging dialogue in a learning context has the potential to be liberating – for both students and teachers. It is liberating to become aware of perspectives *as* perspectives, to understand how power is linked to dominating voices that are re-presented by representatives of institutions and organizations, and to become able to articulate one’s voice together with other voices in order to generate questions, new perspectives, and a common social understanding of the rapidly changing reality we live in.

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Chapter 7

MEMORY: MORE THAN RECALL

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“Just as everything participates in memory, so memory participates in everything: every last thing. In so doing, it draws the world together, remembering it and endowing it with a connectiveness and a significance it would otherwise lack—or rather, without which it would not be what it is or as it is”

Casey, 1987, p. 313

“In general, information enters from the physical environment through our senses into sensory memory and flows from sensory memory to short-term memory to long-term memory and then back to short-term memory when we need to use it”

Griggs, 2017, p. 201

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INTRODUCTION

Memory inhabits a central role in life. It is how we know whom we are, where we have come from, and it influences where our lives might be headed. Memory maps our world, identifying *whom* we may know (Ms. Thompson is my neighbor), *where* we are (home not school), and *what* we know and do not know (I play the piano but I do not know Spanish). It is how we navigate our cultural world (wear black to a funeral) and place ourselves in history (I was born after World War II), and it informs identity (my early memories of the farm made me a naturalist). It is a foundational skill, and when it is disrupted, as may be observed with conditions like Alzheimer's disease, it is clear how damaging the absence of a functioning memory can be.

The quotes at the beginning of the chapter reflect differing views of what memory is and how it operates. Memory is a force drawing the world together, and it is a hub in the mind for managing information. Understanding memory as a force that links a plurality of elements to ensure the *knowability* of the world is very different from understanding memory as a function of the mind. Understanding memory, as a cognitive function alone, stems in part from the medical model developed in the nineteenth century. The medical model sought to prevent conditions of mental illness from being understood through stigma-based narratives that named mental illness as a social deviance rather than a health concern. Advocates called for mental illness to be seen as a medical problem in need of a medical solution, meaning it would be treated as a disease and not a moral failing. This was an important transition at the time for psychology. However, long term, the focus on illness in isolation prevented psychologists from understanding, and responding to, a range of factors that were impacting people with mental illness. This included socio-political structures that provided varying assistance to people in response to race, class, or gender identities, producing different outcomes for people even when they had the same medical diagnosis (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

Memory is a way to process information from the physical environment, *and* it is a force that *draws the world* together. Due to the limitations generated by the medical model, this chapter will explore memory through the latter lens. Memory will be framed as personal memory in dialog with a collective memory, both of which bear traces of power from socio-political structures, cultural narratives and silences, and ancestral knowledge. Memory is individual and collective, it is personal and social, it is historical and it is not, it is acknowledged and contested, and it is stable and fluid. This chapter will propose a different model of memory through a critical approach that unpacks Western epistemological assumptions, puts memory back into context, names multiple types of memory, and finally explores memory as a site of social contestation and transformation. The first step toward a more inclusive model of memory requires engaging a critical decolonial framework to unpack epistemological assumptions in the knowledge.

CRITICAL LENS: DECOLONIALITY

The processes of colonization that happened in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were accompanied by a revolution of thought in the Western world. Colonization both sprang from these revolutions of thought and deeply shaped them. The “Age of the Enlightenment” shows a shift from basing knowledge upon religious beliefs toward basing knowledge upon science (Mignolo & Escobar, 2010). The shift to science was imbedded with two core assumptions: that knowledge is both universal and ahistorical. Universality can be seen in the three-phase memory model where all humans have the same brain, ergo they will remember in the same manner. Universality was believed to transcend the idiosyncrasies of context (including history) to a more objective truth. Ahistoricity is present in the three-stage model by stripping memory of a context. Ahistoricity made the argument that certain realities were *natural* and therefore timeless. Racialization being part of the natural order was the same type of fact as the sun setting in the west. Racial inequalities did not enter into

history through colonization; they had always been present due to the ordering of nature (Mignolo & Escobar, 2010). Sociologist Aníbal Quijano (2000) writes that universality and ahistoricity were an important extension of Western power that allowed the West to establish every aspect of its culture, language, and knowledge as normative. The fact that ahistoricity and universality operate on an epistemological or foundational level of knowledge guarantees reproduction unless they are challenged.

Decolonial theorist Maldonado-Torres (2007) extends the control of land, resources, and people to include control over epistemologies or how colonized people *knew* themselves. Colonization was the invasion of land *and* knowledge systems. Colonization transformed the way colonized people would encounter and learn their culture, language, and history for generations to come.

Understanding the impact of the invasion of knowledge systems is especially important for the consideration of memory and how colonization understood and *changed* temporality, or the relationship to time for the colonized. Alejandro Vallega (2014) theorizes that colonization operated from a linear temporality. The linear relationship to time constructed a past that minimized or erased the histories and memories of the colonized and gave control over the present (and by extension the future) to the colonizer. Vallega (2014) argues that linear temporalities were emphasized to make the past become a site of erasure and the present and the future sites of alienation, as the colonized could not exercise any control over them. The question of the repression of memory and in turn history is explored early in the field of psychology through the work of Sigmund Freud and others (Herman, 1997). Freud's (1986/1962, p. 203) early exploration focused on the experience of women in therapy who were revealing incidents of sexual abuse from earlier in their lives. Freud originally concluded that women were recovering repressed memories of the abuse. However, after much pressure he re-wrote his conclusion stating that the women were engaging in fantasies of sexual violence and were not actual victims. The denial of his first conclusion came from the inability of Freud and others in the field to face the widespread sexual violence present in Viennese society (Herman, 1997). On a micro-scale the story of Freud's patients shows the

permission present in Western thought that the past could be manipulated, erased, silenced, and re-written if the information it holds disturbs the status quo. In particular it shows psychology's willingness to embrace a linear temporality in which the past is unknowable to all but those with power. The women, despite the presence of their memories, were rendered unable to know the difference between memory and fantasy. It was the male psychoanalysts, with more social and political power, who got to name memory as fantasy and ignore the need for individual and social redress. "The knowledge of horrible events periodically intrudes into public awareness but is rarely retained for long. Denial, repression, and dissociation operate on a social as well as individual level" (Herman, 1997, p. 2). Vallega's (2014) reading of western temporality is not only an effort towards diversifying concepts of time. It reveals the *power* inherent in temporalities in particular how they reveal whom a society names as capable of *knowing* the past and who is only capable of fantasy. Severing memory into a past orientation also may sever responsibility for that past disabling mechanisms for holding perpetrators accountable.

In more recent scholarship linear time is reflected in Western psychology through the framework of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD positions a linear temporality as a natural function (even though conceptions of temporality are deeply cultural), and it pathologizes experiences of past memories erupting into the present (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Healthy memory orders trauma to the past where it is less impactful and theorizes based only on individual memory (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Paul and Angela Lederach's (2010) work on trauma in nonwestern cultures revealed a temporality that is simultaneous instead of linear. The experience of the past in the present in these cultures serves as an indicator of a *functional* memory. Lederach and Lederach (2010) reveal that linearity is not necessarily universal. PTSD, as it is currently defined, also excludes trauma that can happen to a collective and be ongoing and intergenerational like systemic racism (Holmes, Facemire, & DaFonseca, 2016). Basing memory in an ahistorical individual denies the experiences of structural violence that is often contemporary as well as historical or simultaneously past-present.

Decoloniality, as a critical lens, challenges assumptions that have framed memory as the cognitive processing of an individual with a linear temporality. By removing the assumptions of universality and ahistoricity, we are now free to consider memory in context (a people in a place with a history) and in plurality (more than one kind of memory).

MEMORY IN CONTEXT

As stated earlier, most of the recent research on memory frames the processes of memory through a three-stage model. Memory is a cognitive process in which sensory information from our physical environment moves from sensory memory to short-term memory to long-term memory and then back to short-term memory when it is needed (Griggs, 2017). While this may be an accurate description of the physiological process of the mind, it assumes a subject that is absented of a socio-political context, histories, ancestral knowledge, and the identities that flow from each. Take, for example, the interaction between memory and the history of a place. The memories and history of that place may appear differently in diverse communities based on one's socio-political position in relationship to the place as well as their own cultural and religious traditions. How the descendants of indigenous peoples in the Americas remember the processes of colonization and the establishment of a state will be different than the memories of the descendants of European settlers. These differences will occur across varying sites of memory from knowledges inherited from ancestors, to historical records, and socio-cultural significance. For the descendants of settlers, the Americas were founded; for indigenous communities the Americas were stolen. These memories may still move from sensory, to short-term memory, to long-term memory, and back to short term, but the content of the memories themselves is very different and requires context for understanding.

It is important then to consider not only how memory *works* but also how it is *made*. In considering how memory is made, it is important to widen the lens from a physiological process to a socio-political process

that includes differences in power, histories, and identities. The memories held by a member of an indigenous community in the Americas exist in the tension between dominant social narratives (often framed as a singular history) and the cultural understandings of temporalities, ancestors, and memory as an ethical obligation to the community (Deloria, 2009). Memory in context removes foundational Western epistemologies of universality and ahistoricity. Indigenous peoples' model(s) of memory and histories should exist without a reductive comparison that filters their knowledge back through the universal three-phase model. By removing context, the risk of reproducing the erasure of histories and cultures that was practiced during colonization is much higher. Memory in context ensures a much more inclusive approach for gathering the relevant data held in memory and for understanding how memory is made and works.

INTERWOVEN SITES OF MEMORY: INDIVIDUAL, COLLECTIVE, HISTORICAL, AND CONTESTED

Individual Memory

Paul Connerton (1989) looks at *individual memory* through personal, cognitive, and habit memory. Personal memory is our life narrative, how we remember our personal past. Cognitive memory is how we remember how to conjugate a verb or solve a geometry equation. We do not have to remember the context of how we learned conjugation to be able to conjugate, whereas with personal memory we need context to understand and even re-interpret the events of our past.

Habit memory is the embodied memory we form for tasks like riding a bicycle or how to thread a needle. Habit memory can also require context, for example, remembering how to respond to a greeting will differ in most cultures depending on whom you are greeting.

Therefore, you are not just remembering a handshake or a kiss on the cheek; you are remembering norms and cultural rules for greeting a grandmother, a co-worker, a child, etc. Connerton (1989) places memory into a context and develops memory as a plurality.

Collective Memory

Paul Ricoeur (2004) writes that *collective memory* is memory with the “I” removed. This “shared” memory describes the history, tradition, knowledge, and cultural practices of the place(s) a people inhabit. These memories provide pathways for understanding and teaching a culture, the rules of a place, the traditions of an ethnic or religious group, etc. This memory orients people to norms (we do not eat meat), it informs identity (we are a people who farm), and it draws from shared histories (the first village was built in 1202). Collective or communal memory can be quite intimate, a portrait of the people of this place. But it is also often a space for constructing memory that may differ from official histories (Connerton, 1989).

Collective memory exists alongside political record and may contradict it. For example, the political record could say that Black men were enfranchised to vote with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment (Dubois, 1935). However, collective memory would say Black men did not gain full suffrage at that time. The political record, as a dominant voice in the shaping of communal memory, could diminish the memories of a particular community, in particular if the memories of that community challenge status quo beliefs that a larger collective may hold. The site of collective memory informs the identities and memories of an individual. Collective memories also pass through the three-phase model, but again could not be understood via universal or ahistorical lenses. This leads to a final site of memory to consider, the site of historical memory and sites of contestation.

Historical Memory

Historical memory recognizes a dynamic tension between the construction of histories and the understanding of memories, which challenge official narratives that deny or minimize abuses of power (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica & University of British Columbia, 2013). Historical memory takes seriously questions of power, in particular regarding the authorship of history to ensure space for victims to interrogate the past, name harms, and vision redress *as acts of memory* (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica & University of British Columbia, 2013). Memory in this construction becomes an agent of social change, a necessary check and balance against power systems that might wish to avoid accountability and change by erasing records of political and historical abuses of power. This echoes Vallega's (2014) concern that the past and its construction served as a tool for erasure during colonization and continues to operate in the systems that descended from original colonial structures. Memory in this construction includes stories told by individuals (this is what happened to me) that are then placed into a larger narrative (this is what happened in the civil conflict). Memory in this construction addresses sites of contestation. It does not begin from a premise of *history*, choosing instead the orientation of *histories* and clearly maintaining that the goal of this memory work is not to produce one unified telling of history. Rather, historical memory envisions an ongoing encounter with memory and histories as sites of reparation and transformation. The construction of past here would be closer to what Lederach and Lederach (2010) name simultaneous to the present.

Contested Memory

By opening to context and multiple sites of memory, we can begin to see how memory and the identities it informs weave across multiple sites: individual, collective, historical, and contested memory. For example, a Black person in the 1920s in the United States would have a completely

different set of memories than his or her White peer. Consider the *Negro Motorist Green Book*, a travel guide for Black people during the time of segregation and Jim Crow in the south. The *Green Book*, displays types of memory described by Edward Casey (1987), with-ness (memories happen to a body), around-ness (memories happen to a body in a specific place), and through-ness (memory comes through shared ritual activities w/others). The travel guide drew from individual and collective memories, socio-political context and history, and memories from with-ness (body), around-ness (place), and through-ness (ritual acts), and recorded as safe as possible a passage for Black people through segregated geographies. The three-phase model of memory sheds little light on this act of memory by the Black community. Nor would ahistoricity or universality assist in understanding the psychological significance of this book. The travel guide only makes sense and is able to speak to the present when afforded multiple sites of memory and a simultaneous past-present temporality. It required and requires contemporary and historical context as well as understanding of socio-political structures. As an act of memory, then and now, it offer insights and challenges to communities on both sides of segregation. The Black community did not just craft a travel guide; they crafted a piece of historical memory that holds information about the harms that stem from generations of racialized violence. By bringing the past into the present, memory becomes a possible site of transformation and repair. Memory as *transformative* draws from historical memory and recognizes memory, in particular collective memory, as a place of dialog, repair, and redress across generations. The individuals who had to travel by the *Green Book* still require reparation whether living or deceased, and so do their descendants. The *Green Book* offers an opening into unpacking the historical harms of segregation and understanding its contemporary manifestation. A travel guide may no longer be required, but that does not mean that communities of color move as freely in the United States as their White counterparts. Understanding the past as *over* misses the needs, questions, and challenges that transcend linear time as well as the opportunities to transform and repair.

Mary Watkins and Helene Shulman (2008) in *Toward Psychologies of Liberation* suggest a present-past-future orientation to time instead of a past-present-future. Placing the present first they offer a positioning in which it is in the *now* that we both struggle to understand the past and build a future from that understanding. They explore memory as a site of resistance, in which the past is plumbed for events *and* the meaning of those events. Recall in their temporality, is not simply a re-telling but a re-encounter that establishes spaces for mourning, celebration, accountability and transformation of harms. An example of this type of memory is public memorialization. “The iconic objects or images that are brought forward in such a space activate the memories and affects of individuals while at the same time maintaining a significance that is collective and historical” (Watkins & Shulman, 2008, pp. 127-128). An example of memorializing is the passage of the Reparation Ordinance, addressing police violence, by the Chicago City Council in 2015 (Kunichoff & Macaraeg, 2017). The ordinance had several features but included three that dealt specifically with memory: the creation of a public memorial, the establishment of a community center for victims, and the creation of a curriculum for public school students that taught the history of specific events of police violence in the city. A public memorial, curriculum, and community center engage what Shulman and Watkins name an “aesthetics of interruption” that stop a “frozen and forsaken possibility of imaginative understanding and mourning” (Watkins & Shulman, 2008, p. 129). By refusing erasure and claiming their memory of police violence in Chicago, even when interpretation of the events was contested, the impacted community claimed their history of tragic occurrences as a site of possibility and resistance. They interrupted the silence that surrounded their histories and memories and stopped the erasures that had been imposed by systems of power invested in avoiding accountability. But perhaps most importantly as Judith Herman (1997) writes, “to hold traumatic reality in consciousness requires a social context that affirms and protects the victim and that joins victim and witness in a common alliance” (p. 9). Memories, especially traumatic ones, require a witnessing that the victim cannot perform alone. In the case of Chicago, the city may now join with the victims of police

violence in acts of memory and together affirm, mourn and seek meaning. The movement from individual memories (survivors of police violence) to collective memory (city of Chicago) begins to form the common alliance that Herman (1997) calls for and prevents erasure and forgetting.

In conclusion, the three-phase model of memory while containing important information about memory it needs to be put into dialog with other models of memory. Delineating what happens on a physiological level will always be important, but it loses functionality when it is isolated from other sites of knowledge failing to “draw the world together.”

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Chapter 8

**BEYOND DEVELOPMENT AND MORALITY:
ENTANGLEMENTS OF LIFE
AS POLITICAL PRAXIS**

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“The project of prefiguring minds and bodies capable of revolutionary social change and the transformation of structures and relations of oppression remains as pressing as ever. But we will not find the answers in developmental psychology, now or ever.” (Burman, 1994/2016, p. 286)

It has been nearly forty years since Carol Gilligan (1982/1993) challenged Lawrence Kohlberg’s masculinist frameworks for moral development, a challenge that was taken up by Erica Burman (1994/2016) with the publication of her feminist critique of developmental psychology.

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And yet, developmental psychology continues to saturate the field of psychology and operate as a powerful colonial construct distributed worldwide. While development is often presented and taught as a natural accounting of phenomena, it is without a doubt a culturally and socially determined way of describing the structures of living things. As Burman (1994/2016) points out, developmental frameworks are powerful deployments of social force that are, “often imperceptible, taken for granted features about our expectations of ourselves, others, parents, children and families, informing the structure of popular and consumer culture as well as technical and official policies” (p. 2). The adoption of developmental concepts and ideas, as simply a given, can make them seemingly inaccessible to significant critique. They become naturalized and as such, begin to permeate all aspects of our lives in powerful ways. This paper will propose an extension of the analyses by Gilligan and Burman. It will explicate alternative frameworks to masculinist theories of moral development and offer alternatives based on contemporary feminist theory.

FEMINISM AND DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

The relation of feminism to developmental psychology might be seen as tenuous at best. Most developmental psychologists have little or no understanding of feminist theory or its relationship to psychological theories of development (Miller & Scholnik, 2014). One might go further and say that psychology’s relation to its founding mothers and the interests of women, both theoretically and practically is fraught with tension and elision (Burman, 1994/2016; Collins, Dunlap, & Chrisler, 2002). While there has been a significant rise in the number of women psychologists, the theoretical and methodological orientation of the discipline as a whole is still heavily reliant on psychology’s founding fathers (Clay, 2017). This reliance on theoretical and methodological masculinist foundations has profound and problematic implications for the way psychology has come to understand itself within the broader frameworks of the prevailing social

system of capitalist relations. The extensive web of entangled historical collusion, both theoretically and methodologically, between psychology and the various stages of capitalist development has shaped the field in many ways. The teleological imperatives of western philosophy that undergirded the European and U.S. colonial projects are inscribed indelibly into the epistemological understandings of development within psychology.

One of the ways that psychology is embedded within Eurocentric understandings of human behavior is how transcendent and universal concepts elide the effects of particular historical and geographical concretions of concepts, modes of production, and living force. Mainstream psychology and developmental psychology both tend to understate, if not ignore the role of what Marx and Engels (1846/1970) called the mode of production as an influence on behavior and cognition. In classical Marxism, society and social formations, such as subjectivity, are subordinate to the way that life is produced and sustained in a given historical period. Who we are as social subjects will be shaped, and in no small degree pre-consciously determined, by whether our society is agricultural, industrial, mercantile, and so on. Concomitant with the process of subjectification is the development of conceptual frameworks of knowledge that support the values and logic of a given system of production. Althusser (2014) refers to this as the production and dissemination of ideology or the proliferation of the logic of the ruling class.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) point out that the sustenance of such a system of rule is premised in its capacity to deploy language as a set of universal signifiers that operate as what they term “order-words.” Order-words function at two levels: in the first, they order the world by nominalizing, categorizing, taxonomizing, and producing hierarchical sets of relations. In the second instance, these systems of signification are utilized to order the subject by inducting them into understanding themselves and the world around them according to the universal and transcendent terms of signification pre-constituted in the language system into which the subject is born. The power of such a system is in how it

obscures and elides alternative understandings of who we might become and how our relation to the world might be altered outside the logic of the dominant system of rule.

This is exemplified in the work of Jean Piaget, the father of developmental psychology. Burman (1994/2016) notes that “the Piagetian model is ... unable to theorize cultural and historical change in relation to development” (p. 239). She goes on to argue: “Piaget depicted a subject who is irrevocably isolated and positioned outside history and society” (p. 239). Such a transcendent understanding of the subject positions the foundations of developmental psychology as a system of thought that obscures the role of material relations in composing a heterogeneous field of living struggle against homogenous systems of social control and dominance.

In a broader sense but premised in a similar logic, Psychology itself, as a co-evolutionary element of colonial and capitalist systems of rule, is an active contributor to the production of our current social system (Burman, 1994/2016; Parker, 2007). As a conceptual framework for understanding who we are, mainstream psychology has contributed to the dissemination and proliferation of precisely the kinds of logic and conceptual frameworks necessary for the expansion of capitalism as a polysemic system of rule. The impact of psychology as a conceptual form of colonial subjectification has had immense effects on a global scale with its universal registers of diagnosis, familialism, neurological hierarchies, teleological imperatives of personal growth, valorization of individuation, insistence on positivism, and ongoing propositions on utopic constitutions of the self (Burman, 1994/2016; Parker, 2007). The effect of this ever-shifting yet ostensibly determinate set of ‘truths’ has had profound implications across multiple populations of people, reducing a potentially rich and diverse ecology of subjective formations, and corresponding social alternatives, to a psychological monoculture of predetermined structural possibilities.

Perhaps no branch of psychology has been more influential as a force of colonial subjectification than developmental psychology (Burman, 1994/2016). Indeed, Piaget’s work valorizes Western science over *primitive* people’s understandings of the world. (Burman (1994/2016).

Piaget's notions of progress were deeply imbued with "Western forms of reasoning. Stigmatizing and dubbing as inferior, the irrational" (Burman, 1994/2016 p. 246), Piaget echoes the themes of Western progress so common to his historical moment. Progress was seen as particular to the West and driven by a transcendent sense of teleological inevitability. The emerging logic of capitalism blended with a profound belief in the logic of science was central to the origins of developmental psychology and particularly industrial capitalism.

Indeed, developmental psychology echoes its genesis under industrialism capitalism by extending and imbricating the logic of the factory into our education system, our family structures, our concepts of care and affiliation, as well as our sense of personal worth (Burman, 1994/2016; Wasiak, 2011). The hegemonic force of development as a driving factor in capitalist production extends beyond the factory floor into our very psyches (Foucault, 1975). The logic of capitalism as a system premised on profit as its defining characteristic is mutagenic in its effects on social relations, muting their capacity as systems of care and shaping them as centers of social entrepreneurship.

The ability of capitalism to appropriate and transform the inherent ecological processes of living things into abstract transcendent notions emptied of any sense of immanent value has been a hallmark of mainstream developmental psychology. Starting with the powerful structural proposal that the movements of human beings across time can be universally mapped as a series of discontinuous and universal structures, developmental psychology invokes the logic of the industrial capitalist mode of production.

Although Piaget's work was driven by a structural logic premised in the enlightenment value of the capacity to uncover universal truths, at another level his accounts of his encounters with children was more nuanced. While Piaget saw stages as inherent to human development, he did not see his four stages as universal or rigid demarcations. Instead, he proposed that the movement across stages was idiosyncratic to each child (Burman, 1994/2016; Wasiak, 2011). The shift towards development as uniform, progressive, linear, and product focused was developed by post-

Piagetian psychologists enamored of Fordist and Taylorist models of assembly production so essential to the expansion and deployment of the industrial capitalist project (Burman, 1994/2016; Wasiak, 2011). These Foucauldian diagrams of industrial production continue to have resonance as definitional frameworks for families, physicians, teachers, and, of course, psychologists (among other ‘mental health’ care providers) as they interact with and shape the lives of children. It is important note, that these industrial diagrams from a fading mode of capitalist production are still the most predominant understandings of human development as we enter the 21st century.

In this regard, as we move into the 21st century, industrial social diagrams are ever so gradually giving way to more flexible models of developmental trajectories more in keeping with the current capitalist mode of production. Hardt and Negri (2001) argue, that as we enter the 21st century, the predominant mode of production shifts from the disciplinary regimes of industrial capitalism. Under industrial capitalism, psychology acted as an “immaterial space of confinement; confining the developing child to a hierarchical and quantifiable notion of teleological time and thus a hierarchical and quantifiable notion of value. Anything or anyone not fitting this confine is rejected as abnormal” (Wasiak, 2011 p. 122).

In our contemporary period, things begin to shift as capitalist relations reach a point of full social saturation at a global level. At the same time, capitalism engages global virtual platforms that allow for modes of cyber-production that shifts the historical tendency away from industrial production and towards what Negri (2012) calls “immaterial labor.” Immaterial labor refers to new modes of cyber production in which the kinds of physical labor common in agricultural and industrial modes of capitalism shifts into an appropriation of our social and intellectual capacities, such as the historical tendency to open modes of purely virtual social activity in a rapidly proliferating set of media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and so on. These new modes of labor have us deploying our capacities for sociality to the ends of multibillion-dollar global corporate marketing networks.

Similarly, in our workplaces, there is an increasing emphasis on social networking, teamwork, as well as harmonious and non-contentious collaborations with co-workers and administrators that draw on our social capacities and place them in service to make a profit. Our work lives are no longer centered in one location or workplace but networked in temporary configurations of impermanent or contingent labor. There is an emphasis on entrepreneurship, which appropriates our creativity and intellectual capacities as bargaining chips within a precarious system of casino capitalism, where we might win one day but lose the next, and in which the house always wins.

With this shift in the mode of production, there are simultaneous shifts in the way that developmental psychology begins to orient itself within the realms of cyber-capitalism. While some of these shifts may appear to signal a move away from the dominant binary Cartesian view of human growth, we would well be advised to remember that any advances in the system of capitalist production are the result of revolutions that have failed and been appropriated. It is also essential to consider the possibility, as Negri (2012) would have it, that it is a failed revolution that can have the greatest degree of future revolutionary possibility because it has so much unexpended capacity. In the realm of cyber-capitalism and 21st-century developmental psychology, there are several domains of revolutionary impetus that are at stake. Each of these has a history of struggle as well as a contemporary history of continued alternative force that I will consider in a moment.

As I have noted above, the ability of capitalism to use spaces of containment such as the factory, the home, the clinic, and the school as spaces of discipline and training was imbricated in the theories of developmental psychology. The dissemination of industrial concepts that produce children as social products and the clinic, the school, and the home as mutually reinforcing regimes that shaped young people according to rather specific templates of behavior and subjectivity was a hallmark of industrial capitalist sociality. The center of these activities was the home, and the primary technician who administered and coordinated social reproduction was designated to be the mother (Donzelot 1979; Federici,

2004). Any abnormality or digression from the Taylorist assembly line of appropriate developmental progress was diagnosed as a failure of some kind in the maternal function. From refrigerator mothers, to double binding modes of maternal affection, inappropriate triangulation of the family system, overbearing mothers, distant mothers, too much touching, not enough touching, too little discipline, too much, insufficient nurturance, or overindulgence were all corrective diagnoses of mothering gone wrong. The isolation of the mother in the suburban home of the post-World War II era placed even more responsibility on women to raise the next generation of compliant citizenry (Coontz, 2016). The central task of motherhood was that of care, but care as defined by industrial models that articulated childhood as driven by the necessities of industrial capitalism.

As we move from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, the enclosures of industrial capitalism begin to come apart (Negri, 2012). As capitalism shifts towards modes of immaterial labor, the process of subjectification moves from a focus on disciplining the body through apparatuses of containment to what Deleuze (1992) call the society of control in which we are controlled by abstract algorithms such as our social security numbers, credit scores, and, more recently, the development in China of social credit ratings. The model of assembling childhood and children along a developmental assembly line of rigid stages gives way to a new definition of development no longer focused on preparing workers. Correspondingly, the role of mothers begins to shift. Instead of technicians who coordinate the activities of home with schools and clinics, mothers are responsible for coordinating the abstract overcoding of children as consumers and entrepreneurs.

Simultaneously, there is a shift in the social roles for women with, what Hardt and Negri (2011) term, the “feminization of labor.” As we move away from industrialized labor to new forms of immaterial labor, women enter the workplace in ever-increasing numbers. In terms of the reduced human labor deployed within the factory, women begin to take up tasks that require fine motor control, such as computer chip assemblage and a return to their role as seamstresses. A good deal of this feminized labor takes place in the Global South in newly resurrected sweatshops

echoing the earliest days of women in the workplace in the 19th and early 20th century. There is also a movement towards outsourcing these tasks to women working from home or in small localized factory settings funded by microloans that place impoverished women in the role of entrepreneurs, who exploit the labor of their families, neighbors, and friends.

Hardt and Negri (2011) also point out the inclusion of children and youth in the Global South and fast food franchises, social media platforms, and the fashion industry across regimes of global capital. Child bodies are utilized both in actual physical labor, where their small fingers serve in industries like their mothers and sisters. But child bodies also serve as sheer image for social media advertising and as objects of desire, as both eroticized and idealized innocence. Images of maternal family relations are also produced as media objects, both for reactionary political ends and as vehicles for marketing products and services. These virtual bodies and social assemblages of familial images operate in the realm of what might be called symbolic affective resonance.

The body of the child as well as the role of the mother shifts from the disciplinary registers of industrial capitalist teleological structures of development to what Deleuze (1992) refers to as a system of infinitely variable composition in which no one ever arrives. The child is no longer completing developmental tasks predetermined by their ‘stage’ of development. Instead, stages, as conceptual spaces of containment, are blown open and children’s movement across time is marked by a call to be all one can be: to exceed any limitation imposed by age, neurology, or physical composition.

Deleuze (1992) calls this “the logic of control” and posits it against the industrial model of discipline. The spaces of development that produce the child as a series of partial stages leading to the finished product of a thoroughly bourgeois adult give way to an infinite series of modulations and transmutations each of which opens the child to increasingly flexible modes of appropriation and exploitation at all levels. As Deleuze notes that under the regimes of industrial capitalism, “The different internments or spaces of enclosure through which the individual passes are independent variables: each time one is supposed to start from zero, and although a

common language for all these places exists, it is analogical” (p. 4). As we move into the society of control, on the other hand,

the different control mechanisms are inseparable variations, forming a system of variable geometry the language of which is numerical (which doesn't necessarily mean binary). Enclosures are molds, distinct castings, but controls are a modulation, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point. (p. 4)

The implications of this shift in the processes of subjectification are profound for developmental psychology. Regrettably, for mainstream psychology, the turn towards neurological reductionist paradigms has muted, if not entirely obscured, psychological analyses of social trends under 21st-century capitalism. The exception has been in the work of feminist psychologists, such as Erica Burman, and the broader field of contemporary feminist theory. Part of the reason for this is a divergence between the increasingly science-driven paradigms of current psychological theory and the ossification of some of psychology's more radical edges such as phenomenology, radical humanism, and existentialism. Of course, there have been movements in psychology to incorporate the theoretical implications of postmodernism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, Marxist and post-Marxist frameworks, work on decolonization, and even the neo-Spinozist ideas of Deleuze and Guattari. However, like the works of Gilligan and Burman in their feminist critiques of developmental psychology, these efforts remain marginal to the field.

That said, there is little doubt that the lived experience of children's development has shifted and is quite likely to shift further as we enter the world of advanced capitalist appropriation. As psychologists, we might well take the warning at the beginning of the chapter seriously, when Burman warns us that developmental psychology will never offer us the tools to create/discover “minds and bodies capable of revolutionary social change and the transformation of structures and relations of oppression” (Burman, 1994/2016 p. 286).

With new modes of oppression and appropriation moving with astonishing speed across the global landscape of our lives, there is an urgency to re-think psychology in relation to development outside the frameworks of developmental psychology. This rethinking of developmental psychology would imply a perspectival necessity to see both psychology and development differently before placing them in proximity to each other. Psychology itself is deeply compromised as we have noted above and may be unsalvageable. Similarly, development is founded in a dubious legacy of colonialism and capitalist modes of appropriation. The question is, can we find a new foundation for either or both of them? Is there what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) might call a minor lineage of psychological development?

One response to this might be to explore psychology *outside* of its history as a lens that explains human behavior and cognition through frameworks such as Skinner's behaviorism, Piaget's notions of competition, evolutionary psychology's concepts of reproductive necessity, neurological psychology's investment in motivation, or Kohlberg's ideas about moral development. Is it possible to re-found psychology as a non-binary, non-hierarchical, non-mechanistic, non-reductionist, and non-essentialist mode of inquiry into the psyche?

Given our depiction of children's trajectories across the face of virtual capital's society of control, these 19th and 20th century paradigms have limited utility. And yet, it is also the case that much of what postmodern thought has offered as an alternative (i.e., subjective fluidity, freedom from the rigid constraints of social modes of containment, the opening of hybrid and multiplicitous forms of identity, and a release from dominant constructions of nominalized truth regimes) has been appropriated by 21st century neo-liberal capital and turned to its own ends. The question is, within a system that appears to have tremendous flexibility to modulate its regimes of appropriation and control, what constitutes a genuinely transformative/revolutionary approach.

The key may lay in the abstract nature of capitalism itself. The source of its infinite mutability resides in its existence as a binary code. The capacity of capital to parasitically appropriate the creative capacities of

living force relies on capital's ability to take the radically heterogeneous field of living ecologies and to transform them into binary taxonomies of monetary value. Put simply, capitalism takes the ontological realm of life and translates it into the transcendent code of abstract value; the value of life is produced as a financial equivalence. In this vernacular, a body's trajectory across a life span is only valuable to the degree that its activities can be monetized.

To reconfigure development and psychology as a radical alternative to neoliberal capitalism's appropriation of the creativity and variability of living force would require an alternative set of logics founded in actual living ecologies. I would propose that such alternative understandings of a body's movement across the lifespan might be found within recent developments in feminist thought such as neo-materialism, ontological becoming, and transhumanist feminism.

It is significant to note that in each of the configurations of capitalism from industrial to the current post-modern form, feminists have been at the forefront of contesting the brutality and rapacious greed of a system that has become in our time what Hardt and Negri (2001) term Empire. From the earliest days of union organizing, movements for immigrant rights, fights against child labor laws, advocacy for recognition of housework as unwaged labor, and reproductive rights for women to contemporary movements for ecological justice, global labor equity, equity for the queer community, and indigenous struggles for justice, feminists have contested the dominant masculinist frameworks of knowledge underlying both capitalism and developmental psychology.

Feminist scholars such as Bordo (1990), Lloyd, (1984) and Hekman (1990) have argued that feminism offers a framework of radical alterity to the modernist project by contesting dualistic frameworks such as rational/irrational, masculine/feminine, subject/object, and culture/nature. Janack (2004) proposes: "The aim ... of feminist epistemology is both the eradication of epistemology as an ongoing concern with issues of truth, rationality, and knowledge and the undermining of gender categories" (para 4). Contemporary feminist thought from the middle of the 20th century through our contemporary period has sought to explore alternatives

to the ways that masculinist models of modernity, rooted in transcendent models of an ideal outside of life itself, has shaped our social discourses and understandings of our behavior and cognition. While the feminist project as a set of alternatives to masculinist models might well be read as a form of dualism, my intention here is not to delineate a binary opposition, but to trace an alternate epistemology and lineage of thought. My project is to open binary configurations to difference, rather than an either/or configuration of conceptual frameworks. In that regard, central to these projects has been a concern with contesting reductive and essentialist accountings of the complexity of life and lived experience.

Within the broad sweep of feminist theory, there has been a dual assertion of the necessity to flee appropriation and to develop possibilities that are responsive to the needs of living things. There has been an impetus towards horizontal mappings of growth, entangled sets of ecological relations, collectivist understandings of self, and idiosyncratic movements across the lifespan. Feminist scholars have challenged the scission of culture and nature. They have suggested that we expand our understanding of our movement across space and time to include not just our individual biology, but also the intricate interpositions of the infinite compositional elements of the material co-evolutionary creation that produces us. I use the term interposition in its psychological valence here as an overlapping of objects that allows for depth perception. It is precisely this deepening of perception beyond the abstract surfaces of capitalist code that is at stake here. The ability to see the world anew and to re-imagine thought and bodies within time as intricately entwined in, what Barad (2007) calls, “space-time-mattering,” Anzaldúa (1987) calls “Coatlalopeuh,” or as Stockton (2009) puts it “growing sideways.”

In a sense, the feminist revisioning of the mutagenic morphology of bodies asks us to leave our conventional notions of development and morality entirely behind and to entertain our relation to the world as inseparable and without any outside. There is no dialectical relation in which lack drives us forward progressively into the future. There is, in fact, nothing lacking. We are not going anywhere. We cannot be measured

against any scale. We are neither moral nor immoral according to any outside universal measure.

Carol Gilligan's (1982/1993) work in challenging Kohlberg's universalist concepts of hierarchical moral development opened the door to ethics and morality as particularized aspects of lived experience. In her work she has offered us the possibility of premising our ethics outside transcendent abstract notions of justice and morality that often obscure power relations premised in culture, class, sexuality, or gender. Premising her proposals on an alternate epistemology and lineage premised in women's ways of knowing, she suggests a morality/ethics premised in an ecologically founded form of subjectivity. For Gilligan (1982/1993), ethics is not centered within an individual subject, but is premised in relational webs of care. She argues that ethics/morality is a collective endeavor conducted by human beings as responsive, connected and interdependent. Ethical/moral decision-making is a response to injustice and careless treatment of living things. In a recent interview (Gilligan, 2011), she stated:

A feminist ethic of care is an ethic of resistance to the injustices inherent in patriarchy (the association of care and caring with women rather than with humans, the feminization of care work, the rendering of care as subsidiary to justice—a matter of special obligations or interpersonal relationships). A feminist ethic of care guides the historic struggle to free democracy from patriarchy; it is the ethic of a democratic society, it transcends the gender binaries and hierarchies that structure patriarchal institutions and cultures. An ethics of care is key to human survival and also to the realization of a global society. (para 8)

This perspective on care moves us beyond traditional notions of development or morality. If we extend Gilligan's assertion that we are inherently relational and open her definition of global society to include more-than-human others, we can see that our capacity for ethical care is premised in a radical materiality through which discursive elements, neurological elements, bacterial elements, viral elements, and cellular

elements all engage in the creation of the worlds of which we are a part and only a part. As Frost (2011) notes:

Fausto-Sterling, Elizabeth Grosz, and Karen Barad have begun to try to include ... the movements, forces, and processes peculiar to matter and biology. These ‘new materialists’ consider matter or the body not only as they are formed by the forces of language, culture, and politics but also as they are formative. That is, they conceive of matter or the body as having a peculiar and distinctive kind of agency, one that is neither a direct nor an incidental outgrowth of human intentionality but rather one with its own impetus and trajectory. (p. 70)

To reposition matter and the body in this way is a radical repudiation of Cartesian duality. The mind is no longer the arbiter of reality through its access to the universal abstract fields of reason and rationality. Agency is not driven by intellect and the decision-making capacities of cognitive processes. Instead, there is, as in Spinoza (1677/2000), a parallel process of mutual agentic force within which the body or matter is engaged with thought in “complex interactions through which the social, the biological, and the physical emerge, persist, and transform” (Frost, 2011, p. 69). In this reading, all things have agency, not just human individuals. The body’s movement across its lifespan is a negotiation of these sets of agentic relations. One does not develop so much as one is composed by a very nearly infinite field of interactions with the agentic capacities of other bodies encountered across time and space. This model of development resets psychological concepts of the self, cognition, and behavior in an entirely new light. There is no capacity to isolate and differentiate taxonomies or hierarchies of development. Instead, our ability to think and act is premised in profoundly complex, recursive, and multilinear systems. While psychology has nodded in this direction, it has always centered human agency in its relation to the world outside the self. To go beyond development as a teleological imperative generated by human individuals implies the adoption of what Taylor, Pacini-Ketchabaw, and Blaise (2012) refer to as a “more-than-human” network of entangled relations that operate on a radically altered understanding of time, space, and matter.

Karen Barad (2007) reconfigures relations between time, space, and matter as an entanglement that does not allow for a clear distinction to be made between our sense of each of these terms. Moving beyond classical definitions of ontology that propose that we as individualized and bounded entities move through linear time and quantifiable space, Barad (2007) suggests “spacetime mattering” as the actuality of lived experience in which there is no real way to differentiate the compositional elements of a singular event. For Barad (2007), the nature of things is comprised of an infinite set of virtual capacities that operate performatively as a set of relations composed of interactions between multiply agentic agents and indeterminant conditions. As compositional elements are thrown together, each with its own sets of idiosyncratic capacities, there emerges a process that simultaneously differentiates and entangles elements. Our phenomenological experience is the antecedent to what in Barad (2007) might be called: “matter-in-the-process-of-becoming.” In relation to the body’s movement across the lifespan, spacetime mattering would imply that our identity is composed over a field of indeterminate compositional capacity shaped by a multiplicity of agential agents inclusive of all the ecological elements (human and more-than-human) in each moment of our becoming. In this sense, who we imagine our ‘self’ to be is very possibly the least relevant aspect of our identity. Who we are experientially, outside the social logic of a system of abstract code such as capitalism, becomes radically indeterminate and focused on our sheer capacity to act compositionally. This phenomenologically-based subject stands opposed to overcoding our actions into the money sign.

This notion of differentiated entangled becoming is echoed in the work of Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) in her refusal of a singularly differentiated identity derived from either space or time. In her accounting, the self is a multiplicity that refuses fragmentation. There is a plurality to who we are that encompasses both binary social categories and conventions, as well as how each of these categories is utterly inadequate in describing the compositional force of their entanglement. For Anzaldúa (1987), the space we inhabit is always a contingent element in the body’s movement across the lifespan. Space as geography brings with it certain affinities for

climate, cuisine, a sense of the aesthetic, but also a more-than-human set of geological and bio-ecological coordinates. Space is also saturated with time in ways that cannot be easily or productively disentangled. For Anzaldúa (1987), who we are is not separable from the geo-biological coordinates of older ancestral knowledge. The land that we inhabit and beings that live on that land that we inhabit compose our lives across time without reference to western industrial capitalistic notions of minutes, hours, years, and so on. Anzaldúa (1987) crosses the contemporary moment of her own life with older understandings of Aztec deities such as Coatolopeuh (*she who has dominion over serpents*). Her interest in such things was not archeological, but phenomenological. For her, to produce the past and the present in binary form was to refuse a profound understanding of how we are becoming. She said, “I know things older than Freud, older than gender” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 26). The figure of Coatolopeuh was a figure of entanglement. A referent to a way of being in the world that phenomenologically acknowledges the indistinguishability of time and space at the level of materialist ontology. In this sense, the body’s movement across the life span never really arrives at any/where or any/time in particular. Because, there is a multiplicity of agentic elements in constant movements of composition, there are elements in motion and elements in momentary stasis. The body as a multiplicity in motion is a space of, what Anzaldúa (1987) termed, “the borderland.” Of such a space, she said:

Cuando vives in la frontera, people walk through you, the wind steals your voice, you’re a burra, buey, scapegoat, forerunner of a new race, half and half—both woman and man, neither—a new gender ... To survive the Borderlands you must live sin fronteras, be a crossroads. (Anzaldúa, 1987, pp. 194-195)

This reading of the borderland as a space of alterity opens non-binary formations of identity founded in what Barad (2007) might refer to as “matter-in-the-process-of-becoming.” For our purposes, it offers us an alternative reading of time and space that opens us to the possibility of

infinite liminal development. This shifting of our relation to time and space that produces us as non-axiomizable code holds the possibility of eluding capture by capital in its efforts to overcode our phenomenological experiences. While postmodernity offered us resistance through linguistic reclamation and epistemological reconfigurations of our identity, Anzaldúa (1987) and Barad (2007) open the possibility of an ontological complex fluidity of movement that engages a cosmic dance between elements.

The steps of such a dance are spontaneous, although not without an intrinsic virtuality of order. Certainly, they are neither binary nor linear in their movements as the body moves across the lifespan. There is no universal or proper mode of dance—no set steps that predetermine how the dance will develop; neither right nor wrong moral compass to guide or direct us. Perhaps it is more akin to what Stockton (2009) refers to in her work on queering development or as “growing sideways.” This queering of development is no longer growing up with all the stage markers of healthy growth according to the predetermined logic of capitalist bourgeois adulthood. Instead, Stockton talks about “irregular growth involving odd lingerings, wayward paths and fertile delays” (as cited in Edlestien, 2018, p. 84). This shift towards the irregular and wayward rather than the neo-liberal drive towards entrepreneurship and being ‘all you can be’ takes the logic of ontological posthuman materialism and utilizes it as what Guattari (1995) refers as “stuttering.” In his writing on the production and effects of “minor literature,” both with Deleuze (1986) and on his own, Guattari (1995) proposes that certain forms of writing subvert our understandings of the world and ourselves. O’Sullivan (2009) tells us that

such stuttering and stammering of language operate to produce what I would call an affective-event that in itself can produce what Guattari calls a ‘mutant nuclei of subjectification’ and thus the possibility of ‘resingularisation’ (a reordering of the elements that make up our subjectivity). (p. 249)

The production of an “affect-event” is a moment of transitions between states of being. It is, to use the language I have used earlier, a liminal

moment in which meaning is suspended and put into motion. This liminal moment is why such a stuttering has a morphological effect on the process of subjectification. It calls into the question the dominant overcoding of the order-word in producing who we imagine ourselves to be. This moment between meanings has a similar morphological capacity at the level of subjective formation as the more-than-human formations at the ontological level. It re-orders the elements that comprise our descriptions of ourselves.

The suggestion by Stockton (2009) that “odd lingerings, wayward paths, and fertile delays” might interrupt the orderly teleological progress of psychological models of development implies a similar *stutter* in the process of neo-liberal subjectification. The process of growing sideways has the possibility of reordering the speed, direction, and intensity of capitalist overcoding, causing it to stutter. Such a shift and rupture in the code of capital may well create a rift into which the actuality of material, ontological materialist phenomenological experience, might flow. This flow of living force is precisely the cathectic operation that recomposes those elements of spacetimemattering functioning as free radicals in the immediate environment of the event. Guattari (1995) suggests that there needs to be a “partial object” laying unfulfilled within the array of dominant signifiers. This partial object must be directly related to the advancement of mutant desire. This partial object “operates as a point of entry into a different incorporeal universe. A point around which a different kind of subjectivity might crystallize” (O’Sullivan, 2009, p. 249).

In growing sideways, the stuttering of time creates a pause into which an alternative apprehension of the world that lies between the code might become phenomenologically available. Such an apprehension may well have the capacity to reconfigure psychology in such a way as to rethink cognition, behavior, and the self in ways we have not yet imagined. As Deleuze (1995) notes about the impact and power of the overcoding of our lives under twenty-first-century capitalism:

Maybe speech and communication have become corrupted. They’re thoroughly permeated by money – and not by accident but by their very nature. Creating has always been something different from

communicating. The key thing might be to create vacuoles of non-communication, circuit breakers so we can elude control. (p. 175)

I said earlier that feminism had two driving forces in the development of its theories and practices. One of them is the necessity to flee appropriation. Certainly, growing sideways as a kind of temporal stammering has at least the latent capacity to produce the sort of temporal circuit breakers that may well be responsive to the driving teleological imperatives of neo-liberal capitalism. The kind of time that collapses our lives into monetized quanta and squeezes our lives into massive accelerators of sheer consumption. Perhaps the least we can do by way of flight is to stammer.

The other feminist impetus is to develop possibilities that are truly responsive to the necessities of living things. The thinking of Anzaldúa (1987) and Barad (2007) make important proposals in this direction. The investment in ethological capacity and more-than-human networks of care have radical political implications for rethinking and enacting social formations.

In terms of psychology and development, they suggest that the basic building blocks of how we conceive of who we are and what we do, space-time-matter, can be thought differently. Instead of filling time and space with large universal taxonomies and hierarchies of knowledge about how our bodies traverse a lifespan, perhaps we could open borderlands and liminal moments? If we could decenter our notion of being human and re-engage the world of the more-than-human, then new worlds and knowledges might recreate and rejuvenate the field of psychology as we know it. It is, of course, possible that developmental psychology would not survive such a transfiguration. If so, I welcome a new world, in which it has become irrelevant. In that extinction, I can but hope its partner in coevolution would reach a similar fate of irrelevance.

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Chapter 9

A CRITICAL DISCURSIVE APPROACH TO IDENTITY

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INTRODUCTION

In my own journey with teaching the topic of identity in my Introduction to Psychology courses over the last 15 years, using a variety of different textbooks, I have repeatedly felt like there was something missing. The standard socio-cognitive Eriksonian take on identity and identity *stages*, though digestible and nicely packaged, felt too step-wise, too linear, too cognitive, and too intrapsychic. Students, especially college-aged, would of course perk up around relatable topics like ‘identity crises,’ though ironically I felt the conceptualizations themselves had a tinge of foreclosure to them. They were too neat and tidy. What seemed missing, for example, was the idea that something like an ‘identity crisis’ was more

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than an *intra*-psychological stage of identity development but was also a social and culturally loaded cultural discourse itself that groups of people negotiate daily with *others* as part of making sense of their daily worlds as well as gaining access to resources. In other worlds, identities and their ostensible ‘crises’ are always already embedded in larger cultural conversations which are pieces in extant socio-political power structures. As such, I was hungry as a professor to figure out how to bring this level of awareness to my teaching about identity. I wanted to find a way to highlight the dynamic, contested, performative, and constitutive nature of identities-in-contexts.

The aim of this chapter is to present a critical psychological perspective on the topic of identity from a discursive psychological orientation. Traditional psychological approaches to identity are, as noted above, typically an outgrowth of Eriksonian thinking, where identities are personal, intrapsychic, and cognitive. For decades, psychological work on identity has thus been predominately shaped by *cognitive* approaches to categorization—namely ‘social identity theory’ (SIT) (Tajfel, 1978, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and its more cognitivist derivative, ‘self categorization theory’ (SCT) (Gibbs, 1994; Hogg & Adams, 1988; Lakoff, 1987; Turner, Hogg, Oaks, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Both SIT and SCT are concerned with addressing how *ascribed* or *acquired* identities are externally attributed and internally owned. The central premise is that the structure of society is reflected in the structure of the self, or self-concept (Turner et. al, 1987). Individuals are thought to inherit certain social category entailments which they become aware of and attached to over time. Social category memberships thereby become internalized as a part of the self-concept (Tajfel, 1978). By linking ‘individual identity’ and ‘social structure’ (in SCT), these approaches articulate the cognitive processes through which social category memberships are internalized as aspects of one’s self-concept.

Several consequences ensue from SIT and SCT. The first is a characterization of identity that is both realist and essentialist (Widdicombe, 1998). As Widdicombe (1998) notes, these theories are essentialist because they treat identity as a property either of the individual

or society that the psychologist can measure and use as a predictive or explanatory variable. Second, identities are treated as demographic facts about people (i.e., ‘men,’ ‘women,’ ‘American,’ ‘Catholic’) that are internalized, which purportedly have predictable associated behaviors. And third, these theories are realist as they assume a correspondence between one’s self-concept and some aspect of social reality (Widdicombe, 1998). This motivates experimental work that seeks to find the objective means of correlating class membership with other personal/social variables. The findings are used to make causal predictions (e.g., the ‘Social Identification Scale’) about the attitudes and behaviors of certain *real* identities that are ‘out there,’ so to speak, in society.

As a way of broadening these theories, some neo-Eriksonian psychologists have argued for a multifaceted view of identity that goes beyond the personal/intrapsychic realm to consider the importance of social contexts and social interactions (see Côté, 1993, Côté & Levine, 1988; Schwartz, 2001). Neo-Eriksonian researchers have raised questions about the extent to which identity is an individual/internal project or a function of interacting in social and cultural contexts, or a combination of both (see Adams & Marshall, 1996; Côté, 1993; Côté & Levine, 1988; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985). Although this work continues to proliferate, *critical empirical* work that details the relationship between social contexts/interactions and identity development has been scarce. In Schwartz’s (2001) meta-review of the first half century of neo-Eriksonian work, there is a conspicuous lack of influential work mentioned that critically addresses identity by studying social contexts/interactions. The lopsided prioritization of internal processes over the ideological/contextual realm remains as an unsurprising predilection of a discipline that continues to privilege the measurement of interiority.

When social contexts and interactions are discussed, they are typically conceptualized as extant factors like ‘schools,’ ‘families,’ or ‘peer groups,’ and social interactions are often coded and transformed into ‘interaction variables’ that are treated as ‘factors’ or ‘forces’ that individuals must integrate and differentiate from as part of their identity development. While contexts and social interactions are ingredient in a range of current

psychological claims about identity development, rarely is identity studied *as it is embodied* within those contexts or interactions. Rarely do we see *how* identities are built, shaped, contested, and revised *within* actual social contexts. Instead, contexts and interactions (and all other nods to the ‘external’ cultural world) are usually treated as a kind of overlay or influencing factor and are thus methodologically reduced to factors and variables. The social and cultural realm, as fluid and nuanced interactional sites where identities develop, have thus had an impoverished status in psychological identity research for over 50 years (see Meeus, 2011).

A CRITICAL DISCURSIVE APPROACH TO IDENTITY

The purpose of this chapter is to advance a critical (and specifically discursive) psychological perspective (hereafter, DP) where identity is underpinned, made possible, and reflective of the institutional and material frameworks of one’s social location and interactions. Specifically, this chapter advances a discursive psychological approach that is constructionist, but also ethnomethodologically-oriented (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Korobov, 2010, 2013, 2014; Potter, 1996; Widdicombe, 1998). DP is an approach that is concerned with the *action orientation* of how identity categories are handled *in use*. DP promotes a performative view of identity that shows how actual interactional moments where categorical identity ascriptions are built as discursive *actions* that are rhetorically meaningful as part of the machinery of some bit of social and cultural business being conducted. Here, identities are *discursive practices*, constituted in and through discourse (Butler, 1990; Korobov, 2010, 2013, 2014; Widdicombe, 1998).

Although an ethno-inspired DP approach to identity is aligned (broadly) with critical psychology, it does resist the common move in critical psychology of reading the accomplishment of people’s identity through socio-political concepts and the ascription of identities to people based on their social/cultural location (e.g., the ‘identity politics’

movement). Often, critical analyses of this type are too top-down, treating identity as an *ideological effect* of some pre-established *extra-discursive* norm, discourse, or speech-style, or cultural locale which tends to reify the extra-discursive realm and marginalize the nitty gritty of actual local social interactions. The result is a false-dichotomy where there are the external cultural/social realms and *then* there are the internal participant discursive orientations and/or attitudes towards them. The societal or extra-discursive realm is not *out there*, so to speak, independent of participant's orientations, but are fluid *resources* that speakers create and work-up, use and re-use, and as a result constantly re-fashion for use in future contexts (Korobov, 2010). An ethno-DP approach advocates an *immanentist* account of discursive meaning-making (see Davies & Harré 1990; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) where identities are immanent within (and not transcendent to) communicative activity and an account of *occasionedness* or *indexicality*—that is, a micro-discursive emphasis on demonstrating how people use talk to *index* (or draw-up into a kind of communicative space) identities. As such, an ethno-DP perspective has a decidedly bottom-up point-of-departure.

CENTRAL COMPONENTS OF A CRITICAL DISCURSIVE APPROACH TO IDENTITY

The critical approach to identity presented here is motivated by a least three key streams of thought. First are the theoretical developments in *social constructionism* (see Gergen, 1994, 1999). Over the last several decades, social constructionism has emerged as a compendium of poststructural, postempiricist, and hermeneutic philosophical thought aimed at emancipating contemporary psychology from its ties to foundationalist assumptions regarding mind, identity, language, and thought. Social constructionism has become an invaluable as a clearing space for a non-mimetic view of communication which, in turn, has invigorated a discursive turn towards studying identities as

interactional/contextual phenomena. Social constructionism is, however, a meta-theoretical orientation, not a methodological one. Second and third, then, are the systematically detailed empirical grounding of interactional identities in *ethnomethodological* (see Sacks, 1992) and *discursive positioning* (Korobov, 2010) approaches. Ethnomethodological and discursive positioning approaches provide an interactional vocabulary and empirical method for studying the practices by which people order their everyday lived realities, including their identities. These three pillars—social constructionism, ethnomethodology, and discursive positioning—work synergistically to form the backdrop for a critical approach to identity.

Social Constructionism and Relationality

Social constructionism reflects the radical prioritization of relationality—a view that attempts to reverse the longstanding idea in psychology that relationships are derivative of individual minds; instead, to borrow from Vygotsky (1978), relationality precedes individuality, and makes it possible. Following in the tradition of Vygotsky's (1978) social developmental theory, continental phenomenology (see Schutz, 1970), the dialogism of Bakhtin (1986), Wittgenstein's (1978) emphasis on language use/games, as well as theories of the interpolated self and performativity (Austin, 1962; Butler, 1990), social constructionism posits that the interior/internal world of the individual is not only fashioned within social, cultural, and historical webs of interdependent relationality, but is a constitutive feature of relationality. Identities are not decontextualized entities which stand outside of relational contexts. It is later, in processes of reflection and abstraction that identities appear reified and objectified as internal phenomenon that we experience and label as private and individualized.

Further, social constructionists capitalize on what Gergen (1999) refers to as a 'crisis of representation,' which is purportedly a failure of the traditional (mimetic, mirroring) responsibility of language, as well as on

the epistemological problems of dualism, introspection, objectivity, and rationality. Constructionists view language not simply as a mirror or map of the world, but rather as the very instrument that is itself the basis for our methods of simultaneously understanding the world and constructing it. Social constructionism has thus been instrumental in undermining the Cartesian dichotomy in psychology of ‘internal’ versus ‘external,’ particularly with respect to identity. For constructionists, neither the internal mind nor the external world is granted ontological status; constructionists remain ontologically mute or agnostic about issues regarding fundamentalism/ontology. Constructionists view all assumptions about ‘internal minds’ and ‘external worlds’ as constituents of discursive practices. Gergen (1994) thus problematizes psychology’s long-standing commitment to a *dualistic metaphysics*, which assumes an external real world which both influences and is reflected by an interior mind (or vice-versa). Instead, he refers to constructionism as a *social epistemology*, which collapses the distinction between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ and instead sees the locus of knowledge not in individual minds nor in extant sociocultural realities, but rather in patterns of social relatedness.

Constructionists are thus aligned with the critical tradition because they invite psychologists to begin their search for identity within relationships/relationality, broadly construed. Relationality could be as micro as a wink or utterance between two people, or it could be a macro habitus, such as ‘western democracy’ or ‘capitalism.’ Relationality is essentially a moniker for interactive contexts, both small and large. Although social constructionism thus provides an emancipatory philosophical and theoretical framework for psychologists interested in interrogating both micro and macro contexts for the study of identity, it nevertheless has limited *analytic* mileage as it does not offer a method per se, nor does it lay out a nuanced, micro-interactional descriptive vocabulary for analyzing identities as interactional phenomena. These blind spots are taken up by ethnomethodological and discursive positioning analytic programs.

Ethnomethodology: Empirically Grounded Categorizations

Ethnomethodology reflects both Harold Garfinkel's (1967) suggestion that people are continually displaying their local understandings of what is going on and Harvy Sacks's (1992) idea that such displays of local understandings are organized and visible in the details of everyday talk. Ethnomethodology approaches identities as relationally-responsive categorizations that are claimed, resisted, and otherwise *used* in communicative contexts to conduct social and personal life. Although these processes are analytically tractable, they are not measurable vis-à-vis an experimental factors and variables approach, but rather are analyzable as a texture of orderly and repetitive linguistic, gestural, and sequential resources. Although ethnomethodology currently encompasses a variety of strands, apposite for this chapter is Sacks' early interest in membership categorization. Sacks's early work offered rich descriptive accounts of the ways people's identities are rendered visible in their displays of, or ascriptions to, membership in identity-relevant or feature-rich categories.

Sacks's approached identities as *practical categorical ascriptions* that people use as transactional tools for conducting social business with others. For Sacks, the truth or correctness of an identity claim or ascription is not what is central. It is not important that someone truly 'has' the identity that they claimed or that was ascribed to them, nor was Sacks concerned, as many psychologists are, about correlating identities to people's actions or feelings. This (lack of) interest allowed Sacks to avoid the methodological problem of treating identities as variables or factors that could be quantifiably measured. What mattered for Sacks was how identity ascriptions were interactively *used* in live communicative exchanges, and how such uses figured as parts of the architecture of personal and social lives.

Sacks approached identities as membership categorization ascriptions that are used to perform various kinds of discursive actions. A rich and nuanced descriptive vocabulary thus emerged from Sacks's writing and was taken up by a broad range of language and social interaction researchers (for a more elaborate discussion, see Antaki & Widdicombe,

1998). For example, speakers are said to directly or indirectly *occasion* (or *make relevant*) an identity category. Such indexical invocations are referred to as *occasioning(s)* that *orient to* an identity. *Making relevant* or *orienting to* an identity or the features of an identity is brought off through a range of discursive *conversational structures* (or discursive actions) that include not only direct speech, but also paralinguistic cues. Interrogating the identity constitutive work these conversational structures do, as well as the attendant processes of *occasioning*, *making relevant*, and *orienting-to*, in the process of creating sociality, is the focus and contribution of ethnomethodology for the study of identity.

Ethnomethodology additionally stresses the importance of focusing on how the *participants themselves* occasion identity-relevant categories and use them to conduct social interaction. This is in stark contrast to the prototypical psychological agenda of beginning with *a priori* researcher-constructed identity categories (or features thereof), usually visible as items on questionnaires or as parts of pre-established interview questions, and testing to see whether and how people respond to such categories, as if taking them up or not is an indication of whether one ‘has’ this or that identity, which may in turn be associated/correlated with a range of behaviors, feelings, and so on. The shift to treating identities as an endemic participant resource (rather than analyst categories or predictive variables) that people naturally use in everyday interactions, as well as the up-close empirical investigation of such interactional work, is an additionally significant contribution of ethnomethodology to the interactional study of identity.

It is thus out of an ethnomethodological framework that the discursive moniker ‘identities are for talking’ emerged (see Edwards 1991; Stokoe, 2010). Given the enormous variability and flexibility by which speakers can categorize themselves and others in various interactions, analysts attend to what is demonstrably relevant to speakers at specific discursive junctures to see what identity ascriptions are designed to interactively accomplish. The idea is that the demands of interpersonal engagement are complex, requiring speakers to hone a certain level of discursive dexterity when it comes to managing various identity alignments. According to

Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2008, p. 585), the study of how people engage in identity work of this kind in various conversational contexts is one of the “most vibrant areas” in the field of interactional studies.

Important to note, however, is that much of the ethnomethodological work on identity became (in the field of conversation and discourse analysis) a means to the larger end of examining social action. In other words, identity ascriptions have been studied, as the moniker above states, as a means of engaging with the larger project of examining the intricacies of *social action*. Many conversation and discourse analysts pay attention to participants’ identity work as means of studying the types of discursive actions that such identity work accomplishes—i.e., patterns of turn-talking, turn design, repair, sequence formulation, and action formation. With few exceptions (see Stokoe, 2010), examining the social actions brought off through categorical identity ascriptions has been a central way that ethnomethodological insights about identity have been channeled into critical interactional research.

Positioning: Indexing Identities through an Analysis of Discursive Actions

For psychologists interested primarily in identity or, specifically, in a critical ‘bottom up’ approach to identity, and not simply in identity as a route to studying the architecture of discursive action, the ethnomethodological approach (and some resultant conversation/discourse analytic approaches) to identity may be limited. They may seem to too quickly bypass an in-depth analysis of identities per se. A discursive positioning approach is an attempt to remedy this problem. Like ethnomethodology, and in keeping with the general spirit of the discursive project, a discursive positioning approach is committed to an up-close descriptively discursive vocabulary for the systematic and empirical identification of discursive action. But it does more. To serve as a uniquely qualitative discursive approach, a discursive positioning approach additionally shows how discursive actions are, at times, ingredients in the

constitution of identities as interactional (not mentalistic) phenomena that are organized as part of the social maintenance of relationships and daily life (see Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2003). The analytic end goal of positioning is thus identities, not identities as a route to examining discursive action. The present approach thus conceptualizes positioning as the vanguard for an interactional approach to identity.

The use of the term positioning is not without precedent. Positioning has had a somewhat varied and complicated history. Historically, positioning has been conceptualized as either the outward expression of a world beneath the skull or as the realization of a shared societal order. For instance, Wendy Hollway's (1983) seminal work on positioning saw acts of positioning as driven by an interior psychodynamic operation of unconscious and irrational defense mechanisms. Post-structural thinkers like Althusser (1971), and Laclau (1993) discuss positioning by theorizing that social agents are comprised of 'subject positions' that are constituted by ideological and discursive regimes, making subjectivity an ideological effect (see Wetherell, 1998 for review). And since the early 1990's, Rom Harré and his colleagues (see Davies and Harré, 1990; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) have variously advanced ethogenic and ontological constructionist discursive views of positioning, where acts of positioning, though immanent in conversations, are fundamentally the product or expression of an extant societal realm of rules and/or social representations. These approaches to positioning tend to capitulate to interiority metaphors (psychodynamic or cognitivist) or post-structural assumptions about the relationship between our minds, our social worlds, and our discourse (for an extended discussion, see Korobov, 2010).

The present approach to positioning avoids treating discourse (and thus identities) as the product of something more primary (see Korobov, 2006, 2010; Korobov & Bamberg, 2004a, 2004b, 2007; Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2003). The discursive-positioning approach advocated for here is anchored in the *epistemological* discursive psychology of Edwards and Potter (Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Potter & Edwards, 1999, 2003). An epistemic discursive psychology (hereafter, epistemic DP) sees talk and identities as having a performative rather than referential

quality. The analytic task of epistemic DP is that of *epistemic constructionism*—that is, examining how, on what occasions, and in the service of what kinds of interactional practices, discourse is identity constitutive (Potter, 2010; Potter & Edwards, 2003; Edwards, 1997). A discursive positioning orientation thus approaches identity by examining how social interactions are ordered, made relevant, and attended to by persons-in-conversations (Korobov & Bamberg, 2004a, 2004b, 2007; Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2003). As noted earlier, this is a more markedly bottom-up approach to examining identity construction within social interactions as compared to the post-structural approaches to positioning that tend to launder local identity work through extant social and cultural ideologies/repertoires.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter is to offer a critical psychological approach to identity from a discursive psychological perspective. Although neo-Eriksonian researchers have emphasized the importance of social contexts and social interactions, empirical demonstrations of the rich and nuanced links between personal identity development and social/interactional contexts has either been investigated too broadly or not at all. Psychologists have, unfortunately, contributed very little understanding to the way identities emerge and develop within culturally rich interactional spaces. Within psychology, the closest we typically get to an analysis of identities vis-à-vis sociocultural contexts are studies modeled on a factors-and-variables approach which emphasize extant ‘social contexts’ (schools, peer groups, families, etc), and of the ways participation in these broad contexts *predicts* various facets of cognitive internalizations of social categories. Conspicuously absent are up-close interrogations of the interplay between identities and the actual social interactions that comprise and enliven broad social contexts. The charge of this chapter is for critically minded psychologists to investigate *how* identities are formed, contested, and revised *within* interactional contexts.

The critical discursive approach to identity presented here is an outgrowth of three interconnected theoretical and methodological approaches. Social constructionism is a metatheoretical orientation that attempts to free conceptualizations of identity from foundationalist assumptions regarding the ontological prioritization of individuality over relationality, as well as the (falsely) dualistic the relationship between language/communication and minds/thoughts. Ethnomethodology makes the theoretical intimations of social constructionism analytically visible and tractable. It puts meat on the bones of a theoretical commitment to identities as emergent relational phenomenon that are analytically tractable in the details of actual discursive moments. Ethnomethodological work has generated a rich vocabulary for describing how people orient to, ascribe, make relevant, and resist identities in social contexts. And a discursive positioning approach reveals how discursive actions are ingredients in the constitution of identities as interactional phenomena that are organized as part of the social maintenance of relationships and daily life. A discursive positioning approach is thus posited as the vanguard for a critical interactional approach to identity.

This view of identity ushers in exciting possibilities for liberatory forms of critical psychology. For example, a critical discursive orientation to identity has been useful for addressing issues related to sexism (see Gough, 1998; Korobov, 2004), homophobia (see Gough, 2002; Korobov, 2014), heterosexism (see Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 2013; Speer & Potter, 2000), racism (see Durrheim & Dixon, 2004; Fozdar, 2008), non-relational sexuality (Korobov, 2006), as well as issues concerning exploitation, social structure and power relations (Wetherell & Potter, 1993), or the internalization of oppression by young women (Bearman, Korobov, & Thorne, 2009). Such an approach lays open, in a concrete and grounded way, the fine details of how inequalities take root at the interactional level, and how at the same level, there exist possibilities for intervention and resistance.

In sum, a critical approach to identity that is grounded in discursive psychology will sharpen the ways psychologists typically talk, in broad strokes, about identity as a contextual phenomenon. The aim of a critical

discursive approach is to connect a bottom-up, fine-grained examination of discursive action with an analysis of identity categories. Such an approach is both theoretically progressive and analytically grounded. Although psychologists will continue to connect identity to the rich and nuanced sociocultural realm by using both a cognitivist and factors/variables approach, the hope is that with a critical discursive view of identity, psychologists will increasingly find ways to conceptualize and examine identities as interactional phenomenon that are organized as part of the social maintenance of relationships and daily life.

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Chapter 10

**CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON PERSONALITY
AND SUBJECTIVITY**

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Personality theory is one of the most intriguing areas of psychological inquiry, with an extensive history that reaches far beyond the emergence of Psychology as a distinct academic discipline in the late 19th century. Unlike some psychological concepts, such as ‘cognitive-dissonance’ or ‘post-traumatic stress disorder’ that have unambiguous 20th century origins, inquiries into ‘persons’ and their characteristics has been a topic of study that has existed in various forms for millennia (Danziger, 2012, p. 59). For instance, the physician Galen’s psychobiological theory of character/temperament, which is derived from Hippocrates’s older system of four humors, dates back to the 2nd century CE (Frances, 2014, p. 44). However, as Kurt Danziger (2012) notes, “a *specifically psychological* understanding of persons emerged relatively late in... history and was effectively superimposed on rich layers of alternative meanings” (p. 59).

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Such alternative meanings, including notions of an ‘immortal soul’ and ‘moral character’, are decidedly different conceptualizations of a person involving different implicit assumptions and explicit theoretical frameworks from the modern psychological concept of ‘personality’ (Danziger, 2012, p. 59). The concept of personality as it is currently understood thus largely came into existence alongside the discipline of Psychology itself in the late 19th century. Personality as a subfield of empirical research within Psychology oriented towards the study of individual differences received a systematic conceptual elaboration by the German philosopher and psychologist William Stern in his 1911 monograph *Methodological Foundations of Differential Psychology* (Lamiell, 2013, p. 66). Gordon Allport made foundational contributions to the development of personality psychology in the late 1920’s and 30’s, emphasizing personality as a holistic *pattern*¹ of thought and behavior involving both universal and particular dimensions, an approach that is recognized in the currently accepted definition of personality as a “characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting” (Meyers & DeWall, 2018, p. 462).

TRADITIONAL THEORIES

Psychoanalysis

In most introduction to psychology textbooks, the study of personality as pursued from a *specifically* psychological perspective is depicted as beginning with the psychoanalytic metapsychology of Sigmund Freud. Freud was clearly invested in portraying himself as the lone and heroic

¹ In his book *Pattern and Growth in Personality*, Allport (1961) writes, “If we accept this dogma concerning the scope and limitations of science we shall have to abandon the person as a person. But we are not yet discouraged. That the individual as a system of *patterned uniqueness* is a fact. That science likes universals and not particulars is also a fact. Yet personality itself is a universal phenomenon though it is found only in individual forms. Since it is a universal phenomenon science must study it; but it cannot study it correctly unless it looks into the individuality of patterning! Such is the dilemma.” (p. 9, emphasis mine).

discoverer of a dark continent—the unconscious—of which little had been known about prior to his singular efforts. For instance, Myers and Dewall's (2018) textbook showcases a portrait of Freud with the following caption underneath: "I was the only worker in a new field" (p. 462). In fact, this claim is at best a strategic hyperbole on Freud's part. The concept of an unconscious aspect of the mind was indeed a veritable trope in 19th century Europe that, as Dumont (2010) notes, was widely investigated via experimental studies, philosophies of nature, and clinical psychological research (p. 84). Notably, what distinguished the 19th century view of the unconscious from its earlier figurations was the new conceptualization that the unconscious was not principally an immaterial spiritual dimension but rather a *natural* aspect of the human mind that could be a proper 'object' for scientific investigation, even if it could not be directly observed. Thus, for example, Dumont (2010) notes that in the first half of the 1800's, Johann Friedrich Herbart attempted a mathematization of unconscious mental processes and even developed a theory of the unconscious strikingly similar to Freud's own in which "ideas struggle with one another for access to consciousness, as dissonant ideas repel one another and associated ideas help pull each other into consciousness or drag each other down into the unconscious" (p. 84). With regard to the philosophical tradition, Freud's concept of the unconscious has an unmistakable resonance with Arthur Schopenhauer's concept of the Will as a "blind driving force, essentially irrational and thoroughly imbued with sexual energy." (Dumont, 2010, p. 86). As such, Freud's ideas about the unconscious should be more explicitly situated within the background of an emerging scientific interest in studying unconscious mental processes that was occurring in 19th century Europe.

Freud's vision of personality is inextricably tied with his efforts to understand and treat psychopathology. For Freud, at the root of psychopathology, and thus of personality, is psychical conflict. In so far as psychoanalysis seeks to change the nature of psychical conflict, it might also be said to be interested in changing the dynamics of personality. Over the course of his theorizing, Freud provided two major models of the psyche—the topographical and the structural models—to conceptualize the

nature of psychological conflict. The topographical model relies on a surface/depth metaphor wherein the psyche is composed of distinct layers—Conscious, Preconscious, Unconscious—each relatively autonomous yet also transitioning imperceptibly into each other. Sadler et al. (1997) note that these psychological spaces become more autonomous and strictly defined during times of intense psychological conflict (p. 64). The structural model of the psyche employs the metaphor of psychological ‘structures’ or ‘agencies’ that carry out specific functions. These agencies are the Super-Ego, Ego, and Id. The Super-Ego is “the organized psychological representative of the parental authority figures of childhood... this mental agency functions as the individual’s conscience and is also a vehicle for ideals derived from parents and, through them, society” (Sadler et al., 1997, p. 170). The Ego is “a structure that develops largely to cope with the demands and restrictions of external reality and to mediate between the drives, reality, and, later, the superego” (Sadler et al., 1997, p. 170). Finally, the Id is “regarded as the reservoir of instinctual drives and wishes (particularly childhood sexual and aggressive wishes) as well as repressed contents held back by the ego through the application of counter-forces.” (Sadler et al., 1997, p. 169).

Where Freud might stake a legitimate claim to fame is in directly linking the origin of the unconscious with repressed sexuality. Here again, however, the standard narrative of Freud as a liberator of repressed Victorian sexuality needs to be critically re-contextualized. For instance, Myers and DeWall (2018) depict Freud’s late 19th century Viennese social context as:

[A] time of tremendous discovery and scientific advancement, but also of sexual suppression and male domination. Men’s and women’s roles were clearly defined, with male superiority assumed and only male sexuality generally acknowledged (discreetly). These assumptions influenced Freud’s thinking about personality. He believed that psychological troubles resulted from men’s and women’s unresolved conflicts with their expected roles. (p. 462)

In general, Myers and Dewall's description of Freud's social milieu is commendably accurate, particularly regarding male domination and the sexual double standards existing between men and women. Yet as Dumont (2010) notes, the notion that there was an overall prudish atmosphere towards sexuality pervading late 19th century Viennese culture is largely mistaken. So, if sexuality was not exactly a taboo subject in *fin de siècle* Vienna, then why did Freud insist so tenaciously upon repressed sexuality as the pathogenic kernel of the unconscious?² Perhaps one explanation can be found by more closely considering the complex *social* dynamics and contradictions occurring at the time in Freud's Vienna that involved not only asymmetries of gender, but also of race and class. David Pavón-Cuéllar and Mario Orozco Guzmán (2017) have discussed how the crucible for the development of psychoanalysis was a specific conjuncture of economic liberalism combined with conservative social mores, leading to the production of neurosis characteristic of Freud's era:

DPC: On the other hand, as you have suggested, the patient, the analysand, would somehow suffer the discourse of liberalism and its intrinsically contradictory character. Perhaps the atmosphere of freedom, the lack of political repression, is precisely what reveals the psychic repression discovered by Freud and operative within the most liberal society.

MOC: That's right. The contradictions were reflected in a world of opportunities for profit and enrichment but with ideological mechanisms of containment and social restraint. Since that time, there has been simultaneously economic freedom and social, racial, and neurotic repression. For instance, liberalism, a matter of the market, was not feasible for women who remained oppressed and obedient despite belonging to the high bourgeoisie.

DPC: Even for the bourgeois class, as the young Marx (1844/1997) observed, economic liberalism does not necessarily imply human emancipation. Producers do not gain their freedom through the free circulation of their products. On the contrary, trade becomes free at the

² As Dumont (2003) notes, Freud insisted that neuroses "have as their common source the subject's sexual life, whether they be in the disorder of his contemporary sexual life, or in important events in his past life" (p. 91).

cost of the freedom of people. Human beings end up reduced to the condition of slaves of liberated commodities and of the capitalist system that ironically regulates their liberty. In such circumstances, women can only recover a certain “freedom”, which is obviously not freedom in the strict and classic sense of the term, through a hysteria that opens the way to what the system cannot regulate. This logically appears as a gesture of subversion and revolt.

Pavón-Cuéllar and Orozco Guzmán (2017) thus emphasize that what is effectively repressed during Freud’s time concerns the ability of many, notably women and racial or ethnic minorities, to become full participants and beneficiaries in the discourse of economic liberalism available principally to a certain class of men, leading to situations of social exclusion or dependence which inevitably impacted their sexual expression and sexual freedom/autonomy. As Pavón-Cuéllar further emphasizes, being a full participant in the discourse of economic liberalism as a producer of goods or services is no guarantee of personal freedom—even those most successful become bonded to an economic system that, “regulates their liberty” (p. 3).

When Freud’s theory of neurosis caused by sexual repression is seen in light of this broader social and economic context of late 19th century Vienna, it becomes less compelling as a universally applicable theory of the human psyche and/or the dynamics of personality *tout court*, and more compelling as a theory describing the psychological repercussions of particular social conditions. Thus, if Freud’s theory of neurosis remains applicable today, within certain cultural contexts, it is arguably because these contexts involve similar if not even more pronounced social contradictions to the ones existing in Freud’s own culture. In addition, Freud’s vision of psychoanalysis did not involve fundamentally rocking the boat of economic liberalism but at best encouraged becoming a fuller participant within this existing social-economic arrangement. This conformist social stance was particularly evident in the variant of psychoanalysis known as Ego-Psychology, the dominant form of psychoanalysis in the United States during the 1940’s and ‘50’s, which encouraged identification with the ‘healthy and strong’ ego of the

psychoanalyst as a kind of ideal social model to be duly emulated. As Goodwin (2017) notes,

The ego psychologists exploit Freud's description of ego formation and transform it into a prescription for ideal therapeutic outcome and an imperative for late-capitalist living. In its theorisation of narcissism as a fundamental stage in psychical development, psychoanalysis "indirectly favoured narcissism's cultural primacy," giving way to a "troubling cult of one's own psyche" (Benvenuto & Molino, 2009, p. 18) where the pains and frustrations of conflict are no longer engaged with as a fundamental instability in the subject but are defended against with the ultimate goal of their resolution and removal...An original decentring of human subjectivity often succumbs to a counter-tendency that re-centres the individual according to new psychical agencies. This creates a psychoanalytic project that not only fits more readily into an institutional mould but is also its greatest betrayal. The ego and id psychologies that Freud vacillates between are two sides of an inward turn that tempers the radical edge of the psychoanalytic revolution by ignoring the social, relational and contextual factors that produce and yet put in question the sanctity of the individual. (p. 89)

Although some traditions in psychoanalysis, such as the Kleinian and Lacanian orientations, have energetically resisted the turn away from the unconscious evident in Ego-Psychology, the role of social asymmetries of power in conditioning psychical conflict has not often enough been highlighted in the historical trajectory and development of psychoanalysis. One important exception to this trend is found in the writings of Frantz Fanon who explored the link between colonization/decolonization and psychopathology, and who emphasized social asymmetries (in the form of racism) as conditioning unconscious conflict. For example, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (1986) writes:

If society makes difficulties for [the black man] because of his color, if in his dreams I establish the expression of an unconscious desire to change color, my objective will not be that of dissuading him from it by advising him to "keep his place"; on the contrary, my objective, once his

motivation has been brought into consciousness, will be to put him in a position to choose action (or passivity) with respect to the real source of the conflict—that is, towards the social structures. (p. 100)

Fanon's incisive analysis of the psychopathology of colonization/decolonization brings to the fore questions regarding the functioning and potential efficacy of psychoanalysis within a broader social context—can psychoanalysis alter the intra-psychic dynamics of psychical conflict while overlooking or leaving undisturbed the external reality of social asymmetries of power? Is psychoanalysis inherently tailored to certain normative interests regarding class, race, gender, and/or sexual orientation? In its Ego Psychology variant, psychoanalysis arguably introduced a new kind of elitism in so far as it proffered a cure that involved becoming better adapted to a socio-economic system productive of social asymmetries of power and, by extension, of neurotic psychopathology, in the first place. Danziger (2012) thus summarizes the implications of this kind of psychoanalysis: “Far from offering a universally valid concept of the human individual, the image of the consciously selfed person had become a difficult ideal imperfectly realizable by a minority prepared to invest considerable time and effort” (p. 74).

Humanistic Psychology

Humanistic theories of personality and motivation are commonly presented in introduction to psychology textbooks as a rejoinder and necessary foil to Freud's theories of personality that focus on the psychopathologies caused by repression rather than a positive vision of health or human flourishing. Humanistic theories, represented by Abraham Maslow's model of a hierarchy of needs and Carl Roger's concept of an actualizing tendency, propose a vision of personality that is not inherently split between conscious and unconscious or between various psychical agencies, but rather inherently whole, thus constituting a vision that is

inherently optimistic rather than pessimistic. One of the most remarkable aspects of humanistic psychology is that many of its insights were conceived or inspired by considering experiences from humanity's darkest hours during World War II. As Dumont (2010) notes, Kurt Goldstein became convinced that a human being's primary motivation was to actualize their individual capacities through his study of German war veterans (p. 64). The theme of a self-actualizing tendency pervading all living things runs throughout the work of Goldstein, Maslow and Rogers. However, it is worth noting that the term 'self-actualizing tendency' is used somewhat differently by Rogers and Maslow. Rogers makes a distinction between the general *actualizing* tendency of an organism and a narrower *self-actualizing* tendency. Rogers (1959) defines the actualizing tendency as "the inherent tendency of the organism to develop all its capacities in ways which serve to maintain or enhance the organism" (p. 196). Rogers describes moments where one's self-concept is incongruent with one's current experience, leading to a state of contradiction between the organism's *actualizing* tendency and a countervailing tendency to actualize one's socially conditioned *self-concept*. Rogers thus (1959) states:

In a manner which will be described in the theory of personality a discrepancy frequently develops between the self as perceived, and the actual experience of the organism...What is commonly called neurotic behavior is one example, the neurotic behavior being the product of the actualizing tendency, whereas in other respects the individual is actualizing the self. Thus the neurotic behavior is incomprehensible to the individual himself, since it is at variance with what he consciously "wants" to do, *which is to actualize a self no longer congruent with experience*. (p. 203, emphasis added)

Rogers' distinction between the organism's actualizing tendency and a countervailing tendency to self-actualize might be read through a psychoanalytic lens, namely as indicating a conflict between the prerogatives of the id to actualize the organism's baser motives/needs and the ego/superego's countervailing tendency to present a socially acceptable

and commendable self. In contrast to Rogers, Maslow conceives of the notion of self-actualization as a process of progressively addressing one's most immediate needs before moving on to address 'higher' needs. However, Maslow's hierarchy of needs has been routinely criticized from a Cultural Psychology perspective for positing self-actualization as a universal human need rather than as a contingent cultural value reflecting the individualistic ideals of Western culture. Regarding this point, Dumont (2010) notes:

Locus of control and self-actualization relate to a panoply of other value-laden Western "virtues," such as inner-directedness or autonomy, optimism, extraversion, self-affirmation, creativity, independence, and gregariousness. Collectivist societies do not by and large resonate to these views. Pedersen cites Rigney, who has highlighted the fact that in many traditional cultures the Maslow hierarchy of needs, as an example, is totally inappropriate: "Placing self-actualization at the top of the so-called hierarchy is simply incorrect for my people. We are who we are because of our relations with the group." To these peoples of Southeast Asia, Japan, China, and Korea, these personality traits bespeak of self-centeredness that group-centered cultures find uncongenial if not repugnant. (p. 246-247)

Similar to Freud's metapsychology that locates contradiction as an internal property of the psyche rather than a reflection or expression of external social contradictions, Humanistic Psychology's approach to personality and motivation has also been critiqued from a Critical Psychology perspective for *psychologizing* (i.e., positing as universal and internal aspects of the human psyche) contingent and external social contradictions prevalent at the time of its theorization. Allan R. Buss (1979) argues that Maslow's individually focused hierarchy of needs with its goals of self-actualization and self-transcendence is not a descriptive science but rather a normative and value-laden liberal ideological response to the socially conservative implications of Freudian pessimism and Behaviorist determinism. Buss (1979) states, "To the liberal mind, freedom, liberty and personal development or progress were ideals that

were inconsistent with the conservative methodology of behaviorism and the conservative theory of psychoanalysis” (p. 45).

Buss contends, similarly to Pavón-Cuéllar and Orozco Guzmán, that Behaviorism and Psychoanalysis hypostasized the social contradictions informing their genesis within their theories, which had the undesirable effect of perpetuating these social contradictions under the guise of a universal theory of the human psyche or the science of (human) behavior. Humanistic Psychology reacted to Psychoanalysis and Behaviorism with a liberal and even radical response—the proposition of the inherent tendency towards self-actualization—that nevertheless reflected social contradictions particular to the United States during the 1940’s and 1950’s.

Buss argues that Maslow’s study of self-actualizing individuals who could serve as models for a positive and inspiring vision of human potential all demonstrated supposed psychological characteristics that could be understood as reflecting not simply Western Individualistic values but also particular *political values*—values that were consonant with liberal ideology. What Maslow was describing was not a loose knit group of *individuals*—the self-actualized 1%—but rather an elite *social group* which had been recently theorized by social science. Buss describes how during the 1940’s and 1950’s, the central assumption of democracy—that the masses would naturally protect liberal values—was all but shattered by the rise of totalitarian social movements across the globe. The clear propensity of the masses to be swayed by the temptation of totalitarianism suggested to some social theorists that only a ‘democratic elite’ could effectively maintain liberal values and liberal political democracy. As Buss (1979) summarizes:

Whereas earlier liberals had believed that liberal values such as liberty, freedom, individual development, tolerance, and pluralism were to be defended and preserved through increasing franchise and individual rights, post-war liberals began to take the exact opposite view. Liberalism was endangered by further democratization, and it needed a “power elite” to safeguard its existence. (p. 50)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs thus proposed a psychological theory that reflected and attempted to resolve a nagging social contradiction of his time, that between a populist democracy led by 'the people', which had proven to be vulnerable to totalitarian cooptation, and a 'democratic elite' that apparently negated the universal participatory ideals of democracy, with the ironic implication that democracy itself could only be artificially maintained by a 'power elite'. As such, Maslow's tendency towards self-actualization could be seen as a kind of liberal fantasy or wish-fulfillment, the hope that the masses would naturally, given the right conditions, tend towards 'self-actualization' as the psychological embodiment of liberal over illiberal values. Meanwhile, the current elite of self-actualized individuals could serve as a model for and safe-keeper of liberal democratic values. Moreover, Buss argues that the very form of Maslow's theory, focused upon *individual* psychological development rather than on broader *social* organization, was evidence that a potentially radical project, due to being expressed in a psychologized form, had ended up with limited radical potential. Buss (1979) states:

The excessive individualism contained in the doctrine of self-actualization serves to mask the larger social questions surrounding society's structures and institutions. A theory that predisposes one to focus more on individual freedom and development rather than the larger social reality, works in favor of maintaining that reality. (p. 46)

CONTEMPORARY THEORIES

Trait Theories

Trait theories of personality contrast with both Psychoanalysis and Humanistic Psychology in so far as they offer *descriptions* of personality traits rather than *explanations* of personality using theoretical models that speculate about the nature of human motivation (Myers & DeWall, 2018). Myers and DeWall (2018) recount how Gordon Allport, an early supporter

of trait theory, was inspired to take a descriptive approach to personality after a fateful meeting with Sigmund Freud when he was a young college graduate. Freud, upon first meeting Allport, attempted a ‘deep’ psychoanalytic interpretation of a passing comment made by Allport who was attempting to establish a friendly rapport with Freud, which struck Allport as absurd. This episode evidently left a lasting impression, as it inspired Allport’s descriptive approach to personality.

Historically, Trait theories of personality have been informed by the *lexical hypothesis*— the supposition that the most salient dimensions of personality will be indexed within everyday language, most often being encapsulated in single adjectives (i.e., happy, flexible, outgoing, shy, etc.). Following the lexical hypothesis, early trait research attempted to amass exhaustive lists of personality descriptors, such as Allport and Ogden’s (1936) “Trait Names: A Psycho-lexical Study,” which identified 17,953 words describing personality traits in Webster’s New International Dictionary (p. vi). Starting with everyday language descriptions of particular mental and behavioral traits, trait theorists attempt to discover higher order *trait-types* governing the expression of a range of what can be identified as closely related traits. Clusters of traits that commonly appear together can be identified through a statistical procedure called factor analysis. For example, the higher-level trait-type of Extraversion encompasses traits such as “sociability, impulsiveness, activity, liveliness, and excitability” (Dumont, 2010, p. 174). However, the question of how many distinct higher order trait-types can be logically derived from the wide array of lower level traits has consistently plagued trait theories. For instance, the original trait theory proposed by Hans Eysenck involved just two dimensions along which traits varied—*introversions-extroversion* and *neuroticism*. Commenting on Eysenck’s trait model, Dumont (2010) states:

This is as reductionist a model as one can find. Its utility is demonstrated by the fact that its two dimensions are integrated into “all major models of temperament and personality.” (p. 175)

Dumont, citing Clark and Watson, highlights that Eysenck's two-dimensional trait model can produce four different trait combinations—emotionally stable and extroverted, emotionally unstable and extroverted, emotionally stable and introverted, emotionally unstable and introverted—that map directly onto Galen's theory of temperament based upon the four humors: sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic. Regarding this unexpected anachronistic link between an ancient and contemporary personality theory, Dumont (2010) states:

It is fascinating that the psychobiological formulation of the Greeks is so nicely replicated in the work of Eysenck. The drawbacks of such a molar approach to conceptualizing human variability is that it can mask the complexity that underlies our constructions. (p. 175)

A major criticism of Trait theory is that although it purports to be 'atheoretical' and simply descriptive, it nevertheless implies that psychological traits are directly attributable to a person's physiological constitution. A similar criticism has been leveled at psychiatric diagnoses, namely that what purport to be theory-neutral descriptions of psychopathology imply a theory of biological causation and treatment.³ In this regard, it is perhaps no surprise that Eysenck's original trait theory could map on so precisely to Galen's biologically based theory of temperament. Dumont (2010) notes that Eysenck in particular placed a heavy emphasis on the genetic basis of not only personality but of intelligence as well (p. 176). As such, trait theories of personality might be considered intellectual heirs to Sir Francis Galton's eugenics research program which focused on quantitatively assessing individual differences in the late 19th century. Allan R. Buss notes that Galton's focus on individual differences did not arise in an ideological vacuum but was rather

³ As Frances (2014) observes: "It was true that the criteria sets were based on surface symptoms and said nothing about causes or treatments. But the surface symptoms method fit very neatly with a biological, medical model of mental disorder and greatly promoted it. The rejection of more inferential psychological constructs and social context severely disadvantaged...other models and put psychiatry into something of a reductionistic straightjacket" (p. 65).

conditioned by the confluence of liberal individualism, capitalism, and modern democracy in Victorian England. Buss (1976) writes:

In capitalistic British society there were great group or class differences in the extent to which the different career and vocations required different levels of intelligence and specialized training. How was one to explain and justify the hierarchically structured occupational groups and attendant social inequalities other than by the principle of inherited individual differences in mental abilities? Indeed, the prevailing democratic individualism, which stressed freedom for individual development, would have been inconsistent with a primarily environmental interpretation of individual differences in intelligence given the gross class differences of capitalistic Britain. Thus all people theoretically had the opportunity and freedom to develop their potential, and the existent class structure therefore must represent inherited individual differences in ability. Liberal individualism was still secure and thereby conditioned the scientific interpretations of individual differences. (p. 52)

Buss thus emphasizes that within the social context of Victorian England, there was an ideological necessity to interpret personality traits as a biological inheritance rather than the outcomes of economic or cultural inheritance, since an environmental and developmental interpretation of intelligence and personality traits would give the lie to the liberal ideology of individual freedom for personal and professional development.

A second major criticism of trait theory pertains to its use of statistically correlated trait-constructs to make probabilistic claims about the behavior of individual people. A fundamental claim of trait-theory research, indeed according to James T. Lamielle (2013) its *raison d'être*, is that, “knowledge of the statistical properties of trait constructs can enhance the power and scope of scientific psychology’s capacity to account for (predict, explain, understand) individual behavior.” (p. 66). Lamiell (2013) specifies precisely what this claim entails, stating:

[G]iven knowledge of the correlation between trait variables X and Y within some population, and then given knowledge of individual A’s

standing on trait variable X, one is positioned to say something scientifically authoritative about individual A's standing on trait variable Y. (p. 68)

Lamiell has argued that there is a fundamental *conceptual*—rather than an empirical—problem in claiming that trait constructs studied at an *aggregate* or population level can legitimately be used to make inferences about *individual* human behavior. Following William Stern's original conceptual distinction between studying individual attributes via Psychography, the in-depth study of one or more individuals, and Variation/Correlational studies that examine pre-fabricated trait-constructs across an aggregate or population, both Stern and Lamiell insist that only Psychography can produce knowledge of *individual traits*. In contrast to Psychography, Lamiell (2013) quoting Stern writes:

[I]t is the case in variation and co-variation studies that “individuals [are] merely the means of the research by virtue of their status as carriers of the attributes to be studied” (Stern, 1911, p. 318). The knowledge yielded is thus not knowledge of individuals, but instead knowledge of attributes. Unfortunately, this distinction would soon become obscured. (p. 66)

The implications of Lamiell's critique of the applicability of the aggregate level trait-construct studies to the predicting of individual behavior is far reaching. Lamiell (2013) concludes:

The ontological reality with which 21st century personality psychologists must finally come to terms is that the between-person differences that have so pre-occupied them over the years simply do not exist at the level of the individual. If and when this utterly fundamental point is once again grasped by some critical mass of those psychologists who profess an interest in the study of personalities, then this sub-discipline will be able to get back on track, cured of its pernicious statisticism. Until then, the field will remain what it really has always been – a kind of psycho-demography – however stubbornly its practitioners insist on pretending that matters are otherwise. (p. 70)

Social-Cognitive Theories

Albert Bandura developed his Social-Cognitive theory of personality in order to more adequately theorize some of the human complexity that had been unduly truncated by Trait theory. Bandura's main criticism of trait theory was that it is deterministic and conceived of people as passive and unchanging, rather than as agentic and changing. Whereas Trait theories held, at least officially, that phenotypic traits were a result of gene-environment interactions, Bandura introduced the new dimension of an individual's cognitive perception of opportunities in their environment. While Bandura believed behavior was learned through observation and imitation, as well as classical and operant conditioning, he also emphasized that differences in *cognition* lead to the perception of different affordances in the environment, thus introducing a third cognitive dimension to the traditional gene-environment polarity (Dumont, 2010, p. 376). Bandura's cognitive dimension highlighted that the environment is not a monolithic entity but rather contains a range of affordances that can be perceived differently by different people, and this perception of affordances can be altered through social learning.

ALTERNATIVE THEORIES

Theory of Personhood

As we have seen, traditional and contemporary theories of personality are in various ways circumscribed by their cultural-historical *zeitgeist* and even the minds of their progenitors. Recognizing this, some theorists have attempted to construct broader 'meta-theories' of personhood that could accommodate the cultural-historical variability of social categories inevitably informing notions of people and personality in any given time and place. One such attempt has been made by Jack Martin and Jeff Sugarman (2003) in, "A Theory of Personhood for Psychology."

Martin and Sugarman (2003) note that the concept of the ‘self’ has pervaded psychological research of all kinds during the 20th century, and express concern about the underlying ontological status of the self that is often assumed as a pre-theoretical concept enabling empirical research. Martin and Sugarman bring our attention to the fact that the Western concept of self, despite its apparent naturalness/obviousness, is indeed culturally specific, and emerges out of the Western philosophical tradition in its modern form via the thought of Thomas Hobbes and subsequently John Locke. Martin and Sugarman (2003) state:

We take Hobbes as the progenitor of many of the ideas that subsequently have proven so influential in the psychological study of personhood. For not only did Hobbes (1962) promote the idea of an ontologically prior person, but he also married this idea to doctrines of a physiologically reductive determinism and a dissolutionist approach to the question of human agency. (p. 75)

Only relatively recently have ontologically prior notions of the self been challenged by social theories and philosophies that substituted Hobbesian individual physiological determinism with various models of social determinism that tend to downplay or outright eliminate the self as having any agentic capacity, even in its physiologically self-deterministic form. Given this stark antimony between a concept of self that is agentic (albeit self-deterministic) versus a concept of self that is an effect of discourse rather than a cause of itself, Martin and Sugarman emphasize the need for a level of ‘middle ground’ theorizing that allows room for the possibility of both individual agency and an appreciation of the ways in which the self is influenced by social forces and cultural discourses.

As such, Martin and Sugarman (2003) begin from the ontological premise that a person “is an identifiable, embodied individual human with being, self, and agentic capability” (p. 78). This postulated embodied person is always embedded within a life-world the horizons of which are established by their cultural context. While the horizon of intelligibility provided by one’s culture is both contingent and inherited, it enables “that compelling comprehension of one’s unique existence that imbues

individual experience and action in the world with significance and provides a phenomenal sense of being present” (p. 78). Martin and Sugarman thus envision a form of personhood grounded in physical embodiment that is informed and inflected by cultural discourses providing the possibility of meaning, and by extension purposive action, via their specific languages and categories of understanding. In this conceptualization of personhood, psychological phenomena such as reasons and intentions are not mere epiphenomena when compared with something supposedly more fundamental such as biology or culture, but considered real “not by virtue of being mind-independent, but by virtue of the influence they exert on actions in the world that may affect self and others” (Martin & Sugarman, 2003, p. 79).

In addition, Martin and Sugarman (2003) emphasize that no one level of reality, be it biological or sociocultural, should be privileged as being on more ontologically firm ground. Rather, psychological phenomenon must be acknowledged to involve “levels of reality that are nested within each other in accordance with a general historical unfolding” (p. 79). Martin and Sugarman’s theory of personhood thus arguably constitutes a meta-theory of human agency and motivation that is applicable cross-culturally and historically, while avoiding the reification of culturally specific categories such as the notion of an ontologically prior self, as inherited through Western cultural discourse via Hobbes and Locke.

Culture and Subjectivity

Martin and Sugarman’s theory of personhood anticipates and sets the stage for the more recent approaches of theorists who propose studying human *subjectivity* as an alternative to the study of personality. The theoretical construct of subjectivity implies a focus on the pervasive influence of language and culture that shape both explicit and implicit categories of understanding as well as providing the structural incentives and rationales for motivation and action within a given cultural framework. The theoretical psychologist Thomas Teo (2018) suggests that the present

horizon of subjectivity is informed by the economic doctrine of *neoliberalism* to such an extent that this economic imperative pervades virtually all other areas of contemporary life. Thus, in the current neoliberal cultural context, Teo (2018) states,

the intellectual form of life becomes subsumed under neo-liberal principles (as universities can attest to; see Ergül & Coşar, 2017). An artistic conduct of life is dependent on the market, even more so than a theoretic form of life, and political forms of life are dominated by a donor class. (p. 583).

Teo's analysis of neoliberalism as constituting a distinct *form of life* is inspired by the social hermeneutic investigations of Eduard Spranger, who explored how broader cultural forms shape human subjectivity. While Spranger's original study was translated as *Types of Men* consonant with the concept of personality, Teo offers the more accurate translation *Forms of Life* consonant with the concept of subjectivity. Spranger succinctly encapsulated his position regarding the influence of culture on human subjectivity stating:

On a lower level, perhaps, the soul is purely biologically determined. On a higher level, the historical, for instance, the soul participates in objective values which cannot be deduced from the simple value of self-preservation. (as cited in Gier, 1981, p. 56)

Teo sets out to provide an updated Sprangerian analysis of present-day subjectivity centered upon the currently dominant cultural logic of neoliberalism. Teo focuses on elaborating four dimensions of neoliberal subjectivity—the relation to self, the characteristic mode of thinking, the characteristic mode of feeling, and the type of agency. Teo (2018) argues that the neoliberal relation to self involves a collapse in an older distinction between a larger *Self* involving spiritual or social dimensions and a narrower *Ego* focused on immediate gain or advantage (p. 585)

Under neoliberal conditions, one relates to oneself primarily as if managing a small business. This involves applying modes of self-discipline

elaborated by the contemporary *psydisciplines* that include “self-regulation, self-management, self-promotion, self-mastery, self-reliance, self-control, or the resilient self” (p. 586). Following from the collapse between Self and Ego, the characteristic mode of thinking in neoliberalism involves an emphasis on a purely Utilitarian thinking where “all is subsumed under applicability and practicality” rather than a more expansive Theoretic style of thinking that would open onto more general and systemic forms of understanding (p. 588).

Teo (2018) argues that under neoliberal conditions feeling takes a precedence over thinking since there is a “cultural and intellectual move away from a reason and enlightenment-driven modernism” combined with an economy that emphasizes the feeling that products provide above and beyond their specific use value (p. 590). Finally, Teo argues that agency in neoliberal conditions involves a focus on *self-change* that is geared towards better adaptation to neoliberal demands rather than on any kind of systemic change that could challenge the neoliberal assumptions that it provides the “best of all possible worlds” (p. 593). Teo (2018) concludes his analysis of neoliberal subjectivity with a general consideration about the concept of subjectivity in relation to culture: “The concept of a *form of subjectivity* entails understanding that individual subjectivity is connected with society, and that subjectivity, in and for itself, does not exist.” (p. 596).

The clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst Paul Verhaeghe (2014) further concretizes and critiques how a neoliberal *form of life* influences mental and behavioral dispositions. Verhaeghe argues that neo-liberal meritocracy, “favors certain personality traits and penalizes others” (p. 174). Verhaeghe (2014), citing the Flemish magazine columnist Koen Meulenaere, lists an unsavory series of personality traits favored in a neo-liberal social context that include being superficially articulate, lying without feeling remorse, a tendency to be manipulative, adaptiveness/flexibility, and impulsivity (p. 174). Verhaeghe notes ironically that the inspiration for this series of traits is taken from a diagnostic manual for psychopathy. His main point is that although such

traits may be exaggerations, neoliberal social conditions have profoundly shaped mental and behavioral dispositions in decidedly anti-social ways.

Verhaeghe makes a subtler point, however, when referencing research conducted by Frans de Waal on primate empathy. De Waal has noted that context is crucial for the evocation of empathic behavior among primates—apes are happy to engage in altruistic behavior as long as they perceive fundamental fairness, but are less likely to behave altruistically if they perceive that the experimental set-up is unfair. Interpreting De Waal's research, Verhaeghe (2014) underscores:

Our closest relatives are familiar with *Do ut des*, 'I give that you might give', and with 'an eye for an eye'. In both cases, the social organization or lack of it, in combination with visual contact, will stimulate or inhibit behavior in accordance with these principles. In other words, primates are not essentially good or evil; circumstances steer behavior. (p. 94)

The Discursive Self: From Personality to Subjectivity

Similar to Teo's focus on subjectivity as an alternative to personality, Peter Branney (2008) argues that the concept of subjectivity should replace that of personality when considering the centrality of language and culture to human activity. Regarding a proposed shift from the concept of personality to subjectivity, Branney (2008) states:

The discursive turn helped change the subject of, and the subjectivity (re)produced by, mainstream social psychology by focusing on language. Broadly, the focus was on what we do with language and what language does to us. The construction of subjectivity is one of the things we can do with language but, as socio-cultural phenomena beyond the control of any one person, language limits the possibilities open to us. As such, 'subjectivity' replaces personality as the key theoretical construct. (p. 575)

Branney's argument recalls Martin and Sugarman's (2003) focus on culturally and linguistically mediated "reasons and intentions" (p. 79) as central to human motivation and action. Branney (2008) notes that while any discourse may offer a number of objective 'subject positions' (p. 575) which one might occupy, this leaves open questions about how and why people come to identify with the particular subject positions provided by a discourse. Thus, Branney (2008) asks: "Subject positions are constructed through discourses but how do subject positions come to constitute a particular individual or individuals?" (p. 576). Branney's emphasis on subjectivity as a function of subject-positions inherent in discourses can be supplemented by Lacanian Discourse Analysis that considers not only how each discourse is structured via the variety of its enumerated subject positions, but also by the mistakes, accidents, and unexpected contingencies that occur in speech acts, indicating how subjects are "*in* the world of language, but not *of* it" (Malone & Roberts, 2010, emphasis original). Such parapraxes reveal a *real* dimension of subjectivity that is simultaneously conditioned by language and yet nonetheless escapes language, something impossible to say that is both structured by and structures a discursive field and its elements. As David Pavón-Cuellar (2015) notes, "There are always errors in discourse, irregularities in its structural regularity, through which we can glimpse the enunciating subject, as well as the inaccessible object that is followed by the enunciator" (p. 422).

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Chapter 11

TOWARDS A MORE SOCIAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Conformity is a social psychological concept defined as social behavior by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.) as “correspondence in form, manner, or character, agreement...an act or instance of conforming...action in accordance with some specified standard or authority.”

In each of these acts or instances, conforming behavior is a reaction to social pressure. Solomon Asch conducted studies of conformity (1940, 1948, 1951, 1952, 1955, 1972) which examined the effects of social pressure to conform on individual male college students. Asch’s studies revealed that collective social pressure created a conflict in determining an action. Would each student provide an answer based upon visual perception judging the lengths of a set of lines or instead agree with the

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group? Asch's findings confirmed most respondents 'conformed' based upon the necessity to fit in with the group or to obey authority.

Interest in scientific examination of conformity as a concept in social psychology is shared by two disciplines, psychology and sociology. Although most social psychologists are psychologists working in psychology departments, an important minority are sociologists. The two groups share an interest in many of the same research problems such as those posed by Asch's study of conformity, but their approaches are distinct. Psychological social psychology tends to focus on how an individual's perceptions of a social situation affect thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Sociological social psychology focuses rather specifically on the interaction embedded within the relationship between the individual and the larger social system milieu (e.g., group dynamics, ranking, norms), and explains results in the context of cultural influences such as collectivism.

According to Keith Tuffin (2009) "critical work within social psychology is a relatively recent development" (p. 3). If Tuffin is correct, then "it makes little sense to criticize the philosophies and methods of a discipline before first coming to understand what is being criticized". A key aspect to move forward with a critical social psychology would be to critically examine how social is the academic portrayal of social psychology within the two disparate disciplines. Tuffin (2009) suggests critical social psychology should examine presentations of social knowledge. The goal would be to determine how and in what ways such investigations are utilizing the essential notion of social psychology: "Is reality socially constructed?" (p. 9).

How specifically, then, is the discipline of social psychology being interpreted? In order to examine this question critically, it is necessary to analyze social psychology, its experiments, research methods and findings. In the distinctly social area of conformity, to look at how it is elaborated to students within the introductory textbooks in psychology.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AS A DISCIPLINE

The American Psychological Association or APA (2019) defines the discipline of social psychology in individualistic terms. “How *individuals* think about, influence and relate to one another and how those interactions affect issues as wide-ranging as prejudice, romantic attraction, persuasion, friendship and aggression” (emphasis added). In contrast, the American Sociological Association or ASA (2019) defines social psychology as a social discipline: “the way *groups and social structures* shape individuals—their perceptions, beliefs, identities, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors—and how individuals acting together create, maintain, and change social structures” (emphasis added).

Based upon the above definitions, Gough, McFadden, and McDonald (2013) make a distinction between psychological social psychology (PSP) and sociological social psychology (SSP). These perspectives are in some ways quite opposite. In presenting one of the major, classical studies such as Asch’s conformity experiments, the PSP approach would emphasize personality over peer influences and the SSP approach would probe how the group shapes the individual’s response. A case can be made that having an over-emphasis on individuality, as typical in PSP, creates inaccurate representations of conformity. PSP explanations reside too wholly upon individual responses rather than incorporating the power of social influences to explain such response. Conversely, an emphasis on SSP may inform textbook authors to look more closely at, for instance, the influence of culture on conformity in the Asch classic line-judgement experiments. This chapter will examine which emphasis, whether PSP or SSP, is highlighted in social psychology chapters of selected introductory psychology texts.

In examining the difference within PSP versus SSP portrayals, this analysis will look foremost at the consideration of, and handling of culture as a social influence. Using C. Wright Mills’ (1959) insight regarding the inter-connectedness of social reality, coupled with Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) contention that reality is socially created would argue conformity is more than simply an individual’s perception of a social group situation,

instead it is an interaction which results in a social construction. As Gough et al. (2013) suggested, insights into social psychology are seriously flawed if they are boiled down to only understanding how “individuals are constituted by society” (Gough et al., 2013, p. 109).

Pilarska (2014) noted self-construal is more accurately presented as a mediator, or a synergistic interaction, of self-identity as taken into consideration by the self within his or her concepts of the culture and nature of the social group. “If self is constructed as interdependent with others, such identity characteristics as a sense of uniqueness, separateness, and continuity may be less important” (Pilarska, 2014, p. 132). As elaborated in studies by Markus and Kitayama (1991, 2003), and Singelis (1994, 1999), the influence of a culture’s collectivism on seemingly individualistic traits, such as self-esteem or the ability to be embarrassed by a group, should go beyond simplistic statements that some cultures are individualistic in emphasis while others are interdependent. Self-construal is not simply self-identity, either individual or interdependent (Pilarska, 2014). “This independent view of the self is lacking in its explanation of the self-views of all people” (p. 131).

Price and Crapo’s (1992) studies supported the argument that competitiveness and cooperation were culturally bound and noted “individuals in many different societies demonstrate greater competitiveness than people from a small town or rural environment” (p. 112). Kagan and Madsen’s (1971) comparative study of Anglo-American, Mexican-American, and Mexican children found that “Mexican children...were less competitive than either the Anglo-American or Mexican-American children” (as cited in Price & Richley, 1992, p. 113). Hsu’s (1961, 1983) consideration of ‘rugged individualism’ among Chinese and Americans concluded that competitive individualism is uniquely a hallmark of American culture.

However, the collectivist self-construal is not limited to cultures outside the United States. Tomas Atencio’s (2009) critique of social knowledge involves the inclusion of liberation philosophy (Burton, & Kagan, 2009) and argues the experiences of all cultures must be affirmed as valid foundations for knowledge. “Traditional cultures have indigenous

knowledge by which they interpret themselves to themselves” (p. 46). His theory pinpoints a major issue that within supposed mainstream American cultures, influences of collectivism exist, which would assist in explanations of conformity.

Textbook portrayals, which use the PSP approach, emphasize the individualistic aspect of social psychology as “possessing states that are internal and stable—attitudes, cognitions, and personalities” (Gough et al., 2013, p. 103). Instead, Gough et al. (2013) argue that an SSP aspect should be incorporated in which social processes are not simply viewed as behaviors which people do (or do not) perform, but rather viewed as an emergence from within basic culturally prescribed social practices.

Griggs et al.’s (2001) study of 37 introductory psychology textbooks found that although general chapter topics were largely similar, the content within the chapters showed a great degree of variation. Gorenflo and McConnell (1991) examined a list of 37,590 textbook citations and found prominent psychologists were missing—including Skinner, Freud, and Piaget. Warne et al. (2018) examined the 29 most popularly purchased introductory psychology texts for coverage of intelligence as a psychological concept. Findings determined that 79.3% of textbooks contained inaccurate statements and logical fallacies in their sections about intelligence. These s substantiate “there is no substantial common core either in the language used by psychology text authors or in the psychologists cited and journal articles referenced in these textbooks” (Griggs, Proctor, & Johnson, 2002, p. 452).

METHOD

To learn more about the undergraduate psychology curriculum, Steuer and Ham (2008) prescribe a technique for sampling textbook content using a taxonomy to evaluate accuracy, and identified the psychological experiments most commonly presented. Most introductory psychology textbooks discuss the classic social psychological experiments, generally

Asch, Milgram, and Zimbardo (Smith & Haslam, 2017). See Table 1, Appendix A for the complete list.

The sample examined included 20 introductory textbooks, based upon Warne et al.'s (2018) list of the 29 most commonly popular textbooks. Most of these textbooks were requested and obtained via interlibrary loan from universities around the country (listed in Table 2, Appendix B). When two versions of a book were available, the most recent edition, or the full version rather than the brief version was selected whenever possible to follow the same procedure in Warne et al. (2018). Cengage and Worth had the largest number of textbooks in the sample ($N = 4$), with Pearson ($N = 3$), and McGraw-Hill tied at ($N = 3$), and BVT with 2. Norton, Oxford University Press, Wiley and Prentice Hall each had one textbook in the sample. The list used for our sample frame was provided in Warne et al. (2018). Because the purposive sampling method focused on the most popular introductory psychology textbooks, the books included in the methodology likely provide a reasonably broad overview of material introductory psychology courses offer students regarding the discipline of social psychology. Using the taxonomy proposed by Steuer and Ham (2008), basic information about the section on social psychology in each book was collected and recorded. This information consisted of where social psychology was located within the text, how social psychology was defined by the authors, the concept presented before and after the social psychology chapter, and the number of pages devoted to social psychology as compared to the total number of pages in the textbook (not including references, indices, or glossaries).

RESULTS

Within the sample chosen, social psychology is typically found as the last chapter in the textbook ($N = 6$, out of 20 or 30% of the time). When not the final chapter, the social psychology chapter was always located at the end of the book, either the second or third to the last ($N = 9$). Hockenbury and Hockenbury (2011), and Ciccarrelli and White (2015),

placed the coverage of social psychology at chapter 11 out of 14. Other placements included a two-chapter coverage (Chapters 13 and 14) by Gray and Bjorklund (2014), 13 out of 17 (Gleitman et al., 2011), and 14 out of 18 (Baird, 2010). Overall, social psychology is presented to introductory college students 75% of the time as the last, or nearly the last, chapter in the textbook. Out of 11,994 pages of text covering social psychology in all 20 texts, the range of pages is 17-69. The total chapter count divided by the text's total pages (again, excluding appendices, glossaries, and references) averaged 6.8%, with a high of 11.8% for Gray and Bjorklund (2014), since they included two chapters. The lowest percentage was found at 4.2% coverage in the text by Gleitman et al. (2011).

Based on prior studies of textbook content (e.g., Griggs & Marek, 2001; Griggs & Mitchell, 2002; Zechmeister & Zechmeister, 2000), the code included each textbook's section headings, emphasized vocabulary terms (e.g., bolded vocabulary words), and topics discussed in relationship with conformity. The definition of 'social psychology' as presented by each text was coded, as well as 'conformity.' Further qualitative data was coded to determine if the author(s) were providing students with any alternative explanations. Specifically looking at the section presenting the Asch experiment, it was coded both for length, for alternative explanations, and the entire chapter was examined to see if 'collectivist' or 'individualistic' culture was mentioned.

Coverage of the Asch Experiment

The next section compares texts for presentations of the classic Asch conformity studies. Was the demonstration mostly individualistic, or socially interactive? Were alternative explanations posed? Were these alternatives able to convey that being a member of a collectivist culture might affect the interpretation of the results?

All the texts (N = 20) covered the Asch experiment. To investigate whether the information was expressed in terms of PSP (highly individualistic), or SSP (including cultures as collective or individualistic),

qualitative data on language depicting how social psychology was defined and how it was presented was gathered (see Table 3, Appendix C).

Two apposite examples will serve to illustrate how definitions of social psychology in each text represent either the individualistic focus of the APA, or the sociological focus of the ASA. Definitions with the PSP focus on social psychology generally defined social psychology following the APA definition as highly individualistic. One such example is found in Morris and Maisto (2015), who defined social psychology as “the scientific study of the ways in which the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of *one individual* are influenced by the real, imagined, or inferred behavior or characteristics of other people” (p. 484, emphasis in original). This interpretation highlights that the social group influences or changes the individual. The most illustrative example of using the ASA definition of social is found in Baird (2010, p. 200). “Social Psychologists study how the thoughts, emotions and behavior of individuals influence and are influenced by *interactions* between people” (p. 200, emphasis in original). Interaction as an emphasis would suggest to the student reading the text that group influence involves reciprocal communications in which the subject of the group pressure also has input to engage or to impact the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of others within the group, as well as being influenced himself.

Elements examined suggest that out of 16 of the 20 introductory texts for which complete data were available, 9 of them portrayed social psychology as PSP, 3 portrayals could be categorized as SSP (Baird, 2010; Franzoi, 2018; Griggs, 2017), and 4 varied in the combination of the two elements (Table 2, Appendix B).

Cicarelli and White (2015) begin their explication of social psychology chapter by introducing the Asch conformity experiment. “What factors influence people or groups to conform to the actions of others, and how does the presence of others affect individual task performance?” (p. 428). Cicarelli and White (2015) mention the influence of culture on conformity: “Subsequent research has found less conformity among participants” (p. 429). Unfortunately, the authors attribute this to replication studies within collectivist cultures outside the United States: “In

other cultures, however, studies have found conformity effects similar to those in Asch's study" (Cicarrelli & White, 2015, p. 429). But the research on collectivist versus individualistic cultures is not explained in depth, the terms are not defined, and there is no suggestion that collectivist cultures might exist in the United States. Therefore, the overall effect is the studies are not offered as alternative explanations, but rather as reinforcements of the Asch findings.

Rathus (2016) devotes one sentence to, and one research study in the development of the Asch experiment, presented under the heading: "Factors that Influence Conformity". Rathus (2016) notes, "Several factors increase the tendency to conform, including belonging to a collectivist culture rather than an individualistic society" (p. 369). Again, without exploration of what this cultural difference means as a possibly alternative explanation of the Asch findings, without defining or presenting collectivist versus individualistic cultures, and without noting the meaning of each on self-construal.

'Conformity' is presented by Ettinger (2018) as a "tendency to change or modify behaviors so that they are consistent with those of other people" (p. 697). Ettinger adds, "Since the correct answers were so obvious, Asch's experiment seems to clearly illustrate normative social influence" (p. 698). Normative social influence is presented as "one basis of conformity in which we accept a group's beliefs or behaviors as providing accurate information about reality" (p. 697). In this example of a mostly individualistic account of the Asch experiment, there are no alternatives posed as actual alternative explanations, and cultures other than mainstream United States are not considered as social influences. The idea of normative influence clearly would impact the self-construal of individuals from collectivist versus communal cultures and begs more detailed exploration.

Franzoi (2018) writes: "Social influence involves the exercise of social power by a person or group to change the attitudes or behavior of others in a certain direction" (p. 641). He cites Cialdini and Goldstein (2004), and adds, "Asch's research demonstrates the power of conformity pressure" (p. 641). He takes notice of the influence of cultural norms on self-construal:

“People from collectivist cultures are more concerned [than individuals from competitive cultures] with gaining the approval of the group, and they feel shameful if they fail to get it” (pp. 642-643). Scholars such as Triandis (1989) and Wall et al. (2010) support Franzoi’s (2018) conclusions. “A person from an individualist culture, on the other hand, has a higher desire for personal control” (p. 643). Franzoi’s social social psychological exposition of the Asch research does not commit the critical thinking mistake of Ettinger above, neither attributing the experiment as having shown “correct answers” to respondents, being “obvious”, nor providing “accurate information about reality”. Instead, the alternative explanations are said to be due to effects of interdependence in a collectivist culture creating social influence that moves the individual’s attitudes, and behaviors, away from their visual perceptions to conform with the group. “As a result of these different orientations, people from collectivist cultures are more conforming” (Franzoi, 2018, p. 642). Franzoi’s text also mentions Bond and Smith (1996) as an alternative explanation, making this SSP inquiry of social psychology more socially aware, by discussing the nature of social influence as interactive, and pertinent to differences in cultures, and mentioning global cultures.

Hockenbury and Hockenbury (2011, p. 474) use the heading of “Conformity: Following the Crowd” and list the key theme as “social influence involves the study of how behavior is influenced by other people and by the social environment”, yet they list as “factors influencing conformity” individualistic ones: desire to be liked and accepted by the group, and desire to be right (p. 275). They cite under “culture and conformity” the question raised by Bond and Smith’s (1996) meta-analysis that patterns of conformity differ in “other” cultures (p. 476). Thus by labeling the idea of ‘collectivism’ as ‘other’ commits the error of mistaking indigenous knowledge as lesser, as Atencio (2009) has pointed out.

In covering the Asch experiment, Lillienfeld et al. (2014, p. 503) define ‘conformity’ individualistically: “Conformity refers to the tendency of people to alter their behavior as a result of group pressure”. In discussing “individual, cultural, and gender differences in conformity”, Lillienfeld, et al. (2014) refer to Kim and Markus’s (1999) colored pen

study in which “Americans tended to pick the minority-colored pens, whereas Asians tended to pick the pens that had a majority of the color” (p. 504). Lillienfeld et al. (2014, p. 504) first acknowledge the individualistic perspective that “people with low self-esteem are especially prone to conformity” (citing Hardy, 1957). The text authors next recognized Asians as being more likely to conform compared with Americans, “probably because most Asian cultures are collectivist” (p. 504). The authors should have proceeded to add information on the differences between collectivist and individualistic cultures on self-construal and how the norms would explain alternative hypotheses regarding subjects in Asch’s experiment.

Lahey (2012) identified “conformity” as “yielding to group pressure even when no direct request to comply has been made” (p. 532), thereby relying upon the social pressure notion of adherence to authority as the cause of conforming to group pressure. Alternative explanations are presented as several factors under a subheading: “Culture and Conformity” which “increase the likelihood of [individual] conformity to the group” (Lahey, 2012, p. 533). The author goes on to detail the difference between collectivist and individualistic cultures as follows: “collectivist cultures, which emphasize the welfare of society as a whole rather than the individual” (2012, p. 534). Lahey does cite Bond and Smith (1996) but neglects to detail the specific findings of Bond and Smith in various cultures globally as alternative explanations to the Asch study results.

Baird’s (2010) *Think Psychology* posits the most critical social psychology presentation (pp. 200-217). Berger and Luckmann’s constructing social reality is first offered as the theoretical basis (p. 203). In his consideration of social influence, Baird begins with facial recognition, and asks the student to use the lens of “perceptions of social cues” (p. 203), in a sub-heading entitled: ‘Social Cognition’, thus linking social psychology to the prior chapter which ends with “the social cognitive perspective”. Further elaboration of the connections between social psychology and other aspects of psychology, Baird includes social control as a group interaction mechanism and covers in some depth cross cultural differences in personality (p. 197). This inquiry is in line with critical social psychology scholars (Burton, 2005; Burton and Kagan,

2009; Dafermos and Marvakis, 2006; Burton and Osorio, 2011) working towards a ‘really social psychology’, inspired by Dussel’s philosophy of liberation. Baird (2010) then takes the next step. A step which is essential to establish critical thinking for students, and to demonstrate the worth of critical social psychology is to provide alternative interpretations for research, findings, and experimental observations. These alternative explanations, if solely individualistic, misrepresent social psychology. Alternative explanations solely based upon the 1950’s college students in mainstream United States culture, are incomplete. Baird (2010) goes beyond these to create the most truly critical and social social psychological evaluation of the Asch experiment, because of his inclusion of the social construction of reality--using sociological interconnectedness as explanations of social psychology.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

A textbook, which provides an account of conformity concentrated upon simply individualistic explanations without consideration of the influence of collectivity, does not suffice to convey the actuality of a social psychological concept such as conformity. As Gough et al. (2013) pointed out in their examination of critical social psychology, rethinking social influence requires exactly the issue pointed out by Mills, that insights into social psychology are seriously flawed if they are boiled down to only understanding how “individuals are constituted by society” (Gough et al., 2013, p. 109). Specific changes to the interpretations of social psychology as presented in the introductory psychology text would enhance the impression of conformity

Pilarska (2014) has a strongly elaborated theoretical model of the interactions of self-construal and various psychological concepts such as identity formation, self-experience, affiliation, and her approach could be effective if applied to introductory texts’ examination of conformity in the Asch experiments.

For instance, to apply Lev Vygotsky's theory of development (as cited in Griggs, 2017, p. 307) in portrayals of social psychology, that one change would create an emphasis on how "cognitive abilities develop through interactions with others and represent the shared knowledge of one's culture" (p. 307). Students from collectivist cultures, would be using their self-construals, would identify with the information, and would therefore learn more effectively. Using Vygotsky, Griggs (2017) points out the concept of teaching as a style called "scaffolding" (p. 307). Using this style of teaching, the text would be expected to take the student from a collectivist culture, from where he or she is now in terms of knowledge to the higher zone of proximal development through structured steps. The authors of the texts should gauge the amount of assistance necessary and move the reader of the text from one point of knowledge to another, considering the "level of performance" (Griggs, 2017, p. 307), in this case, the level would include the collectivist self-construal especially pertinent for students whose social milieus are non-mainstream in the United States, or are global, and predominantly collectivist.

A presentation of alternative explanations for the classic experiments, such as Asch's, would make the chapter more critically social social psychology. This change towards critical social psychology would be particularly effective if the social psychology text included social cognition following Baird (2010). Authors of the introductory text could recognize that scaffolding and greater inclusion of collectivist interpretations of the material discipline of psychology, particularly within the social psychology chapter, would enable the text to influence students to learn "in accordance with his or her expectations" (Baird, 2010, p. 203). To include an advanced and detailed explanation of the nature and effectiveness of specific collectivist cultures on perception of one's connectedness to the group, would similarly create a more social social psychology. Following Bond and Smith's (1996) contention that conformity research must attend more to cultural variables and to their role in the processes involved in social influence, presenting this research to introductory students the instructor or textbook author should carefully pay more attention to cultural variables, and present them as alternative explanations of the Asch experiments,

rather than elucidating Asch's findings and his explanation of them as conclusive.

Steuer and Ham (2008) described multiple errors in texts they examined and attributed such errors to textbook authors use of "deductive" rather than "inductive referencing". They suggest discipline-wide efforts to assess, inform, and revise textbooks scholarly quality. Promoting improvements based in critical social psychology will enhance the discipline of psychology. The findings regarding Asch in this chapter suggest inclusion of cultural as well as global alternative explanations.

In examining the portrayals, this chapter finds that the presentations, and handling of, culture as a social influence within 20 introductory psychology texts (cf. Mills, 1959; Berger & Luckmann, 1966) to be lacking in insight regarding the interconnectedness of the social reality that 'conformity' is more than solely an individual's perception of a social group situation, instead it is an interaction which results in a social construction. Therefore, any text which implies a focus on simply individualistic explanations, without consideration of the influence of collectivity, does not suffice to convey the actuality of a social psychological concept such as conformity. As Gough et al. (2013) pointed out in their examination of critical social psychology, rethinking social influence requires exactly the issue pointed out by Mills (1959). Insights into social psychology are lacking and limited if presented as a simplistic view of how "individuals are constituted by society" (Gough et al., 2013, p. 109).

APPENDIX A

Table 1. Classic Social Psychological Studies

1. Asch's (1955) conformity (line-judgment) studies: "*Opinions and social pressure.*"
2. Zimbardo's (1972) Stanford prison experiment: "*Psychology of imprisonment.*"

3. Milgram's (1963) obedience (shock) experiments: "*Behavioral study of obedience.*"
4. Sherif's (1936) norm formation (autokinetic illusion study): "*The psychology of social norms.*"
5. Sherif et al.'s (1961) boys' camp studies: "*Intergroup conflict and cooperation: The robber's cave experiment.*"
6. Festinger's (1957, 1959) cognitive dissonance: "*A theory of cognitive dissonance*" and "*Cognitive consequences of forced compliance.*"
7. Triplett's (1989) social facilitation and social loafing (competition studies): "*The dynamogenic factors in pace-making and competition.*"
8. LaPiere's (1934) hospitality study: "*Attitudes versus actions.*"
9. Moscovici's (1976) minority influence: "*Social Influence and Social Change.*"
10. Tajfel's (1982) discrimination (minimal group studies): "*Social psychology of intergroup relations*"
11. Janis's (1972) groupthink: "*Victims of groupthink: A social psychological study of foreign policy decisions and fiascoes.*"
12. Latané and Darley's (1968) bystander studies: "*The unresponsive bystander: Why doesn't he help?*"
13. Aronson and Bridgeport's (2004) pursuit of common goals: "*Jigsaw groups and the desegregated classroom: In pursuit of common goals.*"
14. Hamilton and Gifford's (1976) stereotyping and prejudice: "*Illusory correlation in intergroup perception: A cognitive basis of stereotypic judgements.*"
15. Steele and Aronson's (1995) stereotype threat: "*Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans.*"

Source: Smith & Haslan (2017).

APPENDIX B

Table 2. Descriptive Information about Social Psychology Chapters in Selected Introductory Psychology Texts

Introductory text author(s)	Title (year of publication)	Publisher	Chapter number and placement in the text	Page numbers (total number of pages) ¹
Baird, A.	<i>Think Psychology</i> (2010)	Prentice Hall	14 out of 18, after “Personality and Individual Differences” and before “Consciousness”	200-217 (283)
Bernstein, D.	<i>Psychology: Foundations and Frontiers</i> (2016)	Cengage	16 out of 18, after “Treatment of Psychological Disorders” and before “Industrial and Organizational Psychology”	576-625 (692)
Ciccarelli, S., & White, J. N.	<i>Psychology in Action</i> , 4 th ed. (2015)	Pearson	11 out of 14, after “Stress and Health” and before “Theories of Personality”	426-473 (579)
Comer, R., & Gould, E.	<i>Psychology Around Us</i> , 2 nd ed. (2013)	Wiley	14 out of 16, after “Personality” and before “Psychology Disorders”	532-566 (648)
Ettinger, R. H.	<i>Psychology: The Science of Behavior</i> , 6 th ed. (2018)	BVT Publishing	17 out of 17, after “Treatment of Behavioral Disorders”	677-717 (717)
Franzoi, S.	<i>Essentials of Psychology</i> , 6 th ed. (2018)	BVT Publishing	14 out of 14, after “Emotion, Stress, and Health”	623-668 (668)
Feist, G. J., & Rosenberg, E. L.	<i>Psychology: Perspectives and Connections</i> , 3 rd ed. (2015)	McGraw Hill	14 out of 16, after “Personality: The Uniqueness of the Individual” and before “Psychological Disorders”	548-587 (620)
Feldman, R. S.	<i>Essentials of Understanding Psychology</i> , 11 th ed. (2015)	McGraw Hill	14 out of 14, after “Treatment of Psychological Disorders”	520-556 (556)
Gleitman, H., Gross, J., & Reisberg, D.	<i>Psychology</i> , 8 th ed. (2011)	Norton	13 out of 17, after “Motivation and Emotion” and before “Development”	504-534 (715)

¹ Excluding appendices, glossary, chapter reviews, and references.

Introductory text author(s)	Title (year of publication)	Publisher	Chapter number and placement in the text	Page numbers (total number of pages) ²
Gray, P. O., & Bjorklund, D. F.	<i>Psychology</i> , 7 th ed. (2014)	Worth	13 & 14 out of 16, after “Social Development” and before “Personality”	503-572 (693)
Griggs, R. A.	<i>Psychology: A Concise Introduction</i> , 5 th ed. (2017)	Worth	9 out of 10, after “Personality Theories and Assessment” and before “Abnormal Psychology”	370-426 (472)
Hockenbury, D. H., & Hockenbury, S. E.	<i>Discovering Psychology</i> , 5 th ed. (2011)	Worth	11 out of 14, after “Personality” and before “Stress, Health and Coping”	457-494 (619)
Kalat, J. W.	<i>Introduction to Psychology</i> , 9 th ed. (2011)	Cengage	13 out of 16, after “Emotions, Stress, and Health” and before “Personality”	451-497 (612)
Lahey, B.	<i>Psychology: An Introduction</i> , 11 th ed. (2012)	McGraw Hill	16 out of 17, after “Therapies” and before “Psychology Applied to the Environment and Professions”	526-560 (597)
Lilienfeld, S., Lynn, S. J., Namy, L., Woolf, N., Jamieson, G., Marks, A., & Slaughter, V.	<i>Psychology: From Inquiry to Understanding</i> , 3 rd ed. (2014)	Pearson	13 out of 16, after “Stress, Coping, and Health” and before “Personality”	494-539 (663)
Morris, C., & Maisto, A.	<i>Understanding Psychology</i> , 11 th ed. (2015)	Pearson	14 out of 14, after “Therapies”	483-516 (516)
Nairne, J. S.	<i>Psychology</i> 6 th ed. (2014)	Cengage	13 out of 16, after “Personality” and before “Psychological Disorders”	402-441 (536)
Okami, P.	<i>Psychology: Contemporary Perspectives</i> (2014)	OUP	15 out of 15, after “Treatment”	716-769 (770)
Rathus, S. A.	<i>Psych 4</i> (2016)	Cengage	14 out of 14, after “Methods of Therapy”	352-377 (377)
Schacter, D., Gilbert D., Wegner, D., & Nock, M.	<i>Psychology</i> , 3 rd ed. (2014)	Worth	13 out of 16, after “Personality” and before “Stress and Health”	507-548 (661)

² Excluding appendices, glossary, chapter reviews, and references.

APPENDIX C

Table 3. Categorizing Introductory Psychology Texts Portrayals of Social Psychology

Introductory text author(s)	Title of social psychology chapter	Definition of social psychology in the chapter	Chapter's emphasis (1-5): Individualistic or Collectivistic?	Chapter's orientation: PSP, SSP, or Combination?
Baird, A. (2010)	"Social psychology: Do we think and act differently when we're around other people?"	Baird (2010, p. 200): "Social Psychologists study how the thoughts, emotions and behavior of individuals influence and are influenced by <i>interactions</i> between people" (emphasis added).	5 = mostly collectivistic	SSP
Bernstein, D. (2016)	"Social psychology"	Bernstein (2016, p. 577): "the scientific investigation of how <i>people's</i> thoughts and feelings influence their behavior towards others and how the <i>behavior of others</i> influences people's own thoughts, feelings, and behavior" (emphasis added).	3 = combines individualistic and collectivistic	Combination
Ciccarelli, S., & White, J. N. (2015)	"Social psychology"	Ciccarelli & White (2015, p. 428): "The field of social psychology also looks at <i>behavior and mental processes</i> but <i>includes the social world as well</i> in which we exist, as we are surrounded by others to whom we are connected and by whom we are influenced in so many ways" (emphasis added).	3 = combines individualistic and collectivistic	Combination
Comer, R., & Gould, E. (2013)	"Social psychology"	Comer & Gould (2013, p. 524): "an area of psychology that seeks to understand, explain, and predict how <i>people's thoughts</i> , feelings and behaviors are <i>influenced</i> by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others" (emphasis added).	1 = mostly individualistic	PSP

Introductory text author(s)	Title of social psychology chapter	Definition of social psychology in the chapter	Chapter's emphasis (1-5): Individualistic or Collectivistic?	Chapter's orientation: PSP, SSP, or Combination?
Ettinger, R. H. (2018)	"Social psychology"	Ettinger (2018, p. 677): "Social Psychology is the field of psychology concerned with how <i>social influences</i> affect our behaviors" (emphasis added).	1 = mostly individualistic	PSP
Franzoi, S. (2018)	"Social psychology"	Franzoi (2018, p. 624): "Social psychology is the scientific study of how <i>people's thoughts, feelings, and behavior</i> are influenced by others" (emphasis added).	5 = mostly collectivistic	SSP
Feist, G. J., & Rosenberg, E. L. (2015)	"Social behavior"	Feist & Rosenberg (2015, p. 514): "...the focus of social psychology, which studies <i>the effects of the real or imagined presence</i> of others on people's thoughts, feelings, and actions" (emphasis added).	1 = mostly individualistic	PSP
Gray, P. O., & Bjorklund, D. F. (2014)	Part VII. The person in a world of people. Chapter 13. "Social perception and attitudes"; Chapter 14. "Social influences on behavior"	Gray & Bjorklund (2014, p. 503): "This is the first of a two-chapter sequence on social psychology, the subfield of psychology that deals most explicitly with <i>how we view one another</i> and are influenced by one another. This chapter focuses on <i>person perception</i> , the processes by which we perceive and understand one another and ourselves, and on <i>attitudes</i> , the evaluative beliefs that we have about our social world and the entities within in. The next chapter focuses on the effects that those perceptions and beliefs have on our emotions and actions" (emphasis added).	1 = mostly individualistic	PSP
Griggs, R. A. (2017)	"Social psychology"	Griggs (2017, p. 371): "The scientific study of <i>how we influence one another's</i> behavior and thinking" (emphasis added).	5 = mostly collectivistic	SSP

Table 3. (Continued)

Introductory text author(s)	Title of social psychology chapter	Definition of social psychology in the chapter	Chapter's emphasis (1-5): Individualistic or Collectivistic?	Chapter's orientation: PSP, SSP, or Combination?
Hockenbury, D. H., & Hockenbury, S. E. (2011)	"The person in social context: Social psychology"	Hockenbury & Hockenbury (2011, p. 458): "Social psychology investigates how <i>your thoughts, feelings and behavior are</i> influenced by the presence of other people and by the social and physical environment" (emphasis added).	3 = combines individualistic and collectivistic	Combination
Kalat, J. W. (2011)	"Social psychology"	Kalat (2011, p. 452): Social psychologists are "the psychologists who study <i>social behavior</i> and how people influence one another: Social psychology includes the study of attitudes, persuasion, self-understanding, and almost all everyday behaviors of relatively normal people <i>in their relationships</i> with others" (emphasis added).	3 = combines individualistic and collectivistic	Combination
Lahey, B. (2012)	"Social psychology"	Lahey (2012, p. 527): "a branch of psychology that studies <i>individuals</i> as they interact with others" (emphasis added).	1 = mostly individualistic	PSP
Lilienfeld, S., Lynn, S. J., Namy, L., Woolf, N., Jamieson, G., Marks, A., & Slaughter, V. (2014)	"Social psychology: How others affect us"	Lilienfeld et al. (2014, p. 496): "Social psychology is the study of how people influence others' behavior, beliefs, and attitudes—for both good and bad." This definition is from Lewin (1951).	1 = mostly individualistic	PSP
Morris, C., & Maisto, A. (2015)	"Social psychology"	Morris & Maisto (2015, p. 484): "the scientific study of the ways in which the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of <i>one individual</i> are influenced by the real, imagined, or inferred behavior or characteristics of other people" (emphasis added).	1 = mostly individualistic	PSP

Introductory text author(s)	Title of social psychology chapter	Definition of social psychology in the chapter	Chapter's emphasis (1-5): Individualistic or Collectivistic?	Chapter's orientation: PSP, SSP, or Combination?
Okami, P. (2014)	"Social psychology"	Okami (2014, p. 719): "The scientific study of the influence of social situations on individuals and the influence of individuals on social situations. Social psychologists often <i>focus on the idea of self and study the social individual alone</i> , in interpersonal situations, and in groups" (emphasis added).	1 = mostly individualistic	PSP

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Chapter 12

A CRITICAL APPROACH TO ABNORMALITY

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Most introduction to psychology textbooks include a chapter or section on *Abnormal Psychology*. Typically, this will be framed as a sub-discipline of psychology that focuses on the study and treatment of human behaviors that have been deemed abnormal through clinical research and practices. At the very basis of abnormal psychology is thus the assumption that some patterns of thoughts and behaviors are more socially acceptable, even desirable, than others. This is certainly not a new notion, as throughout human history and across all cultures there have been customs and norms distinguishing behaviors that are appropriate from those that are not. What makes this unique in the context of abnormal psychology, however, is the way such distinctions are determined almost exclusively on the basis of

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scientific and/or medical values. Put differently, abnormal psychology presupposes a very narrow sense of normativity (i.e., our relations to social norms and customs) that is grounded in a Westernized approach to biomedical knowledge. By marginalizing the sociocultural dimensions of human behavior, abnormal psychology has traditionally set out to prove what is presumed from the beginning: namely, that certain behaviors are naturally (either developmentally or genetically) more advantageous than others. As we outline below, the very enterprise of abnormal psychology, as it has traditionally been understood, is wedded to a biomedical approach to abnormality, which is rooted historically in Western colonialism.

Current conceptions of mental illness have been fashioned largely by and for the profession of psychiatry, which emerged out of physicians' work within asylums for the insane, that proliferated across Europe during the seventeenth century. Those working in these institutions often performed experiments on residents living there in ways we would now consider unethical. Practices like lobotomy—where stakes are driven through the skulls of residents—were commonplace. Gradually, through trial and error, such physicians came to learn about the role of biology in psychological distress; although, not quite as much as many contemporary textbooks might have us believe. To this day, there are still major questions left unresolved about issues regarding how the mind relates to the body, and even how abnormal psychology relates to science in general, problematizing contemporary biomedical approaches to mental health care. To complicate the field of abnormal psychology even further, it now includes many more professionals than just psychiatrists, ranging from scientists researching psychopathology to other mental health service providers—like social workers and counselors. Throughout this chapter, we outline some reasons why a biomedical approach to abnormal psychology has not progressed in ways that early physicians working in asylums and hospitals likely expected it would. To illustrate this, we interrogate key concepts in abnormal psychology through the critical lenses of three, highly interrelated trends in the field: decolonization, deinstitutionalization, and decentralization.

In this chapter, the term *decolonization* refers to the dismantling of values and methods that Western imperialism, in its various guises, has exported around the world. As we illustrate below, concepts and behavioral modification techniques from psychiatry and psychology—i.e., psy-disciplines—have long been used to subtend various colonial relations, with pre-determinations about which behaviors are abnormal often justifying such arrangements. *Deinstitutionalization* refers to a series of mental health policy changes initiated around the middle of the twentieth century, continuing through today, whereby psychiatric asylums and hospitals have gradually been closed, with those inhabiting them encouraged to integrate back into society. Due to a host of sociopolitical and economic obstacles, however, this has occurred primarily through the administration of often powerful psychotropic drugs. And yet, this alternately marks an important shift in the social values underlying mental health care. Finally, *decentralization* refers to the way concepts across psy-disciplines generally have become pre-packaged for distribution across growing varieties of social contexts around the world. This includes settings like schools and office buildings that have not traditionally been designated for the provision of mental health services.

Decentralization can be understood as both an extension of colonialism and a consequence of deinstitutionalization. It involves a double-movement where, on the one hand, highly technical terms or interventive strategies in psychology are circulated across professional contexts and geographic boundaries, while, on the other hand, communities of support are created—often through popular culture, like social media and blogs—outside of professional mental health settings. With the reach of services expanding into a greater variety of social spheres, there are obvious professional benefits for those working within the biomedical industry. For them, mental health care has become a commodity that can be sold or exchanged on various socioeconomic markets. And yet, the decentralization of psy-disciplines has alternately engendered possibilities for the collectivization of suffering, with social advocacy movements, like neurodiversity (McWade, Milton, & Beresford, 2015) and the hearing

voices network (About HVN, 2019), emerging between the cracks in professional care in often inventive forms.

Today, colonialism is present in mental health care systems in ways that are more covert, yet no less intractable, than with prior generations. This can include the rising cost of treatment (or who has access to care), the ways certain diagnoses inexplicably appear in some populations more than others, or with culturally relative behaviors unwittingly pathologized by professionals from outside of a given community (Metzl, 2010). These concerns are exacerbated by recent efforts to globalize the professional reach of Westernized mental health care. As China Mills (2014) explains in her book *Decolonizing Global Mental Health*:

[P]sychiatry's journey out from the global North is made possible at ground level by diagnostic and classificatory tools (such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual — DSM, and the International Classification of Diseases — ICD), which are translated in order to travel across geographical borders. This 'diagnostic creep' works as a form of psychiatrization that frames increasing numbers of experiences, globally, in psychiatric terms. (p. 9)

Through such processes, diagnostic labels like *depression* become “global categories,” with their social “burden . . . recast into market terms and statistics” (Cosgrove & Karter, 2018, p. 672). Such concerns about neoliberalism notwithstanding, ‘global mental health’ has coalesced into a concerted movement with an underlying goal to infuse Western psychiatric concepts and technologies into a growing variety of areas of human life. Such trends can only be understood in relation to current conditions of global capitalism and the growing marketization of mental health, personal data, and psychotropic drugs.

In this chapter, we interrogate core assumptions and overview social factors underpinning contemporary perspectives in abnormal psychology, starting with the very concept of abnormality itself. In marginalizing the social values and experiences of those being diagnosed, standard notions of what is or is not abnormal remain wedded to colonial practices in ways that are not always obvious to those on the receiving end of services—or even

to professionals themselves. We then trace a brief history of deinstitutionalization movements across systems of mental health care, narrowing in on some reasons why they, and the anti-psychiatry movement more broadly (see Nasser, 1995), have failed to fully achieve their original egalitarian goals. Situating these topics within broader social concerns like globalization and technological automation, we argue that any attempt to understand the reasons and means by which people suffer today must account for the evolution of colonial practices through the use of new social tools and emerging economic markets. Drawing on recent developments in this vein, we chart several emerging alternatives to conventional, ‘Western’ notions of abnormality and mental disorder. As we will see, many of these focus on the power of social networks through the reworking of suffering and care as group and community oriented processes that occur beyond the scope of any single individual.

COLONIZATION THROUGH THE CONCEPT OF ABNORMALITY

As writers like Michel Foucault (1977) and Frantz Fanon (2017) have sufficiently shown, psychiatry has, from its inception, provided instruments to Western governments for purposes of disciplining the mental and physical lives of those who diverge from social norms. To illustrate this, one would need to look no further than the historical waste bin of what are now considered obsolete psychiatric diagnoses. There is, for example, drapetomania—the “runaway slave syndrome”—as well as the various iterations of female hysteria that have been used to pathologize a range of otherwise normal emotions in women. And just as recently as DSM-II, sexual orientation disturbance was used to pathologize all non-heteronormative sexual relationships (see Drescher, 2015). In a similar vein, Western psychiatry has long served as a sociopolitical tool for governments around the world to impose authoritarian rule over dissidents in their own territories as well as those encountered through at times

violent imperial conquest (van Voren, 2010). Research on this problematic history of psychiatric practice was a major force in the creation of liberation psychology, perhaps most notably the work of Ignacio Martín-Baró (1996). While more recent research in critical psychology, like China Mill's (2014) recent book, seeks to outline conditions for decolonial approaches to thinking through mental health, illness, and disorder in the twenty-first century.

According to a popular introduction to psychology textbook written by Richard Griggs (2012), abnormalities related to mental suffering are generally defined by psychologists and psychiatrists through a combination of the following four criteria: statistical infrequency, maladaptivity, the presence of distress, and irrationality. In other words, “we are suffering from a disorder only if our reactions to life’s challenges become atypical, maladaptive, disturbing to ourselves or others, and irrational” (p. 367), according to the information gathered during the therapeutic intake. The specific combination of criteria used in any given case, however, depends upon both the unique lived conditions of the person seeking treatment and the theoretical perspective of the professional making the diagnosis (Parnas, 2015). While those receiving services contribute to this process to the extent that they interact with professionals, the distribution of power in how clinical decisions are made remains unavoidably lopsided—especially when it involves children. Whether or not a behavior is irrational or atypical, for instance, depends in turn upon what is considered rational or typical within the social contexts discussed during therapy. This is also true in terms of what might be considered disturbing to others or ourselves. Such norms and customs will of course differ depending on a broad range of sociocultural and economic values. This renders mental health care a set of social practices in which the cultures and identities of those involved are interwoven through networks ranging from governments and organizations to more abstract colonial relations connecting capitalism to social power, for instance.

Such practices are supported by a growing reliance on standardized diagnostic instruments and manuals. The two authoritative texts used to diagnose abnormal psychological conditions are the Diagnostic and

Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders—DSM, which is published by the American Psychiatric Association and used throughout the United States and Canada, as well as part of the UK, and the International Classification of Diseases—ICD, which is used across the rest of the world and provided by the World Health Organization. These two manuals provide common frameworks for psychiatrists and other mental health practitioners to make sense of symptoms that individuals present regarding their specific circumstances. After what is typically a lengthy assessment process—which could include questionnaires, interviews, or overnight observation—diagnoses are made based upon the individual being questioned meeting specific criteria delineated in the diagnostic manual of reference.

Applying a critical lens to this process, we see this approach to psychological suffering as being enmeshed with cultural institutions and forms of power unique to Western norms and economic markets. For example, the need by managed care and insurance companies to be notified of a formal diagnosis by the practitioner in order for services to be reimbursed speaks to the influence that such companies have regarding what counts as abnormal and how it is treated. In these ways, the medical insurance industry and, more broadly, the kind of neoliberal economic system under which such markets operate, reinforce specific modes of treatment, labeling, and the very definition of what is considered socially maladaptive or abnormal.

This has led to the DSM, in particular, being popularly regarded as “Psychiatry’s Bible” (see Jabr, 2012), insofar as it is the primary source of criteria by which mental health diagnoses can be made. We might reflect further on the metaphorical importance of characterizing the DSM in this way given the colonial history of Christianity, in terms of what that implies for dissenting opinions or frameworks. In such ways, language and culture are fundamental to how we think about what constitutes normal vs. abnormal, or health vs. illness. For patterns of thoughts and emotions to be understood by professionals as ‘symptoms,’ they have to be interpreted according to criteria listed in the DSM. And yet, this produces a certain cultural spillover, one might say, inasmuch as the demand for diagnosis extends into the realms of relationality, sociality, and culture without

always accounting for local languages and norms. In predominantly Arabic-speaking countries like Egypt, for instance, there is no direct equivalent to the word ‘anxiety,’ and as such it is often translated as ‘worry,’ which does not carry the same connotations. Movements toward the globalization of Western psy-disciplines are thus inherently laden with ethical and conceptual concerns that are all too often ignored by practitioners and researchers (Cosgrove & Karter, 2018).

The V-codes listed in the fourth and fifth editions of the DSM provide another instructive example of how culture is understood within psy-disciplines. These are non-billable codes that are not recognized as disorders in the sense of being a psychological abnormality but are, nevertheless, still listed in order to account for problems, issues, or contextual factors that perhaps contribute to the rendered diagnosis. Such issues might include partner relation problems or child abuse. It is worth noting here that despite these attempts to account for sociocultural factors, taxonomies like the DSM and the ICD nonetheless position an official diagnosis as central to treatment. Descriptors related to bereavement, family conflict, and socioeconomic status are attached merely as secondary pieces of information.

The DSM-5, moreover, builds upon earlier attempts to account for culture with the development of a cultural formulation interview (Lewis-Fernández et al., 2014). This represents a more concerted attempt to collect details about clients’ lives beyond their symptoms in ways that might inform diagnosis and treatment decisions. By way of contrast, a critical approach to abnormality would argue that sociocultural factors such as those represented by the V-codes (DSM) and Z-codes (ICD) of the diagnostic manuals are, in fact, more primary in the expression and abatement of suffering than the more abstracted formal diagnosis. Given the mounting critiques of how sociocultural factors have conventionally been marginalized in the criteria for diagnoses in the DSM (see, for instance, Karter & Kamens, 2019), new ways of thinking through the social dimensions of mental suffering and wellbeing are emerging both within and outside of professional care settings.

A HISTORY OF DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION OF MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONS

In Western societies, mental disorders have conventionally been understood as individual psychopathologies, with clinical interventions targeting the behaviors, brains, or even speech of those diagnosed. This approach can be traced at least as far back as the psychoanalytic method of Sigmund Freud (1964). Freud drew inspiration from ongoing interactions with analysands to chart a topology, or map, of the psyche composed of separate but interacting subsystems. In his early work, this included conscious and preconscious thoughts as well as unconscious thoughts and affects. This afforded a foundational interpretive structure for treatment within the psychoanalytic relationship. Such a metapsychology has been used by clinicians thereafter to relate thoughts expressed by clients to systems of social affect and/or instinctual drives supposedly underlying them.

Psychoanalysis operated as a dominant force within research and practice in abnormal psychology in America until the latter half of the twentieth century, when an array of other modalities emerged to challenge its authority. This move away from psychoanalysis was punctuated by the publication of the DSM-III. As Mayes and Horwitz (2005) note, it was here that “mental illnesses were [first] transformed from broad, etiologically defined entities that were continuous with normality to symptom-based, categorical diseases” (pg. 249). Meanwhile, as public awareness spread about problems with ethics and efficacy within institutionalized psychiatric hospitals, attention turned towards opening more locally organized, community-based centers. In the 1960s, anti-psychiatrists such as Franco Basaglia, Ervin Goffman, and Thomas Szasz cultivated deinstitutionalization as a sociopolitical movement while President John F. Kennedy’s Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act created some policy support for it in 1963. Psychiatric hospitals and asylums quickly began closing across the country. And yet, the overarching goals of Kennedy’s bill, and the deinstitutionalization

movement more generally, never came to fruition. By 1977, there were just around 650 community mental health centers in America (Koyanagi & Bazelon, 2007)—less than half of what was called for in Kennedy’s bill. And while there was some renewed hope with President Jimmy Carter’s Mental Health Systems Act signed in 1980, the bill was quickly repealed by President Ronald Reagan in 1981 along with other cuts in social services.

Today, it is generally agreed upon by most mental health professionals that community mental health services remain underfunded and that a greater reliance on pharmaceutical interventions has come by and large to fill this obvious void in care (Miller, 2015). Indeed, the transition away from psychoanalytic topologies of neurosis, perversion, and psychosis, toward more complex categorical taxonomies, was initiated as much by pressure from health insurers to justify treatment as it was by pharmaceutical companies hoping to expand their market (Mayes & Horwitz, 2005). Since the publication of the DSM-III, moreover, there have been increasingly concerted efforts to bridge the research-practice divide in abnormal psychology by coupling neuroscientific research with pharmaceutical intervention. If one accepts the basic premise that cultures are composed of social practices, which incorporate specific sets of objects or tools, then systems of mental health care in America can be understood as professional cultures that rely on certain combinations of biomedical and clinical tools. Spurred by the social consequences of deinstitutionalization, it thus follows that the trajectory of Western colonialism has taken the guise of *medicalization*.

In this context, medicalization refers to a specific theory or worldview that understands abnormality to be a result of an organic or biological deficiency. Sometimes also referred to as the disease or pathology model, psychiatry has conceptualized this deficiency specifically in terms of reward circuits in brain chemistry. Here certain psychoactive drugs, such as Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIS), Serotonin and Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRIS), Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIS), and Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCAS), are administered to alter the level of particular neurotransmitters in the brain.

In isolating psychological interventions to one part of the body, typically the brain, however, this approach fails to take into consideration the power that social, relational, and generational factors have on how psychological health is diagnosed and managed. This is evidenced by demographic data on psychotic disorders, for instance, which shows that consumers from non-European backgrounds are significantly more likely to be diagnosed than their white counterparts (Schwartz and Blankenship, 2014).

Throughout research related to mental health, the practice of identifying biological causes for psychosocial suffering and intervening through medical frames of knowledge is commonly referred to as the biomedical model of psychopathology (Deacon, 2013; Zachar, 2014). However, some mental health service providers and researchers have suggested it would be more accurate to think about this evolving network of scientific research and professional practice in terms of a biomedical industrial complex (see Gomory et al., 2011; Miller, 2015) because of the way mental health services have effectively been monopolized by biomedical care professions across a growing number of social contexts. As described by social workers Gomory et al. (2011), “problems previously attributed to environmental, social, and personal factors—such as poverty, disintegration of family and community, grueling work, and abusive or neglectful childhood—have been increasingly attributed to brain dysfunctions stemming from as-of-yet-unconfirmed genetic and chemical defects” (p. 1). The history of gross abuses in psychiatry, from lobotomies to over-prescribed pharmaceuticals, belies just such a genetic or chemical defect—one that seemingly remains forever elusive, around the bend of the next great medical breakthrough. This deferral is not unlike the one intrinsic to the logic of globalization itself, such that the psyche becomes commodified and granted exchange value through its production and sale on supposedly open markets. Such markets can be conceived as composed alternately in terms of ideas or capital. A critical and decolonial perspective argues that this does not have to be the case. Although, in order to further develop this line of argumentation, it may be necessary to take note of the growing number of alternatives to the conventional, biomedical approach to abnormality.

CHARTING TRENDS FOR ALTERNATIVE PSYCHOSOCIAL PRACTICES

In the ways described so far, mental health services have become more widely distributed across diverse social institutions and professional settings. Services traditionally provided solely by psychiatrists in hospitals, for instance, are now integrated into the training of a wide range of professionals that include social workers, counselors, and marriage and family therapists, not to mention clinical psychologists. As has been noted, this process of decentralization is still ongoing to date. As a result of these developments, alternative practices have likewise entered into common vernaculars and have been granted more social space to be made accessible. Some of these alternatives include: (1) the use of digital apps and network models that afford clinicians new methods of tracking and intervening in the lives of clients; (2) perspectives critical of conventional diagnostic and treatment approaches, coupled with the creation of communities of users and survivors of mental health treatment seeking to democratize psychosocial care; and finally (3) concepts of indigeneity and experimental practices that challenge the traditional, colonialist enterprise of maintaining order through procedures of diagnosis and medical intervention.

With the advent of the Internet and mobile phones, there are now digital apps available to the general public opening up services to a much larger portion of the population than what was possible in the past. Some of these apps include Talkspace and Moodpath. The former provides both real-time and asynchronous therapy with a fully licensed clinical mental health professional. The client is charged a set fee depending on the package they select and the frequency with which they need to meet with their therapist. Moodpath is pitched as more of a companion, that is not connected to a mental health professional, insofar as it purports to ease suffering from depression and anxiety and improve overall mental wellbeing. The app accomplishes this through audio and written exercise, journaling, and by tracking emotional states and thoughts throughout the

day. These trends represent the decentralization of mental health care insofar as concepts and practices related to psychology are being circulated beyond the institutional mechanisms that referee biomedical research. And of course, they must likewise be situated in relation to broader social impulses to collect and share consumer data that are fundamental to contemporary capitalist markets—trends that have been described in terms like data capitalism (Mayer-Schönberger & Ramge, 2018) and surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019).

In order to keep up with such data collection imperatives, the tools used by mental health professionals—specifically, manuals and assessment tools—are becoming more decentralized, as well. The latest version of the DSM, for instance, has moved away from the largely categorical criteria in the DSM-IV, where each diagnosis was distinguished by type, to dimensional criteria, where individual diagnoses are understood according to often-broad spectrums of conditions. This allows for a greater range of behaviors to be included within the criteria for each diagnosis. Allen Frances (2013), a psychiatrist who chaired the DSM-IV task force, has become increasingly critical of this trend, noting that the term illness fails to fully encapsulate abnormality and unnecessarily works toward bringing a greater number of people into the fold of abnormal psychology. With manuals like the DSM transitioning away from the traditional axis system, wherein disorders were mostly separated categorically, diagnostic practices have become more nuanced when describing symptomology while, simultaneously, expanding the parameters by which clinical decisions can be made. Ann McGuire (2017) is likewise critical of the move towards more inclusive spectrums, which she suggests represents “a neoliberal deregulation of disorder” (p. 403). Similar to Frances’ critique, McGuire notes that such a deregulation (or decentralization) of mental health care troubles any established boundaries between normal and abnormal, paving the way for not only new subjectivities but more coordinated possibilities for social surveillance and behavioral control, as well.

Networking Care around Mental Health

The social, economic, and cultural developments outlined above have heralded the development of various new transdisciplinary frameworks to account for increasing concerns with the DSM and its underlying biomedical model of mental health. Examples of these emerging frameworks include the Research Domain Criteria (RDoC) project created by the National Institute of Mental Health (Research, 2019) and various computational network approaches (e.g., McNally, 2016). With the latter, disorders are conceived as the effects of identified symptoms rather than the other way around. With these new network models of psychopathology, diagnoses are understood as the sum total of all observed relations between symptoms. In this way, individual behaviors and thought patterns can be tracked through computer generated models (McNally, 2016). Individual behaviors are represented as nodes within these complex systems, with diagnoses understood as the patterns formed by each constellation of nodes.

In terms of the organization of both treatments and conceptual frameworks, mental health services have thus become considerably more decentralized in ways that nonetheless rely on standardized diagnostic procedures. This poses obvious problems for movements toward decolonization, as the same vocabulary of pathology used by the DSM or ICD is distributed through data compiled across geographical boundaries without regard for local narratives and structures of meaning-making. However, insofar as services today must be rendered across widely different types of social settings, a standardized vocabulary with flexible rules for inclusion seems necessary given the practical realities created through deinstitutionalization.

Providing a more optimistic take on the concerns raised by McGuire above, and the future of deinstitutionalization more generally, Richard McNally (2016) suggests, “[a]dvances in quantitative methods, computational power, and mobile technology will pay if clinical researchers can use idiographic network methods to guide therapeutic intervention in the coming years” (p. 102). The goal with such network

procedures is for information collected about the lives of those diagnosed to form ever more complex constellations of diagnostic relations (see Petzschner et al., 2017). And yet, such wholesale commitments to technological progressivism only seem to further align psy-professions with the neoliberal market policies outlined by McGuire, referred to above as ‘data capitalism.’ For instance, it remains to be seen exactly how and where all of this information will be stored, protected, and distributed. Such issues require a technical expertise that exists almost entirely outside of the purview of clinical psychology or psychiatry. But perhaps more importantly, such technologies cannot interpret data on their own. With a greater amount of data collected and stored in transnational databases, issues related to power and social context only become more pervasive concerns in the context of a globalized industry of mental health care (Cosgrove & Karter, 2018).

Such concerns are at the basis of recent efforts by the British Psychological Society (BPS) to meet growing demands for alternatives to the functional psychiatric diagnoses underlying the DSM and ICD, respectively. As Karter and Kamens (2019) overview, in 2011 the BPS issued a formal statement critiquing proposed changes in the DSM-5, which was supported by dozens of psychiatrists including Allen Frances. Moving beyond the biomedical approach outlined so far, the Power Threat Meaning Framework (Johnstone et al., 2018), developed with the support of the BPS, shifts the focus from symptom diagnosis to pattern-identification and more general forms of psychosocial clustering. Here, ‘symptoms’ of psychological suffering are resituated within parameters that consider the role of institutional power, the role of normal responses to perceived threat, as well as communal and personal narratives and discourses. From this perspective, determinations about which behaviors constitute symptoms versus socially appropriate responses are not made solely by referencing a professional manual or body of research. Rather, they are guided by the narratives and discourses offered by the person seeking treatment. Insofar as this expands who can contribute to the identification and treatment of ‘symptoms,’ this likewise broadens the

otherwise encapsulated notions of self and identity that psychology has historically positioned as its target of intervention.

As cases in point, groups like the Hearing Voices Network (2019) and Open Dialogue (Seikkula & Olson, 2003) represent alternative forms of support, awareness, and resources for individuals who experience what psychiatrists might call ‘auditory hallucinations.’ This provides options for support outside of traditional mental health contexts for those who have been diagnosed with disorders like schizophrenia or acute psychosis. Other social movements, like neurodiversity (McWade et al., 2015) and the psychiatric survivors (Crossley & Crossley, 2001), have formed around similar values of creating alternatives to corporatized biomedical models of mental health. They make significant use of online forums, blogs, and other virtual mediums to share information and subtend their collectives. Here, the emphasis is on networked care, education, and self-advocacy rather than clinical intervention.

The forms of subjectivity constructed through such self-advocacy networks can be very different than the one offered by Western psy-disciplines, despite the ways such groups make use of the latter’s concepts and diagnostic constructs for unique social purposes. Members of the neurodiversity movement, for instance, might refer to themselves as Autistic, as a form of identity-first language, rather than using the term ‘person with autism’ (Sinclair, 2013). In other words, through the decentralization of clinical concepts and practices, the rigid labels and categories that were once solely under the purview of the psychiatric expert have become more flexible and less stigmatized even if they still foster certain group formations and communities to come together. This creates possibilities for thinking through identities in terms of how they intersect in ways that challenge conventional assumptions in psychological science (Goff & Kahn, 2013), which has particular implications for decolonial theory and practice (Kurtis & Adams, 2016). Here, intersectionality refers to the way the social perceptions of and expectations for various identities attached to an individual affect one another in highly complex ways. And yet, drawing on concerns raised by McGuire (2017) and Karter & Kamens (2019), possibilities for neoliberal

market policies to appropriate the collective potential of these movements is always on the horizon.

Rethinking Subjectivity through Frames of Indigeneity

The various trends outlined so far in this section illustrate how earlier attempts to deinstitutionalize psychiatry have evolved into a broader project of decentralizing mental health services on a global scale. While this has undoubtedly provided obstacles to decolonizing psy-professions, it has alternately allowed for the ‘normalization’ of certain subjectivities that have historically been pathologized by psychiatry and other mental health professions. By *subjectivities*, here, we mean the ways in which identity and self-concept are co-created through shared cultural practices across communities. There are, for example, countless examples throughout Western history of subjectivities other than White, European ones being labeled inferior or in some sense abnormal. The concept of the individual self traditionally considered normal, in this sense, is a sort of cultural remnant of the modernist philosophies of Descartes and Locke, for instance, and notions of enlightenment rationality that emerged in Europe around the sixteenth century and seventeenth century. In the ways outlined at the beginning of this chapter, abnormal psychology has, largely reflexively, taken on this normative ideal as the goal of treatment, while alternatives to European cultural heritages are often pathologized.

In anthropology, the notion of the individual, as a self-contained person, is sometimes contrasted with the notion of the *dividual*, which is construed as a more amorphous and socially situated form of subjectivity. Along these lines, the latter tends to be associated with non-Western, or more indigenous ways of life. And yet, some anthropologists have recently deconstructed conventional distinctions “between a Western ‘standard’ and an ethnographic [e.g., indigenous] subject” on ethical as well as conceptual grounds (Smith, 2012, p. 51). For instance:

Whereas [some] studies depict both Indians and Melanesians as ‘dividuals’ when compared to the Western ‘individual’, when the Indian person is compared to the Melanesian person, they appear to be as starkly distinct from one another as each is from the (supposed) Western ‘standard’. This so-called Western individual is, of course, also a highly problematic category. (p. 51)

According to Smith (2012), rather than thinking about Western subjects as individuals, in the Western, Enlightenment sense, and all others as dividuals, it could be more productive to think about each person as being composed of both individual and dividual elements to various degrees. This aligns with trends toward the decentralization of mental health services outlined above, insofar as abnormal psychology is steadily becoming more reliant on networks beyond the individual person in theory with computational models—as well as in practice—regarding the collection of data across social contexts.

The problems described above with how abnormal psychology is becoming more decentralized through neoliberal policies are even more concerning when situated in relation to globalization. Bhargavi Davar (2014), for instance, criticizes both ‘global mental health movements’ and popular narratives about the ‘burden of mental disorders,’ as neo-colonial extensions of earlier historical projects that imposed Western cultural norms unto Indian communities. China Mills (2014) speaks similarly about the danger of ‘diagnostic creep,’ where a greater variety of experiences worldwide are being encoded into Western psychiatric terms. While Kirmayer and Pederson (2014) caution, furthermore, that such trends have unwittingly shifted the focus away from important structural (i.e., socioeconomic) issues that are so often at the root of psychological suffering, especially in what tends to be referred to as the ‘global South.’ Such critiques point to the complicated ways that psychological suffering is simultaneously unique to local cultural conditions while also being affected by global movements to capitalize on mental health markets—otherwise referred to as neoliberalism (Cosgrove & Karter, 2018).

Economist Edward Nik-Khah (2017) adds to this: “a peculiar epistemology resides at the heart of the neoliberal worldview. The

individual human can never match the epistemic power of markets; therefore, goes the argument, markets should assume primary responsibility for generating knowledge” (p. 3). This in turn renders “markets . . . the greatest information processor [ever] known” (Mirowski, 2015, p.11). This is especially relevant given the ways that data on mental health has become a commodity that can be collected through mobile apps and sold to third parties for them to use for purposes ranging from marketing to surveillance (Huckvale et al., 2019). With the internet being a now global phenomenon, this is no longer a problem specific to the ‘First World’ as opposed to any imagined other. Rather, the collection and circulation of data across markets of global capitalism is a unifying force with which all cultures are now forced to engage.

As a counter to the centrifugal forces of contemporary capitalism, decentralization also leaves room for what in colonialist language might be framed as more indigenous practices of dealing with mental wellbeing to emerge and be taken seriously (Lohokare & Davar, 2010). *Indigeneity*, here, is used hesitantly to refer to practices and techniques that offer an alternative or are even subversive to the typical methods used by the psy-professions—not that this refers to native applications that can somehow be envisioned outside the scope of imperialism, but nevertheless conveys a sense of openness to ways of living that are other than what is considered normal in contemporary Western democratic societies. We say hesitantly here to flag how this concept, ‘indigeneity,’ has the potential to be used by colonizers to render *other* those peoples that have possessed a genealogical and geographic relationship to specific locations and spaces. Yet, the term, at least here, may be helpful in languaging those various communities who have traditionally inhabited these singular expressions of otherness.

On the level of psychosocial treatment, for instance, indigenous approaches may include practices ranging from remote healing, meditation, shamanic rituals, to other more spiritually grounded or animistic interventions. These strategies for health and well-being developed out of different cultural traditions than Western psychiatry (Taitimu et al., 2018), making them less implicated with the professional authorities (e.g., the APA) that grant abnormal psychology its perceived legitimacy. Put

differently, the global South (Dussel, 2012), a term used in decolonial literature to refer to developing countries that have historically been exploited by colonialism, houses some of these exact non-imperialist methods for psychological care and, as a result, provides an alternative to abnormality that is not available under the regime of capitalism on which its Western counterpart is dependent. There are clear overlaps here with what philosopher Enrique Dussel (1998) describes as trans-modernism—a theoretical framework which looks to the “occluded other” of modernity, or that which colonialism exploits but does not acknowledge. For Dussel, this can provide a foundation for a Liberation Philosophy that transcends the limits of Eurocentric models of individual persons.

A helpful way of talking about the kinds of non-normative experiences described above has been introduced into the literature, most notably by Charles Tart (1990, 2001), through the term altered states of consciousness. Though some have argued that the phrase “altered pattern of phenomenal properties” is more appropriate insofar as it shifts to emphasis away from normative subjectivity and towards changes in the content of perception (see Rock & Krippner, 2007). Such experiences can be achieved through, for example, intensive sociocultural ritual, the ingestion of psychedelic substances, bodily modification, and so on. Instead of pathologizing alternative modes of being as abnormal, the very idea of a diversity of states of consciousness, or embodied ways of being-in-the-world, carries a potential to normalize and, indeed, bring into acceptance what may otherwise be considered abnormal ways of experiencing life. This perspective is buttressed by research efforts of those like Michael Pollan (2018), who overviews countless studies and personal accounts of how the use of psychedelics can help ease suffering for people diagnosed with depression, addiction, and other forms of mental distress. As he explains, such accounts are only growing in number as the social stigma related to psychedelic substances becomes more subdued. If nothing else, changing narratives about the use of psychedelic substances underscores that experiences beyond what is considered normal may more appropriately help us understand abnormality outside of the biomedical model described so far.

Whether mediated through virtual interface or face-to-face interaction, it is becoming increasingly clear that the pressing mental health demands of the twenty-first century can only be met by putting the healing power of social networks to use. Perhaps most importantly, many of the alternatives charted in this section point to the importance of building communities around a corresponding sense of solidarity, which might engender spaces for less colonizing ways of being together. And yet, it is likewise important to remain vigilant of the various ways neoliberal health policies can subvert the interests of indigenous communities and emerging social practices such as those outlined in this chapter.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the history of abnormal psychology has been illustrated through three interrelated social movements: decolonization, deinstitutionalization, and decentralization. Such trends have been outlined in a way to understand how they each emerged in reaction to a single, continuous trend of globalizing Western psychology through a colonization of culture via concepts of abnormality and capitalist markets (see Watters, 2010). Additionally, the three movements outlined above have largely fallen short—despite many admirable intentions—because their respective strengths and obstacles are not often understood adequately in relation to one another. And as such, abnormal psychology represents a sphere of continued pathologization of otherness, as calls become increasingly louder for alternative approaches to care in cases of psychosocial suffering (Frances, 2013; Miller, 2015; Karter and Kamens, 2019).

On the other hand, if we take the social consequences of the above three movements seriously, we would have to account for mental health services today insofar as they: 1) operate as tools for social and communicative control, 2) are no longer connected to any single set of social institutions, and 3) are simultaneously pre-packaged and made available for application to the mental health concerns of any cultural group around the world. It would, as such, be something of a mistake to

suggest that Western psychological services reinforce colonial practices because of a series of conceptual errors or a lack of material resources; although these have likely served some role. Drawing on what is discussed above, it is important to distinguish here between colonialism, or the material annexation and extraction of resources beyond the empire, and coloniality. The latter refers to a certain style of thinking, connected to modernist philosophical frameworks that privilege the individual person over cultural groups. This is precisely where transmodern frameworks that take seriously the healing potential of social ritual and spiritual practices can provide an alternative to abnormal psychology as it is traditionally understood.

At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that under the current neoliberal conditions of global capitalism—where the economic value of data and information networks rivals that of material goods or services—fruitful overlaps across marketing, data analytics, and diagnostic assessment render psychological concepts and practices most profitable for professionals when they operate beyond the control of a handful of institutions. This is especially relevant today since, as Gilles Deleuze (1992) reminds us, we are living under societal conditions that are modeled on control, where social power takes the form of continuous modulations of behavior through the collection of data, rather than discipline, where physical punishment is the primary form of behavioral conditioning. Here, in this “capitalism of a higher-order production” (p. 6), colonialist thinking and transmodern practices confront one another in highly paradoxical ways, often using the same decentralized (i.e., networked) technologies.

The decentralization of mental health technologies, in particular, has produced a double-movement of fulfilling the teleology of globalization through the dispersion of psychiatric power, for instance, as well as the expansion of psychology into more communally oriented spheres. The latter has engendered certain groups and social networks to form with a goal of taking the sting out of psychological pathology, so to speak. To account for the sociopolitical and therapeutic values of such a constellation of movements, and the intersectional subjectivities they produce, we have argued that an epistemic change in thinking is required, moving beyond the

biomedical procedure of clinical research, diagnosis, and intervention. We can certainly learn from indigenous methods aimed at psychological wellness derived, in part, from the global South as having the benefit of not being enmeshed with capitalism therein, also, being freer to operate outside of the confines of biomedicalized institutional power with its homogenization of subjectivities. Such a retrieval creates spaces in which to challenge the social consequences of over-pathologization—those like prescription abuse, stigma, homelessness, and so on. The dissipation of these ‘symptoms,’ so to speak, would signal how successful alternative interventions have been in combating the centralized approaches that have traditionally pervaded concepts and practices in abnormal psychology.

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Chapter 13

THE FUTURE OF PSYCHOLOGY

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In mainstream psychology textbooks, psychology is defined as the scientific investigation of human mind and behaviour. Although the study of mind and behaviour can be found across many religions, cultures, and philosophies, its disciplinary tenets in the form of formal teaching, clinical, and research practices in schools and university contexts have their roots in the emergence of European science in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The philosophical underpinnings of mainstream psychology are therefore firmly located within a Western canon, which is one of coloniality in practice and in thought (Grosfoguel 2007). Indeed, some of the earliest research projects in psychology, often referred to as race-science, involved the hierarchical categorisation of race groups through psychometric testing (Howitt & Owusu-Bempah 1994; Richards 1997). This body of work influenced and legitimised slavery, colonisation, and apartheid across the globe. By producing knowledge about the ‘other’ as inferior and less than

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human, it becomes possible to treat them in dehumanising ways. Psychology and its practices thus emerged as a form of Eurocentric knowledge production, that were closely tied to the geo-political and socio-economic conditions of subjugation and domination of the oppressed. The importance of highlighting the Eurocentrism of psychology is also in its claim to providing universal, objective, and neutral understandings of the human mind and behaviour (Buhlan 1993). Such a stance would restrict the oppressed to a permanent category of inferior beings. On the contrary, knowledge is always situated and responding to the agendas of those who have the power to produce it and make it appear as universal ‘truth’.

In much mainstream psychology, the unit of analysis has been the white, male, middle-class, heterosexual subject (Boonzaier 2006). What is regarded as ‘normal’ behaviour is often derived from studies that foreground the experiences of the aforementioned subject (Macleod 2004). The experiences of black people, women, and gender queer individuals and groups have been largely absent or pathologized (Shefer 2004; Shefer & Potgieter 2006; Phoenix 1987). In addition, what is often recognised as legitimate psychological research is either conducted by scholars located in the global north or publications in Euro-American journals (Connell 2014). These criticisms of the discipline are gaining traction in the current global higher education context with calls to decolonise universities. The future of psychology thus rests on a critical approach “to emancipate psychology from its universal, scientific, and Eurocentric tenet” (Bhatia 2018).

A useful framework for such an agenda can be found in a decolonial approach, coloniality being the manifestation of a modern and contemporary world system in which the matrix of power between the former colonisers and the former colonised is maintained (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014). This takes place through the maintenance of global economic inequalities, political influence, and various forms of social and psychological control (Grosfoguel 2007; Maldonado-Torres 2007; Mignolo 2002; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014). As Grosfoguel (2007) suggests, coloniality has painted a picture of the colonised over time as a people without writing, without history, without development, and without democracy. A decolonial approach is one that confronts the coloniality of power, the

coloniality of knowledge and the coloniality of being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014) and the ways in which these forms of power persist in contemporary life. A critical perspective for psychology would be not only to critically evaluate the discipline itself, but also, to critically analyse how these forms of power manifest themselves in everyday human relations.

POWER IN EVERYDAY CONTEXTS

For psychology to remain relevant and advance our understandings of human thought and behaviour, we need to foreground a critique of power within the discipline and within society. Power in this chapter refers to the processes through which individuals and groups are able to control and/or exert authority over others. Such processes are far from straightforward and involve a combination of material, symbolic, and psychological factors.

These factors range from direct forms of physical violence to more subtle forms of coercion or manipulation as manifestations of global coloniality.

Material Power

Material power in everyday contexts refers to access to economic and structural resources, such as education, employment & income, housing, transport, healthcare, the law, and protection from the police. In urban settings, people living in houses in the suburbs, for example, are at lower risk of fires and floods, which are common occurrences in townships or informal settlements that in turn impact on health and safety (van Niekerk 2010).

Good public transport systems facilitate access to work and schools and having a car is a safer mode of transport in some contexts, particularly after dark. Access to material resources positions individuals and groups in unequal social standings which impact on many aspects of their individual

lives and wellbeing. Uneven access to material power in neo-colonial contexts is historically tied to the economic and structural conditions of coloniality. For example, labour conditions for some of the most exploited workers in the Global South are often the consequence of decisions made in boardrooms in London or New York (Campbell 2006).

Economic exploitation and structural forms of racial and gender discrimination are indices of the ideals and practices of global capitalism and neo-liberalism.

Symbolic Power

Symbolic power refers to access to recognition, respect and dignity such as positive images of self and the group you belong to and the ability to voice and gain legitimacy for your views and interests. Patriarchal societies, for example, tend to produce negative representations of women in society as subordinate and vulnerable or sexualized objects (Shefer & Potgieter 2006). This impacts on women's ability to hold positions of power in the household and the workplace. Capitalistic societies often produce negative images of the poor, as lazy and unskilled, which helps to justify the low wages that industries rely upon (Hayes 2004). People infected with HIV/AIDS are often stigmatised as having low morals, which impacts on their ability to seek and receive appropriate care and support (Crawford 1994).

Symbolic power can also relate to the predominance of the language of a particular group and objects such as public monuments that tend to display the heroes of more powerful groups (Kessi, 2019). Symbolic power is therefore the cultural images and symbols that construct one's position in society in relation to others and relates to the coloniality of knowledge.

Scholars have referred to the concept of epistemic violence (Spivak 1988) to describe the colonial roots of knowledge production. As described above, the epistemic violence of psychological research has had a far-reaching impact on popular knowledge in contemporary life.

Psychological Power

Psychological power refers to the ways in which individuals and groups internalise and reproduce Euro-American conceptions of the world, in particular when these conceptions contribute to their own oppression. In everyday contexts, it refers to the things that people do, say or believe that maintain their social position in relation to others. Studies on the educational achievements of black students have shown that ideas of intellectual inferiority impact on students' beliefs in their own abilities that in turn affect their performance at university (Kessi & Cornell 2015). People also project negative images onto others as a way of justifying their own relative position. For example, young (black) women are often blamed in their communities for draining social resources by getting pregnant in order to access social grants (Kessi 2013). Such statements serve to shift the responsibility of psychological inferiorisation onto the most vulnerable groups.

Psychological power relates to the colonality of being, the ways in which people embody and perform their relative positions of material and symbolic oppression towards others.

Material, symbolic, and psychological forms of power commonly intersect. It is more likely that individuals and groups with lower access to material resources will face higher levels of symbolic and psychological oppression.

Similarly, individuals who live in societies where they are symbolically excluded will find it more difficult to find access to material resources which will impact their psychological wellbeing. These power processes are not only complex but also intrinsic to human relations and mediated by our relative social position in the modern world system.

Researching power often presupposes a focus on the problem of oppression. However, it is also important to observe the processes by which groups become over-privileged and through their privilege are able to dominate others. In most contemporary societies, race, class, and gender hierarchies are no longer sanctioned by law but are nevertheless maintained through the power processes described above. Privilege

prevails because of the *material power* that gives preferential treatment to privileged groups in accessing schools, jobs, housing and healthcare. Perhaps what is often not acknowledged enough is that inequality is maintained either by the way in which privileged groups remain silent or actively seek to maintain their privilege. Wealthy suburbs continue to benefit from more government resources, such as electricity, water, and sanitation compared to townships and informal settlements. Policies designed to redress material inequalities such as affirmative action are highly contested and often condemned by privileged groups through the media and legal processes (Kessi & Cornell 2015). These are examples of passive and active ways in which privileged groups maintain their privileged status.

Symbolic power recognizes the cultural characteristics and practices of privileged groups. The ‘race’, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc. of privileged groups is presented as normal and these are made visible in the media and the social imagination. Heterosexual relationships, for example, are presented as normal in the vast majority of TV programmes, children’s books, school textbooks and other forms of media. The absence of images of men performing domestic tasks in the media reifies and legitimises the roles and responsibilities of male and female groups in society. Cultural practices that are considered ‘normal’ are sustained by myths and ideologies – such as Christianity, capitalism and patriarchy that recognise male dominance and westernized forms of family structures (Alexander 2005).

Psychological power allows privileged groups to conduct their daily lives free from blame, shame, and humiliation and with the encouragement of strong networks of support. Privileged individuals do not have to worry about being denied service at a restaurant or being followed suspiciously by security guards in shopping malls. Individuals from privileged groups often benefit from high self-esteem as a result of an internalized sense of entitlement and superiority. They believe that their privileged access to material and symbolic power is natural or that they deserve it because of their hard work. These beliefs are motivated by ideologies such as individualism and meritocracy that prevail in capitalist democracies

(McIntosh 2009). In societies that reward individual achievement and performance, privileged individuals will have better chances of success given their privileged access to resources from the outset. These groups are then highly motivated to maintain these myths and consequently their privileged status.

Privilege is the ability to maintain access to resources through relationships of dominance towards less powerful groups through violence, political exclusions, economic and sexual exploitation, cultural alienation, as well as the psychological denial of privilege. Psychological power “is also the hegemonic mind, the white, or masculinist, or heterosexist, or national chauvinist mind that constitutes and is constituted by coloniality” (Martinot 2011).

The challenge for psychology and its future is to produce the kinds of research and practices that critique these forms of power and how they manifest in everyday contexts (Howarth & Andreouli 2017).

Furthermore, if this challenge is to have any impact on addressing power relations, it must emerge from the experiences and knowledges of those who endure the consequence of oppression and dominance. Alternative ways of doing psychological work have emerged from the Global South and its diaspora, drawing on alternative philosophies, such as liberation theory, black studies, postcolonial studies, black & anti-colonial feminisms, and calls for indigenous and decolonial orientations to knowledge production.

These philosophies of knowledge provide a critique of power and its influence on social, political, and economic formations and relations in ways that centre the oppressed.

Foregrounding these perspectives in the research and teaching of psychology, would demand that we draw on multiple epistemologies to understand human life.

It would challenge what counts as psychology, how and where it is practiced, and who has access to it. It would also represent a departure from the methodological constraints of experimental doctrines to include more effective tools for understanding everyday lives. In this final section,

I draw on these orientations, to reflect on the future of psychology, and specifically the possibilities for a decolonial psychology.

PSYCHOLOGY AND RESISTANCE

Critical perspectives in psychology emerging from the Global South have questioned the relevance of psychology (Macleod 2004), an interrogation of the value of western psychology in producing knowledge that serves the interests and wellbeing of colonial peoples. Race, class, and gender identities have been a primary focus of research by scholars in the Global South and the diaspora in challenging the assumption of behaviourism in psychological research. Others have critiqued the politics of location, representation, and practice in doing psychological research highlighting the need for psychology (and academia in general) to promote social action and a social justice agenda if it is to be of any relevance to solving human problems in the modern world system.

Identity and Resistance

Black studies, and black and African feminisms have delved into the role of identity in understanding power and decolonial possibilities. The focus on black identity in psychological research (Buhlan 1985; Fanon 1986; Manganyi 1973;) has provided us with tools to shift from a victim-blaming and stereotypical discourse about the black condition towards an understanding of how the material, symbolic, and psychological power of coloniality shapes black identities in ways that both resist and reproduce coloniality. This body of work provides deep analyses of how the multiple and intersecting identities and subjectivities are intrinsically tied to colonial relations of power in both thought and lived experience. Literary, narrative and archival forms of research amongst others have sought to understand how identities are historically produced and shaped as a result of colonial relations of power.

Epistemic Justice

Considering postcolonial thought for psychology highlights the important questions relating to location, representation, and practice in psychological research (Macleod, Bhatia & Kessi 2017). Postcolonial studies have critiqued the epistemic violence and privilege of academia and intellectual traditions, how this often translates into forms of ‘othering’ in the representation of colonial peoples sustained by assumptions of objectivity and neutrality in research. This positivism in mainstream psychological research is reflected through the emphasis on quantitative and in particular experimental methods which prompted psychologists to develop normative standards and to define normal and abnormal behaviour (Burman 2008). This naturally leads to interpretations of alternative cultures (those of the Global South) through a language of deficits and inferiority as they deviate from established norms (Bhatia 2018). An orientation that promotes epistemic justice in research would fundamentally change some of the underlying assumptions of western knowledge about being human (Mungwini 2018) through the consideration of alternative rationalities and who the subject of the research is. Indigenous psychologies critique the universalism of Euro-American research and promote psychologies based on local philosophies, epistemologies, and axiologies (Ciofalo 2019) with the potential to redefine the meaning of ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ behaviour in local contexts without attempting to extrapolate these into universal truths about the human mind.

Praxis

Indigenous psychologies, liberation psychology, and black and anti-colonial feminisms have explicitly promoted an understanding of knowledge production as praxis. The idea of de-ideologisation (Jiménez-Domínguez 2009) speaks to the need to uncover the less visible forms of power that conceal and justify exploitation and naturalise the superiority of

the Global North (Huygens 2009). De-ideologisation is also the uncovering of myths about the objectivity of science and its claims to truth. Liberation psychology seeks to intervene in the three modes of power described earlier in this chapter, otherwise described as the political, interpersonal, and personal (Moane 2009) through a process of critical consciousness and social action. Similarly, black and anti-colonial feminisms speak of a global matrix of power and the different forms of resistance to power at different levels: hegemonic, structural, disciplinary, and interpersonal (Collins 2000). What these orientations have in common is a focus on the *psychology of power* and the *psychology of the oppressed* with an emphasis on alternative modes of doing psychological research through collective and participatory forms of social action.

These orientations to psychology provide theoretical and methodological frameworks for intervening in unequal power relations. Psychologists should use these tools to research and resist the manifestation of material, symbolic, and psychological power in everyday life. Psychological research is needed to understand the value of redistribution projects, such as development interventions and social welfare programs, or forms of dispute, such as service delivery protests and land reclamation that seek to resist material power. Psychologists should also research how symbolic power is contested through lobby groups, such as youth movements, feminist associations, or gay and lesbian groups who use campaigns, creative activities (such as Hip Hop), and social media as a platform to disseminate alternative images of themselves. Finally, psychological research should assist individuals and groups to access strong networks of support, such as family and community networks or partnerships and alliances with more powerful groups that can support their interests. In doing so, individuals and groups build a self-awareness and critical consciousness of the causes of their situation and develop strategies for social change.

For psychology to be globally relevant and address contemporary human problems, it will have to develop the tools to address the historical coercive nature of slavery and colonial power and resist its material, symbolic and psychological effects towards new forms of human relations

that ultimately lead to the dismantling of oppression. More radical methodologies in psychological research are emerging, such as participatory action research, narrative, and archival projects (often through an ethnographic lens) and the use of creative audio-visual technologies. These are leading the way towards confronting the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, and its protracted effects on the mind and the body. Fundamentally also, is the responsibility of psychologists to be conscious of the politics of the research process, to understand complex forms of marginality and our own limitations in achieving socially just outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The future of psychology lies in its possibilities for self-reflection and the expansion of its theoretical and methodological traditions. Focusing on material, symbolic, and psychological power relations and how these power relations manifest in everyday encounters provides a space for psychologists to investigate issues of social justice and social change that are fundamentally psychological. Decolonial perspectives provide a useful framework for engaging in questions of identity, subjectivity, epistemic justice, and praxis. Such an engagement might provide the ground work for rehabilitating a discipline that has much to offer but also much to shed given its historical complicity in supporting modes of inferiorisation and control.

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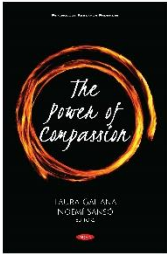
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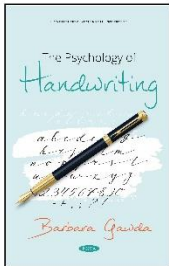
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