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# Toward a Global Psychology: Theory, Research, Intervention, and Pedagogy

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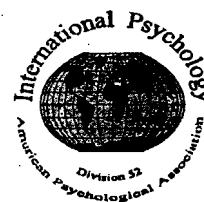
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## Toward a Conceptual Foundation for a Global Psychology

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### INTRODUCTION

As a European scientist, I could not help but be disappointed, and often frustrated, that the neuroscience literature from outside the United States was frequently overlooked ... Had I delved into the book without any prior knowledge of the field, I would have concluded that brain research has been restricted to a small corner of Southern California.  
—Emery (2003, pp. 585–586)

This comment by Emery, in a generally positive book review, serves as a point of departure for our discussion of conceptual perspectives in global psychology. This review appeared not in a cultural, critical, or fringe journal,

but in *Science*, the flagship scientific research journal, and the reviewed book focuses not on culture or ideology, but on neuroscience, purportedly the most objective domain of "cutting-edge" psychological research in the 21st century. We begin by pointing out that the enormous volume of research in the United States, even in "a small corner of Southern California," means that it is now a challenge for U.S. researchers to see beyond their borders. Even before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States already was the sole superpower of psychology (Moghaddam, 1987), exporting traditional U.S. psychology to the rest of the world. Since the 1990s, the global influence of the U.S. has in some ways increased, and traditional U.S. psychology has become traditional world psychology.

But a second, in some ways competing, trend also exists and appears to be growing in strength in different parts of the global village now taking shape. This is the development of *alternative psychologies*, which have evolved primarily in Second- and Third-World societies, but for the most part are as yet less known among mainstream U.S. psychologists.<sup>1</sup> The alternative psychologies are in fundamental ways distinct and different from both traditional U.S. psychology and traditional cross-cultural psychology, which share the same underlying positivist assumptions (Moghaddam & Studer, 1997). The main objective of this discussion is to critically articulate the view of the person put forward by the alternative psychologies, highlighting differences with the traditional causal model of behavior. In contrast to the belief that forms of argumentation create disorganization and disunity in psychology (Katzko, 2002), we assert that psychology is fragmented because of fundamental, real, and growing conceptual differences between traditional psychology and the emerging alternatives.

Although conceptual fragmentation existed early in the history of psychology (Bühler, 1927), today's disunity reflects two interrelated developments. First, as psychology in the Second and Third Worlds has matured, it has broadened its field of inquiry to tackle questions left unaddressed by mainstream U.S. psychology. At the same time, growing numbers of psychologists have directed their theoretical and empirical endeavors toward defining the cultural processes by which individuals make sense of their lives. The objection might be raised here that given the thousands of different cultures and normative systems in the world, the normative approach would only produce an epistemological nightmare of thousands of different psychologies.

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<sup>1</sup>We wish to distinguish our definition of *alternative psychologies* from those which refer to the alternative mental-health movement.

On the contrary, we propose that the best strategy for discovering universals in thought and action is to be found by exploring across the rich diversity of human cultures (this theme appears in many other chapters, most notably, chapter 5, this volume, on indigenous psychology). Turn-taking, reciprocity, and the consequences of social categorization are examples of domains in which universals are probable (Moghaddam, 2002). Moreover, we propose that the alternative psychologies represent the best promise for discovering universals in thought and action. Mainstream psychological research and practice to date has, in spite of its presumed culture-free conceptual framework, been fundamentally shaped by local and regional cultural experiences in the majority populations of Western Europe and North America. Alternative psychologies, in bringing forth a variety of meaning systems, widen the field of known psychological experience. Thus, in supplementing mainstream with alternative approaches, the possibility of discovering universals is improved rather than diminished. In this spirit, the first part of this chapter briefly reviews recent developments in the alternative psychologies, mostly outside the United States. In the second part, we identify shared features of the alternative psychologies. In a brief conclusion, we point to possible scenarios for future developments in global psychology.

### ALTERNATIVE PSYCHOLOGIES

The forms that alternative psychologies have taken through the history of psychology tell the story of a discipline shaped by philosophical debate, shifts in international power, and increasingly organized counter-movements critical of traditional psychology (see chapter 2, this volume). The youngest of the critical voices come from the Third World; they are answering the call to generate locally relevant knowledge rather than re-fashion imported knowledge (Moghaddam, 1990). In so doing, Third-World countries are more effectively promoting national development (see chapters 3 and 4 in this volume on current trends and psychology in the majority world, respectively). Indeed, the Third World is not alone in needing contextually relevant knowledge. Even a denizen of the First World makes sense of her life through frameworks molded and re-molded by her dynamic surroundings. In taking a holistic view of human psychology, whereby single phenomena are situated within larger historical, cultural, and political processes, alternative psychologies attempt to achieve greater contextual sensitivity to address the diverse needs of continually changing societies.

### Alternative Psychologies in Historical Context

The history of psychology reveals that there has always been some diversity in the approaches adopted by researchers (Hergenhahn, 2001). This was signaled early on by Wundt's (1916) "two psychologies"—an experimental laboratory-based branch and a more qualitative field-based *Völkerpsychologie* (Folk Psychology)—as well as by Dilthey's (1914–1936/1985) *Geisteswissenschaften* (The Human Sciences) and Stern's *Kritischer Personalismus* (Critical Personalism; Lamiell, 2003). Even in the heyday of behaviorism in the 1930s and 1940s, Gestalt and psychoanalytic orientations provided influential alternatives.

Since the rise to preeminence of cognitive psychology in the second half of the 20th century, various alternative approaches, most recently evolutionary psychology (Moghaddam, 2005), have exerted considerable influence. These alternatives have co-existed with more traditional approaches and have received greater attention in recent discussions (for example, in cognitive psychology, see Erneling & Johnson [2005] and Johnson & Erneling [1997], and in developmental psychology see Bruner [1983, 1990, 1996], Rogoff [1990, 2003], Shanker & Greenspan [2004], and Tomasello [1999]. Language and culture have been central themes in the alternative psychologies. McCrone (1990, 1999) argues for the crucial role of language to make possible and shape the human higher mental abilities, such as memory and self-awareness. Johnson (2003) discusses the role of cultural inventions, particularly language and logic, in constituting human rationality as it has emerged in history. Danziger (1997) shows how psychological categorizations vary with culture, but also within (Western) culture over time. As these examples indicate, alternative approaches have always been integral to international psychology. But, there is something rather unique about the contemporary international situation, in that one country, the United States, has gained supreme influence on the world stage. Not since the supremacy of Germany for several decades in the second part of the 19th century has one country so completely dominated global psychology.

It was perhaps inevitable, given the growth of European social psychological centers and the critical social tradition in Europe, that the movement to develop alternatives to traditional U.S. psychology should first evolve in Western Europe and in the domain of social psychology (Israel & Tajfel, 1972), with a focus on collective processes as a move away from the perceived reductionism of traditional U.S. psychology (Moscovici, 1988; Tajfel, 1984). The ideological roots of this movement are found in

the writings of Hegel, Marx, and the Frankfurt tradition (Adorno, 1967; Horkheimer, 1972). This movement broadened in Europe to include developmental, personality, and health-related research (Drenth, Sergeant, & Takens, 1990). More specific topics addressed by Europeans turning away from a traditional U.S. perspective have been: memory (Middleton & Edwards, 1990), adolescence (Nurmi, 2001), social and clinical aspects of identity (Weinreich & Saunderson, 2003), learning disabilities (Mehan, 1996), the self (Benson, 2001), human development (Burman, 1994), cognition in everyday life (Smedslund, 1997), reasoning and arguing (Billig, 1987), and cognitive science (Harré, 2002).

In non-Western societies, the attempt to develop alternative psychologies has been mainly associated with national development and also, experiences arising out of colonization and imperialism. This includes attempts to identify: Arab (Ahmed & Gielen, 1998) and Asian (Kao & Sinha, 1997; Yang, Hwang, Pedersen, & Daibo, 2003) voices in psychology; liberation psychology in South America (e.g., Lira, 2000; Montero, 1994b, 2000a); explorations of the psychology of oppression in Africa (Nicholas, 1993); issues of national development in lower income regions in Africa and elsewhere (Okpara, 1985); schooling and child development in low-income societies (Nsamenang, 1992; Serpell, 1993); and the psychology of colonized peoples (Riley, 1997; Taylor, 2002). Recent reviews of the major journals in low-income societies reveal that despite the continued influence of traditional U.S. psychology, some distinct indigenous psychological research is being conducted in key areas, such as poverty and child development, national identity, and health and family relations (Reyes-Lagunes, 2002; Salazar, 2002). These trends, then, reflect a concern to develop indigenous psychologies outside the U.S. (Kim & Berry, 1993; see chapter 5, this volume). Besides dealing with topics not found in traditional psychology, a number of indigenous psychologies are developing alternative theories and methods. We now turn to a closer look at Latin-American liberation psychology as an example of a relatively mature, theoretically grounded alternative psychology that provides lessons for psychologists worldwide.

### Liberation Psychology

The avowed goal of liberation psychology is to fight against oppression and poverty. This battle is waged in collaboration with and through the empowerment of people suffering from exclusion and inequality (Martín-Baró, 1986, 1990; Montero, 2000b). Its roots are in Paolo Freire's adult

education, particularly in his seminal 1972 and 1973 works (English publication dates), as well as in the theology of liberation movement underway throughout Latin America at the same time. Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* as well as Antonio Gramsci's ideas about the role of intellectuals in guiding the people influenced critical sociology as developed by Fals Borda (1959, 2001), which in turn helped shape liberation psychology. Liberation psychology has also been influenced by Vygotsky's (1978) formulation of mind evolved through and in social interactions, as reflected particularly by his much discussed concept of the zone of proximal development—the difference between the level at which the child can achieve independently and the level at which the child can achieve with the support of others. Liberation psychology, as part of a broader intellectual and political movement, is attracting attention outside Latin America, and its proponents have encouraged increased dialogue with critical, community, and applied social psychologists around the world (Burton & Kagan, 2005).

Unlike traditional psychology's embracing of impartiality, liberation psychology grounds itself in a particular ethics, one that gives priority to collective over individual rights and duties (Moghaddam, 1998; see chapter 10, this volume on how professional and ethics bear on this issue). Psychologists who identify with this tradition explicitly aim to end injustices by confronting societal problems (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Parker 2005). Toward this goal, liberation psychology studies the daily psychosocial means by which ideology is produced and reproduced (Montero, 1984), and in its concern with construction and reconstruction of social reality, liberation psychology is similar to narrative psychology emerging in Europe (Crossley, 2000). Liberation psychology links people's material conditions to discourse practices in that it encourages *problematization*, *conscientization*, and *de-ideologization* (Freire, 1973/1988) of those conditions. Problematization is the process through which critical examination reveals a seemingly acceptable situation as problematic, triggering transformational reflection and actions. An example is when a group of women come to see it as a problem that they are underpaid at the factory and mistreated at home. Conscientization is the mobilizing and liberating means by which a person becomes aware of her social relatedness and her capacity for critical thought and change. De-ideologizing involves breaking down discourse that serves to disguise and distort social injustices, such as language about the "natural role" of mothers that justifies mistreatment of women. Conscientization is attained by problematizing and de-ideologizing the status quo.



A number of philosophical concepts underpin liberation psychology and are echoed in the broader themes of alternative psychologies. First is an *epistemology of relatedness*, which describes a mode of knowing based in relationships, whereby all individuals are drawn into relationships of some sort, be they with other people or with objects. Echoes of Vygotsky (1978) are evident in this concept and in the proposition of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1973/1988) that we are "beings of relationships in a world of relationships" (p. 41). That is, we gain knowledge by establishing relationships with other people, as well as with the things we create and use. Interpersonal relationships include I and You, We and They, He and She (Dussel, 1977, 1988, 1998; Moreno, 1993; Montero, 2000b, 2002). The emotions that arise within these relationships provide an additional path to knowledge (Sawaia, 1999, 2004). Thus, human knowledge does not exist in isolation, but rather it is generated and transmitted relationally.

A second philosophical guidepost for liberation psychology is the concept of *analectics* or *ana-dialectics* (from the Greek word *ana*, meaning "through" or "beyond"), as distinguished from dialectics. *Dialectics* is the interrelation of a thesis and its antithesis that produces new knowledge. This new knowledge is a synthesis of elements taken from both thesis and antithesis. In dialectics, thesis and antithesis are complementary and form a unity or totality in the sense that what is present in one is lacking in the other. The symbolic representation of *yin* and *yang* in Chinese philosophy is a well-recognized visual depiction of a dialectic. *Analectics* widens the totality circumscribed by a dialectic. Through *analectics*, the Other can be brought into the thesis-antithesis relationship (Dussel, 1988, 1998). *Analectics* provides a philosophical foundation for intelligible dialogue between vastly different peoples. An example of such dialogue is that which took place between American Indians and Europeans in the 15th and 16th centuries. To each, the Other appeared outside its frame of reference and was thus seen as fantastical and super-human (Europeans perceived by American Indians as gods) or inhuman (American Indians seen by Europeans as animals). Liberation psychology applies a positive connotation of *analectics* to promote diversity and inclusion (Montero, 2002), and to learn about the Other through this inclusion (Freire, 1973/1988). *Analectics* is transferred into practice through participatory action research (see chapter 7, this volume, for more on this and other qualitative research methods).

Originating in the ideas sketched by Lewin (1947) and further developed particularly in Latin America (Montero, 1994a, 2000b; Rodríguez Gabarrón & Hernández-Landa, 1994), participatory action research is an alternative

means of producing psychosocial knowledge that has attracted a range of proponents. It combines research, intervention, and participation of the targeted population. This action-oriented research is particularly sensitive to the distance between researchers and participants (referred to as "epistemology of distance" by Fernández Christlieb, 1994, 1995 and as "cultural distance" by Moghaddam, Walker, & Harré, 2002). A greater role for research participants has led to the redefinition of concepts, processes, and practices in community and political psychology (Montero, 2003, 2004; Sánchez, 2004; Sawaia, 1999; Serrano-García, Bravo-Vick, Rosario-Collazo, & Gorriñ-Peralta, 1998; Serrano-García & López-Sánchez, 1994).

A good example of the impact of liberation psychology is Ignacio Martín-Baró's (1994a) unconventional use of public opinion polling during El Salvador's Civil War. State discourse (the "Official Discourse") falsely portrayed the Salvadoran people as eagerly supporting the government's actions, such as condoning U.S. intervention, barring social democrats from the 1984 elections, and rejecting dialogue between the insurgents and the government. Martín-Baró used traditional survey methods to shape a counter-propaganda that reflected back to the Salvadoran people their true opinions about the civil war underway. In this manner, the public opinion poll was employed as a "de-ideologizing instrument" that brought lived experience into harmony with collective sentiment, and in doing so unmasked Official Discourse as propaganda.

A second example of empirical research in liberation psychology comes from work with slum neighborhoods in Caracas, Venezuela (Montero, 1994c). Using participatory action research methods, researchers performed needs assessments with 346 neighborhood residents. Discussions with residents revealed that problems, such as unreliable running water and free-flowing sewage, had become naturalized, or part of an acceptable norm. Community members perceived running water and sewage control as unmet needs, but they took no action to change their conditions. The study showed that only when unmet needs are brought into conscious awareness and carry strong emotional valence are people capable of acting to change the situation. The needs assessment process, a discursive act between community members and researchers, sets off a process of conscientization, whereby what was once considered acceptable is de-ideologized. Rather than impose their own value systems onto community members, researchers engaged in dialogue with members to bring to surface the community's own needs. This type of research empowers a community to transform in ways that are more relevant and lasting than if change is directed by the research team.

Further applications of this alternative psychology include: psychosocial effects of disease control programs (Briceño-León, Gonzales, & Phelan, 1990), the study of religion in psychosocial warfare (Martín-Baró, 1990), war and mental health (see Martín-Baró, 1994b), and therapy for victims of political repression (Becker, Lira, Castillo, Gómez, & Kovalskys, 1990). This brief introduction to liberation psychology exemplifies how alternative psychologies, in constructing contextually compatible theory and practices, address key issues of global interest (see chapter 9, this volume, for additional material on psychologically grounded macro-level interventions).

### International Alternative Movements

The movements toward alternative psychologies in the Second and Third Worlds are reflected in several broader, more international movements. These include the emergence of ethogenics (Harré & Secord, 1972), discursive psychology (Billig, 1992; Edwards & Potter, 1992), narrative psychology (Crossley, 2000), as well as alternative research methods (Hayes, 1997). Although these new movements have had some influence in the United States, particularly through the work of Bruner (1990) and Gergen (1991), they are far better known in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, the most important themes of these new movements are shared by cultural psychology, which is gaining ground in the United States (Cole, 1996; Ratner, 2002; Stigler, Shweder, & Herdt, 1990). Also, both the narrative-discursive tradition and cultural psychology share the earlier influence of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959), ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), and activity psychology (Pearce & Cronen, 1981).

Thus, at the same time that the exportation of psychological conventions from the United States to the Second and Third Worlds has continued and in some ways increased, there have also been growing movements toward alternative psychologies, and these have become increasingly influential, particularly outside the United States. Although the alternative psychologies have their differences, they also have important common themes, and it is to these that we turn next.

### CONCEPTUAL CORE OF THE ALTERNATIVE PSYCHOLOGIES

In the alternative psychologies, the person is the fundamental unit of analysis. Persons are not clusters of causal systems, but active beings interacting

together with others using tools (such as one's brain or voice) to achieve goals in accordance with local rules and norms. Rules and norms are not causes of behavior, but rather criteria by which correctness and incorrectness, rightness and wrongness are judged. Both are collectively shared and collectively upheld by the community and need not have individual representations. Rules are more prescriptive than norms and may be upheld by laws. In contrast, norms are more flexible, and the sanctions for violating norms are less punitive than those for breaking a rule. Neither rules nor norms causally determine one's behavior, that is, one is free to defy either.

Although there are enabling conditions for mental activity that are causal systems, like the brain, alternative psychologies do not reduce psychological activity to such causal systems. Instead, the paradigmatic elements of mental activity are symbolic interactions among persons. Symbolic interactions, or discourses, organize the enabling conditions as in the case of learning a language, wherein speech sounds (the enabling condition) are given meaning and communicative use in a socio-linguistic setting (Erneling, 1993).

To engage in discursive activity is to engage in joint meaningful and normative psychological activity using symbols, which are any mutually recognizable representation of meaning such as words, pictures, gestures, or signs. Discursive acts include more than just verbal conversations. They encompass publicly recorded and publicly displayed cognitive activities in linguistic forms like books and dissertations, as well as *carriers* of meaning and rules of conduct, like flags, attire, and buildings (Moghaddam, 2002). Discourse also occurs in teachings, sports, arts, and the like. In discursive acts, norms and rules emerge in historical and cultural circumstances and make something not only meaningful, but also inform persons of the correct or incorrect thing to do, learn, think, or feel. People's behavior and beliefs also change through discursive acts. Examples include how the rules for tennis have changed over time or how art is different in ancient Egypt compared to that of late 19th century Paris.

The relationship between the alternative psychologies and traditional psychology can be further clarified by exploring a number of propositions that are shared by the alternative psychologies, which postulate that the science of psychology should give primacy to:

1. Processes of collective meaning making over patterns of individual behavior.
2. Primary psychological reality as a collective phenomenon rather than states or dispositions of the individual mind.

3. Time-dependent processes through which episodes unfold over individual states as an outcome of personal or public processes.
4. Normative explanations based on rules and conventions of correctness as opposed to causal explanations centered on hidden mechanisms, cognitive or neural.

### Meaning Making

Alternative psychologies give priority to meaning-making over behavior. They are primarily concerned with how human actions, as well as events and objects in the world, are ascribed meaning. The focus is on processes of sense-making and interpretations of what is taking place, with less importance given to actions and events as "objectively measured" from the outside. For example, the alternative psychologies consider the central research question to be the meaning of a remembered event, rather than remembering empty of meaning, such as the attempt to identify a location in the brain for a neural representation of a memory.

From this alternative perspective, human development involves individuals becoming active participants in the process of appropriating, manipulating, and manufacturing meaning. This process is intimately tied to the learning of language and its use in "language games," practical activities in which words and other symbols play a crucial part. In this respect, a common influence on the alternative psychologies has been Wittgenstein's (1998) studies on the philosophy of psychology. He proposed the centrality of conceptual innovation over experimental study in psychology, stating: "For in psychology there are experimental methods and conceptual confusion" (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. 232). Alternative psychologies have re-directed the focus of psychology from individual causal mechanisms to collective meaning-making processes, thereby advancing the conceptual foundation of the discipline.

Wittgenstein (1953, 1998) stressed the priority of everyday language activities or language games to human activity. Everyday language demarcates the psychological activities that are important to people in given sociolinguistic contexts. Psychological activities, such as remembering Mother's Day or calculating a gratuity, are learned or appropriated in different language games. Furthermore, Wittgenstein argued that rules and norms are not causes of behavior; rather, they order the discursive activities by which people make sense of what is taking place. They are also criteria for judging the correctness or incorrectness of a psychological

activity. Psychological activities, such as remembering or thinking, and linguistic activities, like reading, are not manifestations or the result of hidden, private psychological mechanisms that cause actual remembering, thinking, or reading. We need not study the brain to decide if a person can read.

Language allows for communicating and learning more sophisticated cultural practices, as well as influencing such practices and even constructing new ones. Thus, for example, the young in England learn to talk about a "Royal Family" (Billig, 1992) and to know what "royalty" means as part of English culture. Similarly, in the United States people learn the meaning of "Old Glory," and such carriers serve to transfer from one generation to another values central to a culture (Moghaddam, 2002). The process of meaning-making is ongoing in everyday life and is related to local contexts.

The contention that meaning-making is foundational to the science of psychology implies that humans should be studied in relation to context. The claim that the ascription of meaning is context dependent does not negate the possibility that laboratory studies can serve a very useful purpose in psychological research (Moghaddam & Harré, 1992). Participants in laboratory experiments ascribe meaning to events, persons, and objects in the laboratory, as they do outside the laboratory. A major difference typically is that in laboratory studies participants are isolated, whereas in the world outside the laboratory people usually engage in sense-making through active collaboration with others. Thus, in everyday life, meaning-making is derived through social interaction—not in isolation from others—unless a person is living in long-term solitary confinement or some other unusual situation; but even then, there are often imagined others involved. Of course, in most laboratory contexts participants engage in meaning-making through interactions with experimenters, starting with questions such as "What is this study about?" and "What am I supposed to do?" Because of this, the alternative psychologies give priority to collective rather than individual construction of psychological reality (Moghaddam, 2005).

### The Collective Construction of Psychological Reality

The meaning-making that characterizes humans is not a private endeavor, involving isolated minds. The alternative psychologies view psychological reality as a collective rather than individual construction. This is in some respects a reflection of the Gestalt motto, "the whole is more than the sum

of its parts," but it is also more than that. The focus is no longer on assumed mental mechanisms within isolated individuals, but rather collective processes outside individual minds—on norms, rules, conventions, and, in short, cultural practices and meaning systems collectively shared and jointly upheld. Of course, even within a single community, considerable heterogeneity will exist. The fact that people engage in arguments reflects the diversity of perspectives at people's disposal. It is in this respect that we can best understand the idea of intersubjectivity arising out of interobjectivity: Psychological experiences at the individual and interpersonal levels emerge from collectively constructed experiences (Moghaddam, 2003). This is akin to Vygotsky's (1978) idea of appropriation by the individual from the common social reality.

From the perspective of the alternative psychologies, primary psychological reality is not dependent on any individual and is not a product of individual characteristics, but arises out of collective characteristics and is collectively maintained. For example, stereotypes about minority groups are not a product of any isolated individual minds nor are they dependent on any particular individuals. Such stereotypes are present "out there" in the discourse of society, including the contents of the mass media, which often strengthen the role of carriers in transporting stereotypes forward (Moghaddam, 2002).

In this regard, the alternative psychologies have been particularly influenced by Vygotsky (1978), who viewed the developing child in networks of interactions and supportive scaffoldings provided by others. Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development has important implications for how psychologists should assess the abilities of all individuals (Moghaddam, 2005). This is because in everyday life individuals typically carry out tasks through interactions with others, and an arguably more realistic way to measure their abilities is by assessing them in the course of such interactions. Of course, in some situations others can detrimentally influence individual performance (Steele, 1997).

According to Vygotsky (1978), individual minds come into being as words. Other symbolic devices are acquired in the public domain, which then come to be used by the individual in private ways. "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level" (p. 57). His idea of appropriating the collective public to become the individual and private, as in the case of social speech turning into egocentric speech and eventually into private thinking, is an account of how psychological being comes into existence. Initially, public language is used in interactions in which the

adult functions to order and interpret the child's behaviors and reactions. Later, the child uses learned speech to control others. Then, with egocentric speech (i.e., talking aloud to oneself) and internalized speech (i.e., thinking), the child controls her own actions. In this way, concepts like the self are culturally and socially transmitted, forming the child's own actions and the ordering of her subjective experiences.

This process can be understood in terms of symbiosis (see Erneling, 1993, and Shotter, 1974). By symbiosis, we mean a relationship in which the infant is dependent on the adult not only for the satisfaction of its physical needs, but also for social, linguistic, and mental activity. The adult actively transmits language by emitting language, correcting the infant's speech, and engaging in conversations with infants. These conversations are initially based on the infant's natural expressions and behaviors, and later on its limited repertoire of linguistic utterances. Parents speak for infants, as in "Is baby tired?," "Oh, we're so tired," "Does baby want to go sleepies?," "We want to take our nap now, don't we?," and so on. Parents thus pretend to have a two-way conversation with the infant (see Hoff-Ginsberg, 1997, and Sachs, 1993). In this way, parents help infants express themselves by supplementing infants' limited linguistic ability. These supplements eventually serve as models for later linguistic achievements. They are ultimately internalized or, in Vygotsky's terms, "appropriated" as part of the child's private psychological activity. Thus, the infant's expressions of innate, idiosyncratic (relative to specific language) speech-sounds are incorporated into a social and symbolic-communicative context.

An example of early social-communicative interactions based on natural and innate behaviors are different kinds of games, for example, "peekaboo" (Bruner, 1983). Playing peekaboo seems to occur in most cultures (Erneling, 1993), though its meaning is not necessarily universal. Differential meanings can be ascribed to common acts, as in the case of crying. In Western cultures, crying is often seen as a sign of hunger, but for mothers among !Kung speaking Bushmen, where the infant is carried on the mother's back most of the time, certain movements are taken to be the usual signs for hunger (Konner, 1972). The same point is illustrated by the so-called Baby X experiments. In these experiments, adults are shown videos of infants labeled as girls or boys and asked to describe the behavior of the infant (e.g., its reaction to the sudden appearance of a Jack-in-the-Box doll). If the adult thinks the child is a girl, the adult typically describes the infant as reacting with different feelings (e.g., fear) than if the adult thinks the infant is a boy (e.g., anger; Vasta, Haith, & Miller, 1995). Thus,



a single activity can carry a range of meanings, allowing for enormous cultural and contextual variation.

However, the ascription of different meanings to behavior is not completely arbitrary. In the case of infant behavior, some limited spectrum of meanings is ascribed. If such were not the case, the infant would never be satisfied or would not even survive (Gray, 1978; Lock, 1978). Hence, infants' behaviors are from the beginning combined and coordinated with others based on local social norms. This symbiotic process continues throughout life, as children and adults learn, for example, to talk about what royalty means as part of an English culture (Billig, 1992).

### Time-Dependent Processes

The alternative psychologies focus primarily on psychological processes rather than on selected outcomes. The focus on process has direct implications for research methods. In particular, the alternative psychologies rely heavily on discourse to explore the interactive processes associated with psychological experience. It is taken for granted that any demarcation of particular points in discourse, as in the "beginning" or "end" of a given psychological experience, are likely to be arbitrary or culture-bound, rather than objective and culture-free. Although categorization of discourse from the outside may be culture-bound, the meaning of discourse and its categorization can reach some level of objectivity by looking at the speaker's point of view.

The issue of the role of discourse provides another opportunity for us to further clarify the difference between the alternative psychologies and traditional U.S. psychology. From the perspective of traditional U.S. psychology, reliance on discourse in order to get at psychological processes is problematic. Although much progress has been made in qualitative methods and discourse analysis in particular (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Hayes, 1997), critics would argue that it is not clear what the requirements and limitations are for studies on processes. For example, when accounts are gathered of past events and behavior, to what extent do such accounts reflect reconstructive memory as opposed to ongoing psychological processes? When discourse is assessed, to what extent should researchers question the integrity of the participants, such as when participants have political motives to deceive or social motives to present the self as positive (Billig, 1987)? But, from the perspective of the alternative psychologies, these questions and concerns are misplaced because the alternative psychologies do not take discourse to be a product of underlying psychological

processes; rather, they propose that discourse is the psychological processes. That is, discourse is not treated as a window through which to peer into one's motives. Rather, it is the most appropriate plane at which to understand the meaning of a psychological process.

### Normative Explanations

A common feature of the alternative psychologies, and perhaps their most important shared characteristic that differs from traditional U.S. psychology, is their emphasis on normative rather than causal explanations of human behavior. The alternative models turn away from logical positivism and determinism; they tend to reject, or are guided much less by the assumption that human behavior is causally determined and that the task of psychologists is to discover the causes of behavior. Consequently, alternative psychologies often abandon the traditional research design based on variables, whereby independent variables (assumed causes) are manipulated in order to measure their impact on dependent variables (assumed effects).

This does not mean that the alternative psychologies have abandoned prediction as a major goal in psychological research. However, the alternative psychologies postulate that regularities and predictability in human behavior arise through individuals adopting particular normative systems as guides; normative systems being "out there" in society in the shape of norms, rules, values, and so on. Styles of individual thinking and behavior are regulated by the wider culture in which persons are socialized and live. Such regulation means that patterns emerge in thinking and acting, and future behavior is frequently highly predictable on the basis of such patterns. Consequently, the alternative psychologies reject the idea that the predictability of behavior is evidence of causation; rather, they take it to be evidence of shared normative systems (Moghaddam, 2002). Nevertheless, a key feature of this paradigm is that individuals can choose to reject traditional normative systems, accepted ways of thinking and doing, and to travel down paths less taken.

According to the core assumptions of alternative psychologies, it is persons in a shared form of life that create the psychological sphere for one another. Psychological activity, like remembering, is not a mere biological process; rather, it is also a sociocultural process of interaction and negotiation. It is in these shared symbolic practices that the individual becomes and functions as a psychological being. Thus, there are no pre-established universal foundations except for some biological enabling

conditions, like the brain. And, even the brain is shaped by cultural forces. From this perspective, cognitive, linguistic, and emotional activity cannot be extricated from social processes. The individual is part of the social from the start, and psychological activities like remembering and using language are, given certain biological enabling conditions, the product of social interactions in culturally and historically varied systems. This brings power and politics into psychology.

It becomes impossible to study psychological activities without regard for the institutions, interactional patterns, and values existing in the society where people develop and act as competent psychological beings. In this vein, alternative psychologies view individual identity as intimately bound up with the larger social groupings that have traditionally been the subject matter of sociologists. Moving beyond the individual and small groups, alternative psychologies recognize the complex macro-identities that people possess. This term has evolved to (a) account for broader categories of social identity (e.g., national, religious, political, ethnic), and to (b) explain how aspects of one's identity can simultaneously carry both positive and negative valence (Montero, 1984, 1996; Salazar, 1983). This second point contrasts with various traditional theories that assume a need for balance and symmetry in cognition and social relationships, examples being cognitive dissonance theory and equity theory (Moghaddam, 1998).

The unit of analysis in studying psychological activities like remembering, thinking, imagining, and talking is not mental schemas, representations and rules, grammar, or the individual learner's achievement in different laboratory situations, but rather persons engaged in public and shared conversational interactions. If concepts like mental rules, representations, or schemas are to have any explanatory value, they must be seen as being grounded in actual social practices, not the other way around (Harré, 2001).

The alternative psychologies also reject the argument underlying traditional U.S. psychology to the effect that human behavior will be causally explained when we have gathered all there is to know about situational and dispositional factors. One viewpoint is that we do not yet have enough data; the best scientific way forward is to gather more and more data about cause-effect relations. In contrast, the alternative psychologies argue that the most important "real sciences" tend to be theory driven, rather than data-accumulation efforts, an important example being physics. Rather than accumulating data in the hope of arriving at grand theories, Einstein and other physicists developed general theories as a first step and launching point for empirical research. Thought experiments are the dominant tool at the cutting-edge of research in physics.

Earlier, we provided examples of the strength of theory-driven alternatives. The theoretical premise of participatory-action research, in which so-called "research subjects" transform their contexts and themselves through collaborative participation, has been highly influential in the social sciences. Adult education, community psychology, and liberation psychology showcase this influence.

### CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

We discuss two main issues in this final section: first, the impact of the alternative critical and normative approaches outside the United States and, second, the future of psychology and the question of whether there will be greater unity or fragmentation.

#### The Impact of Alternative Approaches

It would be misleading to assess the impact of the alternative psychologies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America by examining publications in the traditional outlets. On the one hand, the editorial boards of traditional outlets act as screeners, excluding works that do not meet traditional standards. On the other hand, ideological, cultural, and professional factors mean that many African, Asian, and Latin-American psychologists either are unable or unwilling to prepare research reports that meet traditional criteria. The result is that much of the activity in applied and research psychology taking place outside the West remains unknown to the West (see chapters 1 and 8, this volume). Even research reported at conferences suffers the same fate. Adair, Coêlho, and Luna (2000) reported a zero correlation between the frequencies of topics reported at applied psychology congresses in Asia and Asian research topics abstracted in PsycLIT. In reviewing applied and research psychology in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, our assessment is that the greatest impact of alternative approaches has been in community psychology in Latin America (Lira, 2001; Montero, 1994b, 2004). Interesting efforts are underway in Asia to integrate indigenous and imported psychology (Kim, 2000), but these are at a preliminary stage. The work of Vygotsky is influencing research and education in Africa (Gilbert, 1997; Serpell, 1993, 2004), but again this work has only begun to reach a wider audience.

The clearest evidence of the influence of the alternative psychologies in publications is in journals such as *Culture & Psychology*, *Theory & Psychology*, and *Theory of Social Behavior*. The *British Journal of Social*

*Psychology* included narrative psychology papers for a time into the first decade of the new millennium, but it has more recently reinstated traditional criteria. On the applied front, community interventions, primary and secondary prevention programs, and health and citizen-development projects have been proven successful not only in Australia, South Africa, and South America, but also in the United States, where the web pages of the University of Kansas (especially their Community Tool Box, which can be found at <http://ctb.ku.edu/>) and Vanderbilt University (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/>) are good examples.

### Fusion or Greater Divergence in the Future?

On the one hand, the growth of the alternative psychologies in association with the expansion of psychological research in the Second and Third Worlds might be indicative of a schism in international psychology. The alternative psychologies and traditional U.S. psychology might be seen as something akin to the two different psychologies proposed by Wundt (1916). From this perspective, there might evolve splits and separations, so that psychology as a cultural, discursive, or normative science branches away from psychology as a causal science. Signs of this split are apparent in some major universities in the U.S. and elsewhere.

On the other hand, new developments in research are creating unexpected and exciting possibilities for increased dialogue and collaboration between the alternative psychologies and traditional U.S. psychology. Perhaps surprisingly, these developments include new discoveries in cognitive neuroscience. Consider, for example, research since the mid-1990s on aging and memory, using newly available brain-imaging techniques (Reuter-Lorenz, 2002). This research suggests that even when seniors do as well as younger adults on memory tasks, they often do so by using different parts of their brains to do the same tasks. There are strong indications that seniors can compensate for certain types of neural decline by adopting alternative thinking strategies: "Engaging in elaborative encoding ... improves aging memory and can sometimes reduce age differences in performance. Moreover, providing this kind of 'environmental support' for aging memory can ... sometimes reduce age differences in performance" (Reuter-Lorenz, 2002, p. 395). The implication is that both memory behavior and associated neural activity are influenced by "environmental" support, in particular the kinds of strategies available in the cultural context. This cognitive neuroscience research dovetails in interesting ways with memory research in the new tradition of the alternative

psychologies (Dixon, 1996). Findings suggest that, although seniors do not do as well as younger adults when tested in isolation, they can be just as accurate when tested on how well they remember collectively. That is, seniors seem to have adopted certain strategies for remembering that only come into effect through and in social interactions. Research on aging and memory in both cognitive neuroscience and the alternative psychologies suggests individual memory performance in some ways evolves from the scaffolding available in the larger context, again reflecting the broader theme of intersubjectivity arising out of interobjectivity.

Increased dialogue is needed in order to build and take advantage of connections between research in the alternative psychologies and more traditional research, such as in neuroscience. For example, since Hebb's (1949) conceptualization of cell assemblies, emphasizing learning in perception and other fundamental areas, and more fine-grained subsequent discussions illuminating brain plasticity (Pribram, 1971), the idea has emerged of the brain as a holistic system that changes in fundamental ways in relation to context (Pribram, 1991). The brain as a biochemical communication and decision-making system becomes in important ways transformed through contextual experiences. Rather than trying to link such changes to assumed cognitive mechanisms inside individual minds, the alternative psychologies suggest that the link should be to the wider social context and collective meaning-making. This and other possible links (Deaux & Philogène, 2001) need to be explored further through strengthened international and interdisciplinary dialogue.

We propose that the seemingly dichotomous alternative and traditional psychologies can complement each other to offer a fuller understanding of human psychology. Although the traditional paradigm is equipped to detail biological enabling conditions, alternative approaches shed light on the meaning and patterning of psychological activities. The former is well suited to studies of *performance capacity*—the quantifiable measure of abilities—whereas the latter addresses *performance style*—the manner in which behavior is carried out and given meaning (see Moghaddam, 2002). The strength of the alternative psychologies lies in their attention to cultural and historical context, processes of socially mediated change, and the importance of local meaning systems.

Critics may charge that alternative methods produce nonreplicable findings, but we respond that the criteria of reproducibility needs to allow space for individual agency and development as well as the contextual uniqueness of each lived experience. Although a person may not behave the same way in every similar situation, alternative psychologies expect

that behavior is not arbitrary; rather, some significant patterns can be found, even across cultures. And in response to the critique that the qualitative methods employed by alternative psychologies lack the precision of quantitative methods, we respond that analytical precision need not only be represented in terms of standard error, which is itself a cultural invention. In the case of discourse analysis, an analyst's interpretation may well reflect her particular cultural history, but this does not mean she cannot engage with others (including the "subjects" themselves) to arrive at a collaboratively constructed meaning of a particular event. Interobjectivity is not precluded by intersubjectivity. We believe that as the alternative psychologies gain ground, we may come closer to realizing Wundt's vision of a laboratory-based experimental psychology and a field-based *Völkerpsychologie*, coexisting and collaborating to make sense of both the enabling conditions and discursive acts that together comprise human psychological life.

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