

T. Sugiman · K.J. Gergen
W. Wagner · Y. Yamada
Editors

Meaning in Action

Constructions, Narratives,
and Representations

 Springer

Toshio Sugiman, Kenneth J. Gergen, Wolfgang Wagner,
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and Representations

With 16 Figures

 Springer

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Cover: An image of mixed, interdependent growth against a distant, shining horizon, symbolizing the interdependence and intertwining of all human relationships.

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The Social Turn in the Science of Human Action

TOSHIO SUGIMAN¹, KENNETH J. GERGEN², WOLFGANG WAGNER³,
and YOKO YAMADA⁴

1 Psychology as a Social Science

In psychological science the social world has always stood as a dark and silent specter. The fact of our existence in a social world is clear enough. However, the point of psychological science is to illuminate the activities of the mind. How are we to understand perception, thought, the emotions, motivation, learning, and the like? To carry out research on such processes it is essential to cut them away from the social world, to treat them as independent entities subject to investigation in their own right. In this context, if the social world is to exist at all, there are two major possibilities: First, others' actions may serve as a stimulus input, perturbing the internal mechanisms in one fashion or another. Or, social action may result from the operation of the internal mechanisms. In both cases, if recognized at all, the social world is secondary and/or derivative. And yet, the specter remains to haunt the field with reminders of how central to daily life are the relationships in which we are immersed. It whispers of possibilities that the social world may just be primary, and the mental world secondary or derivative.

This suppression of the social has also been reinforced by the guiding metaphor for most psychological theory, that of the machine. During the behaviorist decades, the dominant metaphor of the person was that of an input-output machine. Individual behavior was viewed as function of "stimulus conditions" impinging on internal mechanisms. It is this metaphor that is largely captured in the experimental method, in which the investigator manipulates the "independent variable" in the stimulus world, and records the resulting human behavior (the "dependent variable"). With the later emergence of the cognitive revolution, the machine metaphor remained, but in this case the input-output machine was replaced by the computer. The mind was (and continues to be) viewed as a computational device,

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with behavior viewed as the outcome of “information processing.” For advocates of the computer metaphor, the major research focus is essentially the hardware, that is, the neurological basis of computation. Such neurological structures are largely viewed as products of genetics and evolution, with cognitive psychology (and artificial intelligence) articulating the implications for mental functioning.

Critiques of the machine orientation to understanding human action have long been extant. They have variously focused on logical shortcomings, paradigmatic narrowness, and the inimical implications for cultural life. However, while impressive in both sophistication and passion, they have largely failed to stimulate a self-reflexive pause in practices of inquiry. One important reason for the resistance of many psychologists to engage in self-reflexive dialogue, is the lack of an obvious alternative to the mechanistic metaphor. For the scientific psychologist, most of the alternative metaphors have seemed unpromising. The hydraulic metaphor of the psychoanalytic tradition seemed resistant to empirical validation; there were no valid methods for studying the content of human consciousness, the metaphor favored by phenomenologists; and the humanist metaphor of the person as voluntary agent promised little in the way of predictive research.

This historical condition gives rise to the drama unfolding in the present volume. In recent decades there has been a slow but distinct development of what many now see as a viable alternative to the vision of the human being as machine, and the mind as independent from the social world. This development is not specific to a single locale or group of scholars, but has taken place in far flung regions of the world, with different emphases, assumptions, and concepts favored in different enclaves. Yet, common to all of them is a vision of the individual action as inherently social, and more specifically, deriving from shared meaning.

On the broad level, such movements suggest that one’s major investments in life – in marriage, family, friendships, occupation, religion, leisure pursuits and so on – are lodged within shared conceptions of what is possible, appropriate, and valuable. More microscopically, it is to say that even in the small details of daily life – one’s facial expressions, tone of voice, posture, gaze, and stride – are fashioned from shared intelligibilities. Students seated in a class have infinite possibilities for action available to them in principle. Biologically they are capable of shouting, throwing chairs, playing games, making love, fighting, urinating on the floor, and so on. But they do not. They do not even consider such possibilities, because these actions are beyond cultural intelligibility.

This is not to say that biology is of no importance. Indeed, genetics and evolution do furnish both potentials and limits of human behavior. By virtue of biological inheritance, one can (with training) leap almost two meters into the air; biological being makes this possible. However, regardless of practice, one cannot make a leap of 10 meters. In this case biology fixes the limits. In effect, biology is important in providing the grounds for participation and change in cultural life, but does not determine the outcomes.

An often disregarded role of our biological inheritance is its importance in providing the learning mechanisms that play a pivotal role for when and where people attain their basic socialization. In the social realm the workings of nature

are far from genetically fixing what behavioral preferences they may possess. Instead, learning mechanisms offer a flexible way of attaining locally important cultural knowledge within temporal windows of opportunity as has been convincingly shown by research in language and culture attainment. Similar mechanisms are likely to exist for other social capacities, such as mate preferences, for example. It is this role of our biological inheritance that social science must appreciate in order to furnish a more complete understanding of human behavior. Within the natural range of variation of capacities and armed with biologically conditioned learning mechanisms we live out lives of meaning – in which we hold some things to be real, rational, valuable or morally right, and others not. It is this world of meaning in which we find love and hate, struggles for justice, power, and money, and the dramas that lend to life both its depth and passion.

It is to this emerging sensibility in psychology that the present volume is devoted. The attempt here is to bring together exemplars of several of the major perspectives contributing to what may be called “the social turn” in psychological inquiry. In this introductory essay, we shall first sketch out several significant movements in psychology that converge in the importance they attach to processes of human meaning making. While these endeavors are important enough in themselves, there are ways in which they also invite a reconsideration of psychological inquiry itself. We shall thus consider, as well, some of the broader implications to which these paradigms give rise in terms of the conception and practice of psychological science. Finally, with this background in place we will be positioned to consider the contents of the present volume.

2 Converging Paradigms of the Social

While concern with social process is shared by a number of significant movements in psychology, such concerns have emerged from quite different intellectual contexts. To be sure, there are broad domains of agreement in their formulations; but simultaneously certain tensions exist in their assumptions and outlooks on inquiry. And, while we shall treat each of the following movements as coherent and univocal, the reader should also be aware that there are significant differences among scholars who might identify themselves within a movement. Rather than viewing these as coherent movements, then, it is more adequate to view them as converging domains of continuing deliberation. We first treat four major streams: social construction, social representation, narrative psychology, and cultural psychology. We then consider a range of lesser tributaries.

2.1 *Social Construction*

Social constructionist inquiry in psychology may be traced most prominently to the social studies of science and their critique of empiricist claims to transcendental or culture free truth. Pivotal in this respect were Kuhn’s (1962) work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and Berger and Luckmann’s (1966), *The Social*

Construction of Reality. Although differing in many respects, both works were dramatic in reversing the familiar view of knowledge as a reflection of the world, and replacing it with a view in which what we take to be the world is a byproduct of community. With added developments in literary and rhetorical study, critical studies, ordinary language philosophy, identity politics, and micro-sociology, among others, there has developed a far broader and more nuanced movement now typically identified as social construction.¹ The chief focus of constructionist inquiry is on the social construction of the granted world in both science and everyday life. And, as it is reasoned, this constructed world is deeply embedded within social practices.

Within this broad space of concern, scholars and practitioners in psychology have moved in a variety of different directions.² Among the most prominent are:

Discourse Study. If understanding is largely a linguistic construction, then one obvious locus of inquiry is discourse. The preponderance of study stimulated by constructionist writing is thus into processes, structures, and functions of language use. Research may variously focus on the normal or sedimented discourses of both science and quotidian life, on the relational processes through which these discursive realities are achieved, and the functions served by various constructions in society. Study has thus focused on such broad issues as discourse and gender, power, education, scientific reality, organizational life, therapy, the news, and more. For a more thorough view of discourse study, the reader may consult Edwards and Potter (1992); Harre and Stearns (1995); Wetherell et al. (2001).

Critical Psychology. When claims to truth are understood as social constructions, significant questions are opened on whose truth is given priority, who is silenced, who gains by the dominant discourse and who loses, and what ideologies and societal practices are sustained by the taken for granted realities. Such questioning has given rise to a substantial body of critical analysis in psychology (Fox and Prilleltensky 2002; Parker 2002; Hepburn 2002). While many who engage in such analysis do so by virtue of realist claims of one sort or another, their deconstructive work effectively illustrates the potentials of social constructionist inquiry to bring all claims to reality, rationality and value into critical reflection, thus liberating people from the realism embedded in longstanding assumptions and practices, and inviting deliberation on alternatives.

Therapeutic Practice. Many therapeutic practitioners have contributed to the constructionist dialogues, and most importantly, have developed practices that realize constructionist ideas in action. In this case there is broad consensus that “the problem is the problem,” in the sense that problems do not exist independent of our construction of them, and that the way a client constructs the world is the major source of his or her problems. Narrative therapy, in particular, is identified as a form of practice in which the central aim of therapy is a “re-storying” of life circumstances (see White and Epston 1990; McLeod 2004). A

¹ This movement cuts across virtually all academic disciplines, and one can now find over a million websites that treat issues in social construction.

² For a more complete survey of constructionist developments in psychology (see Gergen and Gergen 2007).

range of so-called “brief therapists” often replace inquiry into the client’s psychological dynamics with questions about resources and potentials that would enable a new future to be achieved (De Shazer 1994). Therapists such as Harlene Anderson (1997) propose replacing the idea of a fixed knowledge that guides the therapist’s understanding, with a process of listening to clients and joining them in co-constructing new worlds.

These initiatives scarcely exhaust the range of inquiry and practice now contributing to the constructionist movement. For example, feminist scholars (Gergen 2001), historians of psychology (Danziger 1990), and life span developmentalists (Gubrium et al. 1994), among others, all make significant contributions. It should finally be added that some scholars refer to many of these developments as *social constructivism*. At its roots, constructivist psychology was more fully allied with cognitive psychology. Both George Kelly and Jean Piaget, for example, were considered pioneers. In this early form, constructivism and social construction were in conflict. The former placed the site of construction within the mind of the single individual, while social constructionists viewed relationships as the source of meaning. Over time, however, there have been shifts in both schools of thought. Many constructivists now hold that individual meaning is a byproduct of social interchange, and many constructionists view cognitive processes as discursive action carried out privately. In this case, the two schools converge into social constructivism (see especially Neimeyer 2001; Neimeyer and Raskin 2000).

2.2 *Social Representation Theory*

When Moscovici introduced the term social representation to a wider audience, it was in the context of a review on opinion and attitude research. His concise description of what he considered to be a social representation is still frequently quoted today. A social representation “is defined as the elaborating of a social object by the community for the purpose of behaving and communicating” (Moscovici 1963, p. 251). Originally social representations were conceptualized as forms of popularized science that inform large parts of everyday knowledge in modern society, but in later work the term included also cultural and social facts that did not derive from science at all.

Starting from Moscovici’s view, a social representation constitutes a socially constructed object *by* and *for* a social group. If, for example, US-media represent the so-called Mozart-effect (Rauscher et al. 1993) as augmenting the general intelligence of young children instead of temporarily increasing spatial performance on intelligence tests in college students; and if they do so particularly in those parts of the United States, where the school system is in financial trouble, the representation serves the population’s desire for an easy remedy in a situation of pressing educational problems (Bangerter and Heath 2004).

The object or fact is determined by the relationships that the members of the community maintain with each other as well as with their environment by means of communication and overt behavior; thus, it is inherently social. The emphasis on social relationships within a group implies that a social representation cannot be reduced to knowledge held by individuals, but that individual knowledge,

accessible by standard psychological methods, is just one aspect of a shared social reality. The other aspects is the personal and mediated discourse that unfolds in a community and society as well as the institutions, which tend to reify social representations in the form of laws, rules and sanctions.

Social representation theory, hence, is a many-sided enterprise involving the individual level of behavior and the collective level of relationships and discourse. It attempts to describe the conditions under which new social representations emerge and are being elaborated in times of rupture where traditional ways of interpreting the local world fail; the theory attempts to unravel the social psychological processes of collective symbolic coping accompanying a representation's emergence (Wagner et al. 2002; Zittoun et al. 2003); and it deals with the processes leading to a representation's objectification as an unquestioned object or social fact in a community. In doing so, social representation theory emphasizes the symbolic level of images, iconic forms and metaphors prevalent in everyday thinking besides the level of language in use. In fact, social representations are considered to be more of an iconic and figurative than propositional matter (de Rosa and Farr 2001; Wagner and Hayes 2005).

Three large areas of research have emerged within the social representation approach: First, there is the social impact of scientific and technological developments in modern societies (Wagner 2007). Recently, for example, the world-wide debate about genetically modified organisms has motivated a large number of social representation researchers (Bäckström et al. 2003; Bauer and Gaskell 2002; Gaskell and Bauer 2001). Other areas covered are, for example, scientific ideas about the universe (Nascimento-Schulze 1999) and black holes that Moscovici (1992) calls scientific myths, psychiatry and psychology (Moscovici 1976; Thommen et al. 1988), and biology and medicine (Joffe and Haarhof 2002).

Second, there are social and political processes that continuously reshape the structure of our societies due to political and economic historical change (Liu and Hilton 2005). Xenophobia and intergroup conflicts are important emerging social facts and topics of public debate (Augoustinos and Penny 2001; Chrysoschoou 2004; Sen and Wagner 2005), as are community life and the role of the public sphere (Campbell and Jovchelovitch 2000; Howarth 2001) as well as the global issue of Human Rights (Clémence et al. 2001) to name but a few. Social and political processes in modern society are, to a large degree, driven by mass media communication. Consequently, mass media and their role in public meaning making are a pivotal part of social representation research since the inception of the theory (Bangertter and Heath 2004; Bauer 1998; Moscovici 1976).

Third, everyday mentality and collective relationships are to a large degree determined by our cultural heritage that circumscribes objects and facts with a long-term historical development and a high degree of mental inertia. Nevertheless, many of the cultural preconceptions are being challenged in modern times and undergo change as complementary ideas are being added (Wagner et al. 2000). In this context social roles and gender are a frequent topic of research (Flores Palacios 1997; Lloyd and Duveen 1992; Lorenzi-Cioldi 1988), as are Gods and religion (de Sa et al. 1997; Lindeman et al. 2002), sexuality and the human

body (Giarni 1991; Moloney and Walker 2002) as well as disease, health and human life (Flick et al. 2003; Herzlich 1973; Jodelet 1991).

The field of inquiry covered by social representation theory is open to a diversity of methodological approaches covering qualitative and quantitative methods including experimentation. The kinds of experimental inquiry used in social representation theory, however, are not “experiments in a vacuum” (Tajfel 1972) but take the complexities of social positioning and collective mentality explicitly into account to ward off mechanistic views of cognition (Moscovici 2000, p. 78ff). There are also significant attempts at combining narrative theory (László 1997), dialogical theory (Marková 2003) and collective memory theory (Jodelet 1998; Laurens and Roussiau 2002) with social representations that yield promising results and broaden the field.

2.3 *Narrative Psychology*

Narrative psychology is concerned with the pivotal place of narrative or story telling in the life of persons and cultures. While emerging in different intellectual contexts, there is broad agreement that people understand themselves and others in terms of narratives (e.g., stories of success and failure, development and decline). These understandings are also significantly linked to forms of action. Thus, any adequate study of human action must necessarily take account of narrative constructions, within persons or shared within the culture. Much like social construction, narrative studies move in a variety of directions, not always fully compatible. For the most part, narrative research attempts to illuminate what are seen as the privately held narratives (e.g., subjective understandings, cognitive structures, phenomenology) that characterize the single individual, a particular class, or subculture, or that may be pervasive in a culture more generally (McAdams 2005). A second movement in narrative inquiry is concerned with the pragmatics of narrative in everyday interchange. Here the emphasis is not so much on the privately held story as the way in which narratives function in relationships. Still other scholars are concerned with the impact of narrative representations – in the media, politics, religion, moral training, and the like – on common cultural practices (For a general review, see the special issue of *Narrative Inquiry*, 2006, v. 16, 1). Narrative psychologists take a particular interest in qualitative methods, as such methods typically seem far more useful than quantitative in allowing the researcher to grapple with subtleties and variations. As should be evident, there is a substantial similarity in concerns with many who identify themselves as social constructionists. This similarity is perhaps most evident in practices of narrative therapy, as described above.

2.4 *Cultural Psychology*

Cultural psychology finds its early roots in the work of Vygotsky (1978) and most particularly his view of higher mental processes as issuing from the relational surrounds. This view, when writ large, suggests that what are often taken as

universal psychological processes of thought, emotion, motivation and the like, are born within relationships. This possibility has stimulated inquiry across a broad spectrum. On the most conservative level, a substantial number of social psychologists have taken up the exploration of cross-cultural differences or variations in psychological functioning (cf. Markus and Kitayama 1991, 1994). Such research is not simply a repetition of traditional cross-cultural psychology, in which the existence of universal processes was assumed. Rather, researchers begin to explore the possibility of entirely different dynamics. Such ideas are rendered more catalytic in the work of Cole (1998), Bruner (1990), and many others, who explore the possibility that social processes give rise to possibly infinite variation in psychological functioning. Most radical in potential is the so called indigenous psychology movement, in which scholars assert the preeminence of local traditions of meaning in both the understanding of any given cultures and the methods through which understanding is achieved (Kim et al. 2006).

3 The Broadening Base

Over the past decade, these four over-arching centers of deliberation have generated a spectacular body of scholarship. However, this treatment does not do full justice to the range of inquiry placing the social production of human meaning in the vanguard of concern. While a full account of the converging movements is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is essential to touch on the significant work taking place in the following domains:

Dialogic Psychology: Drawing importantly from the work of Hermans and Kempen (1993), an increasing number of scholars are abandoning the mechanistic conception of mental functioning in favor of a dialogic perspective. On this account what we take to be thought or reasoning is essentially internalized conversation, a view that resonates with several of the orientations discussed above. However, in an advance over similar formulations, dialogic psychology is particularly concerned with the movement of meaning taking place when multiple “voices” engage in the internal dialogue.

Action Research. Increasingly dissatisfied with empiricist methods of research, including the alienation they foster between the researcher and the “objects” of inquiry, a vital movement has developed that views research as a participatory process. The researcher effectively joins a group of people struggling to achieve some end (e.g., overcoming poverty, creating a school, reducing conflict), and offers resources that may enable them to succeed. The Reason and Bradbury (2001) volume, *Handbook of Action Research* provides a rich range of illustrations. Such innovations raise significant questions concerning the relationship between theory and empirical research in future inquiry (Sugiman 2006).

Relational Psychoanalytics. Emerging from object relations theory, an increasing number of psychoanalytically oriented therapists now view inter-subjective process as the key to therapeutic change. While they retain a view of internal dynamics, they are keenly sensitive to the ways in which individual dynamics are wedded to ongoing relations with others. (See especially, Mitchell 1993).

Feminist Relational Theory and Practice. Many feminist scholars have been disenchanted not only with the mechanistic models dominating traditional psychology, but as well the virtually exclusive focus on individual action. The result has been a spate of theory and research that emphasizes relational process, both in itself and the way it influences thinking and emotion. Robb's (2006) volume, *This Changes Everything*, provides an overview of the grounding work in this movement.

Qualitative Methods. There has been sweeping criticism throughout the social sciences of the positivist/mechanist forms of inquiry. One result has also been a burgeoning of new methods of qualitative inquiry (cf. Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Many of these methods are centrally concerned with the place of meaning in personal and social life. Researchers are also manifestly aware of the ways in which they, as scientists, enter into the creation of meaning in their work. As a result, dialogue often replaces interviewing as the method of choice, as the former demonstrates the social interdependency of meaning, while the latter obscures it. In auto-ethnographic methods, researchers are themselves the subject of the analysis. They report on their own life conditions and experiences as representative of certain groups (e.g., people with eating disorders, grieving, or obese).

As we find, the four significant movements toward a social account of human action are vitally supplemented by an additional range of lively endeavors. At the same time, none of these initiatives is surrounded by walls. The movement across these various domains – large and small – is active, continuous, and innovative. Broad social concern, combined with a heady sense of a new horizon, invite resistance to canonization. In what follows, we sketch out some of the broader implications of these movements as a whole.

4 Social Meaning and Psychological Inquiry

As we find, there is broad convergence in the importance attached to social process in understanding human action. At the same time, these converging movements begin to raise significant questions concerning the individualistic cast of traditional psychology. At the outset, they begin to offer an alternative definition of the human being, one that replaces the traditional picture of isolated minds in mechanistic exchange, with human connection as the well-spring of meaningful action. Yet, as historian Kurt Danziger (1990) has pointed out, the traditional forms of inquiry in psychology are premised on the individualist conception of the human being. Thus, transformations in this conception bring with them significant shifts in the nature of psychological science. Four of these shifts deserve attention:

4.1 *From Individuals to Relationships*

Psychological science has traditionally taken mental process as its preeminent focus of study. The common practice is to select a particular process of interest and through empirical research illuminate its character. Thus we have available

today genres of research on cognition, the emotions, motivation, attitudes, creativity, mental illness, and so on. As described above, the result is to obscure the social world and to reduce it to a secondary derivative of psychological process. However, as a group, the movements described in the preceding sections function to reverse the direction. The social world serves as the primary focus, and mental life becomes secondary and derivative. It is not the private world of single individuals that gains prominence but the shared worlds of people living together.

The result of this shift is a transformation in both the content of research and the methods of study. In the case of content, researchers participating in the social turn become increasingly interested in studying socially shared artifacts, such as discourse, community activity, narratives in action, and so on. Socially meaningful conduct takes center stage. Methodologically, this means a reduction in both experimental methods and mental measurement. With its emphasis on the manipulation of individual mental states, experimentation tends to carry with it an individualist vision of human functioning. Further, the vagaries of mental measurement are bracketed in favor of studying shared human action. At the extreme, there are scholars in the constructionist wing who are deeply critical – both on philosophic and ideological grounds – of dualist assumptions (e.g., a mind “in here” and a world “out there”).

4.2 From Testing Theoretical Laws to Cultural Concern

Much traditional research attempts to test hypotheses about the fundamental nature of psychological processes. Here the assumption is generally shared that because mental process is biologically based, and human biology functions in a similar way across the species, then trans-historical and trans-cultural truths may be established about the nature of mental functioning. Within social constructionist camps, in particular, these assumptions have come under considerable critique. This is so, in part, because the very idea of mental functioning is a cultural construction. To test hypotheses about what might be viewed as cultural myths is unproductive.

More commonly shared among those contributing to the social turn is the assumption that most phenomena under study are culturally malleable. Thus, forms of discourse, narrative structures, shared representations, conceptions of mental illness and the like may vary considerably from one culture or sub-culture to another and across time. The idea of general laws, and accumulating knowledge through continuous sharpening of experimental research, both lose their attraction. Illuminating the social worlds we live in today becomes paramount. Discussions shift away from topics such as attribution error, dual processing, priming, and motivated cognition, all of which tend to remove the profession from socially relevant conversation. Rather, attention centers, for example, on issues of social equality, oppression, mental illness, the human body, sexuality, and human rights legislation. Herein we find substantial potential for contributing to dialogues that shape the future.

4.3 *From Prediction and Control to Transformation*

The major goal of traditional psychological inquiry was to enhance the capacity for *prediction and control* of human behavior. Experimental hypothesis testing was to culminate in an array of empirically grounded theories of universal application. Yet, as widely recognized, a century's pursuit of this project has added very little to the human capacity for prediction and control. For many engaged in the social turn this meager outcome is not surprising. Not only is most human activity highly malleable, sensitive to both cultural and historical context, but the very reality of the objects of traditional study are in doubt. And, as many critically oriented psychologists add, the attempt to generate means of social control is itself suspect. After all, who is envisioned as the controlling agent, and who are the subjects under control?

As we have seen, participants in the social turn tend to be concerned with topics of broad societal significance. Implicit in this selection is the intent to speak into the culture about issues of common importance. As we unpack the implications of this assumption, we also find a significant shift in the definition of the science. Rather than using laws for purposes of prediction and control of *others'* behavior, the presumption is that as people engage in dialogue they develop the grounds for social change. In broader form, we might say that the aim of the science is *liberatory*, that is, setting us free to deliberate and alter our ways of life. The challenge is not to study the past in order to predict the future, but to grapple with the present in order to shape the future. This assumption is most fully realized in action research projects touched on above. Here the researchers offer themselves to groups actively engaged in projects aimed at improving life conditions. Research and social change become one.

4.4 *From Neutrality to Socio-Political Engagement*

Traditional psychology has taken pride in its claim to rising above ideological conflict in supplying empirically neutral facts about the nature of human functioning. However, as constructionists and critical psychologists have argued, such pride is without warrant. All propositions about the world carry with them a particular tradition of understanding and its favored way of life. This is most obvious when researchers label various activities, mental illness, prejudice, intelligence, or creativity. However, it is also the case in the less obvious terms such as information processing, mental heuristics, or decision-making. All place the center of human activity within the individual as opposed to the social world, thus favoring the tradition of western individualism. As a result of such concerns, many within the social turn avoid claims to political neutrality (which they see as in "bad faith"), and recognize their activities as forms of political activism. This is especially so in the case of discourse analytics, critical psychology, and action research.

5 The Present Volume

The present volume assembles chapters by representatives from many of the so-called “schools” described above. Although they differ in many respects, they are all concerned with the social generation of meaning, and its major significance in human affairs. This convergence makes a fascinating reading where, despite a variety of conceptual and methodological investments, we find a consistent emphasis on social as opposed to individual process, its multiple manifestations, its lodgment in culture and history, and its vital importance in addressing the future. There are multiple ways in which these chapters could be organized, and readers are invited to link and pair according to their own needs and interests. We have selected a clustering that points to certain thematic affinities. Thus, we begin with several chapters concerned with meaning and power, and follow this with clusters variously focused on the construction of meaning in everyday social practices, narrative and dialogical communication, and finally, textual, cultural and historical representations.

5.1 *Part I Power and Meaning*

When meaning informs social action, invariably the issue of power becomes salient. The tension between dominating and being dominated springs up as a major source of conflict in defining what is right and wrong and in determining what is the case. In the initial chapter, *Reflections on the Diversity of Knowledge: Power and Dialogue in Representational Fields*, Sandra Jovchelovitch places this issue in the fore. Her argument is based on the view that the power of defining the world in social groups depends on whose representation of an issue is given a voice and whose meaning is being silenced. Using Paulo Freire’s pedagogical ideas she makes a strong case in favor of dialogical encounters where communication partners equally exchange their views and where lay knowledge is accepted as equal to expert knowledge in interpreting local worlds.

While we often view dialogue as democratic, the process is often governed by realms institutions and the unilateral execution of symbolic and physical power. This process and its effects is addressed in Chapter 2, *Discourse and Representations in the Construction of Witchcraft*, by Wolfgang Wagner, Andrés Mecha and Maria do Rosario Carvalho. The chapter presents a social psychological analysis of Arthur Miller’s “The Crucible” showing how the impetus of private interests, step by step, leads from a dialogical and consensual form of communication to a reified and a-symmetric dominance of institutionalized discourse in a community. The authors show how the representation of witchcraft is maintained as a dynamic pattern across different forms of discourse, and eventually leads to a social construction of physical events such as the execution of several members of the community.

In Chapter 3, *Psychotherapy as Cultural and Intercultural Practice: Reflections from Cultural and Constructionist Psychology*, Barbara Zielke and Jürgen Straub

carry the problem of institutions and their power to the arena of health psychology. They show how in a globalized scientific world, Western based psychotherapeutic practice hits the limits of cultural meaning. Concepts and practices of the West are problematic in maintaining and even determining the criteria of success in psychotherapy in non-Western cultures. The authors argue that this development favors a less individualist, post-national and culture-bound idea of personal identity, and thus a re-orientation of modern health psychology.

The collaborative process of constructing meaning is of focal significance in cases of family crisis. Therapeutic interventions are also complex, as families also collude in painful power games that interfere with confronting the crisis. In Chapter 4, *Facing Crisis and Conflict in Therapy: A Generative Perspective*, Dora Fried Schnitman describes the discursive resources and skills necessary for professionals to confront family crises. The author explicates different conversational tools that allow facing and resolving conflict processes by recognizing their particularities and dynamics. She illustrates her model of generative intervention using examples from clinical cases and consultations.

The institutional process of defining syndromes in clinical psychology is significantly determined by historical and economic conditions. Constanze Quosh and Kenneth Gergen trace this process in Chapter 5, *Constructing Trauma and Treatment: Knowledge, Power and Resistance*. In this chapter, “post traumatic stress-disorder” serves as the focus point. The authors show how the definitional power of mental health professionals is significantly augmented by the broad and uncritical use and dissemination of the concept in media reporting. In the course of their analysis, the authors refer to forms of resistance to the dominant stress-disorder discourse in society, and the potential of people to confront stressful events without being treated as deficient or requiring drugs.

5.2 Part II Constructing Meaning in Everyday Life

Meaning construction in everyday life requires persons to constantly reassess and redefine their knowledge as transformations take place in the social, economic and scientific-technological context. During the last decade or so technological innovation, particularly in biotechnology, has led to a bottom-up reappraisal of what it means to be human, how humankind relates to nature and to life. This development in science entails not only a revolution in everyday understanding of technologically modified life, but challenges our traditional moral understandings. Nicole Kronberger places this issue in the forefront in Chapter 6, *Moralities People Live By*. She understands moral communication as the ongoing social construction and reconstruction of values and their application to persons and world. Her focus is on the moral orders people take for granted, how they accommodate this order to new challenges, and the implications for personal and social identity.

Closely related to the meaning of morality is the issue of how norms are being created and meaning is established. In Chapter 7, *A Theory of Norm Formation and Meaning*, Toshio Sugiman presents an approach to this question that is

informed by the works of Japanese sociologist, Masachi Osawa, along with a mathematical theory of George Spencer-Brown and Jacques Lacan's idea of "the big Other." The principal thrust of this chapter is to outline a process of meaning formation without resorting to the concept of embodied minds. Hence, the author proposes meaning formation as a consequence of the interchange among bodies from which a norm that is attributed to a "third body" arises. The third body designates the horizon or frame in which admissible action takes place. A meaning of an object is defined by admissible action and is thus born in parallel with the birth of a third body and a norm. The concept of "mind-in-a-body" is developed as an effect of the expansion of the sphere of influence in which a voice of third body can be heard.

Giving empirical substance to this novel theory, Akiko Rakugi describes a related field research in Chapter 8, *The Transcendental Nature of Norms: Infants in Residential Nurseries and Child Adoption*. In a first study she shows how the behavior of infants who are reared in residential nurseries remains in a stage dominated by inter-bodily exchange. They fail to acquire the norm-giving third body, due to the lack of intense social interchange taking place in natural families. These behaviors are, for instance, smiling at nurses who are caring for other children, excessive exploratory behavior, and fear of soft toys. In a second study the author relates results from her action research in child adoption agencies. Drawing on her observations of the agency's activities, she shows how adopting parents are brought into close and intense interchange with their adopted child as an intentional action, which would be unnecessary in natural homes. This is interpreted as preparing the ground for the development of the third body that later brings about new norms among adoptive parents and their adopted child.

Often we think of psychological coping in purely individualist terms. However, when we view sense-making as a social phenomenon, we begin to understand coping in broader cultural context. Coping by sense-making is the topic of Tania Zittoun, Flora Cornish and Alex Gillespie's chapter, *Using Culture: A Case Study of a Diarist's Meaning Making During World War II*. The authors address this topic in an analysis of daily diaries written by two English sisters during the five years of World War II. They show how such a societal rupture becomes manifest in everyday activities, for example, in baking a cake. However, reliance on collective discourses, political propaganda, films, and music become aids in reducing uncertainty. The chapter brings the reader to understand how cultural products are used by the individual in constructing sense and in stabilizing identity in social exchange and community life under conditions of serious hardship.

5.3 Part III Narrative and Dialogue

The third cluster of chapters focuses on central features of social communication: narrative and dialogue. Michael Bamberg, in his chapter, *Narratives and Identities as Interactional Accomplishments: Toward a Broadening of Narrative Analysis*, takes up the topic of methodology. Arguing in favor of a socially, as opposed to an individually, embedded view of narrative, he usefully expands the potentials of narrative analysis. Using boys' stories about girls, he first points to the impor-

tance of the conversational context in order to assess the speakers' intended story meaning by reference to underlying "master narratives." Second, Bamberg emphasizes a story's openness to interpretation by the audience; and third, shows how the story-teller's identity is revisable and open to multiple interpretations. This approach favors a more dynamic view of analyzing verbal material than has hitherto been the case in the field of qualitative analysis.

In Mary Gergen's chapter, *Narratives of the Nature-Human Relationship*, we again turn to issues of broad societal importance. Her particular concern is with humankind's ever increasing exploitation of natural resources. As she reasons, our views of nature and its uses are embedded within our shared narratives. Such narratives are about nature as a power and threat, as a woman, mother or Goddess, as a source of spiritual feelings, and, as a new trope: Nature as victim. The author traces these metaphors and their philosophical underpinnings through popular culture and exemplifies how they define humankind's conceptualization of nature itself as well as how these narratives reflect our own relationship to nature. She concludes with a search for the implications that diverse images of nature might have on humankind's future relationship with nature.

As the move is made from the individual to the realm of the social, relational process becomes a primary target of inquiry. Conversation analysis is one significant byproduct of this shift. However, many scholars find it useful to focus on dialogic process in particular. While in the many cases dialogue is viewed in terms of a confrontation of opposing voices, harmonious exchanges is less frequently considered. This is the focus of Chapter 12, Yoko Yamada's account of, *Dialogic and Coexistent Narratives: Repeated Voices and Side-by-Side Position of Self and Other*. Yamada takes the film "Tokyo Story" by Ozu Yasujiro as her case material. She identifies narratives that are characterized by coexistence, repeated voices and harmonious transitions, and contrasts them with oppositional dialog in the same film. In contrast to oppositional dialogue, coexistent narratives are based on mutual inter-subjectivity, repetitions and variations of similarity, and by a development of the dialogue from tuning to harmony instead of from struggle to compromise.

Just as in Jovchelovitch's earlier chapter, Yamada's foregoing chapter emphasizes collaboration and coexistence in narration. This emphasis is brought into practical use in an applied study by Katsuya Yamori. Thus, in Chapter 13, *Narrative Modes of Thought in Disaster Damage Reduction*, Yamori presents a narrative tool based on a game used to educate people in fostering damage reduction in disasters. While education in its classic understanding involves experts telling lay people what to do and what to avoid, Yamori's narrative practice aims at the participation of all stakeholders, be they lay resident people, disaster experts, volunteers, or local government representatives. In doing so, the strategy employed in the game "Crossroad: Kobe" is shown to enhance local, inter-local, and cross-generational understanding and promotion of disaster knowledge and – hopefully – also action in disasters.

The issue of dialogicality is further explored in Ivana Marková's, *A Dialogical Perspective of Social Representations of Responsibility*. Responsibility is central in all moral systems and its representation is the shared basis of social behavior.

The author draws on focus-groups with Czech and French young people who spoke about responsible behavior in the dilemmatic situation of totalitarian societies. On one hand, persons living in such situations need to take care of their personal and family life, and on the other, opposition movements require activists to devote themselves to humanity and freedom on a broader level, putting at risk their personal and family freedom. The dialogues emerging in the focus groups reflect a multifaceted position taking on a public level, as well as dialogical deliberation on a private level.

5.4 Part IV Representations in Text, Culture and History

The last cluster of chapters in this volume concerns the interweaving of culture, history and textual representations, as they relate to the generation and sustenance of meaning. Jaan Valsiner's chapter, *The Social and the Cultural: Where Do They Meet?*, serves a linking function in this case. Here he attempts to relate the micro-processes of meaning making, central to the preceding chapters, to the broader concept of culture. In analyzing culture, which has been and continues to be a notoriously difficult concept in the social sciences, the author departs from Muzafer Sherif's notion of social norms and embeds it in a theory of semiotic self-regulation. In doing so Valsiner relates, and expands on the earlier discussions by Tania Zittoun and others where the "bounded indeterminacy" that culture – or "culturing" – defines for each of us furnishes directions for action in situations of life transition and social rupturing.

If, as argued in many chapters of this book, cognition and social behavior are not as subject to deterministic principles or laws as much psychological research and theorizing supposes, the way is opened for serious consideration of the concept of responsibility. In Chapter 16, *Moral Responsibility and Social Fiction*, Toshiaki Kozakai concretizes this insight in an ethnographic analysis of the societal functions of responsibility and punishment. If the social order is a collectively and historically fabricated fiction, then morality cannot be reduced to individual reason. Rather, morality becomes an emergent of social process *sui generis*. To make his point the author draws on historical material from medieval times up to the enlightenment.

Literary texts are the focus of Chapter 17, *Social Psychology and Literary Texts: An Overview*. Here Alberta Contarello takes literature as a rich source of insight into human behavior that social psychology has – up to now – rarely used as material for inquiry. Besides being useful accounts of human interaction, masterly literary texts frequently also take a historical perspective to behavior and development that is usually absent in psychological research data. The author shows that by offering insights into the changing patterns of motivation, behavior and social events, literature is a broad avenue to explore cross-cultural and historical differences in human action. Further, such study functions as a catalyst to developments in both method and theory.

The last seven decades of modern history are replete with the consequences of the unfinished business of military and political confrontation around the

world. While the enmity between European nations that resulted from wars during the last century has by and large been mollified by European integration, this is much less the case in other parts of the world. James Liu and Tomohide Atsumi look into the painful history of reconciliation between China, Japan and Taiwan in their chapter, *Social Representations of History and the Psychology of Forgiveness and Supra-national Identity*. The process of reconciliation, in the context of deeds and crimes committed by previous generations, has received virtually no attention in social psychology to date. This chapter is particularly tuned to the relationship of guilt and shame in Asian cultures where shame and face-saving is a particularly powerful emotion. The authors examine representations of history and narratives of identity, and their consequences for producing East Asian “group narratives.” They end with a discussion of new and inclusive Asian identities that may overcome lingering historical grievances.

As editors, we hope that the diversity of chapters collected in this volume give a taste of the exciting new world of a psychology in which social meaning is the critical element giving rise to human action. We also believe that this orientation to psychology is maximally suited to work in concern with virtually all other social sciences, including their methods, theories, and research outcomes. In our view such an orientation is also most relevant to issues of societal, and indeed, global relevance. The focus on human meaning is critical in the generation of political consciousness, public deliberation, and active change. In the long run our hope is for a science that can more directly feature in the enhancement of the global condition.

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Part I

The Power of Meaning

1 Reflections on the Diversity of Knowledge: Power and Dialogue in Representational Fields

SANDRA JOVCHELOVITCH

1 Introduction

When Moscovici retrieved the Durkheimian concept of collective representations and gave a new twist to it (Moscovici 1976), he was contemplating a world fundamentally different from the one Durkheim had sought to understand. Indeed, contrary to traditional societies, where collective representations could operate as a binding force in an almost homogenous fashion, new processes of de-traditionalization started to open representations to contestation and scrutiny, bringing different forms of knowing to compete and clash in the public arena. Contemporary public spheres have witnessed dramatic examples of these new interfaces between knowledge systems, expressed in the battles of multiculturalism, the plight of asylum seekers and the insertion of diasporic communities in national states (Benhabib 2002, 2004; Chrysochoou 2000; Heelas et al. 1996; Smelser and Alexander 1999). Ours is a world of social rather than collective representations, where knowledge travels relatively free from the constraints traditionally imposed by geography and time, class and culture, penetrating locales that are psychologically and geographically distant with relative easiness. The shift from collective to social representations has been discussed extensively (Moscovici 1984, 1988, 1989; Jovchelovitch 2001, 2007), and sociological research (Beck 1992; Beck et al. 1994; Bauman 2001; Giddens 1991) has helped us to understand with greater clarity how traditional forms of knowledge are undermined by the reflexivity of modernity.

While this new reflexivity does not completely erase collective representations, it certainly institutes new modes of relating to and producing social knowledge. Everything becomes less taken-for-granted and more open to critical assessment. With the proliferation of mass mediated communication and the impact of globalization, local communities are confronted with different views and representations and alternative cultural practices that introduce novelty and unsettle the established geography of meanings that guide everyday life. The taken-for-

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grantedness and relatively consensual internal homogeneity of knowledge is corroded, and social groups and communities are called upon to justify what they want and the foundations of what they know.

This new regime of encounters between different knowledge systems transforms social arenas into terrains for testing and confronting cultural practices and the knowledge systems they carry, for experiencing contestation and conflict associated with the classes between self and other (Jovchelovitch 2001). It raises questions about the potential for communication and dialogue between radically different people and the nature of the obstacles that undermine such efforts. It brings to the forefront, issues of perspective and plurality, which are central to the formation of communities and the social psychology of public spheres. It reminds us of the dangers involved in power differentials between knowledge systems and puts into sharp focus the claims and tribulations of communities whose knowledge, culture and way of life do not command the status and recognition present in more powerful locales.

In this chapter I want to address these issues by considering how different representations and the knowledge systems they enable meet and communicate in public spheres. Drawing on dialogical approaches to research on community and development, I shall argue that while contemporary public spheres expand the scope of encounters between knowledge and open up new spheres of visibility and debate, they also point to the problem of how power differentials shape the status and recognition of different knowledge systems. This is important because we cannot just suppose that holders of different representations will meet and communicate in equal terms in the public sphere. There is a power differential at the level of production, distribution and reception of representations. This power differential involves the issue of resources, material, social and cognitive, that are available to different social groups. In this sense, it is not sufficient to say that meaning is traveling fast and being transformed as it travels. It is necessary to ask questions about the conditions under which it is transformed. These questions point to the dialogical and non-dialogical strategies that permeate relations between different cultural systems of everyday knowledge, and to how power is drawn to sustain and advance or undermine representational fields.

2 Representation, Communication and Context

Since Bakhtin's writings, we know that no human voice is a single voice and since Vygotsky and Freud we know that the human mind is equally polyphonic. We constitute ourselves as thinking and speaking beings through processes of communication, where a multitude of interlocutors establish, from the very beginning, the field where we engage in becoming what we are. Our human make-up is not only made of DNA; it is also made of dialogue, for there is no possibility for our survival outside the communicative structures that link each one of us to our conspecifics. Recent research on human ontogenesis has convincingly linked the uniqueness of humans (*Homo sapiens*) vis à vis their closest relatives, the bonobos

(*Pan paniscus*), to the dialogical nature of shared intentionality and the ability to take into account the perspective of the other (Tomasello 1999; Tomasello et al. 2005). Such findings corroborate the classical insights of sociocultural approaches in psychology, which demonstrated in compelling ways the dialogical origins of mind and behavior. Vygotsky's general law of cultural development proposed that every function in the cultural development of the child appears twice and in two dimensions, "First, the social, then the psychological, first between people as an intermental category, then within the child as an intramental category" (Vygotsky 1997, p. 106).

Vygotsky's law applies equally to the ontogenesis and the sociogenesis of human knowledge. Whereas it is clear that communicative relations between self and other are foundational in the development of tool and symbol use in the human child, they are equally foundational in the production of representations in social fields. The centrality of communication in the production of meaning is essential to the theory of social representations and has been forcefully demonstrated theoretically and empirically. In her analysis of representational processes, Jodelet (1991) spells out the intrinsic relation between the symbolic aspect of representations and its communicative and referential functions. Her path-breaking study on social representations of madness constituted a major effort to demonstrate that in the genesis and dynamics of social representations we find the social and communicative processes that move knowledge away from a purely cognitive conceptualization of intra-mental properties. In the construction of social representations there appears the intersubjective and subjective dimensions that shape knowledge not only as an epistemic field about the reality of the world, but also as an expressive field related to "who knows and the perspective from which they know it" (Jodelet 1991, p. 10). Moscovici's original study on psychoanalysis was equally concerned with how social representations change in processes of communication. The second part of his book, which unfortunately tends to receive less attention than the first, tackles the analysis of the communicative genres typical of each one of the social milieus Moscovici studied. Linking the first and the second parts of the book is crucial to understand the overall project of social representations, for what the study makes clear is the centrality of communication in the production of representations and how different communicative genres produce different representational systems (Moscovici 1976).

These classical empirical studies have opened up a stream of research on social representations concerned with the psychodynamic and cultural dimensions of representations as well as with their use and dialogical functions in social life. Research on the environment (Gervais 1997), on the public sphere (Jovchelovitch 2000), on the development of gendered identities (Duveen 2001), on school exclusion (Howarth 2004), on food (Lahlou 1998), on AIDS (Campbell 2000; Joffe 1999) and on biotechnology (Bauer 2002; Bauer and Gaskell 2002; Wagner and Kronberger 2001), among other substantive social issues, has consistently demonstrated that the study of social representations goes far beyond the mapping of an epistemic field. In these studies it is clearly shown that the everyday

knowledge constructed by a diversity of communities is not only representing a set of social issues standing in the world outside and waiting to be known. It is rather the opposite. What these communities are constructing is a symbolic environment that is deeply intertwined with the sustenance of cultural identities and traditions, with rituals and practices that move projects and visions of the world forward and re-affirm the intricate connection between knowledge, affection and communicative experience.

In this type of research, representations are studied as social psychological forms produced by, and at the same time producers of, person, community and culture (Jovchelovitch 2007). It is a conceptualization that puts the study of representation in a clear dialogical paradigm and leaves behind the monological view of representation as the product of a self-enclosed mind seeking to copy the world. This program follows Moscovici's early call for the study of the symbolic function of representations and his vision of social psychology as an anthropology of everyday life (Moscovici 2000). It is the fact that representations seek to represent symbolically rather than to copy something outside themselves that has characterized this tradition of research from its inception (Moscovici 1976). Bringing the symbolic back to the study of representations has allowed a new understanding about the psychic and social properties of representations: the realization that they are polyvalent structures, at once psychological, social, historical and cultural (Jovchelovitch 2007). It has also allowed language and communicative processes to take a central role in the study of social representations (Marková 2003).

Thus in the production and use of social representations in larger social fields, we can see the dialogical triads that make them not only symbolic constructions about the reality of the world, but also signifying structures that express self, other and the relations between them. Communicative action shapes representational fields and the social knowledge they enable and at the time entangles them in a context and a way of life. Through interaction and communication, social actors produce a system of knowledge that enables both the clarification and interpretation of life practices and a reassuring vision of the world, related to, and verified by the experience of life each day. To know something is not just the cognitive description of a state of affairs in the world but at the same time a meaningful relation with the object of knowledge, the statement of social identities and of social positionings. All knowledge is shaped by, and expressive of, a communicative context.

Now understanding the diversity and expressiveness of knowledge through the manifold dialogues that bring it into life raises questions related to the nature of these dialogues and how, as social practices, they are influenced by different levels of power and recognition in social fields. Taking the communicative seriously means to ask how unequal interlocutors meet and communicate in the public sphere, put forward and sustain the representations linked to their communities, ways of life and visions of the world. How does the knowledge of experts meet the knowledge of lay communities? How do technocrats working for international agencies negotiate their expertise with the traditional knowledge held by

local communities in developing contexts? How do doctors and patients meet and communicate? There are obvious asymmetries in the recognition granted to, and in the power held by, these different ways of knowing. Thus, while communication shapes all representations and entangles them in a way of life, not all representations meet in communicative terms in the public sphere. Some are recognized and given legitimacy as knowledge and others are represented as “non-knowledge”. This directs the analysis to the consideration of how the power commanded by different forms of knowing influences the way in which knowledge is communicated, establishes its veracity and constructs its authority in social fields. This is the problem I address next.

3 On Power and Recognition

In the foregoing I have suggested that while communication and dialogue are foundational in the dynamics of knowledge production and introduce diversity in styles of knowing, it is also clear that not all relations in social life are communicative in nature and involve the practice of dialogue.¹ Some representational fields simply fail to be recognized and suffer processes of segregation, exclusion, and even destruction in social fields. This, as I have suggested elsewhere (Jovchevitch 2007), cannot be explained by looking at representations themselves but involves considering processes of legitimation of different forms of knowledge. There is nothing intrinsic to a representational system that makes it devalued and dominated in social life; the real issue at stake is how different representational systems fulfill the requirements to be recognized and granted legitimacy in social arenas. Legitimation relates to the positioning of knowers in the social fabric and the resources they hold, material and symbolic, to have their knowledge recognized. In other words, it is a process that relates to the power of different systems of knowing (Apffel-Marglin and Marglin 1990).

The problem of power is complex and has given rise to endless debates in the social sciences. As a concept it tends to be used loosely to refer to issues of domination and asymmetry in social fields. Here I want to follow the work of Arendt (1958) and Bourdieu (1994) on power and suggest a view that takes it beyond

¹ Here, it is important to distinguish between the ontological role of dialogue in the constitution of representations and knowledge and the analysis of communication and dialogue as empirical events in the social world. Ontologically dialogue opens the structure of representational fields and allows for diversity in knowledge. At the same time, communicative practices are social practices and as such dialogue develops under different conditions and is open to empirical observation. As an empirical event in the social world dialogue can be facilitated or hindered and is subject to conditions that extrapolate the intersubjective dimension to include issues of social positioning and asymmetry in power between interlocutors. Marková draws on dialogue at both levels. On the one hand she uses it to understand the formation of mind and representations (Marková 2003) and on the other hand she has studied how dialogue is realised as a social practice (Marková and Poppa 1991; Marková et al. 1995).

domination in social life (Jovchelovitch 1997). According to Arendt, power refers first and foremost to the human capacity for action. In the human act lies the vast and open field of possibilities that are encompassed by and potentially, but only potentially, realized by the act. In so far as we can initiate an act we are holders of power; by virtue of our actions we can produce effects and transform the worlds in which we live. This connection between power and *potentia* is still present in all Latin languages, where the word power is a verb, referring precisely to what is intrinsic to the act: “to be able to do”. In English the auxiliary “can” fulfils the same function as the verb power in the Latin languages, with the word “empowerment” being the closest one gets to the connection between power and the capacity to act. Seen through these lenses, power loses much of its negative meaning.

The reality of power, as Arendt has pointed out throughout her work, is the reality of human action as it is enacted in concert. Understanding that the power of the human act is by necessity socially realized leads Arendt to connect it to the public sphere, that realm where people, in action and speech, establish the system of recognitions that allows power to be actualized. It is in this sense that power refers to being capable of: To be able to produce an effect, to construct a reality, to institute a meaning. We need to note, however, that this power to produce, to construct or to institute is not intrinsic to agents; it arises by virtue of the recognition others grant to the actions of agents. My power to act is always limited by the recognition others confer on what I do (Farr and Rommetveit 1995).

Bourdieu corroborated this position when he considered the inability of words uttered by an unrecognized agent to produce an effect: if I am not recognized as a legitimate person I cannot profess my credo, and I certainly cannot try to preside over a marriage ceremony. I can know the words and I can perhaps utter them by heart, but they will be ineffectual and unable to realize the act for lack of recognition. With this argument Bourdieu put forward a theory of power that, in a similar vein to Arendt’s, rests on recognition and action. Words and symbols themselves derive their power from the system of recognitions that entangles meaning producers and speakers. Here we can see why power is a public affair and, disturbingly enough, why it always rests on a certain degree of complicity between people. The problem of power thus takes us back to the social psychology of self/other relations and to how interlocutors struggle with processes of recognition and perspective taking.

This original sense of power needs to be understood if we are to conceive of social relationships as phenomena broader in scope than sheer domination. Whenever a community acts and develops a certain way of knowing about itself and others, it is, by the same token, instituting itself as such, inviting a future for what it does and indeed, actualizing the power it holds to shape a way of life. Power here is joint action and shared knowledge and, at least in principle, every human group has access to it. However, while power is, in principle, accessible to all, its actualization is not. Power is unequally distributed in social life, and not

all communities hold the same power to act and to be recognized. Asymmetries in the power held by different social actors are integral to social life and impinge on how different systems of knowing meet and communicate in the public sphere. In fact, truly symmetrical power relations are rare and indeed very difficult to find in personal and social lives; for most of the time our human societies are made of imperfect relations where interlocutors meet under very different conditions marked by a number of psychological, social, economic and cultural asymmetries. And yet it is important to note that not all asymmetry involves coercion, abuse of power and domination.

Asymmetries in the power held by interlocutors can also lead to outcomes based on what Winnicott (1965) has called “holding”, a type of interaction where the vulnerability of one interlocutor leads the other to attend to her needs with care and devotion. The relative powerlessness of a partner in interaction can produce feelings of care, understanding and recognition; the paradigmatic case here is the mother-infant relationship. Other examples include the pupil and teacher relationship, all loving and caring relations between adults and children and the therapeutic attitude. These interactions share, at least ideally, the potential for communication and dialogue that derives from the recognition of the vulnerability and needs of the other and a desire to care for the other.

The examples above show that different practices and solutions can be called upon to resolve asymmetries in power. Asymmetry does not necessarily lead to domination, although domination is one of the possible outcomes of asymmetrical relations. The practice of dialogue and effective communication is also potentially there and indeed there are many situations in which these practices are used to generate empowerment and emancipation (Apffel-Marglin and Marglin 1994). Sometimes interlocutors deal with asymmetry trying to understand the other, facilitating the development of the other and helping the other to achieve goals and aspirations through mutual understanding and co-operation. It is at this point that we need to consider dialogical and non-dialogical practices to resolve the asymmetries in power that permeate the encounter between different knowledges. Dialogical encounters, although difficult, are possible and involve an effort to take into account the perspective of the other and recognize it as legitimate. In this encounter interlocutors struggle to take each other into account and reach a mutual understanding of the position, the perspective and the potential contribution each can bring to the situation at hand. Non-dialogical encounters are characterized by the lack of mutual recognition and the domination this makes possible – the perspective expressed in one system of knowledge is denied and recognition remains locked in the power of one knowledge system over another. In the next pages I address these different practices through the consideration of dialogical and non-dialogical encounters between knowledges. Drawing on Freire’s theory of dialogue and Habermas’ theory of communicative action, my intention is to show that dialogue and non-dialogue are central to the realization of power in representational fields, either as empowerment and enabling of action, or as domination, displacement and exclusion of action.

4 Dialogue and Non-dialogue in Representation Fields

Is there a chance for holders of different knowledge to meet and to communicate in contemporary communities? Can people who are very different from each other in terms of cultural, ethnic and social background establish a dialogue about issues of common concern and together construct a joint account about what is happening and what needs to be done? Can multicultural work, or should we reconcile ourselves with the impossibility of dialogue and communication between radically different worldviews (Needham 1972; Gutmann 1994)? Are the claims of culture uniting us in a renewed understanding of our common humanity or are we becoming irredeemably distant, condemned to the realization that once outside our own cultures we cannot adjust and change our beliefs and representations? Whenever we consider meaning in action these very practical questions present themselves – we experience them in a variety of contexts that range from schools, hospitals and institutions of various kinds to conditions of multiculturalism within and across communities.

I define a knowledge encounter as “the meeting between two or more representational systems expressing different subjective, intersubjective and objective worlds” (Jovchelovitch 2007, p. 129). The triple expressiveness of knowledge systems implies that when different knowledges meet what is at stake is more than the description of objective epistemic statements, but also ways of life, identities and cultural traditions. Dialogue and non-dialogue in the knowledge encounter refers to how interlocutors consider and take into account, or dismiss, try to displace and exclude the alternative subjective, intersubjective and objective worlds they meet. To do so, the key issue is the recognition or denial of the legitimacy of the knowledge of others and how meaning is put into action. This, as Habermas (1989, 1991) and Freire (1970, 1973a, b) have pointed out, can be communicative (dialogical) or strategic (non-dialogical), can involve communication (dialogical) or extension (non-dialogical). I shall expand on this concepts taking as an example Freire’s consideration of practices of extension and communication in rural community development.

Considering the practice of rural development and the encounter between extension agents and rural communities, Freire tackled directly the problem of communication between holders of different knowledges. In this work, Freire drew from his literacy method to offer a theoretical program that went far beyond the rural field; he provided both a general critique of non-reciprocal relations and a dialogical model for all encounters between expert and lay knowledge. Starting from the analysis of the semantic field of the word “extension,” Freire shows that in the very meaning of the word we find the idea of transferring from one to the other, of extending one’s knowledge towards other people and regions. Extension reveals, in a nutshell, all that is problematic and non-dialogical in the encounter between the agronomist and the peasant: it is the unilateral attempt to substitute one knowledge for another, as if knowledge could be substituted monologically without simultaneously violating personal, social and cultural worlds.

In the analysis of extension, Freire produced a powerful critique of what constitutes anti-dialogue and in particular of one of its characteristics: cultural invasion. His analysis of cultural invasion is akin to Habermas' concept of strategic action as opposed to communicative action: the other is invaded by self, who denies and silences his words by persuading, by dominating, by using propaganda and other similar instruments. Communicative action for Habermas is action directed towards reaching understanding and it presupposes a commitment of interlocutors to take into account the perspective of the other and treat it as a legitimate position. The desire behind all communicative action is to establish mutual understanding, is to abstract and bracket out asymmetries in the power and status of interlocutors and meet the other in actively constructed equal terms. Dialogue and communicative action propose exchange rather than transference of knowledge. The transference of knowledge, instead of communication between knowledges, ends up undermining the construction of knowledge itself, for it presupposes depositing content in a passive recipient whose task is to unreflectively introject what is given. Freire called the attempt to transfer, to extend knowledge a cultural invasion. Cultural invasion is anti-dialogical because it considers the perspective of the other empty consciousness or wrong consciousness, usually labeled "ignorance", but never knowledge. It does not see the other as an interlocutor with a legitimate perspective of his own, but someone to be convinced and persuaded of the project self is trying to further. The non-dialogical encounter brings to the fore the ideological function of representations and exemplifies well how asymmetries in the intersubjective context lead to the domination of one form of knowing by another.

Freire's discussion of extension is informative to other contexts where issues of knowledge transfer and communication are at stake. Indeed this is the core concern found in the social and cultural psychology of representations where understanding how knowledge systems travel and are appropriated by different social groups is paramount (Wagner and Hayes 2005). From the classical studies on the popularization of science, to the development of paradigms for health campaigns and the mapping of health beliefs, to the more recent studies on how new technologies have entered the public's imagination, the underlying problem remains what happens to knowledge as it is communicated and moves from one community to another, to one institutional context to another. Communicative paradigms alert us to the dangers involved in non-dialogical encounters and the attempt to "transfer" knowledge to communities seen in a state of ignorance, distortion or need; by failing to recognize and by denying legitimacy to the knowledge of others, even if perceived as bizarre and inadequate by the observer, non-dialogue provokes short-term solutions that do not work in the long run and prevents the expansion in the boundaries of all knowledges involved.

When Freire (1970) devised the literacy method for teaching deprived communities in Brazil to read and write, he took into consideration precisely those representations that belong to a group's way of life and identity. He deeply understood the issue of different systems of social knowledge, and how the clashes between them had led to the exclusion of a great number of people from

formal education. To revert the exclusionary practices that were keeping huge populations away from schooling, a new model of communication was needed. This new communication should engage with people who had different ways of communicating between themselves, who produced different social knowledges, and did not have the resources to establish the legitimacy of their knowledge in a larger arena. Via this new communication, which proved to be extremely effective in reducing illiteracy rates among adult populations, various representational fields were transformed: representations of excluded communities, representations of scientific knowledge, representations of one's own role and identity, and even representations of political projects. The pedagogy of Freire was informed precisely by the recognition of the legitimacy of the cultural system of knowledge of communities excluded from formal education. It was because this pedagogy could take the other into account and allow itself to be penetrated by the knowledge coming from the other, that the differences could be worked out and negotiated. The outcome was the development of literacy among communities that, far from having an intrinsic inability to read and write, were eager to do so, and did, when the power of what they knew was recognized as legitimate and used as a resource to empower them further. Such an example is not unique, and recent research on empowerment draws extensively on local knowledge to construct community resources (Rappaport 1995, 1987).

In Freire's discussion of the encounter between educator and educatee we find a detailed theoretical and practical corpus about the empowering potentials of dialogical practices. His point of departure is the recognition that learning can only take place if all interlocutors are prepared to learn and to recognize that everyone involved starts with knowledge of some kind. Against the passive – "bench-sitting" – conception of education that saw the pedagogical act as a linear transfer of information from the one who knows to the one who does not know, Freire proposed that a true pedagogy must start by the recognition of the knowledge of the one who apparently "does not know" and develop into a dialogical attitude in which both educator and educatee learn and change through communicative action. In this sense, Freire's pedagogy is not only conceptual but also normative and procedural, that is, it requires a set of practices that enact the normative conceptualization it develops about knowledge, its production and transmission.

Understanding that knowledge systems are expressive of cultural codes, identities, practices and resources lies at the heart of the dialogical encounter, for it is this understanding that brings about the ethical imperative of recognizing the other and engaging in a dialogical encounter where perspectives can be understood, negotiated and eventually transformed. The combined recognition of diversity, expressiveness and limitations in all knowledge constitute the core conditions for communication between different knowledge systems (Jovchelovitch 2007). Conscientization and empowerment, that is, the gradual awakening to the full determinants of one's psychological and social circumstances comes out of the practice of communication. Underlying all genuine communication is the implicit commitment to the notion of equality, to the bracketing out of dif-

ferences and to the adoption of procedures that promote and require dialogue and reciprocity. These are the central lessons to be extracted from the dialogical perspectives of Freire's and Habermas' work, articulated both in theoretical and practical dimensions.

5 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have argued that all knowledge involves communication and expresses at once subjective, intersubjective and objective worlds. Understanding that all knowledge is shaped by, and expressive of, a communicative context raises questions related to the nature of the dialogues that construct knowledge and how, as social practices, they are influenced by different levels of power and recognition in social fields. Following the work of Arendt and Bourdieu I have suggested a view that takes the concept of power beyond domination in social life and links it to the human capacity for action and processes of recognition. In the human act lies human power and in processes of recognition lies its realization. Situating power in a dialogical paradigm makes clear that asymmetries in power between interlocutors can be resolved through different social practices and lead to different outcomes. Domination is only one of such outcomes that also include empowerment and emancipation.

I have used this conceptual model to address the dialogical and non-dialogical potentials embedded in the growing regime of knowledge encounters that permeates contemporary public spheres. New knowledge interfaces typical of de-traditional, global societies present new questions related to how asymmetries in the recognition granted to different systems of knowledge shape how some knowledges are devalued and stigmatized. Yet, these very questions also point to the dialogical potentials that can expand knowledge and empower communities and social groups.

Freire's theory of communication between holders of different knowledges points to the need and to the importance of constructing participatory dialogues where all interlocutors are recognized as legitimate contributors to the process. Embedded in this dialogue is the view that different knowledges are resources to be transformed and enriched through processes of communication, because no single knowledge is ever produced without dialogue in the first place. The belief in the absoluteness of one's knowledge is in fact a defense that rigidifies and paralyzes the very development of knowledge, scientific or otherwise. It is out of critical dialogical encounters between technical knowledge and everyday knowledge that new knowledge can develop. The growth of scientific knowledge shows that it cannot preclude the world of common sense and common wisdom. Thus while Freire did not idealize common sense and everyday knowledge, he decidedly pointed to the resources they contained and the lifeworlds they expressed, a recognition that was to prove crucial in overcoming domination and constructing a critical encounter where all stakeholders can gain and develop knowledge.

It is clear, however, that establishing dialogues within and across communities is not an easy task and requires effort and determination for all of those who are involved in the process. Behind this effort is the view that, notwithstanding the difficulties, communication between self and other is the path for the development of personal, social and material resources. While non-dialogue is widespread and a permanent possibility, the dialogical view offers a working program for intervention and inspires a growing network of global practice to project the normative and practical necessity of dialogue into the field. It also shows that power is an open concept and as a living social practice can be realized as either empowerment or domination.

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2

Discourse and Representation in the Construction of Witchcraft*

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1 Introduction

Little is known from social psychological research about the dynamics and workings of real everyday discourse. This situation is comprehensible given the fact that real-world discursive processes cannot easily be observed in their entirety without introducing serious modifications of these processes through the mere presence of the observer or recording device. Besides a few more artificial than natural discursive events including laboratory observations that have been analyzed in discourse oriented research, there is little reliable material about socially relevant phenomena available for such analysis. This fact is very unfortunate for all walks of social and societal psychology that are dedicated to investigating real-world social life.

In the present paper, we replace real-world everyday discourse not by laboratory or other artificial settings, but by a literary model. Literature is being created to represent certain relevant aspects of everyday life and events in text. Oscar Wilde asserted that life imitates art and he is probably right with his claim. Be that as it may, good fiction is certainly capable of capturing the essence of real life in a way that provides a veridical model of social processes. An analysis of such texts is not straight-forward empirical, because the target of the study, social life, does not directly constitute our “data base.” Our “data base” is the literary representation of social life as rendered and elaborated by artists. Neither is our study an analysis of literary texts in the sense of a psychology of literature. We are not interested in the artist’s thoughts and the construction of plots, but take the text as a *model* of real life (cf. Contarello, 2007).

In this study we draw attention to the mutual interdependence of discursive events and behaviors, social representations and institutional objectification. We

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think that social representation research usually captures social representations either as distributed individual knowledge or at the institutionalized level of discourse where the representation already exists in a reified version. Beyond these two modes of existence, representations also exist as dynamic units in the communicative pattern of an unfolding discourse. These are difficult to target and therefore the dynamics of the genesis of representations easily escapes social science research.

1.1 Discourse and Representing

Far from a more traditional understanding as cognitive units in individual minds, Moscovici conceives of a social representation as the collective elaboration “of a social object by the community for the purpose of behaving and communicating” (Moscovici 1973). In this interpretation “subject and object are not regarded as functionally separate. An object is located in a context of activity since it is what it is because it is in part regarded by the person or the group as an extension of their behaviour” (Moscovici 1973, p. xi). Taking this characterization seriously makes a social representation a collective phenomenon pertaining to a community, which is co-constructed by individuals in their daily talk and action. Therefore, instead of locating representations within minds, it is more adequate to conceptualize them across minds. In this sense, a social representation is the ensemble of thoughts and feelings being expressed in verbal and overt behavior of actors which constitutes an object for a social group (Wagner et al. 1999).

As attractive as this interpretation of social representations might be, it has, to our knowledge, rarely if ever been applied in a real-world setting. Researching representations this way would mean to observe extended real-life events and extracting the gist of these events to infer the content of the representation being enacted by the social actors through their situated discourse and other activity. This would also allow clarification of the theoretical point that “if one reduces social representations from a collective phenomenon to a distributed property of individuals, the researcher’s focus of interest may come to disregard the close interrelationship between representations and actions . . . at the social level.” (Wagner 1994, p. 261).

Discourse in our understanding is any talking or writing done in a social situation; it is social action (van Dijk 1997). We also add any overt – bodily – action in a social setting, which by virtue of its semiotic powers conveys meaning to other social actors. Through the communicative function and/or consequences of any such discourse people sharing a social setting construct a particular reality that is true for the actors at a given time and place.

Though each individual in a social setting is subjectively free to express whatever he or she desires, it is a fact that each discursive move by one actor delimits the available moves by the other actors. Therefore, in his or her expression each actor is bounded by the presence of others and by their precedent moves. The grammar or content-full structure that unfolds in this sequence of discursive moves related to an issue can easily be seen to be equivalent to a social representation.

The discursive unfolding of representations is incomplete as long as they are not being objectified in social institutions. Indeed, therefore, many representations entail an institutionalized outcome, be it in the form of officially recognized organizations, such as courts of justice, the parliament or schools, or of behaviors, which are informally recognized by the wider majority of actors as designating a social object. At this point representations are more reified than consensual.

1.2 *The Text*

We are dealing with Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* which in German is called *Hexenjagd* (Witch hunt) and in Spanish *Las Brujas de Salem* (The Witches of Salem). The original English title refers to a crucible, (a situation where concentrated forces interact to cause change) of the principal character, Proctor, who faces a choice between truth and a wrong. In the end, rather than lie and perpetuate the distorted reality by stating that he saw a woman keeping company with the devil, he tears up a false confession and allows himself to be executed.

For our present purpose, however, we are more interested in the collective events unfolding during the play and not in the personal reactions of a single character. Therefore, the titles of the translations capture the essence of our task better than the original title. As mentioned before, we treat this text as a model of collective events, a witch hunt, which illustrates exceptionally well the intertwined processes of discursive activity in a group, the related processes of social representing, and the steps toward institutionalization of a representation. The fact that the events are located far in the past does not devalue it for our purpose.

The events take place in the year 1692 in the small village of Salem, Massachusetts. In the course of playful ritual activity initiated by Tituba, a Jamaican slave, together with a few young women and girls, some of the girls faint and fall into a trance-like condition due to excitement and fear. In this condition they are in a state of sleep and do not react to attempts to wake them up. This unusual behavior incites speculations about devil's play and witchcraft among the villagers. Although, after a while, the afflicted girls return to consciousness and health, the speculations lead to an official investigation. In two steps, religious institutions are called upon which progressively turn the initially insignificant events into a serious exchange of accusations and counter-accusations of collaboration with the devil, resulting in the execution of 22 inhabitants of Salem.

2 From Consensual to Reified Discourse to Institutions

At the beginning, the events and related discourses are taking place in the village among the inhabitants, including Reverend Samuel Parris. This setting comes close to Moscovici's (1984) conception of consensual space. Under these conditions, the first rumors of devil's and witches' craft are met with incredulity by the

majority and the girls' stupor and unconsciousness is seen as a natural condition accessible to medical treatment, as in Reverend Parris' inquiry about the doctor's diagnosis:

PARRIS: What does the doctor say, child?

SUSANNA: He bid me come and tell you, Reverend sir, that he cannot discover no medicine for it in his books.

PARRIS: Then he must search on.

(Miller 1990, p. 19)

People's conversations are mixed, however, in the sense that many people outspokenly reject the idea of unnatural causes while others, including the doctor, consider it a possibility. At this stage, one can easily imagine that after the recovery of the afflicted girls, further conversation would return to business as usual in the community. The term "consensual discourse", hence, does not mean agreement but a pattern of conversations where consent and dissent are handled flexibly and the associated beliefs still retain some plasticity to render community life functioning.

It happens, however, that Reverend Parris calls an assembly of the villagers in the church in an attempt to defend himself against accusations of irregularities in his church. In a way, Parris' move is political with clear power interests. This assembly marks the beginning of the first level of institutionalization, the invitation to Reverend Hale, who is an acknowledged specialist in exorcism, to investigate the events, prove them natural and, hence, relieve Parris from the charges. Note that, at this stage, the charge of witchcraft is in the disguise of a political move by the rich Thomas Putnam directed against the Reverend:

PUTNAM: (as though for further details) They say you've sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly?

PARRIS: (with dwindling conviction now) A precaution only. He has much experience in all demonic arts, and I . . .

MRS. PUTNAM: He has indeed; and found a witch in Beverly last year, and let you remember that.

PARRIS: Now, Goody Ann, they only thought that were a witch, and I am certain there be no element of witchcraft here.

PUTNAM: No witchcraft! Now look you, Mr. Parris

PARRIS: Thomas, Thomas, I pray you, leap not to witchcraft. I know that you – you least of all, Thomas, would ever wish so disastrous a charge laid upon me. We cannot leap to witchcraft. They will howl me out of Salem for such corruption in my house.

(Miller 1990, p. 25f)

At this first level of institutionalization, Hale, the exorcist, applies rules and practices according to his profession and the institutionalized wisdom of his books. In replacing common-sense, thinking and argument now bear the mark of law and books and acquire a different character that sets this stage sharply off the previous consensual pattern of discourse:

PARRIS: (hushed) What book is that?

(. . .)

HALE: (with a tasty love of intellectual pursuit) Here is all the invisible world, caught, defined, and calculated. In these books the Devil stands stripped of all his brute disguises. Here are all your familiar spirits – your incubi and succubi; your witches that go by land, by air, and by sea; your wizards of the night and of the day. Have no fear now – we shall find him out if he has come among us, and I mean to crush him utterly if he has shown his face!

(Miller 1990, p. 63f)

The above expressed authority of Hale's profession and scriptures, with the help of others' accusations makes the slave Tituba fall victim to the procedures when she is identified as the initiator of the girls' rituals and dances in the woods. As a result of being beaten, she alludes to various potential sources of witchcraft. This procedure has effects upon the Salem community and Hale summons several formerly critical people, such as Proctor, to question them in an institutional setting. The discourse in the village ever so slowly turns from informal and consensual to expressing tactical interests in the attempt to deflect accusations of witchcraft from oneself. Nobody can consider him or herself safe from being targeted in this new pattern of communal talk.

The second level of institutionalization is determined by the arrival and setting up of a court of justice headed by vice-governor Danforth. This court proceeds in a highly formal way, questioning, at the end, a large number of people who are being accused by others in a mode that soon avalanches. More and more of the villagers are being incarcerated and executed as the investigation proceeds. In its proceedings, the court even convicts benefactors and highly esteemed members of the community such as sober-minded Rebecca Nurse.

This stage of institutionalization is dominated by a discourse of defense and accusations guided by the villagers' will to survive and, if possible, also to afflict harm to their real and imagined enemies for personal profit as, for example, the generations old conflict of the Putnam clan with their neighbors:

DANFORTH: Mr. Putnam, I have here an accusation by Mr. Corey against you. He states that you coldly prompted your daughter to cry witchery upon George Jacobs that is now in jail.

PUTNAM: It is a lie.

DANFORTH: (turning to Giles) Mr. Putnam states your charge is a lie. What say you to that?

GILES: (furious, his fists clenched) A fart on Thomas Putnam, that is what I say to that!

DANFORTH: What proof do you submit for your charge, Sir?

GILES: My proof is there! (Pointing to the paper.) If Jacobs hangs for a witch he forfeit up his property that's law! And there is none but Putnam with the coin to buy so great a piece. This man is killing his neighbors for their land!

(Miller 1990, p. 129)

Besides, also highly miraculous events that would before have been met by incredulity by the villagers, suddenly appear credible, taken for granted and outspoken in everyday conversations without qualms. Arthur Miller notes that the witch-hunt provided an overdue opportunity to cleanse one's soul from past

wrong-doings through public confession, using the victims as the source of blame. “It suddenly became possible – and patriotic and holy – for a man to say that Martha Corey had come into his bedroom at night, and that, while his wife was sleeping at his side, Martha laid herself down on his chest and “nearly suffocated him”. Of course it was her spirit only, but his satisfaction at confessing himself was no lighter than if it had been Martha herself. One could not ordinarily speak such things in public.” (Miller 1990, p. 16)

Within the institutional frame of a witch-hunt, accusations and revenge that were deemed inappropriate and outspokenly immoral in a consensual discourse, suddenly became justified and patriotic. Institutional morality defeats common-sense through its reified character that rests on a system of verification and a logic of its own that deputy Governor Danforth does not hesitate to explicate:

DANFORTH: Mr. Hale, believe me; for a man of such terrible learning you are most bewildered. I hope you will forgive me. I have been thirty-two year at the bar, Sir, and I should be confounded were I called upon to defend these people. Let you consider, now – (To Proctor and the others.) and I bid you all do likewise. In an ordinary crime, how does one defend the accused? One calls up witnesses to prove his innocence. But witchcraft is ipso facto, on its face and by its nature, an invisible crime, is it not? Therefore, who may possibly be witness to it? The witch and the victim. None other. Now we cannot hope the witch will accuse herself; granted? Therefore, we must rely upon her victims and they do testify, the children certainly do testify. As for the witches, none will deny that we are most eager for all their confessions. Therefore, what is left for a lawyer to bring out? I think I have made my point. Have I not?

HALE: But this child claims the girls are not truthful, and if they are not –

DANFORTH: That is precisely what I am about to consider, sir. What more may you ask of me? Unless you doubt my probity?

HALE: (defeated) I surely do not, Sir. Let you consider it, then.

(Miller 1990, p. 133f)

Overall, the unfolding of the institutional context leads to reified procedures and rigid discursive practices. Beliefs in witchcraft and the devil’s activities become central contents of conversations. It is here, in the institutionalized settings and in the related talk, that one can most easily identify a representation of witchcraft, which would easily have escaped the attention of a researcher in the initial, consensual, village life.

3 The Role of Interest and Motivated Talk in the Construction of Social Facts

The development of the witch hunt through the two stages of institutionalization towards the brute facts of execution is independent of the villagers’ confidence in witchcraft beliefs. At least in the beginning, doubts dominate the talk among the villagers. It is only later that witchcraft accusations are being used as an

instrument in many a person's attempts to further his or her standing within the community. Accusations are motivated by jealousy, greed, quarrels about land boundaries, antipathy and other interpersonal arguments.

The construction of brute social facts proceeds relatively independent of individuals' primary motivations. The fabric of collective events in its totality drives the story irrespective of individuals, particularly if institutions are being set up to deal with a hitherto unproblematic condition. Of course, some individuals have more influence upon the trajectory of the events than the majority of people. In the present case, Reverend Parris disposed of the necessary power to initiate institutionalization even if later the events escaped his control.

At the present point we need to distinguish between acting and doing. An intentional act is one of which "its perpetrator knows, or believes, will have some quality or outcome and where such knowledge is utilized . . . to achieve this quality or outcome." (Giddens 1984, p. 10). Doing lacks the explicit intentional quality. It is conventional, but not necessarily mechanical or automatized behavior.

The literary model of Arthur Miller's text illustrates the distinction between acting and doing particularly well. Every actor follows his or her interests as well as possible and as far as the institutional frame allows. Being accused creates defense, denial and counter-accusation in a series of motivated actions and talk as convincingly shown by discursive psychology research (Edwards and Potter 1992). By and through these personally well-reasoned actions the villagers unwittingly confirm the social object and social representation of witchcraft and justify its material consequences of incarceration and execution. None of them, to be sure, intended these consequences that autonomously unfolded as a result of their doings. From the villagers' perspective in the play, they acted in trying to further their personal cause contingent upon the situation. From the collective perspective, they were doing things, which coalesced and resulted in the unintended construction of witchcraft. Individually well-motivated action creates the web of interdependence that, from a collective perspective, appears as a series of concerted doings converging on the social object of witchcraft.

Hence, social actors do *not* engage in their social interactions with others and with the "somethings" in their world because they want or intend to construct an object. It clearly does not make sense to say that a group or an individual intends to construct the object of witchcraft in its local world. Social construction is an unintended process notwithstanding rare cases where power holders may succeed in an attempt to alter or introduce a social object that serves their agenda. Constructing a socially significant object is what a group or its members do and not what they intend to do according to reason; construction happens, it is an event.

A constructive event is an event in the course of which a something in the world is named, equipped with attributes and values, and integrated into a socially meaningful world. It becomes a social object only within the group's system of

common-sense in the course of the interactions in which actors engage (Wagner 1998).

4 Representations as Dynamic Units in Discourse and Interaction

4.1 *Dynamic Units*

When a researcher investigates a social representation, such as witchcraft, the usual way to define or characterize it is to conduct interviews with people who can be expected to share the representation. In the interview the respondents reply to questions such as “What comes to mind when you think of witchcraft?” and their response, after analysis and given that some aspects of the responses are shared among respondents, is interpreted as a representation of witchcraft. This procedure provides a static view of a social representation as a locally integrated unit that is a distributed property of a set of respondents (Harré 1984). We think that this research procedure reveals the shadow of a representation at best, if it is not accompanied by observation of a situated social interaction over time (Harré 1995; see also Sugiman, 2007, for a strong emphasis on meaning emerging from interaction).

Social representations in action can be modeled as dynamic units of volatile interactions, a concept that can be usefully applied in various domains. Traditional units of analysis, such as traditional representations, are conceived of as rigid, locally integrated units with clear boundaries, whose definition is based on properties inherent to the unit per se. Dynamic units may be fuzzy and they are “based on observing a *stable pattern of correlation* across the elements composing the unit;” its definition “is *inseparable* from the *context of observation*: under different set-ups different units may be defined, each reflecting a different pattern of correlation.” Given this, “it is *meaningless* to define the unit unless a specific context is given.” Dynamic units possess emergent properties, “which are not present in the substrate from which the unit is formed.” In its relationship with the environment, the “unit operates as a *basic-level* structure, on par with other basic units” and its interaction with the environment reflects “the *system’s properties as a whole* and not the properties of the individual constituents.” (Mandelblit and Zachar 1998, p. 230; emphasis in the original). All these characteristics can be found in the processes depicted in our literary model of social reality.

The constituents of representations as dynamic units are the individual villagers’ holding ideas and beliefs about witchcraft and devil’s evil play anterior to the events so vividly depicted in Miller’s play. The beliefs are acquired in socialization, education and religious indoctrination, but they are only a prerequisite for social objects such as witchcraft to come into being in social life. Even in their sum, these ideas just constitute the fertile ground out of which discursive objects grow through social interaction in conflict; they are not the social objects themselves that later attain material force in institutions.

4.2 *Stable Patterns of Correlation, Inseparable from Their Context*

As a dynamic unit on the collective level, social representations become real and tangible as social objects that are enacted in situated talk and action among subjects with individual interests and motivations that negotiate the state of an affair in a conflict. Putnam's politically inspired accusation of witchcraft against Reverend Parris at the beginning triggered Parris' attempt to defend himself by calling for a meeting and inviting the exorcist Hale to investigate the charge. Further developments toward and during the setting-up of the formal court were characterized by gossip, accusations and counter-accusations by the villagers, each motivated by the subjects' good reasons, whether they were an attempt to maximize one's personal profit under the given conditions or the mere desire to survive. They were tacitly informed actors with ideas and beliefs about witchcraft, but it is only in their entirety, where each subject engaged in his or her individually motivated actions, that they collectively enacted the social object and institution of witchcraft and witch-hunt.

The entirety of interactions and formal and informal talk that unfolded during these events shows a pattern of correlation across the actors. This pattern attained its meaning and is inseparable from the particular institutional context within which it was performed. The emergent meaning was the existence of witchcraft in Salem at this particular point in time, a fact that was neither present in the consensual discourse before nor in the substrate of individuals composing the village of Salem. The representation and social object of witchcraft emerged as a dynamic unit in the visible pattern of correlated behaviors across actors (see Verheggen and Baerveldt 2007), for a critical discussion and extension of this conceptualization).

4.3 *Emergent Properties not Present in the Individual Constituents*

Ironically, even if some villagers doubted the existence of witchcraft and rejected the very idea at the beginning of the play, their conversations carried the mark of the representation. Both, affirming and negating the existence of an issue, presupposes a shared understanding of it. Through their talk the villagers unwittingly carried the story to its second, institutionalized, stage which condensed the dynamic unit "witchcraft" to its reified institutional representation and its entailments. The entailments emerged autonomously and are constitutive of formal institutions. In our present example the resulting fear and terror of prosecution and execution was certainly not part of the villagers' thinking about witchcraft before the court had been set up.

Arthur Miller's play is a model illustration of three modes social representations take in real life. *First*, there is the tacit background knowledge of social actors or the distributed set of ideas and beliefs in certain topics. *Second*, on the collective level, there is the pattern of talk and interactions that emerges as a

dynamic unit across individual actions in conflict. This can be called the social representation in vivo. *Third*, there is the institutional context with its limited degrees of freedom for the actors involved in its workings and with its paraphernalia of authority. This is the reified version of a social representation that carries the weight of history and received formal power. The institutionalized version of representations is hard to dismantle once it exists and it is equally hard to resist its force in patterning behavior. It can be seen as a catalyst for individuals to produce the desired behavior that in its turn confirms the institution's *raison d'être*.

A prime example of the institutionalized version of representations is national historiography and historical group memory (Laszlo and Ehmann 2002). Reified through their being embedded in school curricula, local historical knowledge sets tight limits on the interpretation of past and present events: It crucially shapes national identity and serves as a justification for contemporary political decisions.

In his autobiography, Miller (1987) alludes to his play being a metaphor for the persecution of suspected Communists in the 1950s in the USA. Hence, despite the apparently remote location of the events and of the beliefs in witchcraft and devils depicted in the play, it is still a valid model for structural homologs in modern times. A superficial reading of the work might lead one to suspect that the play is too exaggerated – or even too distorting – to serve as a model for our world as it appears nowadays. However, it may be exactly the distortion that makes similar processes in modern reality recognizable or, as a German philosopher remarked, it is sometimes necessary to distort reality in order to make it recognizable (“Verzerrung der Wirklichkeit bis zu ihrer Kenntlichkeit”).

We do not need to think of similarly distorted contemporary realities occurring in so-called fundamentalist circles and countries, be they Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu or pertaining to any other religion. In Europe and the Western world, nowadays, we observe xenophobia, racism, nationalism and any other prejudice prevalent in certain groups or milieus and with tragic consequences for the victims who carry the same marks as the events depicted in *The Crucible*. We dare to say that these consequences are also unintended and autonomously emerge as institutionalized facts. Everyday life in modern times is soaked with discursive processes of a like nature, which, in the majority, are neither negative nor socially disruptive. There is a vast field for societal psychological research out there that does not only constitute a legitimate object of analysis, but that might also invite the researchers' intervention to a certain degree (Sugiman 1999).

5 Conclusion

The web of discourse is the fabric from which social facts are construed. Just like any web, this is a highly non-linear and recursive process. The discursive acts, though each one is perpetrated with an individual goal, entail social facts as an unintended consequence. In their personal talk, individuals construe their per-

sonal goal through rhetorical means, thereby defining situations, social positions and relationships (Gergen 1994).

The social construction of facts proceeds through institutionalization, both, formal and informal. The particular form an institutionalized fact takes, is far from foreseeable even by powerful actors, as shown by Reverend Parris' failure to bring the events to a good end. Indeed, power itself can be seen as construed through a successful attempt to align intentions and emerging facts. If this attempt is unsuccessful and alignment of intentions and facts cannot be established by rhetorical means, i.e., if other people do not accept that a person's intentions are consumed by the emerging facts, assumed power of an actor will fade. This understanding of power does not rely on defining power as a static characteristic of relationships between persons.

Social representations can be interpreted as the structures underlying social discourse, although not all individual participants need share in the representation. Even half-hearted belief and outright disbelief plays a role in the construction of the facts. Representations are "dynamic units" of discursive events rather than static entities in individual minds or collective interactions.

For social representations to become clearly visible to the researcher, institutionalization is a prerequisite. That is, representations are best studied under "emergency conditions" of which institutionalization is the long-term expression; societal relevance renders both, the preexisting and the newly emerging representation visible (Wagner and Kronberger 2006). This creates an ambivalent situation for researchers: They may investigate the highly visible modality of institutionalized facts without adding much to our knowledge beyond the self-description of those institutions. Alternatively, researchers may immerse into the opaque reality preceding and surrounding the creation of institutionalized facts. This presupposes to explicitly consider the discursive events preceding and leading to institutionalization, including forms of media communication as well as policy and power-related processes (Jovchelovitch 2001). The chapters in this volume present a series of instruments for this undertaking, be it conversation, discourse, narrative or dialogical theory. This may allow us to disentangle the events preceding institutionalization that are conceptually opaque and only faintly reflect the full-fledged, full-blown picture of a major representation, particularly if several discourses interfere and unfold simultaneously. In our understanding, communicative patterns and social representations are but two perspectives of the same process.

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Culture, Psychotherapy, and the Diasporic Self as Transitoric Identity: A Reply to Social Constructionist and Postmodern Concepts of Narrative Psychotherapy

BARBARA ZIELKE and JÜRGEN STRAUB

1 Psychology and Psychotherapy as Cultural Practice

Scientific psychology is part of a cultural practice whose historical roots lie in Europe (Gergen et al. 1996a). Only in the nineteenth century did it begin to take shape as an independent discipline. Its founding fathers soon included outstanding representatives of North American psychology. Psychology and psychotherapy “coevolved.” The latter was always regarded as applied psychology, which with psychopathology was to provide patients with professionalized social support in treating psychosocial problems. Following Sigmund Freud’s influential “invention” of psychoanalysis, the field differentiated rapidly. New schools, approaches and procedures emerged, without any end in sight as modern psychology and psychotherapy embarked on a rapid career. The twentieth century was often seen as the epoch of “psychologization of people” – at least in the so-called western world.

The increasingly “pluralized” psychology and psychotherapy of western provenance gradually gained influence beyond Europe and North America. This globalized change, however, encountered difficulties in some regions (e.g., in Asia) and even generated resistance or “countermovements.” These can be interpreted as reactions to cultural colonization of non-western forms of life, language games and perceptions of personhood. The increasing efforts to articulate, to practically rehabilitate or establish so-called indigenous psychologies and psychotherapies are impressive witnesses to this (Chakkarath 2005, 2006; Kim 2001; Sinha 1997; Straub and Thomas 2003). Such voices have long since belonged in the discourse of modern psychology and psychotherapy.

Like other institutionalized practices in modern societies, psychology and psychotherapy promote their openness and self-reflection. This includes the criticisms and changes that necessarily arise during the course of cultural exchange

(Burke 2000). The growing global diffusion of psychology and psychotherapy has also contributed to this differentiation. Regional, local adaptations transform psychology and psychotherapy or lead to alternatives in research, new conceptions of self, modes of self-reference and innovative practices of the self. All this sharpens the awareness for the cultural particularity of forms of life and language games, in which the patient as the suffering and acting being, is at the center of his or her relationship to the world and – most notably – to him or her self.

Scientific psychology and modern psychotherapy are, regardless of their manifold branches and internal competition, cultural phenomena. Cross-cultural and cultural psychology researchers have repeatedly confirmed and refined this insight (Berry et al. 1997; Trommsdorff and Kornadt 2007a, b; Matasumoto 2001). However, this viewpoint has been seen as a challenge that is changing state and private sector healthcare services. Over the past few decades, increased worldwide migration has led not only to the emigration of traditional societies but has contributed to the formation of multicultural groups. These are gradually adjusting to the fact of cultural plurality. Migrants or *persons with a migration background* often do not want to be treated as if they were members of the majority culture. This applies especially when services such as psychotherapy and psychosocial treatment are obtained and the migrants' cultural differences are not recognized or validated. Correspondingly, therapeutic and advisory work is being conceptualized and practiced increasingly as intercultural communication (e.g., Streeck 2000; Pedrina et al. 1999; Littlewood 2000; Palmer 2000; Hegemann and Salman 2001).

Before addressing this tendency in more detail, we shall look at certain cultural characteristics of numerous psychotherapies of western provenance. This will focus on the widely accepted concept that the self is autonomous and identical with itself. Then we shall look at the criticism of this concept as expressed by representatives of social constructionism. With their reflections and objections, these critics also undermine certain concepts of the psychotherapeutic work on the self. They cast doubt on certain variants of psychotherapy per se and submit alternative suggestions. Psychotherapeutic intervention here no longer stands in the service of the aspired identity and autonomy of reflective subjects. The critics set out to invent new self-narratives in the sense of a strategic (re)production of selves or identities. From this, representatives of postmodern social constructionist approaches in psychotherapy expect a better life that is smoothly and capably adapted to postmodern conditions.

We will take a critical look at this proposal and its preconditions but with the limitation that we can only briefly outline postmodern psychology and psychotherapy. We will finish by discussing the following two questions: Can the paradigmatic case of the “diasporic” self be appropriately understood as a flexible arrangement of multiple voices, selves or identities in the sense of the postmodern theory? Do we have valid grounds for seeing (and treating in psychotherapeutic settings) the person's life marked, to a particular degree, by experiences of difference, alterity and alienity as a communicative concept of self in the sense of the theory of transitory identity that we advocate?

2 Psychotherapy under the Sign of Personal Identity and Autonomy: General Characteristics of a Culture-Specific Concern for the Self

Psychotherapies of western provenance are taken for granted in numerous modern societies. It would be wrong to see all the practices commonly subsumed under the term “psychotherapeutic” as being the same because this field is marked by heterogeneity. Various schools may present not only competing but irreconcilable images of humanity and recommend incompatible therapy goals and methods. In practice, there is an eclecticism that multiplies the variety of more or less clearly defined approaches. Nevertheless, it is possible and, in this context, appropriate to state a few similarities shared by therapists. When we talk about “psychotherapy of western provenance” it will be on a very general level. We will omit the numerous differences in detail and state various generally accepted preconditions and basic assumptions of culture-specific psychotherapeutic practice (or their theoretical justification). This is necessary because some of these basic, in part, tacit, preconditions and assumptions are challenged by representatives of social constructionism and other variants of postmodern psychology and psychotherapy. We shall return to this point later. Here, we assume:

1) Psychotherapies are “answers” to the prevalent and accelerating processes of temporalization and dynamization of modern life. Likewise, they are closely interwoven with an individualization and “autonomization” that enhances the subjectivity and agency of the (socially constituted) individual and makes this a precarious and prevalent issue in how people shape their lives. This is under the sign of liberty, self-reflection, self-determination and self-assertion of the individual and is yet at the same time a necessity that imposes, and forces individuals to take, responsibility for their own lives. As Michel Foucault (1976) has shown, this requires, socially and culturally driven internalization of discipline and self control. Only then do subjects feel obligated and are actually capable of taking stock of and regularly judging their lives, of accounting to themselves and others and also actively planning and shaping their future in the light of norms and standards. (One need not necessarily agree with Foucault’s all too one-sided normative criticism of these processes when it comes to his diagnostic description.)

2) Psychotherapeutic communication is a sociocultural institution that is rightly included – as confessions or certain forms of sociological interviews – among “biography generators” (Hahn 1987). Psychotherapies are social, dialogical and diapractical modes of self-reference, self-reflection and self-realization. They form a culture-specific practice and institution in which (extracts from) biographies – without the presence of a professionally acting counterpart – are recalled and narrated, considered and analyzed, shaped and, within the medium of language or as linguistic structures, modified. The current topical approaches of narrative psychotherapies – or the reconstructions and reinterpretations of classic psychotherapies (e.g., in psychoanalysis) in a narrative theoretical perspective (as

summarized in Polkinhorne 1988)–shift this aspect to center stage. Psychotherapies thus refer in one way or another to narrative recapitulations of the lived life. They work with, and on, life or self narratives.

3) Psychotherapies are a relatively young achievement of modern, western societies and as such, an outcome of historical, sociocultural changes. As applied psychology, they also arise in the wake of an accelerated scientific interest in memory and people's ability of recall. The story of the human soul, the way it is has become familiar to us from modern psychology, has its origin in nineteenth-century Europe. Ian Hacking (1997) described in his studies on multiple personality and memory that the science of memory superseded the time-honored art of memory, and went hand-in-hand with a secularization and scientization of the access to the human soul. According to Hacking's archaeological analyses, loosely based on Foucault, the structure of modern memory science and memory policy evolved during the last third of the nineteenth century. It is because of acceptance of their theories that we believe that the key to the soul, and thus to numerous life problems, lies in memory and recollection.

4) Psychotherapies work with and on memory-based recollections. Many psychotherapies initiate and accompany processes of life-long learning. They facilitate identity and autonomy development in persons able to speak and act. (We have deliberately omitted the particular aspects required when therapists work with people whose ability to speak and act is not fully developed or impaired.) As a rule, people who undergo therapy are regarded as reflective subjects (Groeben and Scheele 1977). At the same time we recognize that therapeutically initiated or accompanied self-changes are not solely due to conscious self-reflection and intentions. Frequently they are a result of the therapeutic practice itself, i.e., due to *empractical*, implicit learning. The social relationship in a therapeutic setting often enables a practical change that does not require any further words and explanations. It is applied equally to a person's feelings and thoughts. The psychoanalytical formula "remember, repeat, work through" expresses this aspect succinctly.

As a rule, scientific theories of therapeutic communication are based explicitly and implicitly on concepts of successful identity or a healthy self. In modern discourse, this concept revolves around the terms *personal identity* and *autonomy*. However, this does not guarantee that what is meant by these terms is precisely understood. For many, personal identity and autonomy imply the much criticized, individualist concept of the self being autonomous and identical with itself. Erik H. Erikson made a major contribution to an enormous popularization of the concept of identity when he introduced eight developmental stages in contrast to Freud's five. For a critical assessment of his theory see Straub (2000a, 2004). One must remain aware of the modernist connotations of the concept of identity if one wishes to speak of "the" identity of all possible people without all disregard for the pragma-semantic particularities of this term – and as a result envelope them in a form of self understanding that may appear to these people as completely alien or at least quite inappropriate. The widespread (and partially justified) criticism of the identity concept does not imply that we do not have a

complex and differentiated identity concept which also includes a perception of personal autonomy. Postmodern psychotherapy concepts and their ally, psychology, are frequently opposed in favor of simpler concepts of personal identity and autonomy.

3 The Self in the Globalized Postmodern World

Postmodern time diagnoses draw a new picture of self. They direct the focus of attention to globalized societies¹ and reject, as outdated, the concept of a self striving for identity and (partial) autonomy during its entire life. This notion, allegedly, is obsolete and no longer viable. It is also inimical to life because it places subjects under the diktat of internalized control and self discipline. The thus hamstrung self would then mistakenly believe itself to be on the path towards a happy life, whereas in reality it was subjecting itself and others to force, suffering at its own hand and under the domination of its own, rationalist “reason.”

Social relationships in the postmodern world demand something different from the subject. The enormously accelerated change in all areas of life, the omnipresence of social and cultural differences in life practice, global integration and forms of communication, which are taking on a life of its own, and also a “hyperreality” produced by the mass media conflict with the concept of self-determined subjects identical with themselves and guided by reason. (Baudrillard) They are no longer called for in a world where “sense” scarcely depends on rational thinking, power of judgment and the acts of individual members of society. In this world, it is a matter of coping with the manifold irrational consequences of purported rational strategies. All subjects have to be able to permanently adapt, demonstrating mobility and flexibility in every respect – but not identify with its obligation to continuity and coherence or other “antiquated” forms of the communicative world and self understanding.

Such postmodern time diagnoses constitute a serious challenge, because they place the spotlight on core aspects of social and cultural change in modern societies (see Joas 1992; Renn 2002; Straub 1991, 2000b; Straub and Zielke 2005; Leu and Krappmann 1999). Academic psychology however does not always pay them the attention they merit, even though social constructionism in particular is one of the globally regarded positions in social psychology and other fields. As far as the category of the postmodern self is concerned, one scarcely encounters any serious debate in mainstream scientific psychology. This is still dominated, particularly in cognitive social psychology, by the model of the individual, information-processing and rational actor. This precise model is radically criticized and replaced in social constructionist psychology, which advocates a “second cognitive revolution.” But the criticism is not new. It has long been reduced to

¹ On the complex, differently used concept of globalization or glocalization see for example Beck (1997); Robertson (1998).

catchwords such as: cognitivism, rationalism, individualism/individuoctrism, and solipsism (Bruner 1990; Gergen 1994; see Zielke 2004, 2006d). The social constructionist subject concept that became prominent in the 1990s, for example Gergen's (1991) relational self, or Hermans et al.'s (1993) characterization of a dialogical self, tried to avoid these "impasses." Heiner Keupp's conception of a patchwork identity is one of these psychological attempts to respond to the changed world of those living in late- or post-modern societies with a changed concept of self (see Keupp et al. 2002; Keupp and Höfer 1997; Leu and Krappmann 1999). Many a postmodern overemphasis is dismissed by other approaches that take up its challenge without scrapping the handed down theoretical concepts – above all that of identity. These include the already cited works that develop a concept of personal identity in the tradition of action and cultural psychology (e.g., Straub 2005; Straub et al. 2004).

The following summarizes important aspects of social constructionist and related theories of self and reflects on their consequences for psychotherapy. The final section of this chapter returns to the relationship between this position and our own to draw out similarities and also some important differences.

Firstly on the social constructionist criticism of "cognitivist" social psychology.

One criticism of this concept of self is that its notoriously individuocentric approach ignores the social basis of individual development. On the other hand, social constructionism consistently regards mental, especially cognitive, processes, feelings and actions, as elements of social discourses and cultural practices (Gergen 1997, p. 26). Only as such can they be understood and explained in their formation. And only through the reference to sociocultural contexts can they be determined and described as meaningful phenomena. A familiar example is provided by purported individual recollections and memories. These receive their form and consistency in so-called memory talks, discussions about past events. The social or cultural factness of memory-based recollections was not limited to the classic theories of Maurice Halbwachs (1950) or Frederick Bartlett (1932). More recent research shows that small children experience their membership in a community by participating in language games and to an increasing extent begin to build up, reproduce and retain recollections themselves. Memory and recollection are, regardless of their biological-physiological basis and development conditions, products of social interaction and communication. The emergence and development of recollections and memory structures occurs dialogically. The individual – with its autobiographical memory and biographical self – is socially constituted [LT8] (see Nelson 1996). Social negotiation processes and dynamic, linguistic and non-linguistic symbolic practice form the basis for all everyday constructs to which the memory- and recollection-bound self also belong.

Narrative self presentations or self narratives, as they arise in psychotherapies, appear in this perspective not as personal attempts of an I-narrator attributable solely to the individual. They are dependent on social discourses and practices, symbolic forms, cognitive schemas and vocabulary available for self-reference.

They are laced with the relationships to others and the “voices” of these others. This has consequences for the authenticity attributed to these narratives, their claim to veracity. Biographies, particularly autobiographical narratives, follow conventional, culturally available and defined patterns. Only in these paradigms can they be perceived and accepted as intelligible self presentations, as meaningful life stories. This assumption is not contradicted by the alleged idiosyncrasies of a particular self-narrative [LT9]. The entirely individual meaning of life, which appears when initially unrelated events become “my unmistakable story,” emerges from a unique experience, unmistakable intellect and indivisible feeling-world of the narrator. In reality, so runs the social constructionist argument, even the merging of these events to a meaningful, coherent and continuous story is the outcome of following a typically modern compulsion: the compulsion to appear as a self-determined, self-reflexive individual capable of squeezing an identity out of the chaos in his or her life in a retrospective narrative.

This compulsion creeps into self-constructions in very convoluted ways, however. It is practically impossible to reconstruct rationally. The subjects themselves no longer see where, when and how they are influenced and characterized, even when they are presenting themselves in their individuality, identity and (partial) autonomy. An “author,” who as the narrating I would be in a position to spot and expose such “false” positionings, to reveal the compulsions imposed “from outside,” by culture and society, language and other symbolic forms, is not merely a “thing of impossibility.” It is regarded in social constructionism as outdated at least, and at best, a dubious norm. The author or I-narrator who has access to, and comprehends all, “I-positions” is a cultural illusion that subjects are encouraged to nurture and cherish. They should want to see through themselves. Only this self-transparency enables (so it is claimed), self-control and self-command. That is daunting for postmodern psychology. Insofar as this normative perception also influences the goals and procedures of psychotherapies, or even largely determines them, it is ripe for innovative revision and modification. Certain variants of narrative psychotherapy influenced by social constructionism draw – in theory and practice – the appropriate consequences.

4 Psychotherapy in the Postmodern World

4.1 “*Deconstructing Psychotherapy*”?

In view of the considerations summarized in Sections 3 and 4, current psychotherapies taught by recognized institutions now appear in an uncertain light. Some examples: Narrative recapitulation of a lived life has a considerably changed roles. It is no longer a matter of self-assurances by reflective subjects. The autobiographical narrator does not even appear as a “meaning-giving instance.” No person needs to embark on a quest for self, of “true self” and to this end strives for the best possible recollections and veracity. The constructionist perception also breaks with the traditional perception that there is something such as an

equally natural, general and enduring, decontextualized definition of the normal, healthy or stable personality. This perception becomes a matter of cultural and social, purely conventional consideration. What is considered deviant, ill or a shortcoming in one way or another is negotiated and perhaps laid down using contingent, mutable, and factually highly different criteria. The certainty with which pathological variants of self-construction are sorted out, classified and diagnosed using defined criteria, often beyond the reach of reflection, is a thorn in the flesh of the social-constructionist theory of psychotherapy.² For this reason (and others), the so-called “traditional” models of psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic action are sharply criticized. There have been growing calls for new forms of psychotherapy that accommodate the outlined criticisms in the spirit of social constructionism (e.g., White and Epston 1990; McNamee and Gergen 1992; Gergen and Warhus 2001). The mere fact that the institution of psychotherapy functions as a western, modern practice of self-constitution is sufficient grounds for some to “deconstruct” this institution as a whole (Parker 1999). The deconstruction concept brought into play is not as selective and meaningful as that introduced by Jacques Derrida; its use strikes many as appropriate where psychotherapy is to be described and analyzed as a historically contingent phenomenon from a social and cultural studies perspective. Such an approach is quite common and does not characterize in any way only a “deconstructionist” perspective. Here, the program of a system-theoretical cultural sociology (e.g., Hahn and Kapp 1987; Bohn and Hahn 1999) or cultural, cross-cultural and intercultural psychology (Littlewood 1992; Zielke 2006c) spring to mind.

Despite all the differences in detail, these approaches share the insight that psychotherapies are prime examples for institutionalized “subjectivization” practices in the modern sense developed by Foucault: “Whether the I has forms of memory symbolically thematizing its entire *vita* depends on the presence of social institutions that permit such a reflection on its own being.” (Hahn and Kapp 1987, p. 14). Psychotherapy is such an institution. As historical and cross-cultural research shows, it is not merely “conceivable” that there is no possibility for representing one’s own *vita* as a whole. The lack of this ability was and moreover is the widespread “normal case” (Bohn and Hahn 1999). Likewise, it is a specifically modern matter of course that people as individuals take responsibility for their lives and also for its comprehensive symbolic representation. Whoever is not

² It may appear as if systemic (family) therapy would have to be excluded from these criticisms owing to its constructivist and sometimes explicitly social constructionist basis. However, representatives of this school, too, tend to assume criteria and definitions that they consider to be generally acceptable. They use these as the basis for their diagnosis and for planning their therapeutic interventions (see Gergen et al. 1996b); on this basis the therapist uses proven means to identify pathological structures in the system or family (Parker 1999). Only to be excluded are those approaches that, albeit inspired by the general “systemic” theory and practice, have developed their own principles, approaches and procedures. This applies for example to Steve de Shazer’s “solution-oriented therapy.” We will return to this point later.

capable of doing so is by no means “ill” or deviant. In the same sense, Parker concludes in *Deconstructing Therapy*: “Deconstruction in therapy does not presuppose a self under the surface and a deconstruction of psychotherapy alerts us to the way such a notion of the self can unwittingly be smuggled in as some people ‘help’ others” (Parker, 1999, p. 3).

What follows from the outlined views? What concrete suggestions for transforming the “institution psychotherapy” have representatives of social constructionism or narrative therapy made? How should psychotherapeutic practice be adapted to conditions in postmodern societies? What is actually new in these suggestions and the attempts to include them in theory and practice?

4.2 Characteristics of “Postmodern” Psychotherapies

There are numerous approaches in this interesting field that in one way or another identify with postmodern or especially social constructionist positions. Below we can mention only a few selected approaches which we see as seriously looking for alternatives.³ What then are – in a rough summary without any claim to completeness – the key ideas and indications of a change in psychotherapeutic practice under “postmodern” conditions?

Foregoing categorical diagnoses and fixed therapy goals: Postmodern psychotherapy, as already mentioned, is against any laying down or definition of “healthy” or “pathological” mental states. It is just the opposite: Undermining, overturning set attitudes of this nature and thus expanding the self- and world view of patients (perhaps also of therapists) is a declared aim of these approaches. Therapists should put themselves entirely consciously in a position of “not knowing” (Anderson and Goolishian 1992).⁴ They should positively accept the patient’s narrative, “the client’s voice”, and take it seriously as a possible, interesting self-attempt – without immediately holding it against a preconceived benchmark of an “ideal self.” Such ideals and above all the images of humanity portrayed in psychotherapy schools should be bracketed.

The search for the polyphonous (patient) narrative: Attentive listening and valuing the patient narrative may be natural standards for most therapists today. Postmodern-constructionist psychotherapy however goes beyond this: It not only demands that the client’s narrative construction be understood, taken seriously and accepted as contingent construction. The therapist should watch out for possible polyphonous self narratives, not least through suitable interventions at the right moment, and also foster this plurality. The therapist should even “tease them

³ There are, as Tiling (2004) warns, many works that adopt social constructionism only superficially and tie certain aspects of postmodern thinking to their mast without giving them much thought. Some representatives of systemic therapy (e.g., Schiepek 1999) stand accused of this (Tiling 2004, p. 138ff.).

⁴ Gergen et al. (2006) have generally challenged the role of psychotherapeutic diagnoses and in particular the broad-brush diagnostic systems and manuals that enable this diagnosis to be put before any interaction and they have suggested alternatives.

out with technical means” (see in particular the articles in Hermans and DiMaggio 2004). Where the therapist concentrates only on the supportive emphasis of patient narrative, the aim is mainly to produce “a lens for comprehending the world” together with the patient. The constructionist would rather strive for “a repository of lenses”, or in a nutshell: “narrative multiplicity is vastly to be preferred” (Gergen and Kaye 1990, p. 178f).⁵

The abandonment of personal identity: If narrative constructs are understood as self attempts, it then follows that “personal identity” is not represented in the content of the narrated “story” but in the very process of narrating. It actualizes itself in narrative attempts and rejections of multiple self-presentations. If in the case of multiple self narratives it is at all a matter of the narrator being after “something”, a kind of goal or purpose, then this exists in the narrating itself. The narrative self is – in the fluid, dynamic-multiple form of its manifold, successive articulations – a process. This “game” of constructing selves – which can be described as identity construction only in a very unconventional sense – is endless, infinite. It is an end in itself. Its aim is solely “to continue to play” (Gergen and Kaye 1990, p. 180f). The role of this (sometimes probably only apparent) playful exercise is not only to develop contingency or ambiguity awareness, for example. It involves boosting and training the personal ability to slip into ever new roles in a wide range of social and cultural situations in order to take up varied relationships with the changing others. Having several “available” selves designed and tested in the medium and setting of therapy is advantageous. The outlined therapy prepares for and so imitates life.

The emphasis on relationships and the dialogical co-construction of meaning: Psychotherapies inspired by social constructionism are not, or at least not primarily, concerned with “internal” states and processes (feelings, thoughts, motives) of the patient or client. The treatment focuses on the network of relationships in which the individual is embedded. The treatment itself is in turn understood and applied in a specific manner. Social constructionism after all assumes that meaning and sense can only arise and be changed in social contexts. The psychotherapeutic setting is a social situation. The psychotherapeutic dialogue itself is a story developed in an interactive framework, during the course of which meanings, sense projections, selves and identities are negotiated (Payne 2000, p. 120) This involves the dialogical, “reflective cooperation” (Anderson 1990; Gergen and Epstein 2005) between therapist and client that constructionist psychotherapy calls for. Even if the status of (empathetic) “understanding” is criticized from the constructionist viewpoint (e.g., Gergen 2006), “dialogues” and “conjoint meaning making” are regarded as important pillars of postmodern psychotherapy.⁶

⁵ To be consistent within this approach, one must also drop or at least endeavor to transcend the “traditional” narration concept. For a postmodern approach, the narrativity metaphor as a description of personal identity remains too broadly interpreted as the “one attempt” of the self (see Gergen and Kaye 1990, p. 178, compare Zielke 2006e).

⁶ Here we merely point out that the “dialogue” concept itself requires clarification. Social constructionism has yet to present any satisfactory suggestion for this. Between whom –

“Value relevance” and the possibilities of ethically and/or politically motivated psychotherapy: All the issues that can arise in psychotherapies are culturally and socially construed and must be treated as the result or effect of social and cultural processes. Representatives of narrative therapy present a political argumentation of this point. They see psychotherapies as a place where “counterpractices” can be designed and rehearsed. These are directed against those sociocultural practices that boil down to subjectivization in the sense criticized by Foucault. Psychotherapies should then undermine the violent shaping of people to “subjects” identical with themselves and try out concrete alternatives. The most important therapeutic technique used for this is “problem externalization.” The therapist tries to externalize, sometimes even to personify, problems felt as oppressive that had until then been attributed to the person or their relationships (by them or others), (White and Epston 1990, p. 55) and as such to thematize them. “My unhappiness” for example becomes “unhappiness” and is analyzed independently of any personal-biographical or life-world references. This should not be taken to mean that value neutrality in the sense of objective and undistorted diagnoses or goals should be strived for – “value relevance” is directed more to the insight of how fundamentally everything happening in and around psychotherapies is embedded in cultural values and thus also value judgments. There is no value-neutral position at all.

The (social-) critical position: Identity problems in particular are always treated in a normative perspective. Psychotherapies are a political factor. They fulfill a political function. Like many representatives of narrative therapy, Kaye (1999) also points out the “social-critical” role of psychotherapeutic work. Psychotherapy should consider not least the attitude of the individual towards society. This too bears the hallmark of Foucault’s “critique of power.”

The solution-focused position: Not compatible at first sight with the (social-) critical position, but prominent in practically all “postmodern” or constructionist-oriented therapy concepts is the conviction that it is outright fatal to concentrate on the patient’s “problems” or to trace their (biographical) roots or grounds. Thus, DeShazer and Berg (1992) criticize the traditional endeavor of psychotherapies to explore “problems” in all their details and instead suggest that psychotherapy try out other visions of reality with more pleasing prospects. Gergen and Warhus (2001) too believe – on a language-analytical meta level – that “the term ‘problem’ is an operational interpretation – there are no problems in the world.” As a result, they join in the call by many other representatives of narrative, constructionist approaches “to avoid the reification of problems and shift attention to discourse of positive prospects (p. 110).

which “entities” – does such a dialogue take place? What role do possibilities of convincing argumentation and reason-oriented understanding play? Or is there no room at all for non-persuasive discussions? Is everything mere persuasion or chance exchange of contingent opinions?

Clearly this approach strives to change psychotherapeutic practice in many points. The social or cultural function of the “institution psychotherapy” is considered, questioned and “resignified” in a postmodern-critical sense.⁷ Alternatives are formulated and applied. Not everything is completely new. Much is also to be found in “traditional” psychotherapy schools, much recalls time-honored critical voices, e.g., from the former “anti-psychiatry movement” (Basaglia 1973) or the critical psychology developed in Germany (Holzkamp 1972).

Certain thoughts are however typical for our age. For example, the emphasis and recognition of different “voices” in the patient narrative is a comparatively new matter – even though the debate on “multiple personality” is already over a century old (Hacking 1997). The emphatic focusing on a multiplicity of voices in patient narratives can be interpreted as an attempt to use the postmodern concept of the contingent, multiple and variable self for psychotherapeutic work and to implement it in therapeutic maxims. As a result, not only are generally welcome characteristics such as versatility, flexibility or ambiguity tolerance fostered but also “pathologizing” attributes such as identity diffusion, dissociation and fragmentation affirmed as possible consequences of the postmodern experience. This no doubt distinguishes postmodern approaches from most of the “established” psychotherapy theories and practice. This also applies to the discussed “politicization” of psychiatric problems and psychotherapy.

4.3 Critical Remarks and Doubts

However, many of the techniques and practices presented “positively” above also give rise to serious doubts. The frequently unmistakable normative undertone in the lauded liberation from “modern compulsions” sometimes sounds one-sided and overdone. Under no circumstances, we are often told, should the “authentic” narrative be looked for. Accompanying the patient on this search, let alone animating him or her to undertake it, would mean succumbing to the modern illusion of identity, continuity, coherence and autonomy and restricting one’s own possibilities. In view of the confusing postmodern situation and its continuous flood of competing and incompatible options, offers and demands, disorientation, even an inability to act, and despair should not simply be interpreted as problems to be solved. They must be seen, it is argued, as fully appropriate reactions that behoove us to postmodern composure (see also Gergen 1991).

The widely recommended “solution orientation” is also a cause for concern. This applies all the more as the appeal to refrain from problematizing and brooding and to go for “positive thinking” instead moves increasingly to center stage. This aspect in particular does not sit well with social constructionism’s critical

⁷ The way the thus reinterpreted practice of psychotherapy changes needs to be looked at separately but this would distract from the matter at hand – the role of psychotherapy as a culturally western institution. We shall explore some aspects of the therapeutic process when considering the “special case” of intercultural constellations later in this article.

program. An all too forced “solution-oriented” psychotherapy ends up running the risk of becoming an “adjustment tool” for difficult cases. This adjustment is made by trying out construable and available selves. As many variants as possible are experimented with until one or more of them fit, are “viable.” The psychotherapeutic setting then seems to be merely a testing bed for (new) narrative self-fashioning, a kind of “supermarket” of action and life options in the pejorative postmodern sense, as if forms of life and identities could be changed at a drop of a hat just like clothes, ornaments and other items of daily use.

These critical remarks and doubts do not detract from the fact that in the sometimes all too fashionable debates on “postmodern psychotherapy” there are also enlightening thoughts and stimulating ideas. This goes all the more for the theoretical discourses in the narrower sense within the ambit of social constructionism – however they too raise questions: How does the “polyphony” of the self attempt in a patient narrative show itself – and which constructs are necessary to implement and apply it? Is “polyphony” a general or only in some “problem situations” a meaningful strategy? What does an “open therapeutic dialogue,” in which the results and “solutions” are negotiated in actu and without recourse to predetermined definitions and goals, look like? And finally, how can the “solution orientation” be aligned with the critical aspirations of constructionist psychotherapies?

Below we discuss – with a view to finding possible answers to some of these questions – a constellation in psychotherapy that seems to particularly suit the new approaches. The polyphony of the communication partners in the psychotherapeutic dialogue reveals itself particularly clearly in intercultural psychotherapy dialogues. People with a migration background, who tend to be in the role of the person seeking help, are often regarded as prime examples for the postmodern constitution of the multiple self. The term diasporic self is frequently used in this context. We will outline this concept before going on to ask whether this self is actually multiply structured – or merely differential in the sense of allegedly outdated identity-theoretical thinking.

5 The Postmodern, “Diasporic Self” – A Special or a Typical Case?

People with long migration experiences, according to Said (1999) for example, sooner or later enter a stage of constant “translation” and “being translated.” As they themselves say, nothing can be done about this. This rules out any selection of one identity. They also reject the idea of “having” several ascertainable and definable identities. This also applies for the long since popular idea of living, moving or oscillating “between” different cultural identities. Far from it! The existence that leads to such a “diasporic self” (Appadurai 1996; Bhatia and Ram 2001) is so very much in flux, so volatile and so strongly context-dependent in its

concrete appearance that it can no longer support itself on anything persistent.⁸ What remains is solely a fair portion of contingency awareness and a realization of the “processness”, the fluid and ephemeral status of the own self imposed and continuously reproduced by their own existence. The traveler and the tourist, the vagabond or the *flâneur*, the showman or actor and so forth are popular metaphors for this self that has long since abandoned the search for itself and what is more no longer considers it to be necessary or enjoyable (Bauman 1997, 2000).

The aforementioned postmodern theories of self take an affirmative approach to these alleged “typical” characteristics of a psychological constitution formed by long years of migration. They see in the diasporic self a crown witness for what they want to express. The members of multi-ethnic or multi-cultural communities are seen as seismographs of postmodern living conditions. As a kind of avant-garde it is the migrants who show what affects, in today’s pluralistic late modern world, all members of society. Postmodern concepts, such as the “relational” or “dialogical self” (Gergen 1991; Hermans et al. 1993) too produce theory figures more or less tailored to diasporic existences. They strongly resemble the ideas presented in post-colonialism research (Appadurai 1996; Bhabha 1996), but also in inter- and trans-cultural psychotherapy and counseling research. Migration experiences are given paradigm status (see e.g., Bhatia and Ram 2001).⁹ Owing to this common interest in certain aspects and questions about the appropriate conceptualization of the “postmodern” self, “intercultural” psychotherapy and counseling discussions can be reconstructed and analyzed from research and documentation as what is interactively negotiated, using certain patterns, as a suitable or successful, as a polyphonous, fragmented, “hybrid” identity. The thus possible reconstruction of the life world and the “typical” self-construction of migrants should reveal at least a “viable” form of the “identitylessness” of the diaspora selves postulated in postmodern theories of the self.

In a nutshell: The “diasporic self” – as a term for the typical self-constructions of members of culturally highly differentiated life worlds, especially of migrants – is not only a touchstone for conceptions of a “polyphonous” self that is popular in the context of post-colonialism theories and related suggestions for revising psychotherapeutic concepts. In addition, particularly the dialogues conducted in

⁸ But here too, it must be at least mentioned that the term diaspora is used in several senses: “diaspora” points to a group identity formed by a lack of a reachable “homeland” or namable “origin” via the construction of origin images. This description alone makes it clear that the diaspora concept applies in a narrow sense only for certain “migrant groups.” Use “in the broader sense” has to look for criteria to distinguish “diasporic” from other “migrants,” but it too cannot avoid generalizing and not really doing justice to those groups living in the diaspora. We are prevented from analyzing the concept of diaspora and its historical and current use because of time and space limitations.

⁹ Some authors see in it a general tendency and response to today’s living conditions worldwide: “Indeed, through the discussions around the dialogicality of the self, cultural psychology may arrive at a general concept of the self that transcends the differences of Western and Eastern thought. . . . The dialogical nature of the self may be the basic tool for human adaptation under changing circumstances” (Valsiner 2004, p. 17).

intercultural psychotherapies, in which identity or non-identity is negotiated, are prime examples for the co-construction of meaning fully in line with the sense of social constructionist therapy theory.

5.1 Intercultural Psychotherapies and the Commitment to “Relational Dialogue”

Psychotherapeutic communication is particularly prone to being successively loaded with typifications on a trial-and-error basis (Gill 1994; Streeck 2000). These typified attributions are necessary in every therapeutic relationship for the gradual production of a “harmonious” interaction in psychotherapy taking place via mutual adjustments at the micro level. These reciprocal, move-by-move interpretations by both sides, based on implicit cultural knowledge of how to deal with people, shape and apply the self- or identity-constituting attributions and also the criteria for dealing with pathologies or anomalies. Especially in intercultural communication situations what is “jointly negotiated” in the above sense, what (perhaps) can at some time or other be called the “result” of such communication, can be understood only as a relational interpretation of the other party on the basis of one’s own horizon. Assuming this definition of intercultural psychotherapeutic communication as relational co-construction, such communication has to be specified as reciprocal translation, in which ego and alter are in dialogue always on different levels (e.g., explicitly, implicitly and subconsciously) (Straub and Shimada 1999; Renn 2006; Zielke 2006b, c).

Constructs of self (and world) emerging in such communication cannot be had for either party without the contribution of the “other side.” They arise and exist as a through and through reciprocal, albeit variable and process-based construct. This applies not only for intercultural communication, but is particularly apparent there. Intercultural dialogues represent in a particularly distinctive manner what is termed “the communal construction of meaning” (Gergen 1994) in the constructionist sense – because in these dialogues the purported solid foundation of background implicitness appears as a contingent cultural prejudice that can be an obstacle to a successful outcome. This would correspond to the concept of “collaborative” dialogue emphasized in constructionism and specifically in the constructionist concept of the psychotherapeutic dialogue. Intercultural psychotherapeutic communication is a practice in which neither side has definition sovereignty over or any other kind of objective “knowledge” about the other side.

5.2 The Diasporic Self – And the Task of Intercultural Therapies

Moreover, not least in intercultural psychotherapy, dialogues take place in which the parties narrationally conceive “polyphonous” self-constructions in a sphere shielded from the demands, stresses and distractions of the everyday world. The

demands and stresses lived in diasporic, “multicultural” life worlds are reflected in intercultural psychotherapies in so far as this “state” is thematized as precarious and problematic. At the same time a dialogical self is implemented and “acted out.” Thus intercultural therapies are culmination points of every social dialogue in multicultural societies, in which the – perhaps structurally changed – concepts of self of the members of these societies also form. Finally, where one does not want to assume an essentialist or substantialist, holistic culture concept (for criticism see Straub and Thomas 2003), “intercultural” does not mean for example that members of cultures clearly distinguishable by standard criteria are sitting opposite each other as ego and alter. Searching through such psychotherapy or counseling discussions for negotiated “viable” constructs of a “diasporic self” in this postmodern sense not only produces confirmations of the postmodern praise for polyphony but also highlights the limits and weaknesses of this normative concept.

For example, acculturation researchers Sunil Bhatia and Anjali Ram show that it is adequate and helpful for members of diasporic communities, arriving in the USA, Canada or Europe from post-colonial countries to construct their cultural identity as a polyphonous, diasporic identity. Plausibly, it is precisely the concept of different “voices” or “heteroglossy”, or more specifically the moment or the possibility of forming a new previously unknown voice “in” one and the same person, that seems useful for describing the psychological constitution of people living “between cultures” or “beyond” cultural memberships (see also Bhatia and Ram 2001, p. 55). This conceptual solution, that the self is divided into different “I-positions”, not only permits a pertinent description of the resulting “polyphonous” psychological state, but is also normatively effective: language creates reality – and it is important in both crisis interventions and also long-term psychotherapies that persons affected by difference-related self- and identity conflicts and also their therapists have a conceptual alternative to conventional self descriptions at their disposal. Crass contradictions in the patient’s self-constructions must not be simply smoothed over but adequately expressed in these concepts. Understanding the diasporic self as a polyphonous-dialogical self is such a possibility.

During their analyses of their discussions with migrants, Bhatia and Ram (2001, p. 297) have however also vehemently advocated that the strived for polyphony, in so far as it is to be regarded as a “viable construction” in diasporic life worlds, must be allowed to bridge the gap between the awareness of a contingency and fragmentedness extended to all “certainties” on the one side and the necessity to keep up the very multiplicity of the various “I-positions” on the other. It becomes ever clearer that particularly the reconstructive description of experiencing difference calls for a reference to a formal unity of the self not only at a conceptual level but that the wish – after all – for personal identity is also indispensable for articulating the difference experienced and for its positive inclusion in the patient’s own, hybrid self attempt.

The role of psychotherapies that should, and wish to, contribute to the overcoming of extreme and sustained, not always merely “interesting” and enriching, difference experiences is to mediate between heterogeneous demands. The goal

must be then an intermediate position that is devoted neither to the illusion of a “sovereign” cognitive self-control in the “modern” sense, nor to the “postmodern” denial of all and any orientation and agency capacity, reflected life conduct and responsibility of partially autonomous subjects. Indeed, precisely where the postmodern identity models tend to end – with the emphasis and praising of an inability to act, brokenness and incommensurable voices “in the” self – begins the actual theoretically interesting and empirically more important question as to the postmodern identity and role of psychotherapies in the globalized postmodern world.

6 The Diasporic Self as Transitoric Identity and the Place of Psychotherapy in the Postmodern World

We feel that this brief look at the empirical construct of a differential and polyphonous self makes it clear that is necessary to maintain a personal identity or a certain continuity and coherence of the self if it is to be at all possible to live in the awareness of a “dialogical self” and explore the opportunities presented by a polyphonous existence.

The situation of people who live in and have to cope with highly differentiated social and cultural contexts is one of strongly competing identity offerings and demands. It is not enough to simply stylize this situation as “democratic,” “free of coercion,” “pluralistic,” and a welcome enrichment and then shape psychotherapies in this sense. On the contrary, it is a matter of deciding when an individual is capable and thus well advised to understand him/herself as a polyphonous construction and so counter complex communication demands in this way – and when this is not the case or considered justifiable by the therapist. The interpretation of postmodern thinking as a rejection of therapy goals connotated with self-reflection and self-discovery, self-determination and self-realization and also the normative program of abandoning personal identity, i.e., a continuous and coherent self, in the postmodern world, may appear to be moving with the times – but this does not suffice for its being able to claim that it has grasped, yet alone solved, the typical identity problems of members of postmodern societies – not even of (in any case too homogenously stylized) “migrants in the diaspora.” Theoretical and empirical arguments can be presented for this:

1) When we speak about identity, we mean the structure, theoretically certain, dynamic unity of a person. We should not let the term “unity” mislead us. This does not mean anything that would suppress or even rule out multiplicity or difference, quite the opposite. Even less does it involve the sameness of “something” in the sense of a logical identity relationship ($a = a$), hence the stability of “something” which in this logical sense must always be and remain the same. We understand the identity of a person rather as a unity of their differences, and this in a diachronous and synchronous respect. The identity concept used here – as in all ambitious theories, among which we include the traditions of pragmatism,

symbolic interactionism, psychoanalysis or complex action and cultural theories – is shaped to the situation of modern people. It is a response to increased difference, alterity and alienity experiences and a widely spreading contingency awareness. It reacts not least to the growing temporalization, dynamization and individualization of modern forms of life that are embracing ever more people (all genders and all age groups, regardless of cultural and social origin).

2) The “post- or late-modern” living conditions, here presented only in theoretical catchwords, create successive new problem situations and orientation requirements, which even today we regard just as much “our concern” as the need for a continuous adjustment of our action potential (our mobility, flexibility, language and translation competence) to these conditions. The identity concept is shaped exactly to this. It expects these living conditions and attunes people to them. It stands under the sign of growing difference and complexity. Identity- and difference-theoretical thinking, once the structural constitution (the communicative self-understanding) of persons is involved, are not opposing poles. They are very much complementary. The one is not conceivable without the other. Identity is the unity of the differences, and this is never found. The practical concern for the strived-for, diachronous and synchronous unity of these differences is rather a task that is expected of subjects under the conditions outlined above. On this point we refer once again to other works (Renn and Straub 2002; Straub 2005) and note here that identity is and remains an aspiration: it is not a reachable state, a result with which people can calm themselves and relax. It is nothing given but marks a life-long task. Identity is transitory, it arises and proves itself in the transition, in the transformation of itself.

3) Psychotherapies in the late modern world can also still feel obligated to this task without exposing themselves to the accusation that they are adhering to an outdated normative model of the subject. Returning to the aforementioned analysis of the formation of biographies in conjunction with certain memory formations: psychotherapy in the postmodern world can and should be both a biography generator and a “third space.” People who grow up in extremely difference-marked social worlds are, in their dealings with others, active constructors of solutions and rules, of world interpretations and identities. They are – in post-modern conditions perhaps to a greater degree than ever – dependent upon reflecting on the differentiability, plurality and heterogeneity of possible action and life orientations and then making self-determined choices, but also making translations without which no choice would be possible. To meet this need, psychotherapies can function as secret places (see Hahn 1987) in which the person as a whole is addressed or can appear as a whole – in contrast to the reality outside, in which one has to construct oneself so or otherwise depending on the context, in which relational and contextually constituted different “selves” are normally allowed to appear only in isolation and separately from each other. At the same time, however, the psychotherapeutic relationship itself is one of the many “relational contexts,” in which the contingent meaning of certain elements of a narrative self attempt is constituted in the first place. In this sense, psychotherapy is

also one kind of “third space” in Bhabha’s sense, one of those “discursive sites or conditions that ensure that the meanings of culture have no primordial unity or fixity (Bhabha 1994, p. 37). Psychotherapeutic dialogues, in this sense, are modes of articulation, ways of describing a productive, and not merely reflective space that engenders new possibility.

4) From the social psychological viewpoint, it remains unclear how the described type of the postmodern self is meant to be so fundamentally anchored in social relationships or dialogs as called for in the above therapy concepts and in postmodern models of successful social existence. Taking up social relationships includes the ability of binding but also that of distancing (Argyle 1992). Hence participation in dialogical interactions also requires the ability and willingness to adopt and to communicate an “own,” to a certain extent coherent and continuous “position” (see Straub and Zielke 2005). In the case of a polyphonous self-construction without the possibility of relating the various self attempts to each other, the distinction between ego and alter would be hard to make and central concepts on the agenda of postmodern therapy approaches, such as social relationships and the goal of the “dialogical co-constitution” of meaning, would at least call for a clearer description.

5) Last, but not least, we must attribute members of postmodern societies, despite all the difference affinity and all the contingency awareness, with the possibility of resisting the demands of various contexts, and in our opinion that means even today: we must attribute them with the possibility to critically adopt their own biography. How else is a psychotherapy to avoid – contrary to the political and critical function of postmodern concept – becoming the handmaiden of the globalized and glocalized “achievement-oriented society”? How else is it to avoid teaching its patients certain postmodern “norms” of affirmed non-identity to be good, life-long mobile and completely flexible “self-presenters” (who then function smoothly in the socially and culturally highly differentiated globalized and glocalised, liberal-capitalist “world society”)?

According to the concept of a “transitoric identity,” psychotherapy – also in postmodern times – is fully entitled to see itself as guidance to self-searching in the sense of a critical adoption of one’s own life. This requires an autobiographical memory and working together on and with recollections. In the context of psychotherapy, imagination and creativity and also the courage to produce new self-views are just as important as the painstaking dealing with one’s own past. The insights of the postmodern rightly rule out fixation on a substantial self. And they render impossible the clear stating of a concrete, unalterable goal of successful identity formation. For good measure, they undermine the illusion that identity, continuity, coherence and hence autonomy could ever be fully and definitively reached. But they by no means render the paradoxically structured aspiration, the striving for identity superfluous or obsolete. Wanting to achieve what cannot be attained and is at best present in the mode of denial – and remaining calm in this paradoxical situation – is and remains probably one of the most pressing tasks for the postmodern self and its successors.

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4

Generative Inquiry in Therapy: From Problems to Creativity

DORA FRIED SCHNITMAN

I have directed Interfas since 1984. Originally a family therapy institute, it developed into a think-tank and a cultural organ used to disseminate innovative thinking and practices. In my work as a therapist I was concerned with how new possibilities could emerge in the therapeutic process. I wanted to find ways to use the resources that clients brought to bear on the process, ways to expand on and further what they were already doing well. In that context in the early nineties I found in the new, discursively oriented paradigms a meta-theory and a theory to sustain my academic interest and the development of my practice (Fried Schnitman and Schnitman 2002). My focus on a generative perspective was developed initially for therapy and then expanded to a range of diverse systemic perspectives and practices.

Within this framework, I called my perspective a generative process of dialogic creation, the gradual construction over time of something new by means of reflexive dialogue and conversational learning in human groups. The unfolding process is one in which persons or groups come to see, experience, describe and position themselves in a different way. This approach regards the creation of meaning, experience and knowledge as a constructive process in which specific events, acts and episodes have the potential power to transform patterns of social relationships from within. Episodes having the possibility to expand, transfer or create new meaning and practice become alternative nuclei that can develop into privileged contexts of interpretation and practice. In this perspective, inquiries focus on how these episodes are generated. How does something new emerge and consolidate to become a main context for practice or meaning? What are the discursive and social coordinations that foster these developments? Which are the contexts or conditions that facilitate the emergence and maintenance of new possibilities of meaning and action? (Fried Schnitman 1996).

I developed generative inquiry to increase clients' awareness of their resources, allowing them to recognize possibilities, opportunities and new avenues in their

lives. Generative inquiry involves an ethical positioning based on responsible self-involvement and collaborative co-participation; it has the potential to move us beyond the limits of what we say, think or do and expand our familiar embodied forms of life. Generative inquiry inspires people to find new descriptions, transform relationships, and help themselves and others cope with difficult or problematic circumstances. Therapists facilitate generative inquiry using conversation and language as means for connection, innovation, and alternative coordination of action. The process becomes transformative: participants leave reflecting on themselves, the process, and its results, and they notice a difference. This approach restores the view of persons in relationships as subject-agents who can harness their capacity to learn and innovate in order to handle the diverse problems that life presents. This process enables therapists to recognize and collaborate in the search for alternatives.

1 Innovation through Communication and Learning

Systemic family therapy presents a tradition of practices that operate on the extant and the emergent (Anderson 1997; Cecchin 2002; Fried Schnitman 1996; White and Epston 1990), as springboards for expanding possibilities. During the last twenty years, numerous systemic professionals have incorporated social constructionism, narrative theories and, more recently, dialogism, in the development of psychotherapeutic theories and interventions (Fried Schnitman 1996, 1998, 2002a, b; Gergen 1994, 1999; Goolishian and Anderson 2002; Hoffman 2002; Shotter 1993), as well as for organizational frameworks (Cooperrider 1990). From this perspective, dialogue and communication is a formative process that generates social worlds, knowledge, ways of coordinating actions, and experience of identities.

In these new models, communication is viewed as generative, facilitating a *co-constructed process* in which previously unimagined options for addressing problematic situations emerge, thus transforming the experience of the problem. Such transformation allows for creative action in reaching the client's goals. In this process, learning occurs when the participants explore the actions they have taken, the choices they have made, and the values that guided them and informed their choices.

Opportunities are opened up by generative spirals that can emerge in and through dialogue as well as from recycling, experimenting, and scaffolding learning into new knowledge. This entails being on the lookout for transformations that can gradually increase our alternatives and make a conversation take a productive turn. A generative cycle links learning and innovation through different types of constructive procedures. Those involving dialogue include:

- innovating by developing links in dialogue between thematic nodes,
- developing new themes (nodes) by transforming comments into themes or bringing different themes together,
- discovering the novel in and from the extant,

- introducing visions of the future, and reaffirming subjects as producers of knowledge and practices.
- formulating new meanings and narratives.

We can also construct through our ability to innovate and experiment, as well as by expanding our implicit knowledge or using it in innovative ways. In all these instances, we can expand the ability to improve our actions and/or comprehension as they take place.

If one is attentive, a generative cycle can be initiated from many different points: the capacity to innovate, for example, which has been widely explained in numerous articles and will be further illustrated below; unexpected events and transformations in a dialogue: rendering implicit knowledge explicit and/or using it in novel ways (Fried 1996, 2004; Fried Schnitman and Schnitman 2000a, b), and others. Regardless of the starting points, however, all generative cycles require observation, experimentation, reflection and recognition of innovation. Subjects experiment this process as an empowering source of novelty, well being and new resources. In all these instances we can expand the ability to improve our actions and comprehension as they take place. These generative actions are connected and together they produce learning and generative spirals.

2 Illustration of Starting Points for Generative Cycles in Dialogue Facilitation

At a seminar in a masters program in Conflict Management¹ I asked the students to present a case that had a surprisingly innovative outcome and to review it from a generative inquiry perspective.

One of the students relates that she worked with an indigenous community, experiencing community and cultural conflict: men and women were clashing on issues related to positions of power and responsibility in the community. The men were responsible for community issues and the women wanted to participate in decision making and hold positions in the community's organizational network. The women had organized work groups aimed at reviewing the role of women.

With complete respect for the community's culture, the mediator met with both groups (men and women). In the meeting with the men, she asked them how they imagined their daughters' future and how they would like it to be. (*Through her question, the mediator starts a generative cycle through innovation and also the possibility of constructing a desired future*). The men used this question to reflect seriously on issues like women's efficacy in household management. They concluded that if women were good at administration and decision making

¹ Latin American-European Master in Mediation. Institut Universitaire Kurt Bösch, Universidad Católica de Salta, Universitat de Barcelona, with Universidad del Aconcagua, Universidad Nacional de Rosario, Universidad de Buenos Aires and Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires.

at home they would also bring those skills to bear in public matters. (*The men encounter the novel through their implicit knowledge about women's abilities which then starts a generative cycle and further innovation*).

The mediator formulated another question: Do you remember that until the 1950s, all natives in Bolivia, regardless of gender, were not considered citizens? (*The mediator promotes further links between these two significant issues: women's and citizenships rights. She combined and reaffirmed community members as subjects who were also able to promote further changes starting both from implicit knowledge and innovations*). The deliberation continued and the men changed their position: they agreed to women's participation and decision making in the community's network and even in the city itself (*women became a part of the City Council*). Indeed, in some cases more women than men participated in decision-making bodies.

The groups of women spontaneously changed their confrontational attitude. Some time later the mediator was invited to a tribal ceremony in which the women dressed her in keeping with tribal costumes. She was asked to sit at the front in the space used for deliberations. The mediator says that although she had felt very satisfied with her work at the time, until now she had not seen the different starting point, resources and processes that promoted transformations with such clarity in these generative cycles. (*By revising the unfolding of events she, like the community, recognizes herself as a person capable of promoting these processes and so did the community*).

3 Illustration of a Generative Cycle in Conversations with Children and Families

This case involves two therapists working with an Argentine family that lives in Florida. In the first interview with the parents, they expressed concern about their son's symptoms. Nicolas was a four-year-old boy who refused to sleep in his own bed all night so his mother ended up sleeping with him. The child did not want to defecate in the toilet but on diapers and insisted on keeping his soiled diapers on afterwards. Both parents felt that it was inappropriate. His father became particularly upset with the situation; he understood it as a lack of boundaries, which he could not deal with effectively.

They also presented an account of their emigration and the painful events experienced by the family during the last few years. They spoke of the difficulties of raising children without support from an extended group of relatives.

Like thousands of others, the family emigrated from Argentina to Florida during the 2001 crisis. After two miscarriages, the mother became pregnant; she was two months pregnant with Nicolas when they left Argentina.

Once in Florida, after Nicolas's birth the mother became pregnant again. This was a complicated pregnancy that required several emergency hospitalizations. The mother was confined to bed rest for a portion of the pregnancy. In the end, a daughter was born prematurely, though she developed normally.

The struggles between the father and son regarding boundaries and the problems that his sleeping difficulties were creating between the parents were causing more and more tension and conflict.

Th.: I am moved by your account of family events. You have faced all these challenges with courage and integrity (*The therapist focuses on resources in the face of situations they were able to face successfully*).

The mother responded by crying and the father with relief.

(*Therapists have a choice when it comes to constructing meaning and identifying resources; here, it was crucial to emphasize the family's successes and ability to overcome significant challenges together.*)

Th.: In my view, Nicolas's difficulties are expressing anxiety about the many losses and changes the family has experienced. I suggest that you see Mariel, a child psychologist- we work together- just to make sure that this is an appropriate view of Nicolas's situation. Our aim is to work towards constructing a positive future environment where you do not suffer additional pain, stress or tension, but have an opportunity to select and enact what is best and desirable developmentally. After you see the child psychologist, we will have an interview together before you go back to Florida.

Nicolas comes to the interview with the child psychologist and both parents. All of his developmental parameters are normal, as are his social skills. Nicolas arrives at the interview with a good attitude; he is happy and vivacious, and he explores the office by looking around, picking up objects and toys and making comments. He chooses a ball with flags printed on it and twists it around. He discovers the Argentine and United States flags and shows them, enthusiastically, to his parents and the therapist.

Th.: Nicolas! How quickly you found the flags you know! Your mom and dad had already told me how smart you are and how fast you learn. (*The therapist initiates a cycle from comments and implicit knowledge she had from the parents. She transforms the parents' comments into main topics in order to explore alternatives. She notices the child's pride and expression of triumph when he finds the flags and also makes this into a central topic from which to look for previously unnoticed possibilities*).

Th.: Would you like to learn some other things that are a little harder for you, like sleeping in your own bed all night and pooping in the toilet? Don't you think you would be more comfortable that way?

(*N. nods. The therapist invites the child to initiate new generative cycles and the child accepts.*)

Th.: Do those things seem very hard to learn?

(*N. shows his uncertainty with hand and head gestures.*)

(*The therapist synthesizes different topics; she suggests actively innovating and involves in sleeping and pooping contexts as developmental challenges co-creating a future for the family and the child that includes an active search for resources and solutions in confronting difficulties. She is supporting her*

intervention in knowledge she has about resources. She makes use of the pleasure Nicolas shows when he makes discoveries on the ball).

Th.: Ok, let's think about who can help you to make friends with the bed and the bathroom and how they can help you. I have an idea. *(She proposes innovations and experiments)* Think about how you would like to have your bed, your sheets, pillows, stuffed animals and other things that you like or think you might like with you when you go to sleep. We can do the same thing with the bathroom, trying out seats that are more comfortable than diapers.

The parents contribute ideas. They propose including aunts and uncles and grandparents who can give Nicolas the things that might help him meet these goals. *(The parents, the therapist and Nicolas construct new visions of the future by discovering both the novel in the extant and reaffirming the family members as subjects capable and innovative. A different emotionality emerges).*

Parents and grandparents report that in a few weeks there were significant changes in Nicolas's behavior; he is happier, more active and he has made progress. He has reorganized his bedroom with his mother. He sleeps in his bed alone even though he can visit the parents' room a couple of times on his way to bed. He no longer wears diapers and has entered into the sea of what he was afraid to do before *(We can see an emerging future with the resources and reaffirmation of the participants).*

The mother decided that it was time for her to go back to work. She is an architect who loves her work and will restart her career in interior design. Learning does not stop with our action. On the contrary, action initiates innovative cycles since we can reflect on what works and what doesn't. A generative cycle could be facilitated in therapy, but people are capable of developing these cycles spontaneously. It is important to be aware and alert to the cycles that are initiated by the clients themselves as they appear in the clients' narration.

4 Illustration of the Steps in a Generative Process in the Treatment of a Couple in Crisis

This case involves a young couple who comes to the consultation due to violent situations and constant and ongoing arguments. They speak of their concern about the arguments and violence, and the exhaustion that it produces. Although they want to stay together, one of the options that they consider is separation, which they see as both a relief and a failure. Both husband and wife are professionals, and they have been married for a few years after having been together for several years. Both perform well at demanding jobs in prestigious companies. Their lives are riddled with unhappiness. They are looking for new horizons educationally and professionally, and another emotional environment for their relationship.

During the first stage, the therapy centered on clarifying problematic issues and on possible, as well as chosen, courses of action. It attempted to differentiate

personal possibilities and to position the couple proactively in relation to the specific conflicts that they formulated. The therapy worked to produce the ability to recognize the efforts being made towards a resolution that, paradoxically and despite their interest, ended up in arguments that worsened the crisis. For example, the arguments that each one used imposed a rigid consensus, the denial of the other in reciprocal positions. They could not recognize their participation in the escalation. This dynamic threw the relationship off course and they lost their potential as a couple. In short, the resources that they put into play to actively sustain the relationship ended up escalating the conflicts.

In conflicts where the relationship is in crisis, I suggest that the therapist facilitate generative cycles that allow each member of the couple to find new forms of joint action and a new intelligibility. To do so, it is necessary to explore aspects related to the interest in continuing the relationship (knowing what they want to do, their affection for each other, how they relate, their commitment to each other and to the relationship, and the format that the relationship can take and how they wish the relationship to be). When the clients deem it appropriate, it is also necessary to consider the possibility of a temporary or permanent separation. The collaborative creation of new agreements about basic premises and commitments is reached through the unfolding of implicit knowledge and an expressed desire, commitment and ability to innovate.

Generative questions are used to begin this non-linear process, and their implementation is also explored through questions. In this case, for example, a simple question was: would both of you be interested in continuing the relationship and in making a reciprocal commitment? (*Knowing what they want and framing possible roads and emerging visions*) Under what conditions would you chose separation as a solution? (*Identifying implicit knowledge, exploring alternatives that they might consider and knowing what and how*) What would a relationship you feel you could be in be like? (*Knowing what the relationship would have to be like leads to knowing what conditions allow them to create this new type of relationship*). This series of questions allows for a recognition of alternatives that have been considered – whether implicit or explicitly – and, based on their responses and dialogues about these alternative, it is possible to imagine possible futures and an emerging relationship.

On the basis of their collaborative production, each one's responses, agreements and commitments are established about new ways of organizing the relationship. These agreements and commitments make up a new matrix to construct meanings and actions. Both respond that, though they have considered separating, they want to stay together because they love each other and because they would experience the separation as a failure.

After this investigation and agreement comes another issue related to the interest and commitment to contributing to change (*a sequence that will clarify generative possibilities and perhaps increase the communal and collaborative conscience*). The questions were: How do you think each of you can contribute to this situation? What options do you have when a fight is about to begin? (*Knowing how by making implicit knowledge explicit*). Surprisingly, both had

answers (*they knew how*) and could recognize the options before engaging in a fight i.e., that the dynamic of the crisis was stronger than they were. On this basis, they reached a third agreement about ways of handling differences and what criteria and measures they could implement to choose an alternative approach. Would you both be interested and committed to doing what you think might work instead of what you usually do? They both committed to carrying out this alternative.

The therapist starts a sequence to explore the implementation of all the innovations that the couple recognized as possible. Would you agree to perform an experiment for a week, just a week? The experiment would consist of putting into practice the resources produced in the session and in observing and exploring the difference between the usual situation and the ones that could be produced during the week based on the new knowledge, agreements and commitments made. When a sequence is initiated by the therapist, it is very important to explore the interest and willingness of the clients to work in this direction. A collaborative approach could utilize experiments or explorations such as this one if the clients also include themselves as part of the production of the small experiment. A consensus was reached through a question: Would you like to do it? They accept and commit.

The hope was that by starting with this experiment, perhaps they could begin to construct an alternative future based on the recognition of innovations realized and the capacity to produce new innovations. The implementation and sustaining of the already realized innovations would allow for recognition of the degree to which this alternative could be viable.

This type of sequence is geared towards creating conditions that allow the couple to recognize and confront crisis, and contribute to the choice of an alternative course instead of leaving it to chance. If this procedure is successful, it could be used to explore each problematic situation or situation that leads to arguments. At the next session, we worked on what had happened during the week. They performed the experiment, effecting change by making explicit implicit knowledge [*Each one knew what resources they had to use to stop fighting*]. They implemented the alternative, observed and recognized the differences [*The week was calm and productive, they did not fight*]. Comparing this week with the others, the therapist asked which one was better. They responded that this week was much better. Not only were they more relaxed and able not to fight, but they reflected on important issues for each one's future. The next question was how they wanted life to be, as it was this week or as it had been before, (when they were fighting incessantly) and, if they considered it possible to keep on implementing what they had done the better week in subsequent weeks. They reflected and positively assessed the results. They recognized that they could innovate and were satisfied with their capacity to do so.

This capacity to innovate expands on the possibility to create different life conditions. Thus, the generative cycle is completed. The clients are able to recognize indicators of change and their own agency in generating that change, as well as new resources.

In summary, an assessment of the personal, existential and relational advantages and disadvantages of the changes recorded during the week is performed session by session, and these changes are jointly evaluated by therapists and clients. By comparing them to earlier situations all participants assess the transformations. The response of each member of this couple was that the blaming and mistreatment had ceased. This left each more space to reflect on their respective place and allowed them to understand and/or respond differently [*Increase recognition of oneself, the other, communal conscience and emergent identities*]. They could recognize indicators of change and new possibilities generated by new experiences in different areas of life [*Recognition of innovations and their maintenance completes the generative cycle*]. The husband reported that he had more time to think about important problems for him as a person; the wife said she was calmer and had greater possibilities at work. Both recognized the innovations and changes which each of them and the other had made, as well as the fact that they could carry out and implement such changes [*Recognition of each other and emerging resources and emerging identities are identified*].

Other events that they could actively innovate took place during that week. They specified their individual interests, then reached a joint decision and individual choices about the future, after which they began to take the steps necessary to implement that decision. These visions of a future clearly emerged from the experiment that they realized. They also said that not fighting allowed them to move ahead in their projects. With their resources, they were able to develop this new generative matrix; they could work on the specific relationship or personal difficulties.

In later sessions, they reported that they could finish their applications, innovate the handling of their daily lives, and hold conversations with key people in their academic and work environments. Eight months after the initial interview, things were still on track.

A therapist's initiative comes to life only when the clients incorporate them in specific actions.

In handling a crisis and facilitating a generative matrix, professionals can take more initiatives when they have the explicit agreement of the participants; they must work actively in the construction of premises and possibilities.

The active role of the therapist and the importance of any initiative has been indicated in the research of Janet Beavin Bavelas et al. (2000), who maintain that all professional participation implies an active intervention. As Bavelas and collaborators state, although a therapist may be able to choose how to participate, one can not avoid participating. In other publications, I have argued that some generative movements are the result of the professional's initiative. Yet, the professional initiative is framed by the conversation in course, and the process and purposes of therapy as stated by the clients. In crisis situations, the therapist's generative function becomes particularly significant. The therapist works within the framework provided by the clients, actively offering professional and personal resources. It should be stressed that a generative effort that is not agreed on by the clients is not ethical.

5 Generative Inquiry and Transformative Dialogue

I developed generative inquiry as a set of theoretical and practical guidelines to facilitate emerging possibilities in dialogical process (Fried Schnitman 2004; Fried Schnitman and Schnitman 2000a, b). This section's specific focus is on generative questions, which are used to explore the construction and recognition of resources. The questions expand participants' abilities to recognize what they have done well, on the one hand, and the available resources, whether implicit or explicit, on the other. These questions are used in a dialogical and relational process to inspire innovation and novelty and to enhance knowledge and possibilities. The questions foster experimentation, discovery, learning, and effective communication. Through generative inquiry, we are able to move towards expanded resources; a new matrix of meaning and practices; personal, relational and organizational enrichment, as well as innovation and change.

Generative questions have many purposes and can be used in a variety of situation. These questions are not intended to be used as a script but to inspire practitioners to think of questions that might be helpful to facilitate therapeutic dialogue. Generative questions have many goals, including facilitating the recognition of generative possibilities; expanding the ability of participants to recognize the novel; inviting them to identify and reflect upon generative cycles; and formulate with clarity – at some point in the process – who and what the subject-agents are. These questions help identify possibilities for new action.

I also employ a range of generative questions to identify implicit knowledge. By recognizing what they know and what they don't about problems, differences and/or possible solutions, participants create platforms for change. For example, *knowing how* is typically a type of knowledge that is implicit in an action; we "know" without thinking about the knowledge explicitly. This implicit knowledge can be made explicit by incorporating descriptions and reflections about a given action.

To illustrate generative work in action I offer two cases. The first, which involves a six-year old boy who could not control his defecation, illustrates how his therapist enabled him to recognize what he did know and apply it to that problem. This process shows how the client was able to solve this particular problem and use his new skills in other contexts (asking various teachers for certain changes, for example). A new positioning of himself in different contexts was facilitated; he became freer and fuller, as if he possessed a new self-agency.

6 A Case of Generative Inquiry in a Dialogue with the Body²

This case involves an upper middle class, six year old boy whose problem was encapsulated in an inability to control his defecation. He refused to speak about this topic, thus cutting off the possibility of learning and of transferring what he

² The therapist is Dr. María Elena Gandolla de Czertok (Fried Schnitman and Gandolla de Czertok 2000).

had learned about his body in other areas of life. In the description of this case, we will use underlying or highlighting, which allows the reader to accompany the dialogue, like a spiral of dialogues in which the participants construct themselves and each other. This process entails moving from a theory of reception to a theory of the construction of responses in listening. This is what a co-participating observer, like a therapist, does in the process of participating and constructing. In this therapeutic process, the therapist expands the client's resources for registering bodily signals and dialogue with the self. She also operates by favoring learning circuits. She reframes the problem and the solution in developmental terms, and helps the client to recycle his resources for a different dialogue with his own body. The therapist accompanies him in the construction of resources that allow for a better performance: mainly, resolving what is urgent in a context.

The parents make an appointment at the suggestion of their pediatrician. They describe the child as intelligent, happy, curious and active. He is sweet and not spoiled, and he plays a great deal, both alone and with classmates and with other adults.

The only problem is that he still cannot control his defecation and he lets them know that he is concerned, by saying "it escaped me." Without making a fuss, he allows himself to be cleaned up and changed. He does not want to talk about this topic with anyone.

In the course of the conversation, the parents ask me what they should say to Gastón about the consultation.

Th.: Can we try now? Using your own words, what would be the clearest and simplest way to tell him? [*Small experiment to increase the resources for knowing how to speak about; this helps them to recognize how they could respond, explore the resources they have*]

Parents: We are going to see a child psychologist to see if we can solve the pooping problem.

Gastón arrives to the interview with his mom. He greets me smiling and relaxed. Together, they come into the office. He takes everything in, makes some comments, and approaches a low table with paper and drawing materials.

His first drawing is a very nice house rich in detail. It has a landscape and a curved horizon line. He explains that now he draws it like that because a classmate taught him how.

Th.: That's a very nice drawing. Few six-year olds who have just started first grade know how to draw like you . . . How about making up a story for this drawing? Who lives there, what do they do? [*The therapist initiates a conversation that Gastón then refuses to follow. The therapist pays close attention to his response.*]

Gastón: No . . . (He begins to make another drawing. He goes back to the one of the house, looks at me and adds a sign that says: "For Sale or Rent") [*Elaborating by shutting down the topic*]

I take his comment as a sign not to advance, not to move further. I think that Gastón is testing to see if I will follow him, listen to him, and not be intrusive

when he does not want to respond. I do not ask any more questions or make any suggestions, thus letting Gastón guide the conversation. He talks to his mother and with me. He enjoys the conversation and, spontaneously or at his mother's suggestion, he tells stories about his classmates and his cousin, whom he criticizes for being very bossy.

Thus, three sessions are spent playing, drawing, cleverly mimicking characters from television shows, his teachers, his grandmother, and others. A friendly and cordial atmosphere is established; we laugh a lot and he calls me over frequently to tell me things or ask me questions. He watches his mother carefully when, after a moment of silence, she starts up a conversation (I think she does this to keep us from talking about defecation).

In the next session, after the usual update on the week's events, I tell him that there is something I know he has asked his mother not to talk about. But that I, like everyone else, am concerned about it, and we do not have much longer to take care of it. In this situation, there is implicit knowledge: the parents had told Gastón that I was a child psychologist [who knew about children] and that together we would try to solve the pooping problem. This time Gastón will follow me in the conversation. How do I know that I have a green light to move ahead when I did not before? I take as an indicator the fact that Gastón seems quite comfortable in the therapy room (he moves around, explores, uses the materials available and makes eye contact and verbal contact). How long it takes to reach this level of engagement in conversation varies according to the child, and closely monitoring this engagement allows the therapist to assess when the time has come to introduce a new topic. Insofar as therapy is a collaborative endeavor, it is crucial that the therapist be able to articulate when and how to introduce a new idea especially when the client does not want to speak about a given topic. [*The therapist changes the course of the conversation by furthering a new topic based on a comment made by the parents: it is a worrisome topic that must be resolved in a given timeframe. Thus, she contributes to constructing a future vision.*]

Th.: Now, you and your classmates are "facing similar situations." You are all starting first grade. Some of them have been your friends since kindergarten, other new ones are starting this year and, of course, they all experience different things. Maybe some of them pee in their pants, others miss their mommies and daddies and cry, their tummies hurt or they want to go home, or they don't want to go to school, they get bored of having to stay seated, they get tired of writing [*The therapist introduces a new topic- the beginning of elementary school and the reactions of the other children- which places Gastón's problem in a developmental and social framework; there are certain tasks and moments that are difficult for children, and they express this difficulty in a variety of ways. Gastón takes up the topic and a series of elaborative comments are produced. The therapist draws attention to another way of considering the topic and its resolution. She expands the possibilities of dialogue by recognizing and expressing shared interests, thus maintaining a collabora-*

tive attitude. Together, they explore doubts and uncertainties, and the therapist's own contribution is considered just one of the many possibilities.]

Gastón listens to me carefully and agrees that what I have said is true, that all of these things happen. Surprised, he looks at me and asks:

G.: And how do you know this? [*He confirms his participation and allows the conversation to continue. This response is very different from the initial shutting down, or the hegemonic control of the channel.*]

Th.: Because I know a lot about kids and I know that it is hard to learn so many new things at once. (Gastón then relates the different difficulties that some of his classmates have had or have.) [*He elaborates by confirming with different comments*]

Th.: Yes, these are not pleasant things, and we have to hurry along so that you learn to leave your poop in the bathroom, or else I don't think you are going to be very comfortable . . . [*The therapist links thematic nodes that have already been established – the time-space context, school – and frames them in terms of resources for Gastón's own care and comfort. Next, a sequence is started in which Gastón can learn by reflexively revising his own processes. He links his recognition of signals, indicators and knowledge. When the child knows what he knows and how he knows it, he can know about knowledge and convey it.*]

G.: I can't, I don't know how, it escapes me!

Th.: (After a moment of silence) Do you know when you are hungry? (Gastón remains silent) [*A sequence begins where the therapist helps the child recycle his resources and knowledge about what his body tells him. She would explore know how, know what, know about and know about himself and how to position himself in context.*]

Th.: Do you know when you are cold?

G.: Yes.

Th.: Do you know when you are sleepy, when you are hot, when you are thirsty, when a mosquito has stung you?

G.: Yes.

Th.: Do you know why you know? [*The therapist proposes a new topic through a question. Knowing how and knowing about knowledge*]

G.: No . . .

Th.: Because your body tells you. We all have a body that tells us and a tummy that tells us when the poop wants to come out, and so we go to the bathroom. We leave it there and that's it . . . And how does this work for you? Doesn't your tummy tell you? Or don't you listen to it? [*She summarizes and puts him in dialogue with his own body.*]

G.: Yes, I hear it.

Th.: So, how about if you pay close attention to your tummy and when your tummy tells you, you RUN and BEAT it, and leave the poop in the bathroom like everyone else? [*She helps him to recycle his resources and put them into action. The therapist focuses on the emerging possibilities in order to help him to recognize how he could respond and to assess what he could do.*]

The flow of the conversation between Mariel and Gastón shows how this is a collaborative process where each participant includes the other and the comments made to construct new knowledge and resources. The next two sessions are very much like the others. Gastón makes some complaints, saying that playing with his grandmother is boring because she always lets him win. We speak of thinking up solutions: one would be to look for new games with his grandmother, games that are equally difficult for both of them.

At the beginning of the next session, he is standing on the third step of a staircase that connects that waiting room with the office. He calls out to me in a vibrant voice:

G.: Mariel! ¡Mariel! (Triumphant, he continues). I won! I beat the poop once and for all! [*In a generative process, the restoration of skills is promoted. The acquisition of resources is the focus, considering the fact that people can recognize themselves as proactive subjects in the resolution of their problems. In latter sequences, the child is able to resolve other situations using the proper resources.*]

Th.: Congratulations!

Once in the office, I asked him if it had been difficult to win [*Recognizing one's own resources*]. Without stopping what he was doing, he answers me with a gesture that says "more-or-less." [*He could dissolve the boundaries between his abilities and his difficulty.*]

Once a connection and collaboration have been established, they will increase as the child discovers and tests the therapist's genuine interest in what happens to him and what he thinks about what happens to him. In the following interviews, new topics emerged related to his social activities, proposals for new activities, opportunities to visit classmates at their homes, and complaints about the music teacher when he musters the courage to suggest including his favorite songs in the repertoire.

During this time, I witnessed the beginning of a new experience of him in a context. Although apparently the contexts in which he spent his days were the same, now his position was different, freer and fuller. It was as if he possessed a new self-agency.

Later, in an interview, I asked him:

Th.: Gastón, you always tell me what places are like, and you never told me about the bathrooms at school. It occurs to me that for you these bathrooms must be something new because you did not use them before. [*The therapist embarks on the exploration of a novel context*]

G.: They are nice, but they have a problem. There is a string to flush the toilets but it is very short, and shorter kids like me can not reach it. We have a stand on top of that thing (the toilet) to be able to flush. [*Knowing about oneself in a context includes knowing and expressing a problem*]

Th.: Is that very uncomfortable? Could you tell the teacher? [*It is possible to talk about what can or must be resolved and about the resources necessary to do so*]

- G.: Hmm . . . I don't know . . . how could I tell her? [*Exploring knowing how and knowing how to talk about*]
- Th.: Let's think. Would you like to talk to her about it? If not, whom could you ask to help you tell the teacher about this? (He is quiet, thinking. Then, picking up a piece of paper and a magic marker that he puts in my hand, he suggests:)
- G.: Let's write a letter (you dictate it and I write). Tomorrow, I will give it to the teacher.

Later, he proudly tells me about the success of his idea. "Two!! They put longer strings on two toilets!" [*Sequence of links between "knowings" that allow the child to become an agent*]

Gastón illustrates knowing how; the next example illustrates *knowing what*, which has a slightly different logic. *Knowing what* provides a framework for visualizing possible futures and creating contexts for communication and consensus with others. In *knowing how*, as we have seen with Gastón, the change resides in self-agency in what may be the same situations, in re-positioning and implementation knowledge and competences. If the process is started from *knowing what*, its unfolding in specific actions will make the emerging possibilities concrete. It has a different relationship to the materialization of possibilities or alternatives. Adjustments and modifications gradually transform both the imagined and the encountered effects. Thus, new perspectives, practices, experiences and descriptions can become *indicators* of the emerging as we illustrate in the following consultation.

7 A Case of Post-Divorce Family Re-organization

The second case of generative intervention emerged from a training program I did in Porto Alegre, Brazil several years ago. The family involved was poor, though not poverty stricken. The mother, Maria, connected her roles as mother with her concern and responsibility for the children: she knew what was best for them and was working in that direction. One central node in this consultation was her relationship with Analía (her daughter), and her difficulties- or perceived difficulties- in expressing affection. This node includes notions of expressing affection that will later be taken up and re-signified by the therapist.

In a generative process, one is attentive to what plants possibilities that can later be harvested as an alternative. One pays close attention to comments that can become thematic nodes/new themes as well as reframing old themes that might open up alternatives. In terms of the client's outlook and mood, this process works with variations, and it is important to recognize which resources the client finds that might allow for a successful transition from a state of discouragement to an improved outlook.

The key to this interview was a narrative transformation that allowed the client to recover resources, to recycle stereotyped meanings of maternal care and to recognize the ramifications of her task as mother in the post-divorce transition to being head of the family. In the interview the mother was able to identify her

actions as positive resources in child care, thus opening up generative possibilities for an emerging perspective of herself as a mother.

The family was referred by an educational institution. The information available about them before the interview was minimal: a daughter had been in individual therapy, after repeating a year of school, the parents were separated, and the school had proposed family therapy. The session was attended by María (the mother, age 34), Analía (the daughter, age 10), and Joaquín (the son, age 4).

Therapist: How do you think this interview could be useful to you? [*Make explicit her implicit expectations*]

Maria: I would like to improve my relationship with Analía and feel less discouraged. [*The answer contains agency and intention, taking care of her relationship with her daughter and of herself is a frame to find possible roads in the relationship*]. (While she is speaking, the two children are playing, aware of the conversation). A little over two years ago, I separated from my husband because I thought that the separation would be good for the kids (. . .) I moved back in with my mother, who helped me a lot. (Throughout the account, she seems to be exhausted, in pain and even somewhat disoriented). My ex-husband does not help out economically. To support my family, I have two jobs and I take care of the kids. I work twenty-eight days a month. I was feeling very bad, down in the dumps, very tired. I took medication until I decided that it was not a good example for the kids, that they were small and needed their mother to be around for much longer. [*Spontaneous innovation initiated by the mother which will be further explored as generative seeds for emerging possibilities and resources*] I am doing better now, though I still have problems sometimes, and occasionally I take medication . . . [*She is actively assessing the results of her initiative, pondering the effects and the indicators of different outlooks.*]

Th: How were you able to improve your outlook, what helped you to do so? [*The intervention recognizes and describes emerging possibilities and new knowledge, inquires into which resources she implemented and could use again in the effort to improve her state. It also invites the client to recognize her knowledge (knowing what/how/about herself in context).*]

M.: When I was able to talk to my co-workers, to goof around with them, forget myself, stop thinking all the time. I still feel discouraged from time to time.

Th.: When you feel discouraged, what makes you feel that way? [*Knowing about the difference between processes and contexts that construct positive and negative outcomes could become a resource for framing possible roads and emerging visions of self, transformative knowledge.*]

M.: When I feel very tired and everything at work weighs me down (she indicates her fatigue physically) (. . .) the problem with Analía is that

I cannot demonstrate affection (she makes a gesture of caressing). Her father can do it, and I am afraid that she will leave me and go with him when she gets older. Analía is too attached to him. The psychologist that we used to see made us sit together and made me caress her. There I was able to do it, but at home afterwards I couldn't, it was the same. [*The school psychologist, the culture and experts suggest that maternal affection be expressed in a certain way, and in the face of that notion she is deficient; she cannot do it and is afraid of the consequences. When the idea of a deficit is installed, it is difficult for mother and daughter to re-signify or re-construct options for a good relationship. She manifests her fear of losing her daughter as a consequence of this deficit. Her present narrative of her identity as a mother does not include her efforts. The therapist will be attentive to other possible description of motherhood.*]

Th.: What do you think makes it hard for you to approach Analía? [*The therapist invites her to explore her experience, to expand her comments about the problem, the relationship, and the display of affection*]

M.: She is always talking to me about her father and I can not, I can not listen to her because I can not hear anyone speak of him. I loved him too much, but he did terrible things to me in front of her. I left him for the children, and now I am very angry with him [*She expands her descriptions and her motives and works out the context and the difficulty.*]

Th.: If Analía did not speak to you about her father or if he were not in the middle in some way (she makes a hand gesture indicating the space between them) would it be easier for you? [*The therapist works with mother on alternatives that might open relational and personal possibilities and from there, transform a problem into a possible path.*]

M.: Yes (she nods).

Th.: Could you consider that a mother who works very hard twenty-eight days a month, who has two jobs to support her children, is a mother concerned with her children, a mother who takes care of them [*This intervention and the following are based on different comments the mother has made throughout the interview. The therapist invites the mother to consider her previous comments in an appreciative manner; she formulates them as thematic nodes that, when linked, can be organized into central themes that offer a different intelligibility about motherhood. The idea is that this might facilitate an emerging identity for the client, a vision of the different ways of caring for children, and help her advance towards a narrative of a positive vision of herself, a vision in which she has resources. Insofar as the kids are listening, the question opens up opportunities to expand the communal and collaborative conscience.*]

M.: (Surprised, she nods; she smiles, pleased). [*The mother recognizes and accepts this possibility as an opening. The therapist recognizes the*

acceptance of this re-signifying as a possible path. Thus, reflexive cycles of recognition and evaluation of what has been built in the process take shape; these milestones gradually construct the process.]

Th: Could you accept that when you take care of yourself you are taking care of the mother of your children and that- as you said- the children need their mother for much longer and so it is important that you take care of yourself? [*She takes up and reworks the mother's earlier comments, making them into a node wherein caring for the children implies the mother caring for herself. By harvesting the client's previous comments, the therapist expands the narrative of positive identity and a caring relationship.*]

M.: (She nods with a broader smile) I never saw it that way before. [*An alternative begins to crystallize as a new vision*]

Here, generative questions allowed this client to experience herself differently. She could conceive of herself as a good mother because she could adjust pre-existing ideas of motherhood to fit with her skills and resources in a new family situation.

8 The Generative Process in Motion

In generative inquiry, the participants produce new connections and understandings in dialogue, increasing their capacity to identify the novel by exploring what they know in unprecedented ways. Participants frequently recognize and describe the steps that lead to results, linking them to options, choices and diverse possibilities. Of particular interest is the relationship between actions and descriptions. When people reflect upon actions by describing them, this process opens new possibilities because it makes the implications of the actions clearer.

Comparing similarities and differences between actions, descriptions, experiences, results and contexts reveals a sort of *blue print* that accounts for the actions taken and the knowledge acquired; it is an endpoint rather than a point of departure, since it is constructed during the process.

Generative inquiry requires one to proceed with rigor, staying open to all evidence, even to failure. Unexpected, unintentional effects, as well as refutation and resistance, also provide valuable information to orient the process. Thus, if the hypotheses, frames or motions prove inadequate or untimely (as we saw in Gastón's case), the professional needs to reflect on this and find new ways to understand the situation.

When the participants in a generative process in therapy actively inquire as the process is taking place, their experimentation is exploratory; it entails testing hypotheses and procedures. In practice, active inquiry is a learning process in a given situation. Generative inquiry during the process is not, however, the only possibility for active inquiry; participants can utilize generative inquiry after the process has been completed. Whenever generative inquiry occurs, what

is learned about new possibilities and expressions of self in relationships affects action. We learn to recognize, to see difference – novelty – and in so doing, we learn to inquire *a posteriori* about these moments in order to increment our resources.

The roads designed depend on previous movements and on the projection of future possibilities. The relationship to the situation is always dialogical, transactional and transformative: what we try to understand is, at the same time, what we are constructing or transforming, and the situation is understood, precisely, as we try to change it, giving rise to a process of investigation in action and the acquisition of new knowledge.

9 A Generative Position

In a generative context, communication/learning reconfigures the place of each participant. The participant becomes a member of a collaborative team³ that learns from its own processes, a community interested in, and capable of, inquiring into both convergence and difference, using diversity and conflict generatively to develop resources or to create possibilities.

The solution to problems becomes fieldwork conducted by these collaborative teams of professionals and participants, or participants themselves outside the therapy context. They research *in action*, in order to better understand the spectrum of alternatives available and the novel resources they bring with them. In the case of Gastón cited above, when the therapist asked the client how he would like to communicate to the teacher the problem with the toilet flush, she was proposing a small experiment in a collaborative context (mainly, the context of therapy). His response- asking her to help him write a letter- demonstrates the importance of collaboration. In a process that integrates resolution and creativity, the participants can go through previous experiences and select what has been useful and what can be recycled, transformed. They reflect on this process – what is happening, what opportunities are available, what procedure is adequate, what they want for themselves and for the others involved. They propose alternatives that will potentially enrich the experience of all the participants. They perform small experiments designed to test those alternatives. They learn by observing and trying new possibilities and skills.

Participants in this type of process not only engage their emotional lives in new ways, they also recuperate power if they reaffirm each other as capable of generating options, learning and advancing in the direction they intend. Thus, they can recognize, evaluate, modify and experience their operational possibilities at different levels: they can review their responses and the selection of alternatives by evaluating the context, as well as by examining their constructions and

³ I provide an example in therapy, although I use the same approach in training and education (Fried Schnitman and Schnitman 1998), conflict management (Fried Schnitman and Schnitman 2000a, b), organizational consulting.

constructive processes. They recognize the models, guidelines and criteria by which these constructions are produced, as well as the purposes and values that organize their perceptions and actions. Through this process, they come closer to aspects of learning and feeling such as understanding, strategizing, implementing, becoming aware of, and monitoring what they initiate. They also acquire abilities for the reflection and construction that characterize transformative processes. They learn how to learn. They have the possibility of finding solutions and new procedures and of transforming their circumstances and themselves through learning.

10 Ethical Perspectives and Generative Processes

When we work beyond the limits of the resources we have and move towards generative possibilities, we facilitate the emergence of new realities and forms of life. I presented discursive, narrative and learning resources working on the assumption that language and reality are reciprocally constitutive. The instruments are based on discourse, narrative and learning and support the subjects' capacity to create.

Félix Guattari (2002) formulated what he called a new aesthetic paradigm. He reflected on the techno-science cultural narrative in which human creativity is primarily limited to artistic endeavors. In his formulation of a new aesthetic paradigm, he expanded this creative capacity to other realms of human life, such as natural and social sciences, economy, management, entrepreneurship, community work, daily life, psychotherapy, and education. I proposed, in this and other articles, that it is possible to empower people to explore and participate in the creation of their own future by bringing this creative dimension into their daily practice of life (Fried Schnitman 1996, 2002a).

The generative perspective proposal also relates to ethics. Silvia Rivera, an Argentine philosopher whose current research explores the relationship between language and ethics in Wittgenstein's work, elaborates further on this matter. Rivera (2001) suggests that although the *Tractatus* (Wittgenstein 1979) is most often connected with an analysis of language, it can also be considered a book on ethics. According to Rivera, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* implies that we cannot speak about ethics, but only exercise it by examining the assumptions inherent in the limits of the language we use. After a ten-year silence, Wittgenstein returned to the topic of ethics in *Philosophical Investigations* (1988), where he proposed that we participate in multiple intertwined language games⁴ that are diverse, complex, and connected through tight webs of words and actions. These games have a constitutive force to shape the forms of relational life in which we are inserted.

Ethics then becomes a constant exercise of reflection on how we construct meaning and how we open up spaces for re-creating meanings. It entails new

⁴ "I will also use 'language game' to refer to everything formed by language and the action with which it is interwoven". (Wittgenstein 1988, p. 25).

ways of coordinating actions and intelligibilities through re-signifying our forms of life. Re-significations are the work of subjects in relation, co-evolving together. As we have seen in all examples presented, the transformations that took place carried the participants beyond the limits of the world as it was known and spoken about; they coevolved together towards new perspectives, re-signifying and creating new meanings and possibilities that went beyond the descriptions of their world and relationships as they knew it, even a new emotionality that emerged in each example. Language, actions and relations are then intertwined and embodied in relational games that are constitutive of our lives. These games both limit and open up possibilities.

Rivera proposes, then, that ethics is a constant exercise of inquiry that proves, in action, the limits of our description of the world. It is precisely this *ethics-in-action* that allows us to work on the limits of the language we use and the way we live our lives, to transcend these limits and explore new ones that might be possible if a generative posture is established. By examining the limits of our language games, we can also recognize our relational responsibilities in their production and maintenance. We make choices when we engage in conversations, when we respond or express, when we are available or not to receive and to respond to the expressions of others, when we organize our discourse or narrate our stories.

Since therapy is, in essence, a language game, all of these choices are operative in it. Therapists must be aware of what they propose in conversation and how these proposals are received. In the case of Gastón, the therapist did not push when the client did not accept one of her proposals (mainly, describing who lived in the house he drew). In recognizing and accepting his limits, the therapist created a collaborative atmosphere in which other games could emerge. Similarly, in the case of Maria, it is clear how a new notion of herself as a mother and as a person emerged through conversation. She moved from a model of deficit, where she was not meeting certain cultural expectations, to one of strength and possibility, where she could see herself as a caring parent by providing for her home. She could also recognize that taking care of herself was crucial to taking care of her children. In this, she moved beyond the limits of the initial session's discourse and narrative . . .

Sheila McNamee and Kenneth Gergen define relationally responsible actions as those that sustain and enhance forms of exchange out of which meaningful action is made possible (McNamee and Gergen 1999). If human meaning is generated through relationships, then to be responsible to relational processes is to favor the possibility of meaning itself – of possessing selves, values, and a sense of worth. Isolation represents the negation of humanity. Relational intelligibility simply refers to the constructionist stance that everything that is meaningful emerges in relationships (McNamee and Gergen 1999).

A generative inquiry process is built on the creation of resources to design new possibilities in the face of situations which render us speechless and without resources; we have no words or are confronted with instances where we have no forms of life to understand what is going on. The *possibilities* are not necessarily there, available, already given. It is our challenge to construct and discover them,

facilitate them, create them in domain after domain, on the basis of coordinates and procedures that will allow them to emerge, as can be appreciated in the examples presented in this paper. Like every generative process, this one, too, is at once pragmatic and reflexive, a starting point and an endpoint, an open task.

We have options because we have pools of discourses that are spoken with different purposes and objectives; we are peopled by the voices of the many dialogues in which we participate, and we have a wealth of different stories and story-lines available. Our relational responsibility in generative processes is precisely the inquiry, the ethical cycle on the limits of what we do, speak and think with others.

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5 Constructing Trauma and Its Treatment: Knowledge, Power and Resistance

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1 Introduction

As the concept of mental illness has become more widely accepted, there has been a concomitant increase in the dependency of people on mental health professionals. The result has been twofold: first, an increase in the conceptual repertoire by which people can be classified as ill, and second, an increased dependency on psychopharmacological “cures.” This chapter first is focally concerned with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), an increasingly common “illness” in society. We trace the historical development of the concept of trauma and its realization as an illness category. We explore the power of the mental health professions and pharmaceutical research in disseminating news on the disorder and concretizing its existence. This is contrasted by forms of resistance to the dominant discourse, particularly among those who subscribe to constructionist theory, which enables people to confront otherwise stressful conditions without traditional treatment or drugs. Yet, despite critics of the trauma concept, we explore the possibility that the label fulfills important political and social functions. Its abandonment should possibly await effective alternatives to the present definition. As we shall see, there are perspectives that provide holistic as well as context specific ways of dealing with crisis and trauma.

2 PTSD: The Current Construction

The word “trauma” is an important component of our every day descriptions of highly stressful events. Although there is no clear distinction between stress and trauma, a general understanding is that a traumatic event is one that generates extreme stress, such that the resources of the person are overwhelmed. Current psychological theories of trauma distinguish between the traumatic situation, the trauma, and the symptoms resulting from trauma. In the Diagnostic and Statistical

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Manual IV of the American Psychiatric Association (*DSM IV* 1994), Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is placed in the category of Anxiety Disorders. The current diagnostic criteria for PTSD include a specification of the traumatizing event together with three characteristic symptoms: 1) Persistent re-experiencing of the traumatic event causing distress and signs of panic; 2) Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma, numbing of general responsiveness; and 3) Persistent symptoms of increased arousal.

All these symptoms must be present and severe enough to cause substantial impairment in social, occupational or interpersonal domains. Furthermore, the symptoms must be present for at least one month. Commonly reported symptoms of PTSD related to the different domains of expression are:

Physical: difficulty in falling or staying asleep, heart palpitations and breathing difficulties, headaches or general aches and pains, feeling tired and fatigued, nausea, diarrhea or constipation, easily startled by noises, general agitation and muscle tension;

Mental: inability to concentrate, memory problems, intrusive thoughts of the past trauma or/and attempts to shut out the painful memories, dreams and nightmares about what happened, distressing images and flashbacks;

Emotional: anger, grief, sadness, fear, shame, confusion, severe anxiety and depression, feeling of emotional numbing, unresponsiveness to surroundings, and anhedonia; and

Behavioral: withdrawal from others, easily irritated by other people, loss of interest in normal activities and hobbies, loss of appetite, loss of sexual interest, and increased use of alcohol or cigarettes, insomnia and hypervigilance.

Significantly, the PTSD diagnosis differs from other DSM IV categories because it specifies an etiologic event as a diagnostic criterion. It is the only diagnostic category that includes etiology. The descriptive approach of the DSM usually focuses on the symptoms without regard to the context. Its attempt is to answer the what- but not the how- or why-questions. For a person to be diagnosed with PTSD it is different: there needs to be a traumatic situation. As the American Psychiatric Association defines it “the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others,” and which evoked “intense fear, helplessness, or horror” (DSM IV 1994, pp. 427–428). The definition of a traumatic event is broad. It includes military combat, violent personal attack, natural or human made disasters, and torture. But it is the “subjective experience of the objective events that constitutes the trauma . . . The more you believe you are endangered, the more traumatized you will be” (Allen 1995, p. 14).

3 Constructing and Reconstructing Trauma and PTSD

The concept and consciousness of trauma in the western world have appeared, disappeared, and reappeared as social, political, and historical conditions have changed. According to its meaning in early Greek, the word trauma was used to

describe a physical injury or wound. While the term lingered in various locales over the centuries, the first written account and description of a trauma syndrome was in 1866. Examining victims of railway accidents, John Erich Erichsen (1818–1896) identified a physical condition called the railway-spine. Growing interest in the condition and treatment was also fed by investments in industrial accident claims (Lerner 2003). The German neurologist, Hermann Oppenheim (1889), developed the notion of traumatic neurosis, which stands for subtle nerve damage without obvious injury caused by a deeply shocking event. By viewing trauma as a neurological event, the door was then opened to psychology, as psychological problems had come to be identified with conditions of the brain. Jean Martin Charcot (1825–1893), a French neuropathologist, was the first to study and emphasize the relationship between physical trauma and mental illness (Kohl 1993). He stressed the possibility that delay could occur in the onset of trauma symptoms after the triggering event. Together with his students – Sigmund Freud and Pierre Janet – he reached the conclusion that the trauma syndrome can also have a psychological basis. Freud (1896) established the notion of male hysteria as resulting from trauma, thus equating trauma with psychopathology. This trend continues today. The contrasting orientations of Oppenheim and Charcot, created a lasting tension between soma- and psyche- as the locus of trauma.

Although the concept of trauma varied during this time, the focus shifted during WWI. Many soldiers were diagnosed with “shell shock,” first thought to be a defect of the nervous system. Over time, however, the same behavior was interpreted as malingering and labeled a defensive neurosis (Kutchins and Kirk 1997). Later, Kardiner (1941) called it a traumatic neurosis of war and described its critical features in psychogenic terms.

The Vietnam War brought about a “new” apprehension of trauma as a pathology. Veterans of the war often faced severe adjustment problems. The major lobbying group for Vietnam veterans, the Vietnam Veterans Working Group (VVWG), successfully attempted to make public the horrible experiences, the suffering, and the denial of these effects by officials in charge (Scott 1990). VVWG then became the driving force in promoting the PTSD diagnosis and its proponents. They were opposed by mental health professionals who were neither interested nor enthusiastic about introducing a war-related diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association (Bloom 2000). Many studies and publications (Haley 1974; Lifton 1975; Figley 1978; Wilson 1989) provided the scientific support for the efforts of VVWG. During this battle, they extended the interest and lobby for combat stress to other forms of traumatic experience because they discovered parallels between them, and thought it would be easier to prove the case if similarities in different kinds of trauma can be shown. Finally in 1977, the Committee on Reactive Disorders was established, including members of the DSM III task force and VVWG. Despite the attempt to include an etiological criteria (the traumatic event) because etiology was generally excluded from the DSM III drafts; another problem was the Freudian connotation underlying the proposed category suggested. This was not welcome after the term neurosis was deleted from DSM III by the “Kraepelin-driven” tradition of the

DSM task force. Nevertheless, with the completion of *DSM III* (1980), most of the suggestions made by the VVWG were incorporated and the diagnosis was called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The long fight for establishing this diagnosis in the classification system transformed the experiences and effects of traumatized people into a psychiatric category, and enabled them to receive formerly denied mental health care services, financial assistance, public acceptance and even sympathy.

With every war, conditions change and new kinds of labels or diagnoses are produced, which differ from the descriptions of earlier times. Early tools of classification seldom seem adequate enough to capture the meanings inherent in contemporary situations, and this is especially apparent in the case of people who have experienced different types of war experiences. Interestingly, as Kutchins and Kirk (1997) pointed out, from the point of view of Gulf war veterans, they are often wrongly diagnosed with PTSD and feel no necessity to account for their experience in the classification system.

Other lobbies expressed their concerns about the consequences of violence, war, and disasters for civilians (Krystal 1968). After recognizing the power of diagnostic classifications of mental disorders, various “consumer populations” showed increased interest in psychiatric diagnoses. Thus, reason has been found to extend the PTSD label to apply to rape and torture victims, along with victims of organized violence, natural disasters, and various kinds of accidents. For example, the women’s movements created public awareness to sexual and domestic violence at the same time to the efforts of the Vietnam veterans, (Walker 1979; Gelles et al. 1979; Herman 1981). Then, in 1974, Burgess and Holmstrom described the “rape trauma syndrome” (Bloom 2000). Similar developments were seen in cases of violence against children, along with victims of disaster and terrorism and hostages. All have variously claimed to fit the diagnostic criteria of PTSD. As Ziskin (1995) has put it, PTSD became a very “fashionable patchwork” diagnosis.

Trauma was in the air and a budding awareness began to emerge, suggesting that the various forms of traumatic experience might be similar and even interconnected. As early as 1977, investigators were comparing the catastrophic stress of natural and man-made disasters, combat trauma, incarceration, Buffalo Creek, Hiroshima, and internment in the death camps. The time was ripe for a convergence, for people to come together and share their knowledge, experience, and sorrow (Bloom, 2000).

By the 1990s a flourishing trauma industry emerged and the field of (Psycho-)Traumatology was invented. With the emergence of a new discipline, needs were created and a new class of trauma therapy and research expertise was justified. In line with the APA philosophy, most health care education curricula have been shaped around the biomedical perspective. The majority of the health care staff is influenced by this approach nowadays. Besides having PTSD classified and justified, different psychotherapy schools perceive this diagnosis from different angles, filling it with meaning as well as framing it differently for specific interventions. Despite the differences, there seems to be a general agreement that most trauma treatments are based on three sequential steps: stabilization, “working

through,” and psychosocial integration. The pyramid model of those three aspects is considered to be state of art in trauma treatment, but the interpretation and opinions about the necessity of single stages as well as their order differ widely. In line with the current belief system, many assume that the therapy of choice for traumatized people is a cognitive-behavioral therapy combined with pharmaceutical treatment. Another popular treatment is EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), is glorified but also heavily criticized for its lack of scientific foundation. Especially due to the scientific development of psychopharmacology, psychodynamic approaches have become less important. Many exotic and creative treatment variations (e.g., Somatic Experiencing described in Levine and Frederick 2004) have entered the market as well.¹

4 Critical Issues in Diagnosis and Treatment

This tracing the historical vicissitudes of trauma and its pathologizing underscores its socially constructed character. However, this relativization, raises several additional issues and questions that are specifically relevant to contemporary policies and practices:

5 Etiology and Elusiveness

As pointed out earlier, PTSD is unique among the so called mental disorders because the etiology is included in the description of the symptoms. This means that one could report the same set of symptoms, but without the identification of a traumatic cause, it would not be diagnosed as PTSD. And, in fact, many of the symptoms of PTSD are not distinguishable from the symptoms of disorders like depression, anxiety, or psychosomatic illness. Yet, it is the very naming of the cause that has played into a political process essential for the apparent validity of the disorder. In the case of Vietnam Veterans, only a “service connected” disability enabled them to receive treatment or (financial) compensation. In Goodwin’s (1984) terms:

In 1980 the Veterans Administration announced that post-traumatic stress disorder, delayed type, was a compensable disorder. This meant that for the first time since World War I, the Department of Veterans Benefits could consider disorders as service connected when symptoms appeared long after military discharge. Many veterans responded by filing claims based on their belief that they suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, delayed type, related to war experiences. The symptoms of the disorder were well publicized in the media and in brochures distributed by national service organizations. Rarely before had so

¹ For further historical details the interested reader should consult Allen Young’s *The Harmony of Illusion*, and Paul Learner’s *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany 1890–1930*.

many claimants presented themselves to psychiatric examiners having read printed symptom checklists describing the diagnostic features of the disorder for which they thought compensation (p. 82).

In a similar vein, a refugee who merely reported depression or anxiety symptoms would have little right to remain in most Western countries on the basis of these diagnoses alone. However, a PTSD diagnosis accompanied by a treatment often helps refugees to extend their stay, at least temporarily. The future of people seeking asylum is jeopardized without a traumatic etiology as recognized by the mental health profession.

6 The Ambiguous Character of Causality

Related to the preceding point is the way in which the etiological events are also embedded in the interpretation of symptoms. As it is held, PTSD is characterized by the frequent re-experiencing of the traumatic event in dreams, nightmares, and flashbacks. However, there are many clinical symptoms that resemble PTSD in every aspect except that time runs in the reverse direction, that is, from the present back to the past (Young 1995). How do we know then, that what we take to be the effects of an event are its consequences? More specifically, is it not possible that symptoms create a search for a cause, and that the identification of the cause is erroneous or illusory?

Research into memory processes shows that it is difficult to draw a clear line between imagination and conventionally determined facts (Loftus and Ketcham 1994). There is no necessary causal relationship between past and present. Whereas officials usually look for determinative cause-effect relations, the health care worker is more usually concerned with the suffering of the individual. The actual cause may be irrelevant. Yet, health care workers in the trauma field are forced to think in terms of patterns that are marginal to their professional aims. In effect, a political responsibility is shifted from the governmental side to health care workers because no adequate political solution can be found.

These problems become exacerbated by the fact that it is difficult to specify what is and is not a trauma. Atrocities are in the same category as natural disasters, airplane crashes, rape, war, torture, and human rights abuses. In the most recent version of DSM, even daily events (such as threat and harassment) may be traumatizing if they accumulate over time. Further, the right to determine what is traumatizing is unclear. Virtually any event could be considered traumatizing if the individual provides a sufficiently impressive account.

7 Is Trauma a Pathology?

In this context we can appreciate the significance of the exploding market of diagnostic labels of the decade, and with it the expansion of the mental health professions and prescriptions for psychotropic drugs. More therapists and phar-

maceutical products require, of course, more clients. As the media help in constructing people as disturbed by trauma, people begin to define themselves in these terms. In effect, mental health professionals, in concert with the pharmaceutical industry, contribute to the creation of the “illnesses” for which they provide the “cure.” In the case of PTSD, by avoiding the political implications of the categorization, the mental health field has also succeeded in generating reactions to stressful events as abnormal: despite its political origins, the category has shifted to a pathological medical category. Yet, as Yehuda (2003) has pointed out, the three symptom groups i.e., re-experiencing, avoidance, and arousal, are virtually universal reactions to extremely shocking experiences and should not be classified as abnormal. At the same time the “trauma lobby” does not object to pathologizing because its constituents gain from the categorization. If effect, the various professions seem most interested in achieving their own goals, while those who should receive the main attention simply become docile bodies, subject to the shifting tides of administrative power.

Although trauma therapy developed on the basis of Western concepts, the concept of trauma is not restricted to the U.S. alone; it is globally applied. Consider the following account of a Cambodian refugee:

Memories seep back to me in ways I hadn't imagined . . . The sight of someone dressed entirely in black would also trigger a memory – the uniforms of the Khmer Rouge. . . . There are times when I've denied my own memories. I invite the memories back in (Him 2000, p. 25).

This account is exactly what a Western trained mental health professional would expect to hear from a victim of PTSD. Yet, the author would not have known she was showing symptoms of a mental disorder before she fled Cambodia. The Cambodian Culture – like many other cultures – does not share the Western concept of mental disorder. In effect, Western trained mental health professionals perceive symptoms of PTSD because they impose their cultural and professional frames. They further presume that people who are unaware of the symptoms are “blind” people. At the same time, people in other cultures often have means of responding to stressful events in other ways than therapy and pharmaceuticals. For example, certain cultures may place a high value on stoicism and “active forgetting” (e.g. Summerfield 1999; Angel et al. 2001).

Nor can such difficulties be solved through more extensive research. For example, in a British epidemiological study of 824 asylum seekers from Kosovo in Great Britain, it was found that the vast majority did not complain about psychological symptoms (Summerfield 2002). Their concerns with work, family, school and the like were uppermost. Yet, Turner et al.'s (2003) contrasting study of the same group of asylum seekers concluded that half of them had PTSD. It depends obviously on the interpretive perspective brought to the situation. The central question should be, what perspective is most advantageous for the people under consideration?

One might hope that brain-scan research could provide an ultimate breakthrough. There are studies of this kind as well as recommendations about the

pharmaceutical treatment of PTSD (McNally 2003; Schiraldi 2000). At the same time, investigators in this area do realize that there are problems in identifying the cortical locus of PTSD. As McNally (2003) describes, "With such diverse events deemed causally relevant to PTSD, it will be difficult to identify common psychobiologic mechanisms underlying symptomatic expression." Yet, from a constructionist perspective the problem of identification is far more profound. Even if most patients with a PTSD diagnosis shared a distinctive pattern of cortical functioning, there would be no grounds for concluding that PTSD has a neural basis. The diagnostic category is a cultural construction, and the very same "symptoms" could be constructed in numerous other ways. We might view the same population as "striving to cope," "highly alert," "multiply concerned," "intensively hopeful," or "ontologically insecure," or even "spiritually in need."

8 Abandon PTSD?

There are strong arguments for abandoning diagnostic categories in the mental health professions, and with them the rapidly increasing reliance on medication to deal with normal problems in human living. We are in great sympathy with these arguments, and indeed have made contributions to the dialogues (Gergen 2006). Yet, there are also reasons for careful and sensitive development of alternatives. Regardless of their legitimacy, it is important to keep in mind the social consequences, legal functions, and political implications of the PTSD label.

As is the case with most diagnostic labels, PTSD does furnish a simple means for people to explain and render intelligible their anguish and its complex socio-cultural context. And, while pathologizing may have powerful iatrogenic effects for some, others may be relieved to find that their particular difficulty is a member of a common class. More importantly, however, a diagnosis has important social and legal consequences. A misunderstanding of these functions can have disastrous consequences for the people whose pension rights or asylum status is jeopardized by it (Watters 2001). "A PTSD diagnosis is the royal road to compensation for victims of many different sorts of violence, including refugees" (Ingleby 2005, p. 21). Despite all its limitations I therefore think that "until a better system can be devised it would be surely unjust to block off this road" (Ibid.). Furthermore, as we have seen, the diagnosis offers a legitimated victimhood for war veterans (Summerfield 1999).

Ingleby (2005) also speaks to issues of law:

The effects of concepts in a juridical setting are quite different from their application in a health care setting. Many mental health workers strive to avoid "pathologizing" or "medicalizing" their client's problems and try to blur the distinction between normality and pathology. However, this "normalizing" approach (Ingleby 1980), which emphasizes that many supposed forms of pathology are "understandable" in everyday terms, can be devastating in a court of law or in demands for insurance coverage (p. 22).

Finally, if we look at the groups that originally figured in the creation of PTSD, and which sometimes seem to be forgotten in this battle, we see traumatized women, children, soldiers, victims of violence, and refugees underrepresented. Those groups – often minorities, at least in a material sense – attempt to be recognized by institutions of support. In this sense the diagnostic label, otherwise voided of its political meaning, is actually a political outcry. If we abandon the label we also take away an important political tool from those who still need it.

9 From Diagnostics to Care

Often, it seems that the helping professions are more engaged in executing a program of diagnosis and treatment than they are in caring for those who suffer. Sustaining historical precedents seems more important than attending to new social and political forces that contribute to the contemporary meanings of those in need. In our view, it is important for health care and legal professionals to lend their voices to the underprivileged populations in order to give more recognition to their situation, while simultaneously using the tools of an existing system to their advantage.

10 Beyond Pathology and Pharmacology

In our view, the attempt to objectify and universalize a diagnostic system that reflects only the philosophical views and political needs of the therapeutic profession is counter-productive. The institutions to which contemporary diagnostics give rise, function as grinding machines that transform a vast and ever changing range of phenomena into a single shape of their own choosing. Further, with the increasing tendency to medicalize all forms of human suffering, these same institutions contribute to a culture increasingly dependent on mind altering drugs to get through the day. Perhaps the professions require a private language through which to discuss their activities and compare experiences. There is no sanction for disseminating an obfuscating professional discourse to populations in general. We damage the culture by replacing its common language with a professional language, the result of which is to inform people that they are ill and require professional services. At a minimum, it would be helpful to alter the meaning attached to trauma by not calling it an illness or disorder, but rather, a reaction to overwhelming, stressful conditions. (See also Kleber et al. 1992, for a critique of the pathological connotations of PTSD.)

Health care services are continuously confronted with clients differing in cultural and social backgrounds. Although there has been a boom of interest in the cultural context of illness, we still assume that Western disease categories and intervention approaches are relevant globally. Few people are trained in culturally sensitive service provision and there is a lack of diversity in the workforce of many professions. To make Western concepts fit non-Western settings, it is

often assumed that only small adjustments to different cultural idioms are required. In the case of trauma, we see this tendency as particularly problematic. It is within the contemporary social, cultural and political milieu that clients come to construct their worlds. Treatments that are insensitive to these meanings are of questionable efficacy. In our view, it is important to match intervention strategies with the constructed worlds of people receiving them. Only if we take the particular meanings of a person into account can an intervention make sense to the recipient. This is no small challenge for many professionals, as it requires a bottom-up approach, in which the therapist's presumptions about "the nature of the illness" would give way to recipient meaning. At the same time, fostered by both constructionist and cognitive orientations, an increasing range of therapies are moving in this direction (see Gergen 2006, for a review.)

It is increasingly common to rely on pharmacology as a major adjunct to PTSD treatment. In our view, it is essential to limit the influence and power of drug companies. This may mean restriction of advertising, restriction of drug company support of influential psychiatrists, and educating people more fully on the limits and detriments of drug reliance. By de-pathologizing trauma reactions, new and more hopeful messages could encourage people to participate more fully in their own health and well-being. Without denying the pain of suffering, there can be a parallel emphasis on resilience and resources, instead of deficits. An important aspect, the individualization of suffering produced by the diagnostic categories, functions to destroy the power and resilience of people working together to recover.

11 Toward Collaborative Construction

By increasing sensitivity to the multiple and malleable constructions of trauma, we also expand the domain of potentially useful practice. In the case of war or natural disaster, for example, the normal social networks among people are often fractured. In these circumstances, a community based therapy approach might be preferable. There is also a growing literature attesting to the value of traditional healing in postwar contexts (Bracken et al. 1995; Gibbs 1994; Taussig 1986; Wilson 1989). We cannot dismiss the importance of healers or natural community leaders.

Munczek (1998) also finds the individual focus of Western mental-health treatment misbegotten. One's individual problem "has a social origin, and has to be dealt with on multiple levels. You can't just treat the individual. You have to deal with the society, and try to "reestablish a sense of community in people who have lost it." (p. 318) Rather than urging people to visit mental-health clinics, Munczek favors meetings at churches or community centers that "incorporate a mental health component, but do not focus on mental health." (p. 319) In other cases, for example with rape victims, first of all, it might be important to rebuild a general trust in relationships. However, in many cases it can be helpful to bring

people together to support the realization that their experience is shared and not limited to one individual.

Many psychologists have limited expectations for psychotherapy because these traumatic events symbolize losses that cannot be replaced. The question "What happens when survivors do not want to enter therapy?" has forced mental-health professionals to improvise. To help the untreated majority, Weine (1999) has invented "Testimony" therapy, which encourages telling trauma stories in groups and archiving the transcripts so they can be made available to war crime tribunals. This form of healing is dedicated to the healing of the entire society. Ideally it can be used to develop new collective understandings of history and communal identity that can better support peace and social trust.

Also concerned with the societally embedded meaning of trauma, Becker (2001) has argued in the context of the Chilean situation, that without denying individual suffering, one must ultimately transcend the individual level emphasis of treatment. With societal gain in focus, one approaches treatment in a completely different manner. Rehabilitation may come through rural development initiatives, vocational skills training and income-generating activities, public education, community empowerment, crisis intervention, capacity-building, family reunion, group activities with children, or strengthening coping skills, in addition to the treatment of particularly distressed individuals (De Jong 2001).

Given a range of therapeutic traditions in the West, and an expanded conception of "the therapeutic" that emerges as we move more globally, it is clear that no single view or treatment approach should be credited with universal applicability. Rather, what seems most required is a collaborative orientation to therapy, one that not only takes account of multiple professional voices, but client voices as well. The potentials of such collaboration are illustrated in the work of the Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO) (Eisenbruch 1994, 1997). This organization is particularly concerned with the problems of refugees and victims of organized violence. The collaborative program of TPO provides a community-oriented and culturally sensitive public health response to psychosocial problems of refugees and victims of organized violence. Each TPO project is multidisciplinary and integrates traditional, local, and Western healing methods as far as possible. Programs integrate experience and methodologies from public health, psychology, psychiatry, and anthropology in order to find practical solutions to the complex problems of cross-cultural mental health diagnosis, effective interventions, and ongoing management.

The methodology aims to capture idiomatic descriptions of mental health problems that fit local cultural illness experiences. In this way, indigenous coping strategies are bolstered. The program also emphasizes the necessity to understand the nature of psychological suffering in the specific context before practical support can be offered. TPO works in countries and refugee situations by invitation. In each country, primary participant research identifies the local understanding of distress and the local system of treatment. As the program develops, it is gradually handed over to local people to manage.

Finally, it is important to consider legal prosecution, such as war tribunals, as a further way of healing. These contribute to the sense of a just world, and can help to restore hope and confidence in society. Ideally, legal actions against (war) crimes should be coupled with compensation programs for victims. At the same time, however, there is continuing controversy over how to deal with past traumas, and many psychologists are concerned that such tribunals can be re-traumatizing.

Summing up, differing perspectives offer various ways of treating persons suffering from traumatic experiences. Importantly, there is a diversity of trauma interventions based on culturally sensitive and integratively oriented mental health care. Such combinations can lead to multiplicative positive effects. In our view, when such programs are combined, applied, and implemented in the context of multidisciplinary dialogue, we find reason for optimism.

12 In Conclusion

It is misleading to suppose that the concepts of trauma and PTSD reflect timeless or global phenomena. Both are constructed categories, and their meaning and application are contingent on the social, cultural, political, economic, and historical conditions of the time. Such constructions cannot be separated from the ideologies, daily routines, technologies, institutional needs and so on which constitute cultural life. Yet, illuminating the constructed character of trauma and PTSD confronts us with a dilemma, inasmuch as the pragmatic value of such discourses is multi-sided. In many respects, such constructions function as a means of stereotyping and pathologizing many people. They invite the expansion of pharmacological dependency. Yet, people working in the field of humanitarian intervention are very thankful for the promotion of the PTSD concept because it has increased the global awareness of suffering, which cannot be “healed” and treated on a purely economical and political basis. For them, it calls for more global responsibility on the side of wealthier nations. The situation of refugees in the world today is appalling. Sadako Ogata the UN High Commissioner for Refugees called refugees “the symptoms of the ills of an age.”

The highest priority regarding trauma health intervention is to develop culturally sensitive approaches. Different cultures and variable contexts of trauma require unique concepts and practices. Culture and context have to be considered on both population and individual levels. Trauma work should occur as a multidisciplinary approach. Cultural competence training should be an essential part of medical education as well as the education of all those working in health care settings. Every health care professional should have a deep respect for multiple forms of healing, and, if possible, integrate them into his or her own practice.

Finally, we wish to express our admiration of the enormous power of human resilience. We are drawn to such accounts as those of Chanrithy Him (2000), a Cambodian survivor now living in the US:

Throughout a childhood dominated by war, I learned to survive. In a country faced with drastic changes, the core of my soul was determined to never let the horrific situations take away the better part of me . . . (out of) silence comes a burning desire – a desire to fight back, not with guns but with the mind – a desire to learn. In ways I can never imagine, this desire will come to affect us all . . . Everyone learns to cope . . . This is the delicious power of the mind (pp. 21–86)

We must remain impressed by the capability of people to mobilize strength, courage, creativity, and inventiveness to cope and recover.

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Part II
Constructing Meaning in
Everyday Life

6

Moralities We Live by: Moral Focusing in the Context of Technological Change

NICOLE KRONBERGER

1 Introduction

Westerners might wonder why people in India are starving when there are cows lined up at the roadsides. At first sight it looks as if values, or moral rules vary considerably. Often, however, such variation is not due to a difference in moral maxims but rather to a difference in beliefs (Rachels 1993), or *moral focusing* i.e., the implementation of a general rule in a concrete cultural context. Both people from India and the West agree that we should not remain hungry, suffer from malnutrition or starve to death; they may differ, however, in their assessment of whether the outdoor cow is potential food or a sacred symbol, a “holy cow”.

Psychological research on morality traditionally focuses on two aspects: moral judgment and moral behavior, or moral competence and performance.¹ Typically, these approaches pre-define situations as morally relevant issues and then investigate respondents’ verbal or behavioral reactions. In this chapter, a further approach to investigating morality is introduced that does not concern the capacity of people to apply abstract moral rules, or behave in morally good ways. Here the focus of attention is directed towards the question of what moral orders people take for granted and how they collectively implement and concretize moral rules in communication. As such, this approach seeks to define the moral constructs that people live by that are reflected in everyday discourses.

Moral communication as the ongoing social construction and reconstruction of phenomena according to binary criteria such as good and bad, right and wrong, and acceptable and unacceptable, is closely related to identity issues and becomes especially relevant whenever people face novel and confusing situations such as

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¹ Developmental psychology tends to concentrate on the competence level; that is, the aim within this tradition is to elicit the most mature reasoning of which a respondent is capable. Such perceptions about what one should do, however, do not imply that respondents actually *act* according to these judgments. Moral behavior, that is, performance, is the focus of social psychology (e.g., research on conformity, prosocial behavior).

when different cultures meet, when new ideologies become salient, or when innovations render old routines obsolete. In this perspective, morality is understood as communicative action where the focus is on *moral interpretation* of phenomena in communication. Moral communication refers to implicit or explicit evaluation of individuals and their interactions according to shared norms about good and bad (Bergmann and Luckmann 1999). For example, empirical findings that natural risks arouse less moral concern than technological risks (Axelrod et al. 1999), can be explained by the fact that technologies are *anthropogenic risks*, that is, risks caused by humans who could have acted otherwise. A technology that arouses particularly strong moral concern is modern biotechnology. Since the mysteries of the DNA molecule were unlocked in the early 1950s, biotechnology has expanded to invest increasingly in many domains of human life. Press releases regarding genetically manipulated food, miracle medicines, Dolly the cloned sheep, or “cloned pregnancy this year” are common topics in our daily news. Both praised as “The Holy Grail” and dismissed as Frankenstein technology, genetic engineering is the subject of an ongoing societal controversy. As a social psychological topic, biotechnology offers the possibility of studying how the general public comes to terms with a controversially discussed up-to-date innovation. It offers a good chance to explore moral focusing in the making.

2 Moral Focusing

One fundamental aspect of moral communication consists of a social process of attention regulation. Many moral communication episodes deal with what should be considered relevant and what should be disregarded. I borrow the term *moral focusing* from the cognitive sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel (1997, p. 39) who deals with the question how “optical communities”, or thought communities, engage in complex processes of “focusing”:

Not only does our social environment provide us with a general idea of what we can disattend, it very often also tells us what we should repress from our consciousness and ignore. In other words, there is an important (though relatively unexplored) normative dimension to relevance and irrelevance. (p. 50)

Moral focusing is the social or cultural process of separating the relevant from the irrelevant, translating moral rules or norms to concrete contexts. When claiming, for example, that everybody should have free access to medical care, we implicitly also define who or what counts as “everybody”. Foreigners, monkeys and quite a number of other beings are tacitly defined as “no-bodies” in this context. Moral focusing also includes what we – willingly and automatically – ignore. For example, we wisely refrain from considering certain objects (such as children, cats or our best friends’ spouses) as potential sexual partners. Our cultural norms of erotic focusing usually make us regard those beings as erotically unacceptable. Zerubavel gives many examples of how moral focusing varies between cultures and over time. Virtually all cultures have some form of an incest

taboo, yet the specific boundary of those who are considered sexually off-limits is arbitrary to each group. Similarly, although skin color has been a socially and morally highly relevant category historically, the morally correct way for children to learn about color difference today is to willfully disregard it. Even within cultures there is remarkable variability. While many people in our society consider animals morally irrelevant, animal-rights activists condemn such an anthropocentric stance as morally narrow-minded.

In everyday life we hardly notice our ongoing line-drawing between the morally relevant and the irrelevant because everyday routines keep the domains separate. Moral feelings or moral intuitions² (Rozin et al. 1999; Haidt 2001) safeguard such demarcation. Anger, contempt and disgust, as typical reactions, not only occur when moral rules are threatened but also when norms of focusing are disregarded. Violators are condemned as perverse and morally degenerate.

In order to advance the understanding of moral focusing from a social psychological view, I now turn to Alan Page Fiske's Relational Theory (1991; see also Haslam 2004). Fiske holds that there are at least four universal patterns of organizing, interpreting, coordinating, and evaluating relationships, both with other human beings and with other objects. He names those patterns, or relational models as: 1) communal sharing, 2) authority ranking, 3) equality matching and 4) market prizing. It should be noted that it is neither sufficient to place the relational models as ideas in culture (exerting constraint on the individual) nor to view them as the outcome of individual thought. Culture must be seen as having "directive force" (D'Andrade 1990). People coordinate social action in a teleological way by acting together with reference to those shared models. Relational models as shared ideas may imply a strong sense of binding obligation; they serve both as ideals and as a basis for judging the quality of a person's performance.

What is relevant in the present context is that each of these four models can be seen as a moral grammar, a grammar that is generative in the sense of defining a range of acceptable behavior and at the same time excluding other forms of action. Just as people in a linguistic community have reliable and highly congruent grammatical standards for judging whether an utterance is well-formed, so people in any stable community use the culture-specific forms of social models to assess each other's behavior. The metaphor of a socio-moral grammar highlights the fact that acceptable ways of thought and behavior are neither unstructured nor fully determined. Like the grammar of a sentence, there may be many variations of acceptable ways of acting, but it is not the case that "anything goes".

Each model highlights certain aspects of a relationship and removes attention from others. The same entity can be perceived from the perspective of any of the

² It is beyond the scope of the present research to consider the question whether feelings such as disgust must be considered an actual affective phenomenon or a metaphor that is strategically applied in order to signal seriousness of socio-moral outrage (Royzman and Sabini 2001).

models where each requires specific distinctions to be meaningful and the process of moral focusing and defocusing is based on making such distinctions. Consequently, I suggest an understanding of the relational models as specific forms of moral focusing. *Communal focusing* implies making categorical distinctions (inclusion versus exclusion). When two entities, people or other objects, are considered to belong to the same category, then, with regard to the dimension that is communally organized, the entities in that relationship are equivalent and undifferentiated. Human rights, for example, are taken to be valid for all human beings equally, but invalid for non-humans like animals or plants. In the context of human rights, *ranked focusing* in contrast is considered unacceptable since it constructs hierarchies based on ordinal ranking. In an Orwellian sense, no human should be “more human” than others. By ranked focusing people or entities are ordered according to some meaningful aspect although there is no metrically specifiable distance between them. In our society, human beings are considered morally more relevant than are animals or plants. This “natural order” suggests, for example, that it is more important to save the life of a child than that of a whelp, even if for most of us it would be senseless, or even outrageous, to say that the life of a human being is worth two times the life of a dog. We believe that humans have “intrinsic worth”, valuable beyond any price, and there is no metric tool possible to compare the worth of beings such as humans and dogs. *Equal focusing* defines coequal units, enabling determination of balance and imbalance. Such focusing specifies relevant units for strategies such as tit-for-tat or an-eye-for-an-eye. *Proportional focusing* makes use of ratios to coordinate interaction. Typically, such focusing is based on values determined by a market system, and therefore is oriented to socially meaningful ratios or rates, such as prices, cost-benefit analyzes or measurement of efficiency. Although money is one of the most important units in proportional focusing, it does not necessarily need to be the medium. The main criterion is proportionality; that is, focusing occurs with reference to rates whose numerator is a common standard for all values in the domain. While it does not make much sense to say that one kilo human being is worth two kilos of a dog, we readily say that one kilo of beef is worth four kilos of carrots. The orientation towards proportions enables comparing different things according to a common unit. In this kind of focusing, not only in-kind entities but also qualitatively different things can be compared.

3 Relational Ambiguity

Understanding in terms of one of the relational models is never fixed; each event, object or relation can, at least in principle, be understood according to at least three other models. No model is more “natural” than any other. Relational Models theory attributes universal status to the relational models, but the models themselves do not tell where and how to apply the models: “the cultural differences have to do with when and where people use a few universal relational models” (Fiske 1991, p. 145). It is cultural implementation rules that specify who relates to whom, in what way, when, and where. Such rules determine what social aspects are

considered meaningful in what contexts. It is necessary to point out that the entities referred to in the models are not persons or objects as total selves but rather aspects of those that enter into a specific relation. In ranked focusing, for example, people may attend to seniority but ignore body weight when determining who is to speak first. The norm “respect your superiors” itself is neutral with regard to criteria determining rank; it is the implementation rules that specify what aspects to consider relevant (e.g., age, title, performance) and what aspects to ignore (e.g., body weight, hair color). As such, implementation rules determine our focusing patterns. Cultures provide broad implementation rules that specify when the relational models apply, to what and to whom, and in what way, but the rules change and are ambiguous at the margins. Especially in novel situations, confusion about which model to apply and how to apply a model is common. When cultures mix and transform, people frequently face confusing, anxiety-provoking trade-offs since it is at these transitions that people recognize that every act is necessarily a choice between different social logics. There is always the potential for blocked exchanges to become permissible and for permissible exchanges to become taboo (Tetlock et al. 2000; McGraw and Tetlock 2005; see also Zelizer 1994); issues may become moralized and unmoralized (Rozin 1999).

According to Relational Theory, moral concern arises if expectations on what relational model to apply in a specific context clash (Fiske and Tetlock 1997). Biotechnology, for example, suggests a number of objects to be “used”, “changed” or “manipulated” in order to achieve certain purposes. This means-to-an-end rationality represents a proportional form of focusing. For some objects, such usability is perfectly normal and acceptable, while for others it arouses serious concerns. For objects conventionally being perceived in a market pricing mode (e.g., plants for food production), the manipulation in itself is not problematic, while for objects that tend to be seen in a communal sharing mode, this interference is disturbing in itself. The idea of “human dignity”, for example, implies that human beings may not be used as a means to an end. But both the rules “respect human dignity” and “harm to humans must be avoided” are neutral with regard to what counts as human. Do embryonic stem cells count as human or not? The controversy on embryonic stem cell research is fundamentally based on the question of the status of the embryo. Pro and contra arguments usually do not disagree on whether human life should be venerated or not (it should), but rather about the time that an embryo achieves personhood. While for some, such entities are “pre-embryos” or life in a cellular stage, they are human beings for others. For the former, using and pricing is a straightforward thing to do, but it is using the “unusable” and pricing the “priceless” for the latter. Categorization and definition of the object are central to the moral understanding of the object. An important function of categorization is to “go beyond the information given” (Rothbart and Taylor 1992); categories are “inference rich” resources (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998). Category membership allows for the induction of further information about an exemplar. One aspect of this inductive potential of a category is that it allows for information on how to *relate* to an object in question. Being a member of a natural order category suggests being treated in specific ways and not in others: human rights apply to humans, animal rights to animals. Category

membership allows deducing morally acceptable and unacceptable forms of relating. Definition (the construction of facts), language use and moral implications go hand in hand.

Modern biotechnology challenges our classification systems in that it turns naturally occurring objects (natural kind objects) such as plants, animals or human beings into artifacts – or “products” – created by humans. Genetically engineered objects no longer exist independently of humans, but reflect human needs and desires. Thereby the theme of contradictory social logics is actualized. Our understanding of the world is fundamentally based on the distinction of natural kind categories and human artifacts (Rothbart and Taylor 1992; see also Haslam et al. 2002; Quine 1969). While artifact categories include objects that are “made” according to human desire and design, natural kind categories involve objects that are “grown” independently of human will. The classification of objects into these two categories is important in that such classification gives information on what is the appropriate way of dealing with such objects: the manufactured traditionally demands a technical attitude, whereas the organically grown asks for a cultivating, therapeutic attitude (Jonas 1984). Modern biotechnology forces us to rethink the categories of the natural and the mechanical; the distinction between the “grown from within” and the “intentionally constructed according to a plan” is no longer given. The new technology reminds us that entities such as plants, animals or human beings can be understood according to different social logics. As a result, *relational ambiguity* prevails; depending on what social model is chosen to structure an event, different inferences are drawn.

4 Moral Focusing and Relational Ambiguity in the Making

In the remaining sections of this chapter I will present excerpts from group discussions on biotechnology to illustrate how moral focusing and relational ambiguity characterize everyday discourses on this technology.³ Thereby, I will restrict the selection of the presented materials to sections dealing with the application

³ The analyses of the present study are based on data that were, in part, gathered within an international research project (LSES: “Life Sciences in European Society”). For an overview on the project see Gaskell and Bauer (2001). Nine discussions with approximately seven participants each were conducted in different regions of Austria. Besides considering socioeconomic characteristics such as educational level, sex, and age, sampling also aimed at maximizing perspectives on the topic by inviting a group of mothers, farmers, prospective economists and people with an explicit interest in the topic (exhibition visitors). Such “homogenous” groups share common experiences that provide the context for immediate understanding (Mangold 1960). The more people share such commonalities, the more likely they are to orient themselves to shared moral norms and orders. There is a tendency to elaborate on issues in a kind of “division of labor”. Such groups are more likely to perceive each other as relevant conversation partners and to “speak in one voice” (p. 49). The data were analyzed on the basis of a procedure suggested by Bohnsack (2000).

of reproductive human cloning. This application has achieved quite a lot of attention in the media and in science fiction, but it is not (yet) reality. Widely rejected as morally unacceptable, reproductive human cloning represents a projection screen to analyze sense-making processes of the yet unknown; it evokes fantasies that are structured by relational ambiguity. Everyday discussions on human cloning frequently are centered on the – implicit or explicit – question whether a clone is a human being or not. That the question arises at all is a sign that there is ambiguity about the status of the clone: it is seen to be both “product/commodity” and “natural/dignified being” at the same time. Biotechnology’s objects, and especially human objects, are depicted as “products” that “should at the same time be treated very differently from products” (Nerlich et al. 2000, p. 232). Communal focusing (defining clones as intrinsically worthy human beings without difference) is opposed by ranked focusing (defining clones as “more” or “less” valuable human beings) and proportional focusing (treating clones as a product or commodity designed to fulfill a specific purpose).

The quotations presented in the following sections illustrate how discussants engage in discursive boundary work concerning the socio-moral status of the clone, how they thereby easily switch between different social logics, and how they collaborate towards removing such relational ambiguity in order to re-establish a shared moral order.

In the first citation,⁴ a group of farmers is discussing reproductive cloning for parents who cannot have children. Relational ambiguity quickly occurs when the question arises who it is to bear the responsibility for problems that occur.

1. BF: But you don’t know. With the sheep there were hundred trials, yes, it just didn’t work
2. hundred times, yes malformations, yes, people say, well, it’s only a sheep, but I can’t say it’s
3. only a baby, that’s the difference, I mean, that’s an enormous difference
4. IF: An enormous difference between a baby
5. HF: And an animal
6. BF: And an animal, I mean (..)
7. [. . .]
8. EM: Those who do it have to bear the responsibility
9. BF: But what does that mean, that they have to bear the responsibility?
10. DM: Those who do it or those who want to have it?
11. BF: But what does it mean, if one says, “do it, you’re a researcher” (..)
12. EM: It is always the one who does something who is responsible
13. BF: Yes! But what is that, if you say I’m responsible?
14. DM: If we deliver a machine in our company, which does not work, then we bear the

⁴ Group participants’ names were replaced by a combination of capital letters that were selected randomly i.e., F (female speaker), or M (male speaker), (e.g., AM, BF). Utterances of the female interviewer are introduced by the prefix “IF”.

15. responsibility
16. EM: And not those who want it
17. BF: But what is the responsibility then?
18. DM: The baby is a cripple, because the experiment went wrong, well, what do you do because of
19. your responsibility, do you take the baby if the parents say, we don't want that. Because it was you
20. who was botching [FARMERS]

While for animals the logic of trial and error is more or less thinkable and acceptable, human dignity forbids applying this logic to human objects (lines 1 to 6: “hundred trials . . . malformations . . . well, it’s only a sheep . . . but I can’t say it’s only a baby”); it is not possible to get rid of the product gone wrong as it is with other objects. The ambiguous status of the baby as both human being and product implies uncertainty about who is responsible for the being: is it the “parents” or the “producer”? Depending on whether the baby is defined as a product or human being, different conclusions can be drawn. In a world of commodities, supplies and demand (line 11: “do it, you’re a researcher”), those who produce something are responsible for the result (line 14: “if we deliver a machine in our company, which does not work, then we bear the responsibility”). Consumers who order a product but are not content with the result (if there is “botching”, line 20) have the right to reclaim (line 18/19: “the experiment went wrong . . . the parents say, we don’t want that”). If a product does not meet a certain standard (line 1/2: “it just didn’t work hundred times, . . . well, it’s only a sheep”; line 18/19: “the baby is a cripple, because the experiment went wrong”), it can usually be dumped. When understood as human being in contrast, it is unacceptable to say “it’s only a baby” (line 2/3). The very existence of the being entails the right of being to be cared for and treated as human being, whether a “cripple” or not. The logic of communal focusing demands that one ignores the malformation; what is relevant is the inclusion into the category human being. The logic of proportional focusing, in contrast, invites the question of how well the product meets a certain standard. Consequently, the new technological possibility implies relational ambiguity about the social and moral status of the result of interference. In a sarcastic tone, the group explores the meaning of such an “unthinkable” proposal. Although the proportional focusing logic is readily available and is easily translated into corresponding market talk, it is clear that the intrusion of this logic into the domain of communal sharing is judged to be unacceptable.

5 Moralizing Behavior: Combating “Socially Toxic” Ideas

In contrast to issues of personal choice, moral norms are seen to be binding; they concern people’s identities. They are not merely attitudes that can change on a whim but basic commitments and beliefs that provide a source of identity for the people who live by them.

Morally relevant behavior is – in contrast to issues of personal choice – also subject to social control and sanction (Durkheim 1912/1955). Violations of the moral order are met with reprimand and punishment. If issues are considered to be moral in nature, actors are held accountable; they own responsibility for their doings. Furthermore, with moral issues, there is “quadratic intercontingency” (Fiske 1991): people are not only obliged to follow moral rules themselves, but they also have the obligation to require others to conform to the shared rules of their moral order. Furthermore, if secondary parties fail to react in an appropriate way, those with social links to the secondary parties are supposed to modulate their relationship to the secondary party. In politics, for example, the need for politicians to distance themselves in public from others who are accused of immoral practices can be observed. If they fail to do so, others will reprimand them in turn for not distancing themselves from the unacceptable issues.

In Western modern societies, the norm of freedom and personal choice – alongside the ideal of non-interference and non-judgmental relativism – is extremely powerful. With increasing secularization and a continuous increase of domains regulated by law, the role of morality appears to become less and less important. The autonomy norm consequence is that people are reluctant to sanction overtly if moral norms are violated because more and more certain domains of life are considered private business. This does not mean, however, that breaking the rules has no consequences: “gossip has an insidious reach” (Fiske 1991, p. 174). In modern societies, moralizing communication becomes more indirect and less binding, but nonetheless remains ubiquitous (Bergmann and Luckmann 1999). Moral communication concerns an actor’s or a group’s image, honor and reputation.

The group discussion method is an interesting method for studying moral issues since the participants in the discussion not only talk *about* issues but also talk *to* each other. When the group members are relevant conversation partners for each other, then normative social influence and conforming behavior can be expected. Instead of viewing this as a biasing influence, in the present context it is considered a chance to study in what contexts and in what ways moralizing and conforming behavior takes place during the discussion (Bohnsack 2000). Theories on morality suggest that efforts to make others conform to the group opinion should be frequent if an issue is understood to be moral in nature, but rare if the issue is construed as a matter of personal choice; moral issues create pressure for all those present to declare their position (Bergmann and Luckmann 1999). Consequently, I analyze what happens in the groups if deviating opinions are voiced. In contrast to issues of personal choice, where everybody should be free to state his or her personal point of view, moral issues should lead to a higher degree of moralizing and conforming behavior. Indeed conforming behavior among discussants within the groups clearly is related to applications and objects considered. While the issue of GM food is construed mainly as a matter of personal choice, where the individual is free to purchase whatever he or she prefers, medical issues tend to be discussed as moral issues (for a similar result see Schütz et al. 1999). For the latter domain, deviation is less acceptable, both in positive

and negative directions (the inference with humans is rejected, but the provision of possible help is considered necessary). Although there is little support for food applications in all groups, individuals are free to offer contrasting views (“I like it” – “I don’t”). In contrast, such expressions of personal preference are hardly acceptable for human cloning. People engaged in communication are not impartial observers primarily concerned about internal logic and consistency of argumentation, but rather are emotionally involved in their relationships. It is their moral integrity that is at stake:

1. IF: I’m coming back to all those applications, because you’ve said, with humans, you don’t want
2. that
3. HF: No. (.) that’s too much interference with nature.
4. BF: That’s my opinion too.
5. FF: Mine as well. (..)
6. AF: I’m not for it neither! I believe, I don’t know, but I think there are more people who are
7. against it, against something like that
8. DM: For medical purposes probably yes!
9. AF: Yes medical
10. HF: (to DM) But believing in God, being Catholic, you would never say that!
11. DM: Hey, I just say that for medical purposes you also have human genes
12. BF: You’re asked for your personal opinion! And not
13. DM: Yes! But where do you draw the line, you know, humans, cloning humans, breeding humans,
14. of course most people condemn that I think. But where do you draw the line, because you have to
15. take genes from humans for medical purposes, too
16. HF: That’s something different, DM, the question only was whether we are in favor of human <
17. DM: We reject that
18. HF: We do reject that
19. FF: Forming humans or something like that I would not [support] neither
20. GM: We reject that
21. HF: That’s rejected [FARMERS]

In lines 2 to 7 different group members offer their disapproving view of cloning humans (although the interviewer leaves it open what kind of human application she refers to). At first, this sequence resembles a sequence of personal choice, where one respondent after the other states his or her opinion. In line 8, however, the situation changes when DM introduces consequentialist reasoning and suggests that rejection may depend on the purpose of interference. When HF reacts to DM by saying, “but believing in God, being Catholic, you would never say that”, she clearly questions DM’s moral integrity. In this view, the proposal is unacceptable, whatever the consequences are. DM’s statement is interpreted as

disqualifying him from being a good Catholic. In line 11, DM tries to explain his concern, but is interrupted by BF who tells him that he is being asked for his “personal opinion”. This comment may seem paradoxical, since actually it is not possible for DM to hold a personal opinion without being questioned as a moral actor. The “personal” opinion clearly refers to the group’s opinion (see line 16, “the question only was whether *we* are in favor of . . .”). In line 13/14, DM gives in by saying that “of course most people condemn that”, referring to “breeding” humans (a form of relating to plants and animals, implying a de-humanized status of the clone). To “condemn” something is a strong moralizing expression, supported by the words “of course”, alluding to a taken for granted order. DM does not support cloning humans but asks whether the rejection can be absolute or whether there may be exceptions. His concern about moral limits is dismissed as “something different”, and finally, DM conforms to the group’s opinion: “that’s rejected”. This sequence illustrates that it is not possible for the individual to state deviating opinions here without being reprimanded. The group engages in processes of conforming and persuasion until the moral order, or communal focusing respectively, is re-erected. Proportional focusing in the form of consequentialist reasoning (making use of human objects to bring about specific outcomes) is considered taboo.

The status of the clone is an important issue in the discussions about reproductive cloning. If such proposals are not rejected at once, the groups’ discourses frequently are characterized by struggles about the definition of the objects concerned. In the following quotation, the group engages in discursive boundary work concerning the socio-moral status of the clone:

1. OM: Let’s take the scenario where a pharma-company develops a prototype, a working-human, a human
2. that cannot do anything else but work, for example. A human robot, so to speak, or whatever. Is this a
3. human?
4. JM: Is this so bad?
5. OM: Here we are again, with the question of responsibility, and ethics also.
6. HM: What about slavery then, for example.
7. OM: Can I say that that’s good, that’s the question. How do we think about slavery today. For me, it is
8. progress that slavery has been abolished, at least with us. (..)
9. F: I mean, you’ve asked, would that be so bad, such human robots or the like
10. JM: I mean, this was a bit cheeky I’ve to say, but would it be that bad if there were some bodies with
11. the brain of a cow or something like that, and if they were working all the time, (..) maybe faceless
12. somehow, so that we do not have to feel that bad, say, standard face
13. IF: How is that?
14. NM: For what reason do we need that at all?

15. JM: We do not need to work anymore, theoretically
16. GF: But, if you do not have to work yourself, how do you want to make up your living?
17. JM: Maybe everybody has such a worker
18. KM: Exactly
19. JM: Who works and works, maybe I'm having ten, twenty of those working in the field, then I have a
20. dog (.), I mean, that's, you know very well that-, but would that be that bad? After all, we have the
21. animals work for us as well, this would be kind of an animal then, one having human shape but without
22. brain. I mean, it looks like us, maybe, and that's what, that's all a matter of getting used to it.
23. GF: Okay, right, practically it's an animal then which is used for work, but I don't know, I can't get used
24. to it, but it could be like that
25. KM: That's too absurd at the moment
26. NM: An animal also has rights, doesn't it?
27. OM: Exactly, we're coming to that point
28. IF: Are you saying that we would get used to it?
29. JM: Yes, absolutely.
30. OM: That's an absolutely horrible idea of yours! saying that that's an animal only!
31. JM: If a living being only has the brain of a hen, but looks like a human, is it a human or an animal?
32. NM: And then you can do with the hen what you want?
33. JM: That's not what I'm saying, but maybe the hen wants to work all the time!
34. (LAUGHTER) . . .
35. GF: That's somehow not what I think about biotech, ending with faceless <
36. JM: That's exaggerated for you?
37. PM: Of course it can be, but
38. NM: I think that's awful that you need that at all, or that you think that this were good if you had it
39. OM: He didn't say that, that's not what it is about
40. JM: I only mentioned it
41. NM: Yes, but do we need that at all?
42. MF: It's an idea what could be done [STUDENTS]

In lines 1 to 3 the question is raised whether a cloned human is a human being or not. The definition as “working-human” and “human robot” already implies a tension between human essence and function. Both the classificatory status of the clone and the moral status of the being are ambiguous. In this group JM asks in line 4 whether it is a bad thing to have “human robots”. In the following lines he engages in constructing a non-human identity by defining such beings as

“bodies with the brain of a cow” (lines 10/11), bereaved of identity and uniqueness (“faceless” or with “standard face”, lines 11/12), that can be owned and used like animals (“I’m having ten, twenty . . . then I have a dog”, lines 19/20; “we have animals work for us as well” line 21), and that would be a “kind of animal” with “human shape but without brain” (lines 21/22), or with “the brain of a hen” (line 31). Although human shape may prevail, this sensory information no longer can be taken as indicator of underlying human essence. In order to justify usability of the clone (that is, proportional focusing), the clone’s identity must be construed as non-human. Bereaved of the human status, human rights no longer apply. As soon as in line 6 the opposed idea of non-usability (communal focusing) is introduced by reference to the issue of slavery (here the status as human remains unquestioned, and consequently the idea of ownership and usability is considered morally unacceptable). Acceptable and unacceptable forms of relating are fundamentally based on the classification of the clone as human, animal or machine (robot). If the being is human, possession is “slavery”, but if it is an animal or machine, this is an acceptable way of relating.⁵ The rule that human life should be respected consequently remains valid; what *counts* as human, however, is questioned. It is not the moral rule that is doubted but rather the socio-moral status of different groups.

Direct moral reprimand starts slowly (“I mean you’ve said ‘would that be so bad?’” line 9; and “for what reason do we need that at all?” line 14), but it is clear that the group does not understand the issue as a matter of personal choice, but feels a need to re-state what has been said and to make the wrongdoer conform to the norm. Soon reprimand is getting stronger (“that’s an absolutely horrible idea of yours! Saying that that’s an animal only”, line 30; “that’s awful that you need that at all, or that you think that this were good if you had it”, line 38). JM is very well aware of his role of introducing unpopular ideas,⁶ which is illustrated by repeated forms of backing off and offering excuses (“this was a bit cheeky”, line 10; “you know very well that”, line 20; “that’s not what I’m saying”, line 33). The tension between wrongdoer and those reprimanding is solved when the group changes to a meta level of discussion, clarifying JM’s role as *advocatus diaboli*, who did not mean but only “mentioned” (line 40) an “idea what could be done” (line 42). Finally, he conforms to the group’s rejection of the proposal.

Referring to the application of cloning human cells in order to make it possible for infertile couples to have children, in the following sequence, one group member resists conforming to the group’s point of view:

⁵ A common fantasy regularly encountered with unease in the groups is the idea that the being could be *happy* about its de-humanized status (“maybe the hen *wants* to work all the time”, line 33).

⁶ An additional aspect is the introduction of the moral status of animals and their usability (“an animal also has rights”, line 26; “then you can do with the hen what you want to”, line 32). If the status of the being is “animal”, then animal rights apply. But since the group works towards a consensus of the definition as human, this idea remains secondary.

1. FM: Well, this cloning of adults, I would not do that
2. IF: So, we may not clone humans?
3. FM: No. I would not do that
4. EM: We're not allowed to
5. IF: Why not?
6. EM: It's the genome, it's too much interference with the genome, isn't it
[. . .]
7. GF: Why? Why? It doesn't concern me as an individual, if there is somebody
who thinks he needs
8. himself be cloned [. . .]
9. EM: Sorry, GF, don't you have any social commitment?, don't you think of
others as well?
10. GF: No, why! What should I? [. . .]
11. EM: You've to say, it's for all people, it's no good for the whole world!
[. . .]
12. GF: But everything that can be made, will be made some time [. . .] But I do
not have to do it, and me
13. personally, I don't mind if there is the possibility to clone humans, I person-
ally do not mind because I
14. don't have the intention to double myself < yes but > for me it's enough as
I am, but if there is
15. somebody who needs to have it, I won't stand in his way or something like
that
16. DM: But, but, sorry, but, I've got the feeling, eh, well, saying I don't mind, the
others can do it if they
17. want. You simply can't say that! Okay, well, I'm far away, let's throw the bomb
because it won't hit
18. me, I don't care or so. I think one should care a bit for one's environment or,
also care for the people,
19. future generations, isn't it
20. GF: No, I think, all that can be done scientifically has been done in history,
whether I am in favor or I
21. am against it, probably it will be done some time
22. DM: Well, but [. . .]
23. GF: That's like saying "I'm against homosexuality". I don't care! Everybody
should live, as he wants to.
24. That's the same with the clones, I think, everybody should copy as often as
he believes to, if he feels for
25. it
26. DM: Well, but, sorry, these are, these are not similar pairs of shoes, homo-
sexuality and cloning. Cloning
27. interferes with things, that is
28. GF: There are many people who mind for example. Why does somebody
mind whether somebody is
29. homosexual, why should I mind whether somebody is a clone. (HUBBUB)

30. IF: Okay. GF would not mind, she'd say everybody should have the freedom
31. GF: Yes. Yes of course. (HUBBUB)
32. DM: She is comparing cars and apples or something in that direction.
[VIENNA I]

GF suggests the moral norm of free choice. She construes cloning as a question of life-style and personal taste, and compares it to the issue of homosexuality. Her proposal is not based on a clearly supportive view of cloning but rather on a runaway understanding of progress: what can be done will be done anyway, whether we like it or not. The conclusion drawn from this assumption is that it is useless to oppose cloning; the only possibility left is to consider it as a matter of personal choice. This understanding of morally good action suggests a focus on individual rights and calls for the minimal demand of doing no harm (line 7: "it does not concern me as an individual").

The logic of free choice is opposed by the other group members' definition of the situation as morally relevant issue ("sorry, GF, don't you have any social commitment, don't you think of others as well" line 9, see also lines 11, 16–19). Again, it is the actor's moral integrity that is questioned. Although GF does not have any interest in cloning herself (line 14), it is her refusal to engage in reprimanding action that arouses the anger of the group ("personally, I don't mind", lines 12/13; "I won't stay in his way", line 15; "I don't care", line 23). For moral issues, there is *quadratic intercontingency* (Fiske 1991), meaning that people with social links to actors have a duty to react when the actor fails to meet the obligation to condemn morally unacceptable behavior. While indifference towards cloning is comparable to indifference about homosexuality for GF, it is indifference towards throwing a bomb for others (line 18). The issue is *constitutive incommensurability* (Fiske and Tetlock 1997); people are not only cognitively overtaxed by proportional focusing but simply find it inappropriate. Such comparison is perceived to be "socially toxic" (Tetlock et al. 2000): to compare is to destroy ("these are not similar pairs of shoes" line 26; "she is comparing cars and apples", line 32). Viewing cloning as a matter of life-style and personal preference erodes a taken-for-granted moral order. Emotions and social norms function as heuristics that obviate the intrusion of alternative social logics. The point is that people very well *can* engage in such reasoning, but only find it appropriate in situations where choice already has been institutionalized (Smelser 1998).

Interestingly, by comparing cloning to homosexuality, GF alludes to a paradox that repeatedly pops up in the groups. Thus, it is necessary to make a distinction between cloning and the product, the clone. The same logic (the dignity of human beings) that forbids humans to be used, demands tolerance and acceptance for the result: the cloned human, who must be respected and treated *as* human. Therefore, the reasoning goes, opposition is only acceptable as long as there are *no* cloned humans. As soon as a group of such "different equals" exists, human rights apply, and it is as unacceptable to discriminate against clones as it is to do so against immigrants, homosexuals or other minorities. Although there may be

a personal conviction that reproductive cloning is bad, this conviction may no longer be forced upon others. Once reproductive cloning becomes institutionalized, the moral question is turned into a matter of personal choice and taste.

6 Images of Relational Ambiguity

In the preceding sections I illustrated what happens when different social logics clash: communal focusing is opposed by ranked focusing and by proportional focusing, leading to relational ambiguity. Are clones to be seen as intrinsically worthy human beings?; are they human beings with reduced or increased worth?; or are they products designed and produced to fulfill certain purposes? The two latter logics introduce distinctions that are unacceptable for the communal logic in which both hierarchical distinctions as well as the instrumentalist approach are taboo. Images, metaphors and iconic illustrations are frequently deployed in discourse and the question arises whether the choice of such pictorial devices occurs at random. What makes certain images “good to think” (Wagner et al. 1999) but not others? More than accuracy, it is the criterion of *plausibility* that determines which images make the run (Wagner et al. 2002). Connected to social identities and ways of life, the images become *socially* true, rather than true in a scientific sense.

In the present context, plausibility seems to be given if the images and metaphors capture one of the two relational ambiguities. First, one class of images depicts clones as “*more/less worthy humans*”, as either super-humans or elites (being strong, smart, beautiful and perfect), or second-class mass-produced robotic slaves, working troops and human animals. These images are based on ranked focusing: hierarchical distinctions are made where such distinctions are not admissible. No human being should be *more* human, or intrinsically worthy, than others; according to the code of dignity all humans are equal. Although in practice this certainly is not always the case, this understanding is at the core of our Western moral codes and is relevant for our modern identity.

Second, a further class of images and metaphors stresses a functional understanding of human beings, including the idea of “usability”: humans as fighting or working machines, as human robots, as designer babies, walking spare parts stores or copied life. These images stress the *purposive nature* of the objects rather than their inherent value or essence and are based on the logic of proportional focusing. The idea of instrumentalization and commodification of human beings arouses serious concern.

Occasionally, the images even allude to both forms of relational focusing at the same time: the metaphor of the “human animal”, for example, depicts the cloned being both as reduced in worth on the one hand, and readily usable on the other. Metaphors invite for “metaphorical entailment” (Lakoff 1987), for drawing inferences: animals are grown, bred, bought and sold as wholes or parts, and even can be butchered; machines are manufactured and can be used as a means to an end; they are bought and sold; they can be exchanged and primarily

have commercial and functional value; products can be “used”, ordered and offered according to supply and demand, bought and sold, dumped, or botched; commodities are manufactured by producers who are liable for the outcome. All these images have in common that they depict the object (or product) of biotechnology as bereaved of human dignity. The repeated reference to slavery, the Nazi regime⁷ or eugenics in the group discussions supports this view. These examples refer to situations when human status is or was denied to certain social groups, when human dignity was not socially recognized. The images concern the humanistic self-understanding of humans as free, equal and dignified beings – an ideal that represents the backbone of our modern moral orders (Berger 1973; see also Marková 2000). Modern biotechnology, applied to human objects, is perceived as a threat to the ideal of human dignity: genetically “designed” beings, the reasoning goes, cannot free themselves from the genetically fixed intentions of others. The decisions taken by others can no longer be corrected; the specific genetic equipment irrevocably reflects other people’s preferences. Furthermore, as soon as there are human “designers” and human “products”, the relationship between human beings is no longer symmetric. Consequently, a core question in the groups was whether being genetically determined still allowed for a self-understanding as a free and autonomous human being.⁸

7 Innovation, Change and Moral Focusing

The fact that it always “could be otherwise” is a motor of change and threatens the status quo. Usually we are not aware which shared and culturally implemented model is at work for organizing our relations. In this sense, the relational models can be understood as “themata” (Moscovici 2001), or “interpretative repertoires” (Potter and Wetherell 1987) that are concretized and put to flexible use in discourse. As moral grammars, they give structure to conversations; the same entity can be conceived from the perspective of any of the models. Even if people are puzzled by relational ambiguity, they nevertheless can easily switch between dignified and vernacular talk, for example. By this switch, “brute facts” become interpreted in terms of one of the relational logics: any set of facts can be addressed and understood from very different perspectives and viewpoints (Wagner 1998).

⁷ It remains an open question if such associations are especially strong in countries like Austria (where all of the discussions took place), or whether it is a pancultural phenomenon.

⁸ This question corresponds to Habermas’ (2001) “ethics of the species”. According to this view, the issue is not so much that modern biotechnology causes moral concern *per se* but that it questions the basic assumptions of our Western understanding of what it means to be human. Habermas asks why we should want to be moral if we feel that we are predestined and that we are optimized and forced into a certain direction of development that we can never change. The idea of being technologically designed undermines a sense of human freedom and choice.

Routine practices in everyday life obviate conscious choice between the models; it is only in situations when innovation challenges the status quo that models of social organization become problematic in discourse. This challenge, however, provides the potential for a changed paradigm. Processes of change are accompanied by struggles to cope with relational ambiguity and to uphold a taken-for-granted moral order because people engage in moralizing and conforming behavior to fight “socially toxic” ideas. Collective symbolic coping (Wagner 1998; Wagner et al. 1999; Wagner et al. 2002) must aim at creating clarity. On the whole, ambiguity about the status of a manipulated object or the product of manipulation is resolved either by rejecting the idea as morally unacceptable (re-establishing the communal focusing logic) or by re-defining the object so that it can be classified into another category. In this latter case the object is collaboratively re-categorized into a category that allows for usability, or it is construed as a member of a broader category to absorb the conflicting or ambiguous aspects. This change is not necessarily radical. Human beings, for example, need not necessarily become considered products and commodities as a whole. And, it is possible that aspects of the entities under consideration are compartmentalized and after some time will be understood and accepted according to the new social logic. In this sense, relational organization occurs according to the principle of “local consistency” (Wagner and Hayes 2005). Defining organ transplants as “spare parts” (Moloney and Walker 2000), for example, categorizes parts of the human body in a mechanical way. However, such an understanding does not necessarily generalize to one’s body as a whole. Similarly, the appearance of terms such as “pre-embryo”, which is frequently used by supporters of embryonic stem cell research, can be understood as a discursive effort of moral focusing to separate the early life stages from “normal” embryos; the labeling implicitly disputes the human status of the entity. Defined as non-human, or not-yet-human, certain forms of relating that would be unacceptable for organisms defined as human become thinkable. If a new understanding is to be achieved, it not only needs to capture the new reality but must also allow for a self-understanding as morally correct. Definitions, practices and moral implications go hand in hand.

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A Theory of Construction of Norm and Meaning: Osawa's Theory of Body

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Our intellectual world requires not only knowledge of natural sciences but also human sciences (Sugiman 2006). The two areas of inquiry differ from each other in meta-theory. Natural sciences embrace a philosophy of logical positivism (empiricism) in which an outer or objective world is assumed to exist independently from an inner or subjective world. That division, of inner and outer worlds, does not correspond to a physical boundary between inner and outer sides of a skin. For example, the stomach, part of the outer world in the human body, might be experienced as painful by an inner world if the wrong food is eaten. An inner world, i.e., a world of mental process, is assumed to be somewhere within, definitely not outside, the skin. This common image of a person is called the mind-in-a-body paradigm (Sugiman 1999).

Logical positivism stands on the conviction that an outer world as an object of research can be described precisely using language including mathematical and symbolic language. When more than two descriptions of the same phenomenon differ among multiple observers or when the description of one phenomenon is not consistent with another, further observations are required to revise the description. This process to make description more precise by accumulating observations is referred to as empiricism.

Human sciences embrace another meta-theory, social constructionism (Gergen 1999). In social constructionism, a dichotomy between inner and outer worlds and thus the mind-in-a-body paradigm is rejected. Instead, it is assumed that action, including recognition as a part, and an object for action, is possible only when both are immanent in a collective stream. This stream is defined as a moving state of the nature of a collectivity consisting of bodies and their physical and institutional environments (Sugiman 2006). For social constructionism, inner and outer worlds or a mind-in-a-body paradigm is never a starting point from which concrete theories are developed but is taken as one of many phenomena that should be explained after having started from the above assumption. The reader will see this later in the paper.

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A variety of concrete theories have been proposed from the perspective of social constructionism. This paper will introduce a more recent theory proposed by the Japanese sociologist, Masachi Osawa (1990). The theory is concerned with how our life-world is constructed, focusing on the process in which norm and meaning are born and developed. It is based on a mathematical theory proposed by Spencer-Brown (1969; also Osawa 1988).

1 Norm

Norm is defined as an operation to distinguish an infinite set of valid actions from an infinite set of invalid actions. Here, a valid action is not strange if it occurs whereas an invalid action is one where one would doubt one's perceptions if it did occur. Let us assume a school teacher, while in the process of teaching, suddenly stopped and scolded two students loudly and told them to stop talking with each other in class. All the students would be surprised at the sudden interruption and the teacher's harshness in tone of voice. However, such an action would not be unusual if it occurred in the classroom. It is possible for such an action to occur under certain conditions in a classroom although neither a teacher nor students would want to experience it. Thus, the action is valid.

Next, let us imagine that a teacher under the same usual teaching circumstances, suddenly stops teaching, gets a wine bottle and a piece of cheese from beneath the table. The teacher then requests the students' permission to allow the teacher to stop teaching for half an hour, and begins to eat and drink. Such an action is so unexpected that the students do not believe their ears or eyes, fail to regard it as real, and consequently do not report the teacher. This is an example of invalid action.

Both valid and invalid actions are unlimited in number. In a classroom, there are valid actions that a teacher performs such as giving verbal explanations, writing information on a blackboard, and questioning students. There are also valid actions that a student performs such as listening to the teacher's explanations, taking notes, or falling asleep. One of teacher's actions, writing on a blackboard, has infinite variation if one considers the contents of the writing, the way to write, the sounds produced by writing, and other variables associated with writing, text and syntax.

A norm operates in a similar way to the following example: you draw a circle on a piece of paper stating that the inside of the circle is valid based on the assumption that any point on the paper represents action. You further explain that the number of points a person can put in the circle is unlimited. One can find sufficient space and put a new point between two points that have already been put at the seemingly same location if one enlarges the area with the use of a magnifying glass or views it under a microscope.

The circle that distinguishes valid actions from invalid ones is necessarily drawn in a collective stream. A typical example is shown in children's play. Suppose four boys get together to play baseball. A game is started with two on

each side using only three bases located in a triangle. One is a pitcher and another plays a double role of infielder and outfielder on the defense while the offense designates a batter and a catcher. An additional rule is necessary because when a first base runner cannot come back to home base by a hit of his colleague, he is out because there is no other batter. Of course, they need another rule prohibiting stealing bases. Then, a fifth boy appears. The team which the fifth boy joins assigns a catcher when it is on the defense side which then allows a runner to steal a base if the catcher fails to catch the ball. The sixth boy joins, which evens the number on each team. Two more boys join. At this point, the triangular base reverts to the typical square base, followed by resolutions in other rules. In this way, an infinite set of valid actions varies momentarily. Boys are playing baseball while developing norm, norm enables them to enjoy playing baseball, and norm is changed while playing baseball. Norm is developed in parallel with action.

We live in a situation where a more stable norm has been *established* although we sometimes put ourselves in situations where norms are changed momentarily. Then, what is it that establishes a norm? How is a norm established? In what ways, is a momentarily changing norm transformed into a stable norm?

2 Meaning

It might be good to explain the relationship between norm and meaning before describing how a norm is formed and established. The concept of meaning is especially important in social constructionism. Anything bearing no meaning cannot be an object of action, which makes the action itself impossible. Look at the upper half of Figure 1 which shows two bookshelves standing side-by-side. First, stare at it, and then turn your eyes to the lower half. Here, you can see an unfamiliar polygon that is painted black. Did the polygon appear when you first stared at the upper half? Maybe, not. Why? It is because such a polygon has no meaning. A bookshelf, right or left, and one or two shelves appeared. It is because you had the experience of purchasing a bookshelf or getting it from someone free. And you also had the experience of wondering if books on a single shelf could be packed in a single carton. More precisely, you had the experience of being in a collective stream in which such actions were taking place. It is such an experience that made a single bookshelf and a single or two shelves appear.

Meaning and norm are two sides of a single coin. Meaning is defined as the identity (what it is) of an object of valid action. For example, a teacher taps a blackboard with the hard part of an eraser to make a sound in order to elicit attention from students. Obviously, this action is valid. Then, if you are asked what the object (an eraser) is in this valid action, you can answer, "It is something which produces a sound by tapping a blackboard with it," which is the meaning of the object.

Meaning is developed in parallel with norm that is developed in a collective stream. Therefore, different meanings are produced along with different norms. A caveat to the reader: Be careful not to confuse meaning, which is referred to

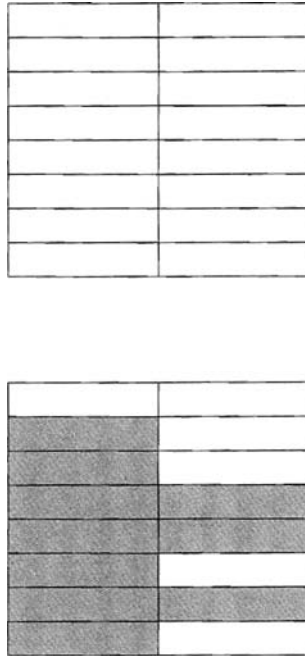


Fig. 1. Two bookshelves standing side-by-side (Look at the upper half and then the lower half)

now, with meaning that you can find in a dictionary. Meaning in a dictionary indicates the identity of an object (what an object is) for actions that occur in many (but not all) collective streams in which the object referred to by the word is included.

3 Interchanging Body

In Osawa’s theory, the concept of body is of crucial importance. Needless to say, a body is not an individual who has a mind somewhere within its skin. A body never has a mind or an inner world where it can think and feel.

A body is defined as a being to which intentionality in its broadest sense can be attributed. A body can take two kinds of status, an interchanging body and a third body. To state a conclusion briefly in advance, a third body is constructed, or more precisely, fictionalized, by the frequent and intense interchanging of more than one interchanging bodies. Norm is born as the voice of a third body when a specific body remains to be an interchanging body and, at the same time, is under the third body’s sphere of influence. This is a primitive form of norm.

Let us explain the above plainly. We will start from an interchanging body. A body can become another body. Body X can perceive the world at the place of

body Y, another body. Then, it can go back to its original body, X, and perceive the world from there. For an interchanging body, self and other are different from each other relative to where the world appears at a particular point of time.

The state of an interchanging body is experienced in one's everyday life. You become the body of an actor or actress when you are taken in by a living theater. You feel delight, anger, sorrow and pleasure as if you were in the place of the actor's or actress' body. And, a little while later, you return to your original body. This kind of experience occurs in our daily life although not as intensely as in a theater. For example, you become another body and return when you are involved in a quiet talk with a friend, when you cry or smile in empathy with someone, or when you find a kindred spirit. You might have experienced aggravation if a student of yours performed poorly after you taught him or her how to operate a computer. This is because you became that student momentarily and experienced the difficulty of performing the operation.

The state of an interchanging body can occur in the relation with non-human beings as well. A stuffed animal like a teddy bear is loved because you can become it. Moreover, you can commune with nature because you can become not only a lovely animal, but a beautiful flower and even a grand mountain and river. When a person interchanges with an object, both constitute part of a collective stream, which is also a body although it does not have biological life. An object for which interchange does not occur is called a physical thing. It is a collective stream that determines whether an object is a body or a physical thing.

Since we tend to be prisoners of the "mind-in-a-body" paradigm, we have no other way to express the experience of an interchanging body in terms of terminology consistent with it, like "I felt like him" which means "I had a sense as if I were him in my mind that was somewhere within my skin." However, we should not forget that our starting point is not the paradigm but social constructionism i.e., every action and its object are made possible by their immanence in a collective stream. In other words, any experience is made possible by its immanence in a collective stream and the interchanging of bodies is one form of a collective stream.

4 A Third Body

A situation in which two or more bodies repeatedly interchange frequently and intensely is referred to as an *inter-bodily chain*. Specific bodies that are in an inter-bodily chain become each other repeatedly. Thus, a communal experience that is shared in each different body becomes more prominent than the difference among those bodies. This communal experience provides the basis of norm, and then meaning.

The relation between communal experience and norm is interesting. Norm designates communal experience, that is, valid actions that should be followed by each body, once it is born. But, in the sequence of norm development, communal experience occurs first, and then crystallizes into a norm. In other words, the

causal relationship between a norm and communal experience is reversed before and after norm is born. Communal experience produces a norm before a norm is born, but a norm designates communal experience after it is born.

It is an inter-bodily chain that brings about communal experience that is possibly crystallized into a norm. In an inter-bodily chain, the communal experience each body shares beyond the difference of specific bodies becomes prominent while the difference of experience in each body becomes latent. It follows that communal experience beyond each specific body is crystallized into a norm.

The development of norm parallels the emergence of a special body that is a source of the norm, namely, a body that imposes a norm on specific bodies. A norm is a product of an inter-bodily chain made of plural bodies interchanging with each other frequently and intensely. However, it is logically impossible to attribute a norm to any specific body in the chain since it consists of communal experience that is just a part of, but not the same as, experience of any specific body. Consequently, a norm is attributed to a third body that is different from any specific body in an inter-bodily chain. A norm is developed as the voice of a third body. The area where a third body's voice can be heard is called sphere of influence. Only specific bodies that have constructed an inter-bodily chain are included in the sphere of influence of a third body that has been produced by the chain.

It is also important that a third body is constructed along with the fictitiousness that it existed prior to the inter-bodily chain that produced it. In other words, an inter-bodily chain constructs a third body backwardly on a temporal sequence, which is called *backward projection* of a third body. The backward projection secures a situation in which action by a specific body is regarded as a result of selection from an infinite set of valid actions that has already been designated by a third body. But, it is a matter of degree how far backward a third body is projected. More intense and frequent interchanging of specific bodies in an inter-bodily chain is required to secure a third body that is more backwardly projected. We will come back to this issue in the next section after looking at examples of emergence and development of a third body.

Let us see some examples of a third body taken from developmental psychology. A child aged three or four said to his mother, "Mom, tell me to stop playing with my toys and clean up." The mother wondered why the child said so despite knowing what should be done, but she complied and said, "Now, stop playing with your toys. Clean them and put them into a box." By hearing her voice, the child started to clean up and put away his toys. This example might appear puzzling but it is a familiar scenario narrated in developmental psychology textbooks. The child already knew he should stop playing with, clean, and put away his toys, but could not. He needed to hear his mother's voice in order to do so.

The mother and her child constituted an inter-bodily chain every day around many issues. Cleaning up and putting toys away was just one situation in which they constituted an inter-bodily chain. The two were put in an inter-bodily chain while cleaning up, putting toys away together, and sharing their concerns about how to clean. A third body was developed from the chain. The third body gave a voice of norm concerning playing with and cleaning up after playing with toys.

A third body overlaps a particular specific body especially when it is on a primitive level where it is produced directly from an inter-bodily chain. It overlaps the mother in the above example. Mother is a special body that is overlapped with a third body while at the same time, she is a specific body that is in an inter-bodily chain with her child. This is why the mother appears to be a special body for a child although an ordinary psychology textbook often refers to the phenomenon using the concept of psychological attachment that is grown in the mind of a child.

A phenomenon called eighth-month anxiety is also related to a third body overlapping mother. Infants begin to show shyness and fear for strangers who do not share their family life when they reach about eight months of age. They cry wildly when they are held by a stranger or a non-family member even if they had smiled at this individual before. Until this time, an infant and a mother have developed many norms along with corresponding many third bodies that have overlapped the body of the mother. But, the sphere of influence of these third bodies is restricted to the small area in which the mother is visible to an infant. The voice of the third body, mother, can only reach an infant in this small sphere. It cannot be heard if the infant is removed from the sphere. Here, remember that a norm and meaning are two sides of a single coin and anything bearing no meaning is not visible. When an infant loses the voice of a norm produced by a third body, mother, he/she loses meaning and consequently, the world around him/herself. Because of this fear, infants are frightened by the possibility of being taken from their mothers' sphere of influence.

The process of development of a third body through an inter-bodily chain is not limited to children. Adults are often involved in the process. It is not as succinctly observed as in a child because adults have already been included in many spheres of third bodies on a higher level. As an example, you might have had an experience like saying to yourself, "Oh, I have to do this now" while doing some work and, at the same time, having an image of the person who once taught you how to do the task. It has the same function as a third body like the mother in the above example.

5 Ambivalence of Norm

Processes in which specific bodies produce a third body through their inter-bodily chain and follow the voice of norm of the third-body are self-referential. Specific bodies produce a third-body that designates their experience. Since norm distinguishes between valid and invalid actions, that is, designates a particular action either as valid or invalid, it is always possible that a particular action is negatively designated as invalid. Therefore, starting from specific inter-changing bodies, it is always possible for their actions to be *negatively* designated by a third body they produced as a *positive* effect of their inter-bodily chain. This is a self-referential loop starting from and returning to interchanging bodies through a third body.

This self-referential loop has the same structure as the liar paradox in which a person you have positively endorsed as honest denies (namely, negates) your recognition by saying, "I am a liar." Is the person a liar or honest? Let us start with the positive assumption that he is an honest person regardless of what he says. Here, you have to reach a different conclusion from the assumption, the one that he is a liar, because an honest person said he was a liar. Next, let us start with the positive assumption that his remark can be believed regardless of his honesty. Here, again, we have to reach a different conclusion from the assumption, one that his remark is that he is not a liar, because once you trust his remark that he is a liar, he should be regarded as a liar. Hence his remark that he is a liar really means that he is not a liar. Consequently, it is not possible to determine whether he is a liar or honest. It must be that he has an ambivalent nature, both honest and dishonest. Such an ambivalence is not restricted to the liar paradox but is generally accompanied with any situation in which a specific action that occurs in an inter-bodily chain is designated as either valid or invalid by a third body that is constructed by the chain at the same time.

Any action is possible only when specific bodies are in the sphere of influence of a third body that they produce. It follows that any action is ambivalent in principle. However most of our actions do not look ambivalent if exceptional situations are neglected. Usually, we are not playing baseball and playing baseball at the same time. Ambivalence is inevitable in principle but can be covered or made latent. How is it achieved?

6 Unilateral Transmission of Norm

Ambivalence of norm and meaning can be covered to some extent when a third body has been projected more backwardly by intense and frequent interchanging of specific bodies in an inter-bodily chain. In this way, a third body can secure a transcendental position for specific bodies where it specifies an infinite set of valid actions prior to the selection of a valid action by a specific body in a fictitious way. In other words, more backward projection enables specific bodies to take, or select, an action from a set of actions which is more predetermined. However, ambivalence cannot be covered sufficiently by backward projection alone.

At a very early stage, the sphere of influence of a third body is so small that specific bodies that originally put themselves in an inter-bodily chain and a few specific bodies that entered the sphere later are included at best. Outside the sphere, norm and meanings of the inside do not work at all. It might be that anything does not happen between the inside and the outside of the sphere. But, the situation is drastically changed if something happens between both, especially if a norm is transmitted from one sphere to another.

Transmission of a norm from a sphere X to a sphere Y takes place unilaterally. It is different from exchange. Whether equal or unequal, exchange requires a common scale that is effective in both sides. Namely, exchange is possible only when both sides are in the same sphere of influence of the third body as far as

related norms are concerned. In contrast, in unilateral transmission, one side gives something as if it were discarding it while another side takes it without any appreciation. When unilateral transmission of norm occurs from sphere X to Y, Y is included in X and thus becomes a part of X while a third body of X now becomes the one that can provide the norm for a wider sphere (see Fig. 2). At the same time, the contents of a norm becomes general enough to apply it to bodies in Y as well as X.

The vehicle used to transmit a norm is either a body, a physical thing, or language. A Western president who revitalizes a Japanese company or a top manager of a local government, recruited from a private sector, who successfully transforms a rigid bureaucratic organization into a flexible one are good examples of transmission of norm by the use of body as a vehicle. In both examples, norms were transmitted by bodies and these were adopted to become new norms for the recipients. In general, a new member often brings about some change in a group although it might not be as evident as in the above examples. Such a change might appear to be the influence of the new member as an individual but the action that was foreign to the established members was already designated as valid in the new member's prior affiliation. Thus the change should be understood as a transmission of norm using the body as a vehicle.

A norm is often transmitted by a physical thing that is integral to valid action in a collective stream that has developed the norm. Suppose a computer is introduced to a workplace where no one has ever used one. Here, the computer might

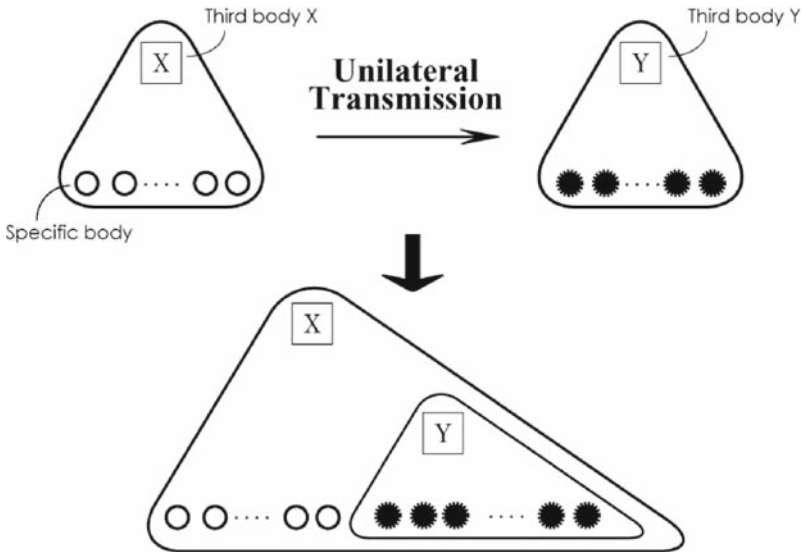


Fig. 2. Unilateral transmission of norm from sphere X to Y

transmit a new norm that has prevailed in many places but not there. Many kinds of norms designating valid actions around a computer such as communication in a workplace, data management, and even the way people spend lunch breaks might be changed.

Lastly, a norm can be transmitted by language that is integral to it. The meaning of a word is embedded in a collective stream when the word is introduced and continues to be used. Here, again, remember that meaning and norm are two sides of a single coin. Transmission of meaning by a new word parallels transmission of a norm that designates valid actions in which an object which bears the meaning is integral.

It is not sufficient to have a limited number of transmissions like one from X to Y and then from Y to Z to actualize unilateral transmission in its pure form. This is because the process of unilateral transmission is likely to be contaminated by elements of exchange regardless of which vehicle, a body, a physical thing or language, is used.

Unilateral transmission in a purer form is actualized when a chain of transmission is prolonged as shown in Figure 3. It would be more trivial to see a face of, and experience exchange with, a recipient when a vehicle was assumed to come from far away and continue to go far away. Here, the immediate donor is a person who happens to bring something that came from far away while an immediate recipient is a person who happens to take something. A new type of a third body is constructed, or fictionalized precisely, when a chain of unilateral transmission is prolonged. Thus, two levels of third bodies are developed. A third body such as that already mentioned above is constructed by an inter-bodily chain and

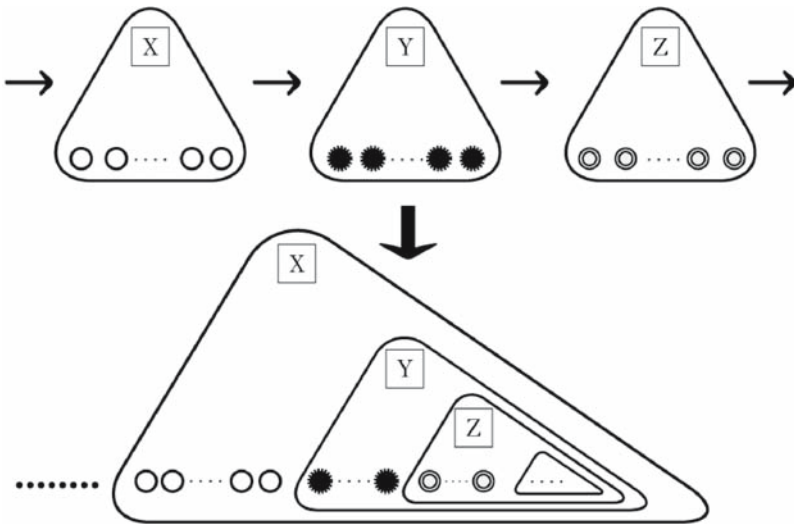


Fig. 3. Prolongation of a chain of transmission

called a third body on the first level. It is distinguished from a third body on the second level which is constructed as a position from which a long chain of transmission has started and to which it returns when the chain connecting many spheres of influence of third bodies on the first level is sufficiently prolonged.

A two-tiered structure consisting of third bodies on the first and second levels can reduce ambivalence of norm drastically although it is logically impossible to eliminate ambivalence completely. Specific bodies who have followed a third body that was constructed directly by their inter-bodily chain now follow a third body on the first level that follows a third body on the second level that designates norm that is so general that it works penetratingly in many spheres of influence of third bodies on the first level. This two-tiered structure can absorb fluctuation of ambivalence of norm that is designated by a third body on the first level alone. Here, it is possible for specific bodies to follow a norm that has been already established to greater extent.

7 Enlargement of Sphere of Influence

It is possible for the sphere of influence of a second-level third body to be enlarged by further prolonging a chain of unilateral transmission. But, it is just possible, never necessary. Suppose there are two collectivities, one which has a particular norm and the other which does not. It is possible that the sphere of a third body of the former is enlarged to the extent that the sphere of the latter is included as a part of the former by unilateral transmission from the former to the latter, but it is also possible that a norm of the former is declined by the challenge of a norm of the latter. This is equally possible to work in the opposite direction.

Moreover, any sphere of influence on the second level is faced with bodies that are located outside it, but in the neighborhood, and therefore do not follow its norm. Here, it is possible that an inter-bodily chain is developed between those bodies and some of the bodies in the sphere, which constructs a third body on the first level that is easily included in the sphere on the second level. It is also possible, however, that the sphere itself is challenged and collapsed by those bodies in the neighborhood. Here, we can see that the process of sphere enlargement is just a probable, not a necessary process.

Then, what happens when the sphere of influence of a particular third body continues to expand successfully? First, the larger the sphere is, the closer a specific body in the sphere approaches a situation in which it can hear the voice of the third body anywhere and anytime. Second, the content of a norm needs to be more generalized to the extent that it works for diverse bodies included in a larger sphere. Third, a third body decreases overlap with a specific body and, in this sense, becomes more invisible. Putting these three together, enlargement of the sphere of influence brings about a situation in which a specific body follows the voice of norm that is made by an invisible third body that observes it anywhere and anytime.

8 A Notion of Mind-in-a-Body

The “mind-in-a-body” notion is regarded as an effect of a third body that creates an enlarged sphere of influence. For this, two kinds of the notion are distinguished. The notion of the first kind is developed during the process of an individual’s life history, especially the early stages such as infancy. It corresponds to what you mean by saying, “I have a mind in my body,” a concept which has fascinated people since ancient times. In contrast, the notion of “mind-in-a-body” of the second kind is a product of social history. Specifically, it refers to mind as an important place where judgment or decision is made. This concept was formed as modernity evolved and the notion of the individual was established and philosophically labeled as individualism. Yanabu (1982) claimed Japanese people had not yet accepted the mind-in-body of the second kind as late as the latter part of the nineteenth century when they began to industrialize.

Let us start with the notion of the first kind. As mentioned earlier, many inter-bodily chains are developed between an infant and its parents for the multiplicity of events that occur around them, thus norms are developed one after another. But, since third bodies that are developed by these inter-bodily chains are still primitive and overlap with parents, they have only a small sphere of influence.

However, a certain number of norms that are indispensable for a child’s survival expand its sphere prominently. These are norms designating valid actions such as prudent dietary intake, avoidance of harmful objects, and taking precautions in potential dangerous physical situations. For these, parents tend to react more acutely to their children and develop more frequent and intense inter-bodily chains than for others. This inter-bodily chain tends to project third bodies indicating indispensable actions for survival and expands their sphere of influence rapidly. These bring about a situation in which a child follows the voice of norm made by an invisible third body that observes the child anywhere and anytime.

The notion of mind-in-a-body of the first kind is developed as an effect of those third bodies. Hearing the voice of norm anywhere and anytime produces situations in which you feel as if you had the source of the voice from inside your shirt pocket. What difference is there between a source of voice in your shirt pocket and one slightly more interior, i.e., a “mind-in-a-body”? This is how we feel we follow what the mind wants. But, the voice is still restricted to one concerning indispensable norms for survival, not norms for a wider variety of actions in our life.

The notion of “mind-in-a-body” of the second kind developed historically as the modern age arrived. The modern age is characterized as a time in which norms extend their spheres to encompass nations rather than small villages or towns with regard to major institutions such as politics, economics, religion and their constituent social activities. In other words, third bodies that gave voices of norms indicating valid actions in those social areas to a huge number of people in a nation or beyond were constituted by unilateral transmission of norms that had proceeded through a number of smaller communities. This makes the influence of third bodies in the shirt pocket eminent in various judgments for political,

economic, religious, or other institutions. It follows that a “mind-in-a-body” occupies a special position where such important judgment and thought is carried out. This position is the notion of “mind-in-a-body” of the second kind.

We are located at the intersection of many collective streams, one of which makes obvious the notion of “mind-in-a-body” of the first and second kinds. That is why we say, “I did it because I wanted to do so,” or “I did it because I had thought I should do so,” for actions that are made possible by being immanent in other collective streams as well.

9 From the Realm of Communication

Before concluding this chapter, let us locate the concepts of inter-bodily chain, a third body, and unilateral transmission within the realm of communication. The concept of communication discussed so far assumes the image of an individual person who has a mind in his/her body. Communication has been defined as a process in which what an individual thinks or feels in his/her mind or head is transmitted to another individual’s mind or head by the use of spoken or written language and/or gesture. However, such a concept of communication should be rejected when we depend on social constructionism in which the “mind-in-a-body” paradigm is the result, not the origin, of discussion.

Interchanging of bodies, construction of a third body through an inter-bodily chain and unilateral transmission of norm play a role to explain communication. Communication literally means producing something communal. With regard to this definition, the interchanging of bodies is a more direct way of communication than anything else because more than two bodies become each other, although it might be just a strange idea if you maintain the “mind-in-a-body” paradigm. The concept must be instrumental to understand the primary stage of communication that occurs not only between an infant and a mother but also in any primary stage of formation of meaning that is integral even for adults when they obtain a new understanding of something through interaction among a small number of persons or when they get insight by intensely facing an animate being other than human or a physical object.

Going forward another step, construction of a third body through an inter-bodily chain provides a basis on which meaning is born and thus communication goes beyond the primary stage although ambivalence of meaning is still prominent in its early phase. The ambivalence is hidden by the increased communication steps consisting of unilateral transmission of norm. There, self-reference is a source of energy to expand the sphere of influence of a third body.

Any body is located at a node where there is a huge variety of communication that differs in intensity and duration, namely where interchanging of bodies, and construction of a third body through an inter-bodily chain and unilateral transmission of norm occur. The communication provides a basis of meaning and enables our life world to be less ambivalent. We usually believe that an individual is a subjective entity that can feel, think or decide something in one’s mind or

head. It is argued in this paper, however, that such subjectivity is attributed to a third body. A specific body, an individual body, is like a puppet that follows a voice of, and thus is manipulated by, a puppeteer named a third body that is, however, constructed by an inter-bodily chain including the specific body and others and enhanced by a unilateral transmission of norm. In this sense, what is seemingly going in a mind or head is nothing but a voice of a third body and action is a result of manipulation of a third body. It is not that you communicate something after you conceive it in your mind or head, but that you can conceive it because you have been woven into communication where it is included as an element.

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The Transcendental Nature of Norms: Infants in Residential Nurseries and Child Adoption

AKIKO RAKUGI

Collaborative practices that bring together researchers and those involved in various activities in research fields fit well within a social constructionist meta-theory. This meta-theory assumes that every action or recognition and its objects are possible only when they are immanent in a collective stream defined as a moving state of the nature of a collectivity that consists of a group of people and their physical and institutional environments. An important point to remember is that the researcher's action and its objects are neither an exception to, nor exempted from, this. The action of discovering something new as an object is never possible unless it is taken immanently in a collective stream where the researcher is included in the group of people and their environments in a research field (Sugiman 2006).

This paper will focus on two research fields concerned with non-consanguineal child rearing. One concerns a residential nursery, the other addresses child adoption. In collaborative practice in both fields, the author found some unfamiliar phenomena that otherwise could not have been illuminated. Such findings provided an opportunity for people in the field to understand their current activities as relative and to discover other possible explanations. Hopefully, these findings in the small sample of adoptive populations will provide an opportunity for the majority of people who bear and rear their own children, to rethink what is fundamentally important for parenting. Often these values tend to be overlooked in everyday life.

A theory in human science differs from a revelation of truth in natural science that stands on a meta-theory called logical positivism. Instead, it is a kind of discourse where collaborative practice can be promoted and expanded from one locale to another. In order to develop discourses on my collaborative practice, this study was informed by a theory of body that was proposed by the Japanese sociologist, Masachi Osawa (1990) and introduced in the English language for the first time by Sugiman (2007) in the previous chapter of this volume.

1 Child Rearing in a Residential Nursery

1.1 Residential Nursery in Japan

A brief introduction to residential nurseries in Japan will be provided, focusing on the improvement of child care services accompanied by a change in the concept of hospitalism and the remaining problems that seem inevitable in situations where children are not reared by their biological parents. A residential nursery is defined by the Child Welfare Act in Japan as a facility that cares for and rears infants for the first two years if parents cannot provide care. Some infants have been deserted at birth or prior to age two. Some were abused by their parents and others were born to young or unwed mothers, or to women who had severe domestic problems that made ordinary child rearing virtually impossible.

In Japan, there has been a rapid improvement in residential nursery conditions in terms of facilities and the number of caregivers. In 1973, the nurse to infant ratio had improved up to 1.7 to 1, which was 3 to 1 or 2 to 1 before 1973. Since then, the nurse to child allocation system has changed to a standard practice of one nurse to a predetermined group of less than five infants.

These improvements in child care service reflect and are reflected in changes in psychological and medical parameters related to infants in child care studies (Sato 1991). This becomes apparent when one examines infant behaviors in residential nurseries that have been labeled as hospitalism in psychological and medical studies, and how the definition of hospitalism has changed. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the term hospitalism originally referred only to physical findings i.e., conditions such as high mortality rates and stunted growth. Beginning in the 1950s, a tendency toward mental retardation was added to the recognized peculiar problem of stunted physical development. After the 1970s, hospitalism referred more narrowly to mental retardation and focused on habits common in institutionalized infants such as body rocking and head banging.

Presently, conditions of residential nurseries have improved to the point where stunted physical development is no longer a problem and differences in mental development between nursery infants and infants at home are gradually disappearing. For example, the developmental quotient of residential nursery infants has risen to around 100 (the average figure for all infants) and there is evidence those habits peculiar to residential nursery infants have been decreasing (Amino et al. 1981).

Nevertheless, the living environment for residential nursery infants is vastly different than that for infants raised in familial homes because they are nurtured in a large group with other infants and by several nurses. The group caring tends to interrupt the kinds of intimate relations that ordinarily develop between an infant and a nurse. Nurses give priority to implementing daily schedules efficiently rather than satisfying the physiological and psychological needs of each infant. For example, it is difficult for a nurse to continue to hold an infant until he/she stops crying because that is not a time-efficient task. Instead of holding

an infant like a mother would do while nursing, nurses give milk to infants while the infants lie on the bed and this is done without physical contact. It is also part of the routine in such an institution that a nurse interrupts an infant's sleep to feed it or give it a bath. The situation in which efficiency takes priority tends to affect the attitude of a nurse toward the infant. That is, the nurse tends to identify "good" infants in terms of how well they contribute to the nurse's efficiency. An infant who demands less care and thus requires less effort from a nurse is likely to be labeled as "good," while an infant who demands more care is likely to be negatively labeled as "dependent" or even "selfish."

1.2 Peculiar Behaviors of Residential Nursery Infants

Our collaborative practice was carried out in a residential nursery that had one of the best reputations in the west Japan for several years since 1992. It was aimed at finding peculiar behaviors of residential nursery infants and sharing the findings with the people working there. Such an attempt was important because although differences in behavior were not readily apparent from those of infants at home, there were psychological problems. It was important to make nurses aware of these idiosyncratic behaviors because most of the nurses were in their twenties or early thirties and did not have the experience of rearing their own child.

Listed below are the four kinds of peculiar behavior observed of residential nursery infants during this collaborative practice: 1) smiling at other nurses who were holding and caring for other infants some distance away, 2) prolonged and concentrated exploratory behavior, 3) fear of stuffed toys, and 4) failure to follow a request to point to a stimulus figure among several alternatives drawn on a sheet (Rakugi 1999, 2002). These behaviors will be discussed theoretically using the discursive framework proposed by Osawa (1990; Sugiman 2007).

1.2.1 Smiling at Nurses Who Were Holding and Caring for Other Infants Some Distance Away

There was a tendency for residential nursery infants to direct their social smiling towards nurses who were holding and caring for other infants some distance away, rather than at the particular nurse who was holding and smiling at them. This does not mean that infants never smiled at the nurse who was caring for them. They did. But some infants smiled at a nurse some distance away far more frequently than at the nurse who was holding them. However, it was not rare to observe infants who did not smile at all at the nurse who was feeding them but consistently smiled at nurses who were feeding other infants. This eccentric smiling behavior was not a response to smiles from other nurses – none of whom were smiling at them from a distance – nor were the infants smiling at extremely familiar persons, such as nurses who would normally be in charge of them.

It is important to note that the smiling is neither the physiological, spontaneous smiling that is generally shown just after birth, nor smiling caused by comfort or

intriguing changes in the environment that become apparent one or two months after birth. Moreover, the smiling extends beyond the stage in which infants tend to smile at whoever is smiling at them. These infants reached the stage in which their smile could be directed at a specific person.

1.2.2 Prolonged and Concentrated Exploratory Behavior

Generally, infants at home tend to show exploratory behavior such as playing with a toy in the secure space that has been jointly constructed by a mother and her infant. In many cases, exploratory behavior will continue for as long as the infant feels that the mother is not far from it. It is very rare to observe exploratory behavior taking place when an infant is left alone.

It was observed, however, that exploratory behavior of residential nursery infants was likely to proceed as if they were unaware of the nurse who was watching over them. Nurses often tried to attract an infant's attention from behind or, in an attempt to positively interact with them, hold and care for them face to face, but infants would continue with their exploratory behavior as if they were oblivious to these attempts. It was not unusual for such concentrated exploratory behavior to continue for nearly an hour. Had this behavior not been interrupted by certain routine activities of daily living such as bathing and eating at meal-times, it would have continued for longer periods if allowed.

In one example from my observation, when an infant failed to respond to its name being called while engaged in exploratory behavior, a nurse forcibly took hold of the infant and waved another toy about for the infant to see, but the infant's attention continued to be fixed only on the toy it initially played with and the infant did not look at the nurse. Another relevant observation was that, in some instances, even when all the nurses were absent from the area where an infant was playing, the infant would pay no attention to this and continue playing as if nothing had happened.

1.2.3 Fear of Stuffed Toys

There was a tendency for residential nursery infants to be intimidated by the same kinds of stuffed toys that infants who were reared at home would generally find appealing. The author was surprised to find that the nurses who worked at the residential nursery regarded the infants' fear of stuffed toys to be a general indication of the emergence of the concept of fear. For example, some infants would invariably cry whenever stuffed toys were brought near them and would retreat to a place where they no longer could see the toy. Or, when a nurse held out a stuffed toy and waved it around in front of an infant, the infant became extremely upset and cried for 40 minutes.

In many cases, the soft toys had previously been regarded as innocuous and subject to the infant's exploratory behavior on numerous occasions, but, one day, without warning, the infant would start to fear stuffed toys. This was triggered more often when a nurse waved the stuffed toy in front of the infant than when the toy was left lying motionless beside the infant. The fear of stuffed toys

observed in this study is similar in nature to the fear of strangers that emerges and is manifest at around the same developmental stage. Many of the infants that developed a fear of stuffed toys in the study also developed a fear of strangers synchronically.

1.2.4 Failure to Follow a Request to Point to a Stimulus Figure Among Several Alternatives Drawn on a Sheet

Peculiar behavior was also observed when a developmental test was made for residential nursery infants aged 1.5 years. In one of the tasks included in the test, a sheet on which six different objects (e.g. a dog, a car, an item of food) were drawn. The sheet was shown to an infant who was then asked to point to one of them and answer the question “Which is a bowwow?” Only 30% of these residential nursery infants could point correctly compared to the test manual that reported a rate of more than 70% correct responses.

Behavior of residential nursery infants during the test was more interesting than the numerical data. Here is a typical example of such a behavior. When an infant was asked to point to a bowwow, she turned her eyes away from the sheet and began to gaze around to look for a dog. Wondering if she did not know what a dog was, a tester pointed to a dog on the sheet and asked her what it was. She answered, “A bowwow.” Then, the tester asked her whether there was a bowwow here on the sheet, but she began to gaze around again.

1.3 Theoretical Discourses from the Viewpoint of Osawa’s Theory

In the following section, those four kinds of peculiar behavior found in residential nursery infants will be discussed applying the theory of body by Osawa (1990) and Sugiman (2007). Specifically, the behaviors will be interpreted as reflecting difficulties of construction of a third body through an inter-bodily chain between an infant and a specific caregiver. This prolongs the period in which the state of an interchanging body is dominant for an infant (see page 138–141).

If an infant smiles at a nurse some distance away, who is holding and caring for another infant, it is a good indication of the fact that the infant is still mainly in the state of an interchanging body without developing an inter-bodily chain with a specific caregiver and then constructing a third body that overlaps with the caregiver. The infant perceives that both the other nurse and the infant being held by her are smiling and has a smile at the position (there), and immediately after, the infant embodies smiling at the position (here) of the infant’s own body. At this time, the infant perceives both the experience of the position of the other nurse and the other infant (there) and the experience of his/her own position (here) as interchangeable and indistinguishable.

Why doesn’t an infant pay any attention to the nurse who is holding and caring for him/her? To answer this question, it is necessary to start from the

consideration of why an infant's attention is naturally directed to its mother holding him/her as in most parental relations. Osawa's theory suggests that the mother's body is overlapped with third bodies that have been constructed by an inter-bodily chain between the mother and her child in their daily life. It follows that the mother's body is not just one of a number of specific bodies but has special importance for her child in the sense that the mother's body can afford norms/meanings to her child even though they are not expressed verbally. Here, we should remember that nothing can be a target of perception unless it has any meaning.

Moreover, it should be noted that the sphere of influence of a third body is restricted to the small area in which the mother is visible to an infant. The sphere is so small that physical touching is integral in the early stages of life until about one year of age. For such an infant, being held by the mother is the most secure way for the infant to be in the sphere of influence of third bodies overlapping the mother's body.

It is not that a third body is maintained forever once it is constructed by an inter-bodily chain. It is easily collapsed unless it continues to be projected by an inter-bodily chain especially when it is still in a primitive stage. Mutual looking on the part of both mother and infant is required in order to develop an inter-bodily chain to maintain third bodies that are overlapped with the mother and afford a significant world for the infant.

Now, we can answer our question concerning why a residential nursery infant never pays any attention to a nurse who is holding and smiling at him/her. As we see from the above requirement, mutual looking at by the mother and her infant was the basis on which third bodies overlapping the mother were maintained through an inter-bodily chain. In a residential nursery, however, mutual looking does not have such a function since construction of a third body is delayed by difficulties in developing an inter-bodily chain between an infant and his/her caregiver(s).

Next, the two other kinds of peculiar behavior, prolonged and concentrated exploratory behavior and fear of soft toys, can be theoretically interpreted as reflecting delay of the construction of meanings that parallels delay of construction of third bodies. Here, it is relevant whether an object is taken by an infant as a body or a physical thing. A body, more exactly, not a third body but a specific body, is defined as an object with which other bodies can interchange while a physical thing is an object with which they cannot.

It is its existence in a collective stream that determines whether an object is a body or a physical thing. During the early stages of life, a trinomial relationship that consists of an object, an infant and an adult determines whether something is a body or a physical thing, along with a meaning beyond it. The adult has already created overlapping third bodies and is now going to overlap a new third body that gives a norm and a meaning to the object. Therefore, a trinomial relation is not possible if construction of third bodies is delayed in relationships that occur in residential nursery infants. In such a situation, everything appears as a body for an infant at the beginning (Wallon 1954) and thus as an object with

which a body of the infant can interchange. Exploratory behavior that is excessively prolonged with much concentration but without any attention to a caregiver can be interpreted as reflecting the state of the interchanging of two bodies, an infant and the object being explored.

The same line of interpretation can be given to the third kind of peculiar behavior, fear of soft toys. For most infants at home, or even most adults, a soft toy is a physical thing that is also something we can love the same way as a person or a body. This meaning of a soft toy is also developed in a trinomial relationship for many infants at home in which one of the three elements is a parent (a mother in many cases), who overlaps third bodies. Again, delay of construction of third bodies tends to lead to the appearance of a soft toy as a body, not a physical thing, for residential nursery infants.

It is interesting that fear of soft toys is likely to start to be observed when an infant reaches about eight months of age or slightly older. From the time that infants begin to show what is called the eighth-month anxiety, they begin to show shyness and even fear of strangers. Originally, the term came from a behavioral phenomenon exhibited by eight month old infants at home toward those who did not share in their family life. But, generally, an infant at home tends to begin to show such behaviors at six months of age. Taking into consideration that the eighth-month anxiety reflects fear of being taken away from the small sphere of influence of third bodies overlapping a parent, it is reasonable for residential nursery infants to show the fear later than infants at home because of difficulties in developing an inter-bodily chain and then third bodies (see page 139–141).

From the above, it is suggested that a soft toy appears as a strange body to residential nursery infants. The soft toy is unlike a nurse who takes care of them everyday even though she does not have as steady a relationship with them as a parental home relationship. At the same time, until then, infants have reached a point where they show shyness or even fear of a stranger. In conclusion, fear of soft toys reflects the eighth-month anxiety that residential nursery infants exhibit toward a strange body.

Last, the transcendental nature of a third body is focused on interpreting the observation that it is difficult for residential nursery infants to follow a request to point to a stimulus figure among several alternatives drawn on a sheet although they can say what it is when someone points to the figure. Here, we should remember that a third body is constructed or projected backward along with a norm that is attributed to it (see page 138–148). That is, a norm, or voice of a third body, functions as a framework, or a horizon, that has already been established for a current specific action.

In the task where a child is requested to point to a stimulus figure, there is a tacit rule, predetermined, that the game is restricted to the world within a sheet that has been put in front of both the adult and the child. This kind of rule is easily developed at home through a situation in which a parent and a child enjoy a picture book together and talk about something in it. There, a friendly-looking dog is the one on the page that both are looking at, not the real animal sleeping

in the corner of a living room. We conclude again that difficulties of residential nursery infants in developing an inter-bodily chain with, and third bodies overlapping with, a specific body lead to a lack of norms that can function as a transcendental premise for a specific action.

2 Child Adoption

In residential nurseries, more than half of the infants are taken back and brought up by their parents or relatives after spending several months or a couple of years there but some cannot return to their families. Child adoption provides a way that infants can be reared in an alternative family and this is widely believed to be superior to spending an entire childhood in a facility. It is, however, a difficult life for both adoptive parents and adopted children to go undergo when there are no blood ties.

A blood relation constitutes a transcendental premise on which a variety of actions are taken for child rearing in daily life. You might scold your child loudly for having everything go his/her way excessively. The child might begin to cry and ask why you are so angry. You might explain you are seriously concerned that he/she might grow up to become an unworthy, selfish person. The child might ask why you are so seriously concerned about him/her and then you might reply by referring to the fact that he/she is your child, namely, connected to you by a blood relationship, whether or not you use the word explicitly. An important observation is that your child never asks why you are in blood relation with him/her. Interestingly, blood relation is the last word beyond which more grounding is not pursued, and, conversely, it is the very starting point from which many other discourses are generated.

We will now discuss how such a transcendental premise is constituted between adoptive parents and adopted children who don't have a blood relation as a biologically secured premise. The author found, through collaborative work, that several attempts to constitute a transcendental premise that substituted for a real blood relation were made by an organization to extend activities to mediate residential nursery infants to married couples who were not blessed with, but wanted to adopt a child.

Collaborative work was carried out for several years in two different organizations both of which held a three-day workshop for couples who wanted to adopt a child. One was a semi-public organization that has a formal relation with local government. That will be referred to as organization A, hereafter; and the other is a private non-profit organization, that will be referred to as organization B. Organization A mediated children who had been in a residential nursery for two years or more while organization B mediated children as young as possible, less than one year and even newborns.

Workshops held by the two organizations had to constitute a transcendental premise on which adoptive parents could grow their adopted child although both similarities and differences were observed between the two. Three aspects among

the detailed descriptions by Rakugi (2003, 2005) will be addressed: 1) the decision for a couple to adopt a child prior to meeting the child, 2) a strategy adopted in a workshop to collapse prior norms that had been followed by a couple until they attended the workshop, and 3) guidance on informing a child of his/her real parents.

2.1 *Decision Prior to Meeting a Child*

The two organizations maintained a strict rule as to when a couple should decide to adopt a child. The decision was required to be made sometime after the end of workshop. However, until the decision was made, a couple could only look at a small picture and have a brief introduction to the child who might be adopted by them in organization A. A couple was not given any information about a child in organization B. Once the decision was made, the couple was prohibited to refuse any child who was mediated by the organization and appeared in front of the couple. If they hesitated to take over a mediated child, any further relation with the organization was dissolved. Thus, a couple was not allowed to make a selection from two or more prospective children.

The rule contributes to *unilateral transmission* of a norm from the organizations to a couple (see page 143). The norm indicates an infinite set of valid actions that is consistent with a premise that a child has been accepted and adopted by a couple unconditionally without either any attempts of selection or any consideration regarding favorable or unfavorable characteristics of the child. The norm is expected to function as the basis on which many other specific norms will be developed in the daily life of adoptive parents and adopted child thereafter.

You might notice that the rule can put a couple in a situation similar to the moment when you and your partner become aware of a pregnancy. After that moment, you and your partner can never choose anyone other than your unborn baby and the favorable aspects that you perceive the baby has. You have no way other than to accept your unborn baby unconditionally and, more positively, to make the having of him/her a transcendental premise on which many aspects of your family life will be restructured thereafter.

2.2 *Collapse of Prior Norms*

A workshop is designed to pave a road until the time when a couple meets a child and starts a new life under a new transcendental norm. For this purpose, it is necessary to collapse norms that have been followed by a couple so far that are not consistent with a new norm. The two organizations take different strategies to pursue the same goal. This is mainly a reflection of age differences in the children who are to be mediated.

In organization A, the lecture, a major part of the workshop, emphasizes how hard it is for adoptive parents to go through the process with their adopted child. First of all, the lecturer stresses that a couple who wants to adopt a child is doing

it solely for the fulfillment of their desire to be adoptive parents and never because they need a child for other reasons. This is the very first step toward a goal of unconditional acceptance of a child, in which, when a couple is asked why they have adopted, they can answer only tautologically like, "We did it just because we wished to do so."

The lecturer presents a series of difficult experiences that will be encountered by a couple in the future. Starting with a story where the infant rejects the adoptive parents in the week after the first meeting, various types of behaviors that annoy parents are given as examples. These behaviors are explained as an attempt of the infant to examine whether or not the couple is really reliable for him/her. The couple is told about other behaviors, specifically, excessive and picky eating, followed by prolonged and frequent sticky physical attachment. Intentional repetitive behaviors, most disturbing and hated by parents such as biting, punching, or kicking parents, and withdrawal to an earlier stage of development are also described.

The importance that couples fully accept the child despite such annoying behavior is consistently suggested. For example, a favorite food should be given generously to a child who shows excessive and picky eating; parents should be tolerant enough to enjoy the physical attachment however prolonged and frequent it is. Parents should offer cups and pretend to enjoy breaking them together with a child who annoys them by breaking cups on a table one after another; parents should lie on the floor and cry together with a child who lies, cries and asks them to buy something at a shopping mall. Parents should not hesitate to allow a child to suckle their breast even they cannot supply breast milk, or put a diaper on a child who has already passed through those developmental stages but suddenly begins to regress.

Further, the lecturer presents cases where no matter hard the adoptive parents try to resolve issues, it becomes impossible. Some of these are tragic situations. For example some adoptive couples could not tolerate the psychological burden of parenting and committed child abuse or homicide; some could not maintain their marital relations any more because of the stresses involved in child rearing; and some were threatened by the sudden appearance of the biological parent(s) who demanded to have the child returned to them.

In summary, the workshop by organization A intends to shake, to its foundations, the bright image of family life that an adoptive couple expects to have with their adopted child and thus threaten and collapse the norms that underpin such an image. The lecturer emphasizes, explicitly or implicitly, that a couple can continue their former life satisfactorily if they give up the idea of child adoption. Actually, some couples have let go of their intention after attending the above described lecture. Only couples who can break the fetters of a prior transcendental norm and secure space to develop a new norm proceed to the next step, i.e., meeting a child.

In organization B where a child less than one year or a newborn baby is mediated, a different strategy is adopted to collapse prior transcendental norms. In this organization, the couple had no problem to overcome annoying behaviors

shown by a child who spent time in a residential nursery and had developed recognition of one's caregiver and familiarity to the environment. Three major points of the strategy used in organization B will be focused on the following.

First, a great deal of time is devoted so that the couple can talk to each other and reflect on their past lives, from childhood to the present. A couple is encouraged to share their happy and unhappy events of each stage. Couples' talk is followed by a discussion in which each couple of the three or four presents what they talked about and exchanged. They offer opinions and the instructor makes comments to clarify their remarks and facilitate discovery of a new way of verbal expression and communication.

For most couples, the experience of undergoing fertility treatments was not only painful psychologically and physically, but was unsuccessful. This is focused on as one of the unhappiest events in their most recent life. Many couples have not yet come to terms with this terribly unhappy event and still carry a sense of desperate failure with them. Most of them did not discuss it sufficiently between them until they did in the workshop. Such discussion enables a couple to locate the event in a different way than perceived originally by using language. In this sense, the process in a workshop is similar to narrative therapy (e.g., McNamee and Gergen 1992) in which, depending on the reality-constructive power of language, a prior tacit framework, a norm in this paper, is relativised, life in the past is reconstructed, and the potential to develop a new framework is provided for the future.

Second, the program attempts to emancipate a couple from the negative aspects regarding child adoption. A couple is asked by an instructor to disclose how they think people in our society generally regard a married couple who is not blessed with a child, child adoption, an adopted child, or a person who bore, but did not rear a child. Many couples report that a married couple without a child is viewed as an incomplete family and therefore a wretched anomaly. Some think child adoption is the manifestation of an excessive insistence to maintenance of one's household or an excessive desire to have a child. Others view an adopted child as a victim of real but egoistic, needy parents. Some couples have the attitude that parents who cannot rear their own child are irresponsible and selfish.

Following such disclosures, an instructor stresses that those attitudes of people toward child adoption articulated by the couple reflect how child adoption is actually perceived by the couple themselves. The instructor also assures the couple that their responses reflect their anxiety over the difficulties of going through with an adoption and being surrounded by people with such prejudices. Here, the instructor emphasizes that a vicious circle of the passive acceptance of prejudice by adoptive parents and the reinforcement of it will never end unless adoptive parents become active enough to challenge it by changing themselves and exposing themselves to the people around them.

Third, special attention is paid to the use of words concerning child adoption. The negative conception of child adoption that is dominant in the society and has been learned by the couple is expected to be transformed into a more positive

one. This positive concept can eradicate a dark image by introducing several new terminologies. These will be shown in the following expressions although it is not easy to express the delicate nuances of Japanese words in English.

It is suggested by an instructor to replace *jitsu-oya*, in which *jitsu* means real and *oya* means parents, with *umi-no-oya*, in which *umi* means giving birth and thus which means parents who actually bore a child. The use of *jitsu* (real) implicitly implies that adoptive parents are not real parents even if they love their adopted child sincerely. Next, it is suggested that pregnancy of *umi-no-oya* should be referred to as *yokisenu* (just unexpected) rather than *nozomanu* (undesired). This aims at changing a negative image of *umi-no-oya* to a positive one. This new terminology implies that the pregnancy was so unexpected for *umi-no-oya*, especially the female parent, that she had no way other than depending on adoptive parents although she desired to rear a child by herself if possible. Last, it is suggested that *morau* (be given) is replaced with *mukaeru* (welcome) when the moment of adopting a child is referred to. Needless to say, *mukaeru* (welcome) can transform a dark image of child adoption into bright one.

2.3 *Life Under a New Norm*

It is important for the adoptive parents to refer to the fact of adoption with their adopted child in daily life to maintain or even enhance a new norm as a transcendental premise for many specific norms after their new life starts. Although it is possible for parents to raise a child without disclosure about who really gave birth to their child, both organizations try to persuade a couple to inform the child. This way, they do not need to worry about sudden disclosure of a secret in the future. In addition, organization B maintains a policy to respect a right of real parents to meet their child via the organization and thus requires a couple to inform the child of that fact.

It is important to note that the fact of adoption should be disclosed in a way that a parental relation that has been established between adoptive parents and their adopted child can continue to serve as a basis of a transcendental norm despite its not standing on a blood-relation. The disclosure should be done along with full acceptance of a child by parents, never unilateral informing from parents to a child. We can see specific ways to disclose the fact of adoption using the guidance of an instructor in both organizations.

In organization A, a couple is advised to disclose the fact of adoption by following three major points. It is stressed that the fact should be disclosed after a child reaches three or four years of age but no later than seven or eight. First, the parental relation should be referred to positively in the disclosure while, at the same time the lack of blood-relation is explained. Specifically, parents should say, "We are your parents and you are our son/daughter although you are not related to us through a blood relation." Parents should not say, "To tell the truth, we are not your real parents." One female parent told about her adopted daughter, aged four, who had already developed and tried to maintain the fantasy that

she lived with her biological parents, grandparents, older brother and older sister in a family. The adoptive mother said, "That's fantastic. I would be happy if you could allow me to join your family."

Second, the disclosure should stress that the child was unconditionally selected by his/her parents for the simple reason that they loved the child. The parents should avoid referring to the adoption as a result of conditional selection. Specifically, parents should say, "We decided to adopt you simply because we loved you." Parents should not say, "We decided to adopt you because you looked very clever," or "We decided to have you because you looked so nice," which implies that they would not have taken the child if certain physical appearance conditions were not met.

Third, the disclosure should be concluded with a remark where parents express their sense of pleasure of, or satisfaction with, having adopted a child. For example, parents can say, "We are very happy to meet you," or "We are very pleased to have you with us."

In organization B, the instructor stresses that a couple should try to share the fact of adoption as an ongoing dialogue with their child in daily life rather than disclosing the fact suddenly at a particular point of time. For example, adoptive parents should allow the biological parents to send a gift to the child and enjoy it together. This can be done while explaining who sent it. A birthday of a biological parent could be celebrated by adoptive parents and their child along with an explanation of whom they are honoring. When the experience is handled in a natural manner, it can give recognition to the person who gave birth to the adopted child, a person who is as important as the adoptive parents.

Emphasis on the disclosure of adoption in daily life is also reflected in the words used by organization B. A word, *telling*, as it is in English, is used to refer to the disclosure of adoption instead of *kokuchi* that is widely used. Here, "ing" in *telling* is taken grammatically as the present progressive form, not a gerund (verbal noun), which means that parents are disclosing the fact in their daily life.

We can learn an important lesson from these workshop instructions and how they were actually implemented by most adoptive parents whose child was mediated by the two organizations. Every day, in Japan, there is news about child abuse, infanticide and parental homicide. In most cases, these tragedies occur between parents and their consanguineal child. This teaches us that blood relation alone does not necessarily guarantee a healthy parental relationship. Just because the parent and child are biologically related does not insure that there is a transcendental norm characterized by a parent's unconditional acceptance of a child. Many specific norms constitute the parental relationship in daily life in order to raise a child to be a good person, in which conditional, or even logical, judgment is integral. However, we should remember that the conditional or the logical is possible only when ultimately underpinned by the transcendental but the transcendental can never be grounded by the conditional or logical.

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Using Social Knowledge: A Case Study of a Diarist's Meaning Making During World War II

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The end of 1940. Who is sorry to see the last of this grim & anxious year? We have certainly lived history this year. How we have wondered & puzzled what the news in the next week would bring. . . . We have got used to being at war now & the inconveniences of the petty annoyances such as the blackout & rations have become a habit. We don't stir at night when we hear the guns & Nasties now, we have got used to them. I would not have believed that a day would come when the petrol pumps would lay empty, & I would actually have summer Sundays off from work & most marvellous of all a weeks holiday together in August. (June's Diary, 31 December 1940)

1 From the Production of Social Knowledge to the Uses of Knowledge

The history of societies is marked by ruptures such as wars, pandemics, new technologies and natural disasters. In response to such ruptures, societies generate social knowledge that enables the population to master the given rupture. The concept of social representations theorizes this production of social knowledge (Moscovici 1984). Social representations make the unfamiliar or uninvited rupture, familiar. For instance, social representations enable people to interact with intangible illnesses such as AIDS (Joffe 1995), they enable people to imagine a distant or unintelligible other (Jodelet 1989), they enable people to imagine what happens in the psychoanalyst's office (Moscovici 1973), and they provide people with concrete images to guide thought and action in regard to genetically modified foods (Wagner et al. 2002). Emerging out of "the crisis in social

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psychology” and the critique of the individualization of social psychology (Moscovici 1973), the theory of social representations has provided a means for theorizing collective phenomena in their own right (Farr 1998). Hence, Moscovici’s well-known statement that social representations “lead a life of their own, circulate, merge, attract and repel each other and give birth to new representations, while old ones die out” (Moscovici 1984, p. 13). In this statement, the unit of social psychological analysis is the social representation, which appears as an autonomous, almost intentional, unit. Social psychological phenomena appear, in this statement, to happen between social representations rather than between people.

Without denying that social knowledge can be studied at the collective level, our concern in this chapter is with the relation between the person and social knowledge. Individual persons are immersed in collectively constructed symbolic streams (Gillespie 2007; Valsiner 1998). As a collective rupture affects them personally, it is within these symbolic streams that they find ways to handle the newness, the unknown, the abstract, or the unthinkable. Accordingly, the question we address in the present chapter is: How are meanings, drawn from the stream of social knowledge, mobilized for the person’s individual action?

Bauer and Gaskell (1999) distinguish four modes of representation: habitual behavior (such as behavioral routines), individual cognition (ways of categorizing the world), informal communication (everyday discussion, gossip), and formal communication (novels, media, propaganda). In the present paper we are primarily concerned with informal and formal communication. We are interested in the social knowledge that flows through communicative channels, such as the mass media, artistic production, advertising, propaganda, and rumor. Specifically we are interested in how collective ruptures manifest at the level of the individual person, and in how the person then mobilizes social knowledge as a resource to master the given rupture. In our framework, a resource is a cultural element which is drawn from the symbolic stream to be used by someone to achieve something (Zittoun et al. 2003; Zittoun 2006).

At the level of the person, ruptures can raise three different kinds of challenges (Perret-Clermont and Zittoun 2002). First: ruptures in people’s lives call for new actions. Practical steps need to be taken to adjust to the rupture. Second: ruptures raise challenges to a personal sense of meaning, and so in response to a rupture, people seek to make meaning – engaging in representational labor and in efforts to regulate and integrate emotional and unconscious responses. Third: as they develop their new actions and understanding, people position themselves toward the rupture, also developing new identities, and thus engaging in the dynamics of social recognition. We propose to examine how an individual uses social knowledge to address these three facets of a rupture.

In this paper, we approach the question of the use of social knowledge through an analysis of a young woman’s diary during World War II in England. Unlike more recent wars, World War II affected people in England on an everyday basis. Decisions made at the level of government had huge consequences for the practices and experiences of individuals. The whole country was asked to support the

war effort and make sacrifices in ways that are difficult to envision today. The war entailed a rupture in social, cultural and economic institutions; it broke up families and social networks, and deprived people of taken-for-granted commodities. The unknown appears at all levels: What will the next army movements be? Who are the enemies? How will events affect each person's life? How does one think through news about destruction and deaths? Very aware of the disorganizing power of people's anxiety when passively facing the unknown, the British government and various associations put much effort into diffusing information and social knowledge during World War II. Quality radio broadcasting, theatre, cinema and adult education programs were funded to actively produce social knowledge about the war. In informal communication, rumors, opinions and advice were diffused.

This formal and informal communication creates social knowledge of the collective form identified at the start of this chapter. We ask how people actually use the social knowledge at their disposal: Do they use it as a resource to address the consequences of the rupture of war in their lives? And if so, how do they use it? Examining a young woman's diary during the war years enables us to identify the portion of social knowledge to which she has access, and how she uses it. The question we thus explore is: Facing the collective rupture that is a war, how does one single person *use* social knowledge to address the three facets of rupture: to support action, to elaborate meaning and to guide identity positioning?

2 Method

The data for the present study is diaries drawn from the Mass-Observation Archive (Sheridan et al. 2000). Mass-Observation (M.O.), established in Britain in 1937, aimed to create a "people's anthropology" to redress the relative neglect of the perspective of ordinary people in social science (Bloome et al. 1993). Following public appeals by the founders of Mass-Observation, several hundred ordinary people across Britain volunteered to keep daily diaries about their lives and their communities and to respond to regular surveys (called "directive replies"). Mass-Observation has archived these diaries and survey responses making them available to interested researchers. Methodologically this is an important point. One of the best ways for qualitative researchers to ensure quality in their research is for other researchers to have access to the primary data (Gillespie 2005). Accordingly, any researcher can gain access to our primary data by contacting the Mass-Observation Archive at the University of Sussex and requesting the diaries from diarist number 5324.

Out of the several hundred available diaries, we chose to focus upon a single diarist, who will be referred to as June.¹ The procedure for selecting June had two stages. First, we selected all the diarists with a family member also submitting

¹ All names and identifying details have been changed.

diaries to Mass-Observation as this gives a second point of view, enabling triangulation (Flick 1992). Second, out of this sub-set we selected the pair that had, together, sent the greatest number of diaries to Mass-Observation. Of these criteria, June, and her sister, Bella (diarist number 5323), were selected. Since June wrote significantly more than Bella (about one page per day), we chose, in this paper, to focus upon June.

In August 1939, just before Britain declared war on Germany, both June and Bella responded to the Mass-Observation appeal to help create “an anthropology of ourselves” by sending in their first diary installment. Aged 18 when she began, June continued to submit her diaries to Mass-Observation until the war ended in 1945.

At the outbreak of the war, June is living at home, in a small, close-knit village on the East Coast. She lives with her mother and older sister with whom she has a very close relationship. Working in the family business – a small village garage and shop selling sweets and tobacco – June is in a prime position to observe the changes to her village resulting from the advent of war, as well as to share the reflections of others, both village members and those, such as travelling salespeople and holiday makers, passing through from other areas of England.

In April 1941, following Labour Minister Bevin’s call for women to enter the workforce, she leaves her home village and makes the first of several transitions. She moves to the southwest of England, where she trains and works as a gardener. Initially she works with her sister in stately homes whose grounds have been converted to agricultural production in the “dig for victory” campaign, and whose buildings became billets to accommodate war-workers – other gardeners and soldiers. Then, in March 1943 June and her sister move once again, this time to be head gardeners at a war hostel, charged with producing vegetables to feed the hostel staff and factory workers billeted there. After several months of successful gardening, June suffers from appendicitis and is unable to continue with arduous physical work. She therefore takes a position as shop assistant and “front desk” receptionist in the hostel.

During these years, June always has access to a wide range of social knowledge: she regularly mentions radio news and shows, as well as newspapers; she regularly goes to the cinema and to the theatre; she visits local libraries; and she attends lectures and summer schools organized by the Workers’ Educational Association (WEA). During these years, she is also exposed to gossip and rumors, posters, billboards, and official leaflets.

We are not under the illusion that diaries offer a transparent window onto the reality of June’s life. June’s reasons for writing are many, and the nature and quantity of her writing are influenced by the free time she has at disposal, her state of tiredness, her degree of interest in the events of her day, and her mood. Moreover, diary-writing adds a specific form of reflexivity or self-consciousness to one’s life narrative. For one, turning one’s experience into a narrative is a means of disengaging from the here and now stream of experience a form of distancing, and self transformation (Gilbert 2001; Ricoeur 1985), mediated by various cultural means (the rules of the genre of a diary, its appropriate

vocabulary and grammatical style – Bruner 1991; McAdams 2006). Moreover, June’s diary is addressed to a variety of real and imagined audiences. Especially at the beginning of the war, it is addressed towards M. O. experts, seeking to give objective descriptions of the reactions of people that June observes to the war, in line with M.O.’s stated aims. During the war, the diary’s role changes, becoming much more a space for June’s reflection about her personal current experiences and dilemmas. Thus, June’s diary is a peculiar mixture of meaning-making and self-presentation. Yet, still, it informs us about factual events, about what seems normal and what seems exceptional in June’s everyday life, about aspects of social knowledge to which she is exposed and, most importantly, what social knowledge she is using to construct her response to the rupture of war.

3 People’s Story within History: Ruptures and Resources

June’s immediate experience of the War was of the “Home Front”. Characteristics of the war such as disruptions to trade and intensive bombing of cities undermined British citizens’ morale. The British government reacted by trying to boost morale. It thus intensively provided people with information about the war and with entertainment: films, radio, and theatre were considered essential weapons against the enemy (Calder 1969; Catsiapis 1996). People were also called upon to be actively engaged, rather than being passive victims of the sky’s rage. Those who were not conscripted were enrolled in various sorts of civic activities. And propaganda was intended to diffuse values, pride and hope. Providing encouraging interpretations of the war and promoting individual agency, the government, mass media and cultural associations attempted to prevent the population from experiencing anxiety and helplessness.

How does the big history – the rupture that is war – affect personal stories? And what do individual people do with the general messages, the political discourses, and propaganda? How did June use social knowledge as a resource to deal with the war? We analyze June’s responses to the war in terms of the three types of challenges raised by a rupture. Thus, we ask: How does June use social knowledge to guide new actions, elaborate meaning, and position herself in relation to the war?

3.1 Ruptures and Uses of Resources to Define New Actions

World War II demanded a response from the people of England. Bombings were frequent and an invasion seemed imminent. But how does one protect oneself from an imminent *blitzkrieg*? How does one prepare for a hundred thousand German soldiers landing on the nearby beaches? What social knowledge was June able to draw upon to plan her action in the event of an invasion?

Before England’s formal entry into the war in September 1939, the government believed that Germany would invade through the air. An intense civilian preparation was underway across the country. From February 1939, people were

asked to construct air-shelters; in March, every household was given a booklet entitled “Protection of Your Home Against Air Raids” (Kelly 2004), and Air Raid Protection (ARP) wardens were appointed to oversee the preparation of shelters and blackout; people had to carry gas masks. In April, compulsory conscription of men was announced. As expected, Germany attempted to vanquish England through the air in September 1940, during what became the “Battle of Britain.”

Thus, for eighteen months (early 1939 to September 1940), people are actively engaged in material practices linked to the expected invasion. Everyday life is radically disrupted. For June and her sister Bella, the beginning of war concretely means the need to blackout one’s windows, the construction of shelters, the excitement around gas masks, the anticipation of the first airplanes and bombings, the rationing of food, candles and clothing. Their family business is affected by the shortage of petrol and cigarettes. Nonetheless, during the day they carry on their habitual leisure activities such as ice-skating, tennis and cycling. But at night, on the East coast of England, the bombs fall.

In preparing for the nightly bombing, June draws upon the ARP leaflets. In a diary entry in September 1939, she describes how she uses this social knowledge to enable her to make decisions about what actions to take:

Bring out public information leaflets & ARP book and read through the lot. Decide bathroom to be refuge room in air raid because it is downstairs & has only one small 18” sq window, and has outside walls 18” thick. It already has in most things in ARP book washing things, disinfectant, bandages, etc. We take in a tin of Smiths potato crisps, 3 bottles lemonade, several packets of chocolate from business stock, & some old magazines to read (September, 1939).

The leaflet provides categories with which to analyze rooms (location, size, thickness of walls), which enable June to argue for the choice of bathroom as refuge. It also advises her on what to put in the room (first aid and foodstuffs). The leaflet does not have to convince June that to prepare a refuge is necessary. She has probably already picked up this background assumption from contemporary discussions about the war and the need for civilian protection, in formal and informal communication. By engaging in such practices, people concretely render the idea of the coming war, and create material security which might help them regulate their anxiety when imagining war. Later on, in 1940, when overhead airplanes become quite familiar (and June’s village remains untouched), June, her sister and their neighbors tend to disregard the formal advice about taking cover when airplanes are heard. Instead, they agree that they often feel it is more important to get a good night’s sleep, or indeed that they might as well take the risk of watching the planes from the garden, to see the exciting events of the war.

June not only reactively makes use of such knowledge as it becomes available to her, but she also expects such knowledge to be available to guide her actions. This is clearly demonstrated in the following excerpt:

Woke up at five. Laid in bed & heard the men go to work at the shingle quarry. I was not listening but overheard the word “parachutes” by two workmen. The next two a few minutes later were also talking of invasion of England. Everybody round here has it in their minds about what we shall do if invaded. Most people seem to expect it. Most have wild ideas about what we ought to do. Why have we not had instructions? Why not a Public Information Leaflet on the subject along with other wartime instructions we have had? After all we had plenty of pre-war on ARP & even since the war not a word to the civil population on what to do on enemy invasion. I wonder if the government has any plans. Everyone here is wondering if we stay put or hop it if they land. Some think both ways. We keep debating the subject of fleeing or remaining, & do not know whether to pack a case as some people have or not. We have had out handbags ready with bank books in since the day war was declared (May, 1940).

Here, June expresses clearly her wish for government instructions on the appropriate action to take in the event of invasion. The absence of such important information undermines confidence in the government’s preparation. Confronting a rupture so unfamiliar that its consequences cannot be anticipated, June, her family, and her neighbors search for suggestions on what it is that they should *do*. If June does not get such advice through formal communication channels, the informal ones are flooded with it. People discuss what the Germans will do to them, whether and how they might appease the soldiers, whether they should flee the East coast while they are still safe, and how they should prepare themselves in case they have to leave in a hurry. Some people recommend opening the doors to the Germans. Others, including June, pack cases with essentials ready to flee, while an acquaintance of June decides that he will take his go-cart, so that he can take his dog with him. June’s sister visits the man’s wife, and June reports:

She had hung out an old thick coat to air on the line. She said she had brought it out to flee with if necessary, as she says you want to look scruffy so that if a fund for refugees is raised you will be more pitied. We decided it would be better to wear your best clothes though (April, 1941).

In such exchanges, people are generating the social knowledge of what to do in response to an anticipated rupture of invasion, to make up for the lack of advice from the government. Having a thought-out plan of what to do allays some of the anxiety brought about by the rupture.

In these examples, we see that the instructions in the leaflets are followed with various degrees of adhesion. The leaflets are considered as a source of knowledge to guide the shelter construction when aerial bombardment is anticipated at the commencement of war, but are increasingly ignored as the months go by without bombs falling in June’s own village. Formal communications (ARP leaflets) do not always respond to the community’s immediate fears, such as the fear of invasion, and have to be completed by informal communication (social exchange, rumors). June reads newspapers and listens to the radio (formal communication), but she also engages in intense discussions, especially while she works in the garage or at the hostel shop (informal communication). She thus writes that “I

form my opinions from discussion among customers and friends and my own common sense” (Directive replies, January, 1940). Thus, uses of social knowledge are rarely homogenous. Rather, sets of information are collected through various modes, and used to complete each other, to compete with each other, or to define new forms of understanding or self-positioning.

3.2 Ruptures and Uses of Resources to Support Meaning Making

As with any major rupture, the outbreak of war raises the question of its meaning. To support commitment to new and at times unpleasant actions, to accept hardships and the postponement of personal goals in the name of an imposed purpose, to accept participation in a collective effort, and to maintain morale, every citizen needs to make sense of events and the part one might play in it. Let us follow June’s uses of social knowledge to confer meaning to the political significance of war, to its day-to-day events, and to the personal impact of these events.

During the early months of war, people are actively seeking out understandings of what the war actually is, and what is happening. For this, the most immediate source of information is given by daily news. June quite often mentions listening to the radio. In her social sphere, there seems to be a consensus about the importance of radio news: many times, a discussion is cut short by people wanting to be home in time for the news. June and her family listen to the news of the progress of the war, to political calls and Churchill’s speeches, but also to various comedy shows.

Although the BBC is providing the news and opinions to be heard by the entire country, people are not necessarily passive consumers. June does not take for granted that the BBC’s version of the war is truthful. Within families and communities, people comment on and discuss the news, developing shared interpretations and doubts about the information that they receive. Working in the garage and, later, the hostel shop, June encounters a variety of people’s perspectives. She listens both to the BBC and the German propaganda of Lord Haw-Haw.² Asked by Mass Observation “What do you believe about the news you are getting nowadays (Give us all your feelings & opinions about this.)”, June answers:

I never do, [I] only half believe the news. I like to hear both sides of the story that’s why I always listen to [Lord Haw-Haw] as well as the BBC I think one is as true as the other & they are both biased to their own benefit (February, 1940).

² Lord Haw-Haw broadcast German propaganda in English targeted at the English population. The nickname “Haw-Haw” comes from the upper class English accent of the broadcaster (who was actually a number of different broadcasters). The broadcasts derided the British war effort while glorifying the German war effort. The tone was sarcastic, and the broadcaster urged Britain to surrender. Despite the British government discouraging people from listening to Lord Haw-Haw, he was very popular in Britain as it was one of the few channels by which the British public could escape the narrow confines of the censored British media.

Hence, the outbreak of war requires people to use available information to create a representation of the war, to be able to understand it, evaluate it, and predict its evolution. Although the formal communication suggests that it is the definitive interpretation, June uses divergent sources of (formal and informal) information to create a dialogical tension – “I like to hear both sides of the story” – through which she can create her own opinion. June is thus not passively enacting a hegemonic representation. Rather, she is actively looking for contrasting social knowledge, which helps her to reflect upon the various representations of the war.

A second aspect of conferring meaning to the war is to link it to a superordinate principle or idea, which would confer a *raison-d’être* to the war. To come to such a general principle, June engages in a work of distancing from the here-and-now of war events, and placing them within the broader context of European politics and history. Resources used to create such distance are given by both collective memory and expert knowledge. On the one hand, June and her sister have been exposed to discourses from their father, mother and teachers about the First World War, in which they learned that the First World War was justifiable as the war that would end all wars. The commencement of World War II refutes that interpretation of the First World War, but the power of the idea persists. June uses this idea to provide an interpretation of how the current war might be justifiable: “We have got to win this war and make certain this time about it being a war to end wars” (Directive replies, October, 1940).

The idea that knowledge is a weapon against war leads June to engage in a process of continuous education, through reading, lectures and summer schools. June and her sister regularly attend weekly lectures organized by the Worker’s Educational Association (WEA), in which they seem to find resources for elaborating the broader picture. They attend lectures on such topics as “Propaganda in Peace & War,” “The Nature of Nazi Germany,” “American Foreign Policy” and “Russian Foreign Policy.” The sisters seem to appreciate these lectures and often actively prepare for them by going to the library. Not only sources of knowledge, the lectures also offer a frame for social meeting and discussion: June reports how a WEA meeting was the occasion to debate Churchill’s broadcast, most people disagreeing with him (Directive replies, January, 1940). In winter 1940–1941, the tutor discusses with the class the loss of his family under the bombings, and people discuss rationing.

WEA activities thus appear to be used to give some intelligibility to the world. For example, when a Mass Observation directive asked June “What do you consider is the main thing which leads you to form your opinion on current events at present?” She answers “WEA tutors & classes on international affairs” (Directive replies, December, 1940). Different aspects of WEA events are used for meaning making: the actual knowledge they provide (rendering visible the wider political and historical determination of the war); the possibility of engaging in shared attempts to interpret events, as part of the general project of a “war to end all wars”; and the actual creation of a feeling of a community of fate, united by this shared understanding and project.

A third aspect of meaning making regards the more personal prolongation of politics and war events. Fears, wishes and desires that a young woman might have in a time of war also need to be given a thinkable form. Fiction can become a symbolic resource to elaborate emotional, personal conscious and unconscious experiences (Zittoun 2006). Both sisters are avid readers of novels, and have easy access to public county libraries. For example, between September, 1939 and March, 1941, June mentions 34 visits to the library. In a Mass Observation directive reply from May, 1942, June also mentions that, at that time, her reading matter was mostly novels and she would take two books at once. The only comment June gives about her novel reading is written while she is a gardener: To the question “Which books that you have read during the past six months have made most impression on you? Why?”, June answers:

How Green was my Valley – Richard Llewellyn impressed me considerably, because now I work on the land I can more appreciate the nearness to the soil and the beauties of an outdoor natural life, especially as I have worked in Suffolk (Directive replies, October, 1942).

Here, June explains how the poetic description of the countryside enables her to see the nature that surrounds her (and to which she is quite sensitive) differently; it is as if it enables a naming of her more personal and unclear experience of its beauty. Thus, she might find a semiotic form for a fuzzy experience, and as it is done through words, this might in turn socially validate it. Thus, working in the field is not only legitimated by it being part of the war effort, but in everyday life, it can also become a poetic experience. Through such use of a book, June might thus be said to confer a more personal sense to the work in the fields.

Novels are not the only cultural tools of imaginary experiences to which June has access; films are also very important in her life. During the war June sees many films, and, as with novels, she uses them as symbolic resources. Contrary to her interest in war-related WEA lectures, she is least interested in films which address the war directly. The film *Immortal Sergeant* makes her “depressed and upset” (March, 1944); regarding *First Comes Courage*, she says: “We get very sick of these occupied Europe films. They are so depressing.” Other films upset or disappoint her for being too obviously propagandist: *Tarzan triumphs* (June, 1944), or *The Desert Song* (December, 1944). One might think that war films would facilitate imagination of what occurs on the front – after all, June never has direct access to the violence or fighting; these might also offer a safe space to experience aggression, hatred, and other feelings which cannot be lived in everyday life on the home front. However, June obviously dislikes films depicting the “war front” and avoids engaging in them. Too close to a threatening reality, they fail to offer June a safe space to experiment with feelings otherwise to be contained (Winnicott 1971).

However, June’s reaction to films depicting the home front shows that she strongly connects these films to her own experience. For example, she mentions *Mrs. Miniver* in October 1942, which she sees two or three times. The film is

described as “the biggest box office success of 1942: it describes the impact of the war on an “average” middle-class family in England, the raids, marriages and deaths, the local people, the alteration of outlook” (Richards and Sheridan 1987, p. 293). June stands in line to see the film, and comments “I am sure [it] will do the Gloucestershireites good as they don’t realize what it is like to live on the East Coast.” Now living in Gloucester, June uses the film as a resource to maintain her link with the vulnerable East coast, while presenting her home community to the local others. Retrospectively, it also suggests the hardship she felt during the first months of the war (which the film depicts).

June reacts very positively to films which do not address the war at all. Walt Disney produced films which had a huge success during the war. In May 1942, while working as a gardener, June twice sees *Dumbo* and comments “I liked it immensely but not as much as *Snow White*. The music is not so catching, though *Baby Mine* brought tears to me.” This might suggest that such a sweet fantasy found some resonance in her interiority. *Dumbo* is the story of a baby elephant whose mother tries to comfort him when he is upset about his enormous ears. The lyrics of the song that make her cry are:

Baby mine, don’t you cry
 Baby mine, dry your eyes
 Rest your head close to my heart
 Never to part, baby of mine
 Little one when you play
 Don’t you mind what they say
 Let those eyes sparkle and shine
 Never a tear, baby of mine
 If they knew sweet little you
 They’d end up loving you too
 All those same people who scold you
 What they’d give just for
 The right to hold you
 From your head to your toes
 You’re not much, goodness knows
 But you’re so precious to me
 Cute as can be, baby of mine

(Washington 1941)

Fantasy creates a safe space, remote from the rules of socially shared reality, in which more personal and intimate emotions can be experienced in an imaginary form (Winnicott 1971). Thus, although it is impossible to interpret June’s emotions with such a limited example, it can be suggested that the song acknowledges a person’s intrinsic value in a hostile world. It may well reflect a young girl’s feelings of loneliness and isolation as the rupture of war has forced her to move into a hostile environment. It is thus neither the objective relevance, nor the popularity of a film that predicts whether June will use it as a symbolic resource.

The rupture of war has various concrete consequences in June’s life. She leaves her village, changes communities (Gillespie et al. 2008), changes her occupation

and has new opportunities to socialize with soldiers and other war workers. To preserve a sense of self integrity through change, June has to confer meaning to what happens. Thus she uses social knowledge, distributed and crystallized in various forms, in her attempts to confer meaning to the war. This process operates at various levels of mediation. At a first, rather abstract level, June uses resources to define values which make sense of “the big picture” – that of a “war to end wars.” At a second level, this, in turn, confers sense to her own action of being engaged in the acquisition and transmission of knowledge. At a third level, the actual cultural elements with which she interacts become resources with which to confer sense to and elaborate here-and-now situations (see also Valsiner 1998; Zittoun 2006).

However, in order to be used by June, these available cultural elements have to carry a social meaning which can be linked to June’s own sense of events: a film which appears to represent women at work cannot be used as a resource if it fails to capture the emotions or actions that *June* feels lie at the core of being a working woman. Social knowledge has to be in a “proximal zone” to her personal experience (Valsiner 1998, Vygotsky 1962). This again highlights the importance of separating the meaning of a cultural element at the collective level of social knowledge, and the very specific sense emerging through its use by a given person.

3.3 *Ruptures and Uses of Resources in Identity Processes*

The rupture of war entails a repositioning of identity. As the war is a highly value-laden issue, one’s position toward the war and one’s role in it become important matters of identity. Moreover, one can be brought to engage in actions which radically alter one’s sense of who one is. In what follows, we highlight uses of social knowledge which support June’s identity processes and positioning toward the war.

June’s personal commitment to the war is conditional upon the idea that it is a war to end all wars. One of the direct consequences of holding such a conviction, appropriated from the previous generation, is that it positions her toward the previous generation. In October 40, June writes:

I feel very annoyed that the generation before mine did not manage things better so that this war was prevented. I think it is up to all young people to study events which have led from the last war up to this one and learn by the mistakes and strive to see that it shall not happen again. We have got to win this war and make certain this time about it being a war to end wars (Directive replies, October, 1940).

Here, June is positioning herself as part of a “*we young people*” In contrast to the previous generation, who failed to prevent war, they have to win and end all wars. June’s contribution to that generational task is possible through study, observation and critical thinking. These activities will define important facets of her identity, distinguishing her from her peers to such an extent that, according to June’s sister, other students call both of them “those brave young people trying

to solve the problems of Europe in a week” (August, 1940). She thus develops a sense of exception relying on two further identity dimensions: she is a critical person, and she is a Mass Observer.

At the beginning of the war, June’s eagerness to find information and to be active in meaning making and war preparation creates a particular sense of who she is, for her and for others. For example, in her diary, which might reflect positions she takes publicly, she positions herself as someone who is not duped by propaganda. June thus writes about a WEA lecture on “Propaganda in peace and war,” apparently followed by an “amusing discussion,” during which she saw that “those most influenced by propaganda think Britain is free from it” (October, 1939).

In contrast, she presents *herself* as someone who does not take information for granted, even though it is produced by a political authority or a majority e.g., “I don’t take much notice of the newspapers or the radio, taking every thing on these with a pinch of salt” (Directive replies, January, 1940), and who only reads critical editorialists (Directive replies, May, 1940). In taking up this position, she uses the media to mark her critical stance and distance herself from more credulous people. As earlier, June shows herself to be aware of the symbolic stream that she is embedded in, and a selective and reflective user of the social knowledge that is offered to her.

June’s belonging to the group of Mass Observation researchers is another important identity dimension, supporting her sense of “exception”: It is clearly present at the beginning of the war: she often mentions collecting leaflets or church magazines for MO, the sisters look for MO books in libraries, which they call “our” book. Her sense of identification with MO is such that she is “very insulted and offended” when the shops don’t stock it (April, 1949); she has a strong admiration for Tom Harrison (one of the founders of MO), listening to his radio show, reading his biography, and finding him “very charming” when she briefly meets him (May, 1941). Her sister notices that their eagerness to approach people and ask questions in the name of MO makes them seem like eccentric young ladies (August, 1940). MO, with its books, its authorities, its ideology and its members, creates an informal community, to which June has a feeling of belonging and which differentiates her from others. In turn, this reinforces her sense of self – it supports, for example, her reflection on war events, as she notes that her diary is addressed to someone who might read it (October, 1943); it punctuates her time (wherever she is, she regularly fills in MO questionnaires); and gives her a legitimacy in awkward social situations. For example, in July 1941, in the midst of complicated love affairs, she writes – not without humor – “My excuse is I am mass observing the forces’ love affairs.”

Although June’s relationship to knowledge is constitutive of her identity, its salience varies through the war. Her actual engagement with the war, her practices and her meaning making necessitate that she repositions her identity. In 1939, England launches the “digging for victory” campaign, encouraging people to turn every garden into a cultivable surface. The campaign is diffused through posters, billboards, newspapers and cinema programs, in which average families

are shown turning their garden into small fields, and guidance is given for doing the same. Later, women are required to engage in the land army.³ Posters and pictures show healthy young women happily working. Initially, June positions herself against “digging for victory”. She describes it as “hard”, “dull & demoralising” work, adding “I hate gardening” (March, 1941). However, following the movement towards the conscription of women, June chooses to become a land-girl: she can avoid doing military work while still contributing to the war effort. Thus by trying to avoid conscription she ends up “digging for victory.” The discourse that she had previously scorned as propaganda she now enacts. The interesting thing, however, is that her identity becomes increasingly built upon her new practices as a contributor to the war effort. Engaging in new practices (agriculture for the war effort) repositions June in relation to the war, entailing a re-elaboration both of her understanding of the war and of her own identity.

As June’s identity becomes increasingly built upon her gardening activities, she starts actively constituting this new identity. In the summer of 1941, she has the opportunity to go to a Cambridge summer school run by the WEA. The previous year, she had chosen a course on social and political approaches to contemporary Europe; this time, however, she opts for a botany course. Similarly, when she became an under-gardener in April, 1942, growing tomatoes, she was asked by Mass Observation about the books she might want to buy and she answers: “I want one on tomato growing now and that is to refer to, now I have got tomatoes in my entire charge” (Directive replies, April, 1942). In such examples, June very deliberately intends to use books which contain the knowledge she needs to achieve some practical end, thus rendering consistent her new identity as land-worker, her ways of understanding the world and her competencies and practices.

4 Conclusion: The Interdependence of Identity, Meaning and Action

Collective ruptures challenge the cohesiveness and functioning of societies, and societies produce collective forms of knowledge with which to address ruptures and facilitate their resolution. Our concern has not been with such collective knowledge *per se*, but instead we have been examining an individual’s appropriation and use of such knowledge. Social knowledge, available in its various modes – informal everyday exchange or rumors, and formal radio news, articles, novels,

³ Because of conscription in 1938, most men between 18 and 41 were sent to the armed forces, which created a severe labour shortage in Britain. Consequently, in December, 1941, the National Service Act was passed by the Parliament. This legislation called up unmarried women aged twenty to thirty, who could choose to join one of the auxiliary services, the Women’s Voluntary Service (to help in supplying a wide variety of emergency services at home), or the Women’s Land Army to help on British farms (The National Archive 2005).

films and posters – is used by a person as a resource to adapt to the ruptures that she faces.

More specifically, our analysis has shown that a person is not necessarily passively absorbing or enacting social knowledge. Rather, there is a margin of choice, of active re-appropriation, and reflective elaboration. Secondly, we have shown that such uses of social knowledge can bring the person to define new practices, to elaborate meaning, orient her action, and develop an adequate and sustainable sense of identity. Of course, these three aspects are deeply interdependent. Every rupture and micro-rupture entails a change in action, meaning and identity. The meaning of the war (is it a war to end all wars?) feeds into the actions taken (supporting the war effort of working in the land army and reading about gardening) which in turn entails an identity reposition (moving away from an identity position as critical observer to active participant as a land girl). Equally, the identity repositioning could be said to contribute to her enthusiasm to work on the land and read about gardening on the one hand while also contributing to her belief that this is a war to end all wars.

Yet our analysis also highlights a second distinction between collective history and the life of an individual: a collective rupture, such as war, is diffracted into a wide range of individual ruptures in a person's life. In June's life, the collective rupture of war is actually translated into the preparation of an air-shelter and the rationing of petrol. It leads to ruptures of moving to another county and becoming a land girl, discovering the joys of alcohol, cigarettes and dating soldiers, changing her moral standards, and becoming an actress and receptionist at her hostel.

In other words, starting with a first theoretical displacement – from social representation to the *use of social knowledge as resource*, we finish by proposing a second one: the move from a unit of analysis given by societal rupture, toward a unit of analysis given by an actual *use of a resource in a perceived rupture by an individual*. The unit of analysis would thus be constituted by the following sequence: a rupture, as perceived by a person, requires her to actually mobilize and use social knowledge, with some intention, with the result of engaging in new practices, changing her identity or generating new meaning. While at a collective level, the war was obviously a catastrophe, at the level of June's own life, it entailed some liberation and freedom, as is evident in the quotation at the start of this chapter. June experienced hardships and losses, but her life was also affected by the war in positive ways – she met new friends, was given new responsibilities, developed skills, broadened her understanding of her world and her capacity to act upon it. Yet while June's experience of the rupture of World War II may have been peculiar, the social knowledge that she engaged with in order to navigate her rupture was not. She had access to and used the same collectively produced knowledge as everyone else, but she used it to cope with her own peculiar ruptures.

By creating a double distinction between collective social knowledge and individual use of resources, and collective rupture and personally experienced ruptures, we come to characterize June as an able, social knowledge-competent person, with a history and an agenda. June's uses of knowledge can be seen to

entail a variety of degrees of reflection. In some instances, social knowledge seems to influence her beyond her will, as when she starts to enact the “digging for victory” motto, becoming an enthusiastic land girl, despite her previous resistance to what she would have called propaganda. In other cases, she simply observes herself using social knowledge, as when she describes her combined use of formal and informal knowledge during the air-raids. In other cases, June deliberately seeks out social knowledge, as when she looks for books on agriculture in order to carry out her new practices as head-gardener. Even more, she develops a reflective technique for uses of resources. Bauer and Gaskell (1999) suggest that reflection arises at the intersection between social representations. June utilizes such an idea in managing her relation to social knowledge. She seeks out social knowledge from competing sources in order to gain reflective leverage (such as confronting ARP leaflets and rumors; Lord Haw-Haw and BBC radio; or news and personal experience). Thus, social knowledge can be mobilized with various degrees of awareness. What enables such a critical distancing from social knowledge? Moscovici (1973) identified privileged modes of communicating in different social groups, some enabling more distance than others. More cognitive approaches to psychology would focus on people’s meta-cognitive skills to resist the influence of media. However, our reading suggests that a person is faced with social knowledge which is inherently multivoiced and contradictory (Bakhtin 1981; Marková 2006). If one accepts the richness and dialogical nature of social knowledge, then one can use it as resource for distancing. In other words, it is not the individuals who by some heroic feat of intelligence manage to separate themselves from social knowledge, but that distance is itself a product of the heterogeneity of social knowledge within symbolic streams.

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Part III
Narrative and Dialogue

Twice-Told-Tales: Small Story Analysis and the Process of Identity Formation

MICHAEL BAMBERG

Let me start by laying out some assumptions – though they may be a bit oversimplified – about narrative analysis and qualitative methods. My aim is to orient the reader of this chapter toward options, that is, choices that we have when engaging in qualitative inquiry and in doing narrative analysis as a particular kind of qualitative method.

Narrative analysis, understood in a broad sense as work with texts (particularly work with written texts of narrative formats), has a long standing history. Hermeneutics, the reflective art and science of text analysis and interpretation, goes back hundreds, if not thousands, of years in the social traditions of Western and non-Western histories. It can probably even be viewed as one of the landmarks in the process of civilization (cf. Elias 1974, 1982). While a number of strands of hermeneutic analysis attempt to reveal (and analyze) underlying oral traditions of the narratives under consideration, such as of the origins of biblical stories or fairy tales (as in the collections of the oral tales by the Grimm Brothers), technological innovations over recent decades that enable the preservation of oral records have radically revolutionized the field of empirical work with narratives. For once, it has become possible to record and transcribe the language, including the concomitant performance features (such as intonation and pitch contour, pauses, gesture, eye-gaze). In addition, it also has enabled innovative views of integrating these aspects of individual performances with the context of situation and concomitant actions, reactions, and interactions between the speakers and audiences within which the narratives under scrutiny are locally and communally embedded. As a consequence of this technological innovation, narratives could begin to morph slowly from their treatment as texts that re-present the meanings as encoded, preserved, and transmitted in these texts to processes within which these meanings were locally, situationally, and contextually “under construction.” In other words, what moved more into the foreground along with recent technological innovations is the functional role that narratives play in the process of interactional meaning construction: what people actually *do* when they

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tell stories – or, to put it more plainly, narratives as sites for social and individual meaning construction and not just as the carriers of what may be considered as socially and individually meaningful.

This is not meant to imply that narratives in previous traditions of inquiry have not been taken to represent sites for the analysis of social and individual meaning constructions. The long tradition of using the narrative interview as a site for tapping into the narrator’s sense of self and identity, recently termed “*big story research*” (cf. Bamberg 2006, Freeman 2006, Georgakopoulou 2006b), was probably one of the most influential contributors in the turn to narrative that has worked its way into the social sciences over the last 30 to 40 years (cf. Bamberg 2007a). However, the tendency within these traditions to equate *life* and *story* and to essentialize self and identity (cf. Bamberg for a critical review, under review), that is, assuming that narrators *have* a self and an identity as some internal organizing principle locatable in the “*big stories*” they tell (and, which they, assumingly, live by), has resulted in particular forms of narrative data collection techniques and subsequent procedures of analysis. Typically, these forms of analysis do not need to account for the locality and situatedness of interactive features of narrative performance but can more directly, and as we have critically argued, often more superficially, move into the sense of self that is “*self-disclosed*” in the narrative interview situation. In contrast, the analysis of small stories, as demonstrated in recent contributions (Bamberg 2007a, b; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, in press; Georgakopoulou 2006a; Georgakopoulou, 2007) requires a more detailed account of how storytellers appropriate particular discourses in order to position characters (in the there-and-then) and each other (the audience and themselves in the here-and-now of the telling situation) so as to display a sense of how they intend to “come across” in situated contexts as persons who “*have*” – or better “*claim*” – a sense of self. In short, small story research does not start from, and is not built on, the assumption that people *have* a sense of self as first located in the person and subsequently locatable in their stories, but that, in the process of telling stories, they engage in “identity work” that results in (local and situated) displays of a sense of self.

1 Telling and Retelling Stories for the Purpose of Identity Formation

From a big story vantage point, the question of how we acquire our stories (so that we can *have* and subsequently tell “our life”) would require what Shweder, Goodnow, Hatano, Levine, Markus and Miller call tracing “the natural history of stories in children’s lives” (Shweder et al. 2006, p. 749). In other words, how do people (over time) retell and revise the same stories of their lives, or at least the critical events, and in this process form a sense of self as the primary locus of a culture-specific being (cf. Baltes et al. 2006)? Thus, retellings of stories, again from the vantage point of big story research, would represent a site of practices that are aimed toward an attunement and slow integration into how individuals learn

to manage themselves as same and different from others, and as being the same in the face of constant change (navigating the uniqueness and the identity dilemma, cf. Bamberg (2007b). Unfortunately a study of this magnitude has not been done; in addition, it may be questionable which of the stories that are told and retold actually would count as the relevant ones – so they could be argued to add up to the tellers' lives – captured and reflected in these constantly revised life stories.

However, retellings of stories have been of interest to linguists and cognitive researchers for other reasons. In particular, memory research has investigated retellings as potentially contributing to a better understanding of the interface of what actually happened, how it was “encoded” into memory; how memory “stores” these encodings (and in this storing process not only preserves but also may alter what was originally encoded), and how these memories are transformed into the act of “storying” (in the form of a second “encoding” from memory into language).

Investigations of retellings (cf. Chafe 1998; Ferrara 1994; Mishler 2004; Norrick 1998a, b) have revealed a number of factors that assist and contribute to changes and sameness (or similarities) between first and second versions. In a natural, conversationally embedded setting, and in the condition of the same audience, the way the story is told is likely to change. In its second telling, the same audience does not need to be informed about the corollary information, and the speaker can abbreviate the path to the gist – or, alternatively, can make parts that were underexplored in the first telling more relevant in the second narrative. However, we would expect the gist – the backbone of what happened – to remain pretty much the same.

In contrast, if the audience had changed and the teller could be assumed to be very much the same person, we could expect the story to be the same as well – or so it seems. Why should the teller change the sequence of events or the way the sequence was assembled and evaluated? In other words, why should a teller change a story in a second telling? It could be suggested that a difference in audience – be it different in terms of age, gender or cultural background – might have quite an effect on how tellers tailor the events and their evaluation, particularly in terms of how they intend to come across with what they tell. This change may occur even if the memory of what happened was exactly the same. The change may surface in the way the story is packaged and performed – particularly in terms of how tellers attempt to present a sense of who they are – way back then when the reported events happened, or right here, in the now of the telling situation.

Another factor that could result in some change in the second story may be due to time that has elapsed between the two tellings. If the speaker has changed in significant ways between the two tellings, this change could contribute to a reinterpretation of what (actually) had happened back there and then. It could also result in reworking the “memory bank,” which would result, in turn, in a new presentation of self in the here and now. These kinds of identity changes, one could expect, often result in different narratives of what seemingly was one and the same (original) event or sequence of events. However, it should also be

cautioned that audiences exposed to those two versions are likely to note and comment on the difference, potentially pressuring the teller to give additional reasons for why or how this change could have come about.

To summarize, second tellings give an ideal opportunity to sort out these different factors and bring them back into considerations about how a sense of self is put together (“claimed”) and reworked at different occasions. In other words, retellings could form an ideal basis for a developmental look into the formation of self and identity. In addition, an investigation of retellings would be particularly interesting from a small story perspective, since this would imply the necessity to pay close attention to the contextual and local detail within which the participants at the storytelling occasion are positioning the characters in the there-and-then in order to position a sense of self in the here-and-now of the telling context.

2 Material

Following Shweder et al. (2006), the perfect material for an empirical inquiry into the topic of identity formation processes would be the twice-told tales of the same person over a period of time. We assume that children or adolescents don’t “*have a life*” – or at least a life story and the identity that in big story research is assumed to go along with it – so it would be fascinating to use stories of the (seemingly) same experiences that reflect the different stages in the formation process of the child’s/adolescent’s identity. Similarly, we could collect the stories (again, about the same experiences) before a client started his/her therapy with the story after the therapy had ended and (hopefully) find a difference in terms of the identity claims in these two stories. However, the data I will work with in this chapter are different.

The twice-told tale under scrutiny in this chapter comes from a woman, approximately in her early forties, who in 1972 told two versions to the camera of filmmaker Liane Brandon¹ at basically the same time and location: once before noon, the second time in the afternoon. The story in both versions is, it could be argued, *exactly* the same: Betty tells how she was invited to the Governor’s ball, needed a dress, shopped for it, and bought it. The dress was really beautiful and it was said to have transformed her sense of her attractiveness/beauty. However, she lost the dress shortly after it had been bought, which she claimed caused her quite a bit of distress. However, she bought another dress and went to the ball. Comparing the two versions in terms of how they are told and performed, they drastically differ. In the version that is presented first, Betty comes across to the audience as “witty, engaging, and delightful,” while in the second, she is perceived as “withdrawn, sad, and vulnerable.” At least, these are the characterizations the viewer can read in the catalogue that advertises the video cassette.

¹ *Betty Tells Her Story* is available from New Day Films, 190 Route 17M, P.O. Box 1084, Harriman, NY 10926 or online via <http://www.newday.com>. The copyright of *Betty Tells Her Story* is with Liane Brandon (1972), renewed 2000. Excerpts are reprinted with permission of Liane Brandon.

The question that is typically asked is, what is it that may have caused the second version to be different from the first? What has happened, either in the course of telling it the first time or between the two telling occasions? And in order to give a tentative answer, we typically seek more information about the occasioning of the two tellings. Here is what we know: The filmmaker, Liane Brandon, had become more to know the teller Betty, had heard the story about her losing her dress at a previous occasion, and asked Betty whether she would tell this story “on camera.” Thus, against this background, we can start from the assumption that the two tellings should have turned out pretty much identical: The instructions to the teller of the story can be assumed to be much the same. In both cases the teller designs an anonymous recipient who has not heard this story before; we can assume further that within the course of a few hours between the morning and the afternoon, the teller has not undergone an identity transformation that could result in drastic changes between the two versions presented in front of the camera. In addition, the actual story that surfaces in both tellings has been told by the same speaker at multiple occasions. A previous telling was actually the reason why Betty was invited to perform her story in front of the camera. Actually, as we also found out from the filmmaker, the second telling – which in reality was the *third* telling on the same day² – was the attempt to capture on film just another version very much the same. In other words, we have good grounds to assume that the filmmaker, the person behind the camera who could count as a potential audience, though different from the hypothetical, generalized audience “behind the camera,” did not expect a radically different story.

In sum then, we would expect that Betty, the storyteller, will design herself as quite the same person telling her story and that she will design the audience in very much the same way. We would also expect that these two factors will coincide in the very same design of the story, possibly with a few small variations here and there that we then could further scrutinize in terms of having “better” access to memory (due to the two previous tellings on the *same* occasion), and “linguistic packaging strategies.”³ We should not expect a different telling that could result in the impression of the audience/spectator of two different designs of Betty as the speaker/teller. Or at least, if we were to hear two quite different stories in this kind of set-up, we would begin to speculate about the teller’s *stability*.⁴

Having two versions of Betty’s story, both told the same day and under very similar circumstances, calls for a detailed analysis that will avoid the pitfalls of

² The two versions of Betty’s story are actually the first and third version. A second version was later discarded due to too much noise that overlapped with the filming. The fact that there were actually several versions was due to a standard technique that film makers employed before we had access to instant replays with video recordings.

³ Linguistic “packaging” is a term that refers to the formatting of concrete permutations and paraphrases in the context of tellers’ linguistic performance. It is not that these performances cannot be tied to the interactional business performed between speakers and listeners and the co-construction business between them. However, a number of aspects of the packaging devices used may also reflect linguistic patterns.

⁴ And that’s actually what happened: Upon viewing the two versions in one of our classes, one of the students commented that Betty was in urgent need of therapy (“Oh my God; she needs therapy”).

using the first as the platform for the second as deviating from it. In other words, the question of what motivated the teller to tell the second version differently does not have to be based on assumptions about a real or more authentic version of Betty's story as well as of Betty as a person. What makes the two versions different from everyday interactions but also quite different from interview narratives is that Betty is asked to perform her story for an imagined audience – an audience that is coming from different backgrounds, with potentially quite different expectations, and an audience that is “timeless”, that is, watching Betty tell her stories still 35 years later. In that sense, Betty's stories are far from small stories: they are pretty long, not everyday-kinds-of stories, and not embedded in an everyday-kind-of interactional context. Rather, Betty's two stories resemble big stories. And one could argue that the elicitation conditions are probably even more contrived and “Sunday-conditions” (cf. Freeman 2006) than those used in narrative interviews. Nevertheless, I will try to bring to bear the methods of small story analysis to the two versions in order to document i) that small story analysis can be extended and applied to big stories; and ii) how small story analysis can reveal aspects of identity analysis that big story analysis has difficulties documenting.

Before I turn to the analytic portion of this chapter, let me attend to an analysis that has been carried out previously with a portion of the same data by Elliot Mishler (2004), who introduced me to Betty's story in the year 2002 at one of our Narrative Study Group meetings at his home. He actually ended his article by inviting his colleagues to join in with more analytic work on the two versions of Betty's story, which I hereby intend to follow up on.

To briefly summarize, Mishler contrastively compares excerpts from the two versions by use of a transcription method that segments the recordings into idea units (*lines*), *stanzas*, and *strophes*, which ultimately leads up to larger *episodic* segments. He works through a number of episodes and tries, in a very reader-friendly way, to pinpoint those contrasts that are “telling” by revealing the *important* differences between the two versions. The analysis is mainly concerned with differences in lexical and syntactic choices and noting deviations from the first version as additions or subtractions. At the end, he summarizes the analysis: “The first [version] is a performance piece, a story that Betty has told before, for which she has a title, and which she knows elicits some sort of ‘oohing and aahing’ response” (Mishler 2004, p. 118). Mishler's overall characterization of Betty's second version rests very much on the interpretation of the filmmaker, who believes that the difference between the two versions is due to a question of hers right before Betty's second telling that may have led Betty to reflect more on her feelings back then when she lost her dress. Mishler writes: “The second [version] is in response to a direct question, one that carries an evaluation of the first telling as lacking something – as being ‘upbeat’ and not expressing her feelings” (Mishler 2004, p. 118). Mishler adds on that in this second version Betty appears to “confront herself,” questioning her previous version from the perspective of an internal dialogue in which she has doubts and needs to figure out the “real meaning” of the events back then.

I will take two points of departure from Mishler's analysis. Although I find it interesting that his overall interpretation of the difference between the two versions is built on the dialogic situation, that is, the context of what conversationally went on around the two tellings (just as suggested by small story analysis), it is imported into his analysis from "outside the data."⁵ In addition, it seems to take the second version as a deviation from the first version, one that is shot through with the teller's reflections, revealing more of her deeper, inner self.⁶ In contrast, in our analysis we will first analyze each version independently. Only after having given each its full interpretive attention, will we launch into a comparison between the two versions. In addition, we will try to pay closer attention to the actual wording and display features in order to be able to better differentiate between what she says, how she says it, and the action displays that go along with both. For instance, when Betty says "*and I remember*," we will not simply assume that she remembers, as Mishler seems to suggest (p. 107), but that something additional may be going on: Since she can be assumed to remember all the events that she mentions and only a few get explicitly marked as "remembered," the explicit marking of those "remembered" may turn out to be quite relevant. In short, we intend to perform a small story, microanalytic analysis on this seemingly monologic data. More concretely, we intend to lay open the interactional positioning strategies in both versions of this episode: how Betty the teller positions herself as a character in the events back-there-and-then and how she positions herself to an imagined audience. In weaving these two repertoires together, positions a sense of self – one that differs in the two versions she tells.

3 Telling and Retelling Betty's Story

Before describing the analytic steps in more detail, let me briefly return to the issue of tellings and retellings. In the course of working with Betty's story with my students, I have tried out a small experiment. I have shown the two versions in reverse order and asked students to comment on the two versions. I will

⁵ We as analysts do not have access to what Betty said after the performance of her first telling; nor do we have access to the film maker's instructions right before either of the tellings. What Mishler (and I) have is a retrospective framing by the filmmaker of how *she* makes sense and "explains" the difference between the two versions. This does not mean that the filmmaker was wrong. She was at the scene and reports from her memory what she believed had happened. However, I would suggest that this is a version – just like Mishler's and just like my own. Rather than starting from the filmmaker's interpretation, I think it would be more interesting to work first with the text and then see whether my analysis is in agreement with the additional information that we admit to further analysis from other sources.

⁶ I should hasten to add that Mishler objects to the interpretation that this second version presents or represents a "truer" sense of who Betty "really" is. Rather, Mishler takes these two versions to be examples of "multiple selves" – selves that lurk in narrative data taken in multiple stories, selves that we may miss when we just elicit and work with one story, however big it is.

abbreviate the results here since the details of this “experiment” are published elsewhere (Bamberg, 2007c). In short, students who saw version A first, followed by version B – as in Liane Brandon’s original version – tended to give credit for the transformation to the first telling: In the first telling, Betty the teller realized that she had not resolved the experience back then. She thought about it more deeply and this type of reflection resulted in the second version. Students who saw version B first, followed by version A, that is, those who saw the two versions in the reverse order, argued similarly that the first telling caused the second telling to be different. Here, however, Betty used her first telling productively in the sense that she realized in the process of her first telling that the loss of her dress was not important to who she “really” is. Consequently, her second telling (which originally is her *first* telling) gives a clearer sense of her “true self.”

A number of lessons are noteworthy from this radically simple “experiment”: i) viewers are looking for reasons in terms of how the first telling *results* in the second as different; ii) they hear the first telling as *first*, in other words, they do not realize or are able to imagine that this story has been told many, many times before, and that it exists in multiple versions way before the “*first*” telling; iii) they tend to hear the second version as *truer* and *more authentic* or *real*; and iv) they tend to attribute a “healing power” to the tellings of stories that can lead up to restorying and revision processes. While this is not the place to reflect and debate why this is so, I nevertheless want to draw attention to the dangers of these interpretive procedures,⁷ particularly when they infiltrate our analytic work and our attempts to listen and be open to potential multiplicities of people as their own historians of the self (cf. Mishler 2004).

4 Analysis

4.1 First Analysis – Top-Down

In the first step of our analysis, we are collapsing the two versions and ask: What is the story/plot? What is it about? And what makes it tellable? In this first analytic approach, we collapse both versions into what is common to them, that is, *the story* or *plot line*.

It appears as if the sequence of events starts with the invitation to the Governor’s ball, *setting the scene* or *orientation* for the *problem/complication*, which is having to get something to wear for the occasion. However, in spite of the fact

⁷ This may sound contradictory: How can we promote interpretation and at the same time be weary to interpretations, especially those that seem to impose a plot structure onto these two slices of everyday life (cf. Crossley 2003; Sarbin 1986)? However, the point here is that the imposition of a particular plot may rule out other possibilities – possibilities that need to be explored first, and then, subsequently, weighed vis-à-vis each other and substantiated with fine-grained analytic observations.

that not everyone gets invited to the Governor's ball, this is hardly a tellable event. And it becomes clear with the abstract given beforehand and the way the events unravel that this is not the story itself, but a pre-story that is setting the scene for another *complication*. Being the owner of a pretty dress (one that transforms Betty into a beauty), she manages to lose the dress, presenting a new or second *complication*. This in turn results in a new goal-plan, to search for the lost dress. However, when the search does not result in a (positive) *resolution*, she has to buy another dress. She does exactly that and goes to the Governor's ball, resulting in the resolution to the first, second, and overall *complication*.

However, segmenting Betty's story in terms of these story-structure units would do injustice to what this story seems to be all about, which is the transformation from a state of non-beauty into a state of having beauty and the subsequent loss of this beauty.⁸ If we take this to be the dominant plot, the story follows the structural unfolding of

not having <beauty> → ***having*** <beauty> → ***not having*** <beauty>

where different accentuations are possible: i) the setting/orientation to the story consists of a state of *not having beauty* that "miraculously" results in a (new) state of *finding/having beauty* (with a subsequent event of losing it again); or, alternatively, where the setting/orientation consists of having found beauty (after not having had it) and losing this beauty, as the resultant state. In other words, the main weight for telling the story can rest on the first two events or on the second two. And as a third possibility, it also can be equally distributed across all three subsequent events:

<i> ***not having*** <beauty> → ***having*** <beauty> → not having <beauty>

<ii> not having <beauty> → ***having*** <beauty> → ***not having*** <beauty>

<iii> ***not having*** <beauty> → ***having*** <beauty> → ***not having*** <beauty>

Accent <i> would focus on the transformation from something the narrator does not have but wants, how this transformation happened, and what this transformation means to the narrator in the here-and-now of the telling situation. Returning back to the original state of not having (but maybe wanting) would be peripheral.

Accent <ii> would focus on the loss of something that the narrator had (and wanted to have), resulting in something that really is undesirable. The focus of this story would be on the losing end, how this came about, what that loss (not having what is desired) means to the narrator, and how it transpires into the here-and-now of the telling situation.

Accent <iii> would focus on something that is more of a cyclical nature: where the original state (not having + wanting) was changed into its opposite (of having

⁸ Again, this does not become apparent if our analysis remains at the global level. Only a more fine-grained analysis of how Betty tells these segments can (and will) make this apparent.

+ not needing to want anymore) and then, subsequently, changed back again to its original state (not having + wanting) and how this cycle is currently relevant for the moment of telling this story.

What becomes apparent in this first and more global approach to Betty's story is that the sequence of events, meaning the plot or story, is tellable for different reasons. Reminiscent of the Cinderella story, though obviously not with a happy ending, Betty's story needs a second look, one that reveals more of the subjective orientation and accent that *she* gives in the way she lays out, unfolds, and ultimately performs in her two tellings. Nevertheless, this first approach has opened up a level of interpretation that argues for more. Betty's story is not simply about buying a dress, losing it, and buying a new one that isn't quite the same as the first. The dress and the beauty it seemingly has lent her stands for something else; it has allegoric potential. Let me speculate at this point that these three different accentuations all at some deeper level stand for some reaffirmation of a personal or group value around issues of "beauty," and more generally, its dilemmatic nature: While attractiveness and beauty on one hand are considered valuable and desirable, they are ephemeral and dispensable when compared to other values. Thus, what may be reflected in the thematization of this dilemma in Betty's story is the question of what is *really* relevant in life. We also need to be open to the consideration that she orients her audiences differently in her differing versions.

In addition, both versions of the story position the audience in a very similar way: We are left with the (hanging) question: What if? – What if Betty back-then-and-there would *not* have lost her dress? What would have happened? Who would she be here-and-now, or at least, how would she present herself? In other words, both versions end up in a very similar way with the invitation for some form of empathy: "poor Betty" – and we wished it had turned out in some form of a happy ending.

4.2 *Fine-Grained Analysis – Bottom-Up*

Within this section I will present the microanalytic procedures that contribute to some deeper understanding of how Betty as the teller orients her audience in terms of her very own, subjective way toward an understanding of the sequence of events, their potential allegoric meaning, and to how Betty makes sense of herself in the two here-and-nows of the two story-telling situations. Since we do not have any data of what goes on before and after each of the tellings, that is, we do not know how the story was contextually embedded, we cannot analyze the story along those lines. We only have the two versions in terms of how Betty orchestrates the text, her audience, and ultimately, herself. In light of space constraints, I will only analyze one of the episodes in more depth, the second episode in which Betty tries on the dress, feels transformed, and buys it. However, unless this episode differs substantially in terms of narrative positionings from the other episodes, which we trust is not the case, the analysis will serve as an exemplar in terms of how to do this type of microanalytic analysis – and, in addition, how it

reveals insights as a tool for analyzing Betty's identities in the two tellings and identity analysis in general.

Let me start by listing the event-clauses for the two versions, version A and version B, for this segment of the story, episode 2. This is followed by a small story analysis of version A, followed by a small story analysis of version B, which I then will pull together for some comparisons of the two versions that enrich our interpretive understanding of Betty's accomplishments.

VERSION A (435 words)

Event-Line:

I went off to this dress shop
 I walked in the door
 a lady emerged
 she said . . .
 and I said . . .
 and she asked . . .
 and she suggested . . .
 she emerged (with three dresses)
 I went into a dressing room
 I tried it <a dress> on
 I got very nervous
 I called up my friend
 she came down
 she saw me in the dress
 and said (you have to buy it)
 I bought the dress
 and I watched (the wrapping process)
 I carried it out of there

VERSION B (220 words)

Event-Line:

I went into that shop
 they brought three dresses out to me
 (and I remember) trying them on
 (and I remember) feeling transformed
 I bought the dress
 and I left there

4.3 Episode 2 – Version A

The narrative clauses of episode 2 of version A (overall: 18) are relatively few when compared to the total number of clauses (overall: 58), indicating that most of the clauses are coordinate or free clauses. And indeed, as the analysis will reveal, most clauses are employed to depict the descriptive details of spatial layouts and the specifics of her feeling states. Overall, there seem to be three parts to this episode, i) the description of the shop and its inventory, including the sales staff, as an exquisite and special place; ii) the characterization of the dress and the effect of this dress on her; and iii) the transaction of making this dress hers and her ambiguity about this transaction. We will work through these three parts of this episode individually in the attempt to show how Betty, the teller, positions the character Betty, in the there-and-then, to show how she positions herself as the person in the here-and-now of the documentary in version A.

Betty starts the episode temporally framing her whereabouts relative to the preceding temporal events (*one afternoon*). All events referred to within this

episode take place within this temporal frame, but more important, all events within this temporal envelope take place at the same location toward which she orients the listener. To be more precise, she takes “off” from some unspecified origo (which could be her school or her home) “to *this dress shop*.”⁹ However, before the event-line actually gets her there, she steps out of the event-line and comments on the experience (*the whole thing*) of when she “walked in the door” – from an explicitly evaluative orientation: “*the whole thing was yaknow a real surprise for me.*” The device of foreshadowing what is to come next by use of an overarching, evaluative statement typically prepares an audience for the delivery of more explicating detail. Again, Betty does not immediately follow up on this. Before she characterizes “*this shop*” in more detail and explicates her “*surprise*,” she sets this experience up *ex negativo vis-à-vis* “*Filenes Basement*,” a culturally shared icon of department store, where things are ordinary and predictable. Her use of “*you know*” (2 times) in this context invites the confirmation of the audience for her attempt to distinguish “*this shop*” as very different from our usual and ordinary imagination. The descriptive detail about “*this store*,” consisting of “*just plush carpet*,” “*beautiful dove gray walls*,” “*an appropriate dress once in a while*” – culminating in the overall characterization of the location as “*hush shadows*.” This sets the scene to position the first character in this episode – “*a lady emerges*,” who is further characterized as “*sort of dove gray*” with a “*sort of dove gray voice*.” Initializing both turns by use of hesitation markers (*um* and *well*), Betty as the narrator positions herself as customer and the shop lady as cautiously and politely dialoguing, resulting in the creation of a customer-staff relationship that is different from the norm.

It is of interest that the characteristic “*dove gray*” was first used to spatially characterize the walls that hold this shop together, and from there is extended to position the personal character of the shop lady as “*dove gray lady*” with her “*dove gray voice*.” Further, constructing her as “*emerging*” from the “*hush shadows*” of the “*dove gray walls*” positions this shop lady as part of what seems to be belonging intrinsically to this location. Furthermore, depicting the location and its personal inventory as *gray*, a noncolor in between white and black, marks objects, but in particular people, with this characteristic as “*indistinguishably distinguishable*.” They stand out and are marked as different from traditional, common, and predictable places and their inventory. In other words, while gray is by no means a color or tone that is extraordinary, Betty, the narrator, uses *gray* to stylize the sales staff in this story as part of the location which is exquisite and special.

Turning to the second segment of this episode, the characterization of the dress and the transforming effect of the dress, it becomes clear that the extensive characterization of the location and its inventory as “*gray*” fittingly serves to set the background against which the “*beautiful emerald green dress*” can stand out as “*absolutely exquisite*.” No wonder that Betty, when she “*tried it on*,” can describe

⁹ Note that *this dress shop* becomes *that shop* in version 2.

her feeling state after all this rhetorical build up as “*glamorous*” – and, elaborating on it, “*it was just the most incredible feeling I ever had in my life.*” And as if this was not sufficient, she appeals to the audience (*yaknow*) for confirmation for this totally unexpected (*sudden*) transformation seemingly topping the previous generalization with two even more extreme formulations: “*I don’t think I ever in my whole life felt pretty until then*” and “*it was like a fairy story from my childhood.*” This string of extreme case formulations (*most incredible, ever in my life, ever in my whole life, like a fairy story*) serves the purpose of characterizing and underscoring the uniqueness of this moment. It becomes clear that this moment, which forms the high point of this episode, could not have been inserted into the story line without a good amount of rhetoric preparation. Along a similar vein, the story could not continue after the rhetoric construction of this all-encompassing, life-changing turning point with a simple monetary transaction resulting in making this dress hers and living a life of beauty thereafter. In order to begin to grasp the relevance of Betty’s rhetorical construction of the high point, let us step back for a second: Let us imagine Betty had constructed this same transformational high point with an ordinary set up such as “I needed a dress, went to a dress shop, saw this beautiful dress and tried it on” – followed by the lines forming the high point in this segment. Or imagine she continued after this high point with something like “I decided to buy this dress, went to the ball, and . . .” Any of these versions would be out of place and simply not “go along” with the way Betty instructs her audience to construct the relevance of the transformation that seemingly took place at this dress shop. What seems already to linger is an allusion that something else is equally relevant for the continuation of the plot that is emerging: This is not a story solely about a life transforming moment; something else is going on.

This kind of allusion becomes more strongly supported by the way Betty puts together the third and last segment of this episode. Positioning herself as having been benefited as if in a fairy tale, she continues with another reference to a feeling state: “*I got very nervous.*” However, with her next clause, the question of what may have caused this feeling becomes clarified: it is the upcoming financial transaction. The price to pay to make this dress her own (and make herself beautiful?) is “*out of proportion and youknow not very right to spend that.*” In other words, Betty, the teller, presents the Betty, back then, in a moral dilemma: Not that she wasn’t able to afford it; but, to buy this dress for this price wasn’t “*right.*” To resolve this dilemma, she reports in a side story that she drew on her friend (the one “*who had suggested the place*”), made her come to the location, and only after receiving her explicit advice decided to engage in the transaction. Still, she positions herself as not having bought the dress if it hadn’t been for this friend (*against my better judgment*) and leaving the store in ambivalence (*sort of at the same time kind of all excited and very guilty*). What exactly seemed to have been causing this guilt remains unclear. While the guilt factor was first brought up when she recognized the price tag that came along with the dress, it also seems to be the packaging and the way this dress was exquisitely tailored for her. This, at least, seems to be insinuated by letting the listener into her mind (back then and there)

when she elaborates in detail the scene in which she watches how this dress is prepared to become hers (*and I watched while they wrapped it up in pink tissue paper and put it into a pink box that said Miss Lynch's on it*). Explicating her state of ambivalence immediately after this scene contributes significantly to the impression that there is more than just the financial tag that causes her state of ambivalence. Although this is not spelled out in any detail, the listener is likely to extend the uneasiness about the price to other aspects of the transaction, such as owning it but also simply to loving the dress (and the effect that she feels the dress has on her) and potentially even coming to this shop and feeling special there.

To summarize, Betty the teller seems to find it relevant to refer explicitly to three characters in this episode, the Betty back-then, the shop lady, and Betty's friend. All of them have "faces"; they are characterized with a number of concrete attributes. In addition, all three speak with their own voices, and both the shop lady and friend "serve" Betty back-then in finding a place to buy a desirable dress that transforms her into a beautiful woman. They also assist her buying this dress and taking it away as her own. Betty, the teller, characterizes herself back-then as coming out of this episode in a state of ambivalence – owning it but not really wanting to own it, feeling both proud and guilty. Retrospectively, although not explicitly mentioned, there may have been more than one factor that contributed to her ambivalence. However, what exactly caused this ambivalence and how this potentially unsettling feeling could ultimately be turned around, remains somewhat unresolved. It leaves the audience in need for more information, a continuation of the story and seeking for the possibility of a resolution.

4.4 Episode 2 – Version B

Betty, the teller, starts the second episode by foreshadowing aspects of the overall experience in this episode, such as at the location that she subsequently details in order to back up this evaluative orientation. It may be of interest that she begins this episode by explicitly marking it as a memory (*and I remember*); she claims (in the here-and-now) to be clear about the overall impression she had back-there-and-then. We have two other explicit references to her memory in the course of this episode and will be able to structurally and functionally say more about why narrators occasionally make reference to what they say has happened in the form of internal constructs of memories.¹⁰ Following Betty's structural

¹⁰ Introducing an event or descriptive detail from some point back in time by the marker "*and I remember*" does several things in a narrative. At the most literal level, it lays open and thereby demarcates that there is a gap between the speaker/teller who is doing the remembering in the here-and-now and that what is referred to next as having taken place in the there-and-then. While the activity of narrating is built on this gap, memory is automatically and always invoked. In other words, remembering is the default case and it goes without saying: When I tell a story, it is unnecessary, if the narrative flow is not interrupted, to refer to each event as memories. Thus, when tellers make explicit that they are remembering, particularly if they do this repeatedly, something else must be implicated.

layout of the second episode, the number of narrative clauses demarcating the skeleton of this episode is the bare minimum of five (see above). Considering that this episode is almost half in terms of its length of the comparative episode of version A, the free clauses in this version even more radically outweigh the narrative clauses.

Having foreshadowed what is happening in this episode from an overall vantage point as a “*strange thing*,” Betty, the teller, positions the there-and-then Betty already at the point of entering “*that shop*”¹¹ as feeling “*uncomfortable*”: “*there was something uhm uncomfortably plush and posh about the whole thing.*” The shop is further characterized as “*quiet*” and “*cathedral like*”, thus likening it to a place that requires being honored by respectfulness and reverence. In line with the requirements that follow from the way the location is characterized, the “*ladies*” who serve their customers are described as “*soft spoken.*” It is of interest that the characters in this episode are introduced as “*ladies*” in the form of a plural marking. “*They*” bring out the dresses and their actions result in some overall impression on Betty’s part of being “*treated like a queen.*” Furthermore, “*everything*” in this location “*looked very expensive.*” The metaphorical field that is invoked, the grandness of a cathedral, the nobleness and preciousness, and the deference and reverence that go along with them in terms of the kinds of actions at this location, is self-contained and coherent. If this is “*the whole thing*” Betty alludes to at two occasions early in this episode, it comes along with the evaluative orientation of “*strange*” and “*uncomfortable.*”

Turning back to the dresses, what Betty “*remembers*” next is “*trying them on,*” particularly the one she singles out and describes in more detail (*emerald-green with chiffon panels that floated down the back*). Here it seems as if Betty’s removal from the event-line of what happened there and then and explicitly referring to the events as her memories (*and I remember*) demarcates a new episodic segment, namely the experience of transforming into looking “*pretty,*” as she calls it a few moments later. Again, before she gets to this point, she dwells and elaborates on the moment of putting on this dress. She rhetorically removes herself from the storyline and relates what is happening at this moment to a generalized experience of being in a “*beauty parlor,*” “*having your hair done.*” The function of this analogy is to relate to the audience what those two experiences have in common: both make her “*feel uncomfortable.*” This analogy is prefaced by “*and I don’t know*”; that is, Betty, the teller, comments reflectively on the there-and-then of what was happening, and she positions herself as one who does “*not know,*” as one who can not clearly relate to the audience what was happening. In addition to characterizing herself as uncomfortable, she also characterizes her experience of wearing this beautiful dress as “*kind of special*” and “*luxurious.*”

At this point she again drops the line of the there-and-then events, steps out and refers to herself in the here-and-now as remembering (*and I remember*); what

¹¹ Note that “*that shop*” was “*this shop*” in version A. The difference between these two deictics (“*that*” and “*this*”) is one of marking one’s stance in terms of proximity/distance. “*This*” is closer than “*that.*”

she says she “remembers” “*looking in the mirror*” (back there and then), and “*feeling suddenly kind of transformed or something.*” In addition to marking this explicitly as memories, Betty, the teller, also embeds the actual transformation into two hedges, “*kind of*” and “*or something.*” So while she is clear about the moment – it stands out very explicitly in her memory, so she says – she presents herself as somewhat unclear, or at least uncommitted, about the feeling that went along with this transformation. In other words, she claims that she does not know how to translate the change of events into her internal feeling states. The reason for this, she claims further, is “*because I never looked that way before.*” Thus, this transformation is not only somewhat unusual but also totally unexpected. And the way Betty, the teller, positions Betty, in the there-and-then, as *thinking* that she “*looked pretty*” signals that she as the teller in the here-and-now is somewhat distanced and maybe skeptical about what really went on back there-and-then in “*that*” shop.

“*Well,*” she “*bought the dress*” (even though it cost far too much). Betty leaves the shop “*with very mixed feelings*” “*about having bought the dress,*” as she claims. However, in light of her repeated characterizations (spread across the whole episode) of “*the whole thing*” making her feel “*uncomfortable,*” it is clearly not just the prize of the dress that results in these mixed feelings. Just like being at the beauty parlor, Betty, the teller, positions Betty, the character in the there-and-then, as “*out-of-place*” in this shop, as “*out-of-character*” wearing the dress, and, as she says at the end, also “*out-of-her-league*” in terms of what she had to pay. However, she also alludes to something more positive in this chain of thoughts and feelings, and this is feeling “*luxurious*” and “*special.*”

To summarize, Betty, the teller, positions herself as character in the story events as “*not herself*” – her “*real*” self does not “*fit*”: into the shop, into the dress, and into the role of the final owner of the dress. The other characters in this episode (they only exist in the anonymous plural as “*the ladies*” and “*they*”) are positioned as relatively faceless (though seemingly very polite – they treated her like a queen). There were no individual characters whom Betty, the teller, holds to be relevant enough to specify individually in any way so that Betty, the character, could be related to them. Everyone mentioned remains relatively relationless. Betty, the teller, reports very few actions or activities; instead she lists her feelings, thoughts, and, as she explicitly says, memories. Even the analogy of going to the beauty parlor is a rhetoric device to explicate her feelings and not her actions. Her frequent use of hedges (*I don’t know, kind of, or something*) and her continuous interruptions of the event-line by reflecting on what happened from her point of view as the teller in the here-and-now give the impression as if she as the teller is involved in some form of internal dialogue, as if she is speaking to herself. Consequently, what the audience is more likely to take away from this episode is the impression that Betty, the teller, cannot (or is not willing to) let the actions of the story speak for themselves. She, as the narrator, is very invested in the interpretation of what happened. The here-and-now and the back-there-then are not clearly distinguishable; or, in terms of traditional story theory, the ending of the story and/or the complication or dilemma have not been resolved.

4.5 *Comparison of Version A and Version B of Episode 2*

To be clear from the start, an episode of a story that revolves centrally about the buying of a dress is most likely not an opportunity to launch into the actions and activities of characters and their development. What we would expect, though, as necessary components, are movements to and from the store and, if the transaction is successful, receiving the dress in exchange for payment. Everything else, such as finding the right dress and dialoguing with the salespeople, which most likely are bound to happen, may not necessarily be noteworthy. Thus, what is it that is tellable or particularly noteworthy in an episode with this specific theme?

In light of these considerations, it is noteworthy that Betty, the teller, is able to weave episode 2 of version A into something that sounds like a story: Betty, the character, enters the shop; the shop itself is unusual; unexpected things happen in this shop; the audience is following Betty the character's gaze at that location; Betty ends up buying a dress; and, she leaves with mixed feelings about the financial end of the transaction. In addition, the teller successfully insinuates that this mixed feeling is a construct that orients the audience toward more to come: the overall story is not over yet; this was just an episode leading up to more to come. In other words, version A successfully interweaves action orientation and evaluation. The teller positions characters in time and space, all orienting in concert toward the overall revelation of the story as a whole, that is, how what happened back then is relevant to the here-and-now and thereby reveals how she wants to be understood. In addition, Betty, the teller, successfully engages the audience in the development of story expectations that go along with this.

In a similar fashion, the teller of episode 2 of version B also succeeds in signaling that this section is part of some preceding and consecutive story work. However, this segment has less episodic character. It is more likely to be heard as a list of memories in service of the teller's position vis-à-vis herself. The world of characters, particularly the world of Betty, the character in the there-and-then, is much less developed compared to version A. In contrast, in version B the audience has much more direct access to how Betty, the teller, positions herself back-there-and-then vis-à-vis herself here-and-now. In other words, the identity work that narratives typically accomplish is more direct. Betty is not addressing or involving the audience in the world of characters and their development. She seemingly talks with herself; we, the audience, are overhearing and witnessing this dialogue. What is of interest is that it has the contour of a dialogue, rather than a monologue, since the telling seems to consist of a struggle for positions – or, to put it differently, it is hearable as a quest for a coherent position, a quest in which Betty, the teller, is making use of Betty, the character back-then, in order to find out more about herself – of who she is in the here-and-now.

The difference between the two versions of episode 2 becomes more transparent when we consider the way evaluative detail is constructed and managed in the course of its delivery. Whereas version A manages to deliver the evaluative orientation throughout the episode through the lens of Betty, the character, the teller of version B mixes character and narrator positions. Let me exemplify this:

In version A the spatial detail in the shop is arranged in such a way that the audience feels as though it is being led through the shop step-by-step by Betty, the character, in the there-and-then. In addition, the verbal exchanges between the shop lady and Betty and also with Betty's friend, who arrives at the scene, are replayed as if they took place exactly this way. When Betty relates what the transformation into a beautiful woman meant to her, it is as if we hear the Betty, then-and-there, (in the dressing room) and only secondarily the narrator, Betty, who speaks in the here-and-now. It is as if, metaphorically speaking, the character, Betty, has a grip on Betty, the teller, where the teller follows the character. In contrast, Betty, the teller of version B, initially sets up the character, Betty, but only to take her back, to continuously interfere, and ultimately to be in control of the character, Betty. While it could have been the situation back then, due to all its alleged strangeness, which made Betty uncomfortable in the there-and-then, this reading is not developed in version B. Betty, the teller, presents Betty, the character, already as knowledgeable about the strangeness of the place before she even enters and as knowledgeable of how the sequence of events only can turn out negatively. This kind of attitude is omnipresent throughout episode 2 of version B. Betty, the character, is shot through with the attitude of Betty looking at it from the here-and-now.

To summarize, comparing the two versions of episode 2, the viewer of the documentary ends up with two versions of Betty: A Betty in version A who is open to new situations and has potential for character development; this Betty is also a person who is socially connected but willing to engage in newness and challenges if backed up "with a little help from her friends." Betty does not present herself as a cosmopolitan woman who knows the world of fashion; rather, she needs the help and advice of a friend. However, with this advice, she is willing to explore new territory and discover aspects about herself that previously were hidden for her. Although her character is presented not necessarily as heroic and adventurous, it is nevertheless *she*, herself, who is in charge of her own actions. In short, Betty, the character, is depicted as "curious." This type of character depiction is severely dampened in version B. The character, Betty, in version B is a person who is continuously self-reflecting, not comfortable in a situation that is potentially new to her and that affords challenges. In addition, she is constructed as alone. There is no one in version B who comes to Betty's assistance. She is an individual, alone in a strange and ultimately faceless world of others. And although it appears as if Betty in version B acts out of her own will, this will is shot through by doubt and hesitation, knowing that none of this should be happening and all this is bound to be doomed.

5 Summary and Discussion

It may seem that the analysis of the two versions of episode 2 has led us dangerously close to the ascription of two different identities of the same person, Betty, the teller in the here-and-now, of the recording 35 years ago. However, let me be

clear that the above small story analysis is not aiming to reveal Betty's identity, particularly her "real" identity, as the description in the catalogue claims, and as some of my student viewers would like to have it. It also is not about ascribing different or multiple identities to Betty, the teller. My contribution tackles the question how Betty hails two different subjectivities (or "identities", if you want to) into being. Or better, my analysis explores the construction means that Betty uses as the teller of the two versions that others use to assign "multiple identities" to her.

Let me attempt to clarify. When watching Liane Brandon's full video for the first time, the viewer typically is somewhat unsettled. The question then needs to be raised, what is it that causes this unsettlement? And further, what causes the viewer to launch into rationales that could "explain" the change from version A to version B? And more specifically, why are these rationales typically looking for something that "happened" either in the previous (first) telling or in between the two tellings? It is not only that these strategies to explain the differences between the two versions are common among students who watch the full video for the first time, but also, even the filmmaker herself, and Mishler (after he performed his analysis of the two versions) are in need of such explanations. Why does it not seem to be possible to simply accept that people tell their stories differently at different times, even if the result is that they hail two different subjectivities into being?

I have no clear answer to these questions. However, I want to stay as far away as possible from getting involved in this kind of debate, as difficult as this may be. Instead, I will focus for the rest of this chapter on what we can learn by a fine-grained (small story) analysis of the particular means that Betty exploits in her business of telling her two versions. Summarizing the narrative strategy used to accomplish version A (including the concomitant reading of Betty, the teller's, subjectivity), it is surprising how detailed the descriptions are of the spatial layout and its inventory. The narrative strategy that accomplishes the kind of reliability that goes along with this is the preferred one in the courtroom or for eyewitness testimonies in general. If the teller can accomplish drawing up a character surrounded by detail, both character and teller appear as a unit and come across as trustworthy. The listener is allowed to peek into the there-and-then through the character back-there-and-then, orchestrated by the teller. Evaluative viewpoints that are external to the there-and-then (i.e., they bring to the forefront that there is a teller in the here-and-now who actually orchestrates and potentially fabricates the world of characters) are few and they typically appear to sum up and transit to a new episode of what happened next. The narrative strategy made use of in version B relies on another kind of detail: descriptions of internal states, especially feeling states. Some of these internal states are ascribed to the characters back then, but other internal states seemingly reflect the teller's state of mind in the here-and-now. This strategy, by use of which character and teller are welded into more of a unit, often does not make it easy to differentiate between character and teller. It is as if the audience is participating in some kind of "internal monologue" of the teller. In sum, the orchestration of the character as a separate unit

in and of itself, one who has her own intentions and agency but also the ability to change and develop, is most difficult by use of the construction means that Betty the teller employed in version B. Typically, a teller using these means is not judged as reliable in the same way. It is not the facts back-there-and-then for which this strategy can vouch. Rather, version B displays another kind of reliability, one that typically is privileged in therapeutic encounters and confessions; in those institutionalized contexts the preferred term is “self-disclosure.”

Thus, we find two different narrative techniques in Betty’s two versions: one, displayed in version A, consisting of the orchestration of characters as actors who are open to development; the other, displayed in version B, resembling the genre of self-disclosure or confession in which the teller is attempting to sort out what was right, wrong, good, or evil back-then from the here-and-now.¹² In light of these differences, both of Betty’s versions have their own credibility, which, however is the result of the use of different story means. Consequently, it is no wonder that interpreters of version A credit the teller with attributes such as “witty, engaging, and delightful.” To turn back to considerations we made above, version A can be understood as accentuating more strongly the transformation from the poor teacher to a beautiful woman, downplaying the fact that this beauty was gone moments later as nothing to worry about. These moments “*tell you something that you always knew,*” she says in her introduction to version A. In contrast, version B is likely to be interpreted as a revelation of her self, which in contemporary Western psychoanalytic culture (Parker 1997, 2003) is the “true” self that confessions and the therapeutic dialogue pulls for by forcing the participant/client to reflect and revise.¹³ It appears as if Betty’s focus in version B is on the latter end of the overall structure, having had beauty which was (tragically) lost; where, from the retrospect, Betty “*reveals how she really felt*” about “*a chance of a lifetime*” (her words), and the “*painfulness of the memory.*”

6 Conclusion

Since there is no final conclusion to Betty’s story and her two versions, the dialogue among those who have started working with Betty’s versions as data will continue. I hope to have shown with my contribution to this volume that a small story analysis that treats stories as interactive positionings can reveal new and interesting insights. The attempt was made to pull Betty’s story out of the domain

¹² Of course, although the here-and-now typically is imposed onto the there-and-then, the directionality can go the other way around and a “deeper” exploration of the there-and-then can impact and alter the understanding of the here-and-now.

¹³ Again, I should clarify: There is nothing wrong with “reflection.” However, it needs to be realized that the kinds of reflection that are privileged in the stylistics of version B are special kinds. Tellers who use story means of the sort that result in version A’s also *reflect*. It is not that their tellings are direct, spontaneous, and unreflective, but they *appear* that way. Using such a story means lends credence to the appearance of spontaneity and unreflectiveness to the author.

of big story research and demonstrate that even narratives that appear to consist of inner dialogues are based on complex interactional strategies in which the appearance of what often is considered a more reflective and truer self are deeply embedded.

In addition, in contrast to positioning multiple selves behind different versions of Betty's story and opening them up to analysis, my contribution suggests studying the construction of identity as a process, and simultaneously, a process that is shot through by three dilemmas: i) the "*identity dilemma*," posing the question how it is possible to consider oneself as the same in the face of constant change; ii) the "*uniqueness dilemma*," whether it is possible to consider oneself as unique in the face of being the same as everyone else (and vice versa); and iii) the "*construction*" or "*who-is-in-charge dilemma*," asking whether it is the person who constructs the world the way it is or whether the person is constructed by the way the world is. Making sense of oneself by telling stories – be they big or small – is an ongoing process taking place in everyday, mundane situations before it is repeated in Sunday situations in front of a camera. Studying this ongoing process does not require an endstate from where previous stories all fall into one or several places. As Betty's versions demonstrate, not even our participants work with these assumptions when engaging in storytelling. So why should researchers jump to such conclusions?

And finally, if identities are continuously "under construction" and require analytic tools that pay dues to this process, how can we do justice to the role of our participants in this construction process? Here I want to join forces with Mishler's position: Yes, research participants – but we can probably generalize *we* to mean everyone, everywhere, all the time, when we engage in storytelling – "are the historians of their own lives" (Mishler 2004, p. 101). Yet the developmental telos is probably not in finding our "real," "true," or "one and only" story. And neither is it in finding a couple of *good stories* that we can download at the appropriate occasions in the form of "multiple identities." If we take the notion of "life as a continuous process" seriously, we may have to rethink qualitative methods, and narratives methods in particular, in terms of how they capture and do justice to the constant changes that take place. The study of microgenetic processes the way I have tried to demonstrate using Betty's two versions as data may be a step in that direction.

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Human/Nature Narratives and Popular Films: Big, Bad, Bold, Beneficent, Bountiful, Beautiful and Bereft

MARY GERGEN

Nature is to man whatever name he wants to give her. He will perceive nature according to the names he gives her, according to the relation and perspective he chooses.

Ernest G. Schachtel

As narrative theorists claim, we are made from the stories we tell. Yet, we may also say that the stories we tell are made from the lives we live. These two versions of narrative analysis summarize the central contention of narrative research.¹ Within these boundaries, it is clear that the focus of narrative research has been almost exclusively on the relationships people have with other human beings.² Overall stories range from the intrapersonal and intimate interpersonal relationships to those of the broader societal groups – clans, communities and nations. The emphasis of philosophers, literary theorists, social scientists, psychotherapists, and other narrative scholars has been on the ways in which narratives create meaning for groups of people in terms of their customs, roles, behavioral expectations, status hierarchies, power relations and moral order. Stories teach people how to act with each other in their social groups. Stories shape people's identities, provide them with appropriate goals, inform them of their social value, and teach them how to feel and think. Stories tell people what is meaningful, good, and worth caring about. Changing our stories can change how we feel about life (White and Epston 1990). They can frame the way we relate to friends and

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¹ Among the major resources for surveying narrative research are work by Ted Sarbin and his colleagues and several others (i.e. Duarte and Lightfoot 2004; Josselson and Lieblich 1996; Lieblich 1993; Lieblich and Josselson 1997; Josselson et al. 2003; Rosenwald and Ochberg 1992; Sarbin 1986, Sarbin and Kitsuse 1993, Sarbin and Schiebe 1983).

² A secondary topic of some prominence is the relationship of humans to their gods, who are often made in the image of the human. Examples include Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian traditions.

enemies (Schon and Rein 1994). According to Boje et al. (2006) a story becomes a framework for everything we think and do.

1 Human/Nature Narratives: Where Have They Been?

The major concern of this paper is to ponder the significance of a class of stories that is almost invisible. To wit: to ask the question, where are the stories of humans relating to nature? It may be surprising to many, as it was to me, to realize that such stories are an unexamined genre in western culture.³ We had not noticed that they do not easily come to mind. While an exception could be made for a growing interest in certain human/non-human relationships, these stories tend to be about non-organic “material” primarily of use in organizational settings: technological devices; software packages, and machines, not with the natural environment (Blackler and Engestrom 2005). Donna Haraway, a feminist futurologist (1988, 1997) has written, for example, about the world of cyborgs and the relations among humans, robots, and machines. For her, the boundary between humans and non-humans is intentionally blurred; there is a liminal space in which new combinations can be developed.

These stories aside, one is hard pressed to discover stories that have a human as their major protagonist on one side and a character we might call Nature on the other. One of the reasons for this lack may be that issues of status, power, deference, civility, moral conduct, and intimacy are not relevant to human/nature interactions in the same way as they are for humans with each other. The social order is held in place by human conventions in a way that the natural order may not seem to be held. There may be a sense that it is necessary to train a child how to become involved in human to human interactions, while it might be regarded as unnecessary to train someone in human/nature relations. How one acts in nature may be assumed to be in some sense natural. It is also reasonable to protest that Nature does not have the qualities necessary to become a storied character in a narrative and that a certain poetic license must be given to allow Nature to have a voice or to be a “character” within a story at all.⁴

Despite these qualifications, I wish to argue that human/nature relationships abound, but are often invoked without our awareness. There are implicit relations, which have storied qualities, in human/nature interactions. While these relations may not attain cultural significance in an acknowledged story, they exist

³ First Nation people, the indigenous people of North America, whose lives have been highly dependent on the shifting qualities of the natural world have stories that are about human/nature relations. Here the forces of nature are most often personified as gods, who have powers over humans and who must be respectfully acknowledged in some fashion (Callicott 1995, Suzuki and Knudtson 1992).

⁴ Interestingly, Environment, which might be considered a synonym of Nature, was originally in a verb form, “the action of environing”, that is surrounding one. This meaning of environment gives it an active character that has agentic capacities, rather than being simply acted upon, as we see it now (Mazel 1996).

in a nascent form in all dramatic events.⁵ Every story has a context that almost always includes some kind of natural setting. However, many interpretive perspectives – structuralism, poststructuralism, semiotics, symbolic interactionism and hermeneutics – tend to disregard the material dimension of culture, especially as it involves non-human interventions. The assumption these perspectives share is that material objects exist primarily “as envelopes of meaning” and not as meaningful in themselves (Engestrom and Blackler 2005, p. 308). An exception would be the Marxist tradition, but even here, the central materialist concern is with the means of production, and the relationship between owners and producers. The “material” itself, especially removed from its natural setting, is immaterial. In general the context of most stories may be so overshadowed by an interest in human interactions as to seem almost invisible; however, I would argue that the background of nature does play a formative role in the production of a story. Whether explicitly or implicitly, the formulation of the human/nature relationship has a dramatic impact on the way the story is framed, and how it is supplemented by the audience. In many films, nature is used as a way to instill in the audience an emotional reaction in advance of any action and to give specific actions an overtone of excitement, dread, or pleasure. The films of Alfred Hitchcock, for example, used various scenic shots to convey approaching danger. Dread is telegraphed by scenes of nature in films such as *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*, *The Birds*, and *Psycho*. Each of these films produce ominous portraits of danger, as the natural world becomes a threatening entity to the characters, even before any human-based action occurs.

One might wonder why it is important to investigate these subtle human/nature relationships, which serve as dynamic elements in contemporary storytelling. My view is that through identifying with the human characters—as the observer does – one’s definition of nature becomes clarified. Nature takes on certain characteristics, which are significant for the story form. We also may draw from the stories more enduring representations of Nature, which influence us in our daily lives, including our economic, social and political activities and preferences. And the reverse is also true. As people relate to Nature, so do they become certain kinds of characters, with particular ambitions, needs, duties and rights. We, too, may take these on, and find in their personal qualities, resonances. With our own self-understandings in the nature world, we are more able to justify our interactions with nature, given the actions of characters we observe.⁶

⁵ Sociobiologist E.O. Wilson (1984) created the biophilia hypothesis, which posits a genetically based human need and propensity to affiliate with life, and which would account for the implicit human/nature connections that can be observed in certain interactions. The hypothesis has been highly controversial, although it has a certain popularity in ecological circles due to its suggestion that people are innately programmed to love nature.

⁶ Of particular concern at this writing are the controversies over global warming. The policy of the United States under President Bush is to resist joining international efforts to curb polluting agents being expelled into the atmosphere in order to protect the interests of economic groups, such as the coal/gas/oil industries and power plants. Here we see a story of political interests conflicting in the international arena with Nature as a pawn to the politicians and special interest groups, including scientists and environmental activists, as well as industrialists.

There are many sources, as mentioned above, that provide illustrations of these rather subtly defined human/nature stories. To limit these explorations and to share in common cultural resources, within this chapter, I include references to popular films that offer us guides to important human/nature stories. The origins of the ideas about human/nature relationships are taken from more traditional philosophical writings, as well as from humanistic and psychological theories involving nature and ecology. Three prominent general classes of human/nature stories are presented and related to popular films, as well as to other relevant cultural icons. After these major relational forms are explored, I describe a new story form in which Nature is not the major actor in relationship with humans, but rather is the acted upon. I also make some suggestions as to why there are important implications for our world's survival in human/nature stories. Finally, the question of how to create a different kind of human/nature story is raised, given the urgency in today's ecological climate.⁷

2 Social Construction of Nature

As a starting point for looking at the varieties of human/nature stories available in American culture today, it should be noted that these descriptions are social constructions, which might otherwise be made by other people analyzing this topic (Gergen 2001; Gergen and Gergen 2004). We may not all agree on what we are seeing when we view a film or describe a philosophical perspective on the nature of Nature. For example, from a psychodynamic point of view, human/nature stories are ripe for interpretations that emphasize attachment themes, Oedipal conflicts, archetypal expressions, repressed desires, and symbolic expressions of underlying trauma (Aizenstadt 1995; Roszak 1993).⁸ Noted cultural critic, Edward Said (1978), in fact, has emphasized that all definitions of nature constitute a form of cultural imperialism. How the West defines the Earth and its resources is under its power to name because of its political and military strength in the international arena; what has been decided by certain Europeans and Americans becomes the official version of what exists in the world for others as

⁷ For the purposes of this chapter, Nature will be characterized exclusive of animals. There are many stories about humans and animals, which are of a different type than those about humans and inanimate nature. In many stories animals take the place of humans and relate to Nature in a fashion similar to humans. Just as there has been a great increase in concerns with the Earth, and human activity in regard to it, so too there has been a great increase in interest in human/animal interactions.

⁸ From a Freudian perspective, two of the major themes regarding Nature/Human stories emphasize sexuality and death. A third major theme concerns spiritual and ethical dimensions. The theme of friendship and harmonious interdependence, as well as the vision of Nature as victim comes closest to an ego-centered consideration of Nature. From a psychoanalytic perspective, stories of Nature provide a huge canvas onto which one might project deep fears and fantasies, which are well-steeped in publicly shared media reports of natural occurrences.

well as for themselves. Said's comment might also be applied to the ways in which the indigenous peoples, as well as their territories have been co-opted and controlled by foreign powers. The First Nation People of Canada, the American Indian in the United States, the Maori in New Zealand, and the aboriginal tribes in Australia all have stories that include this subjugation. In more recent history, the shape and borders of various nations, such as Iraq and Israel, were drawn by British cartographers in service to their Foreign Office. We might draw attention to this analysis as a subtle form of imperialism as I formulate the kinds of relationships human/nature interactions create, and which ones are chosen to be supported, emotionally, ethically and politically.

3 Narratives of Nature/Human Relationships

Among the major narratives relating humans to the natural world are the following:

3.1 Nature as a Dangerous, Amoral and Magnificent Power

In this perhaps most ancient of stories of human/nature relations, nature is defined as possessing enormous strength and the capacity to do good or harm, but with no particular enmity or affinity to humans. The natural world through the history of civilized society has been the object of projection, for many, a dark shadow. As noted by Rene Dubos, "The word *wilderness* occurs approximately three hundred times in the Bible, and all its meanings are derogatory. Deeply seeded in the psyche is the image of evil darkness in wilderness." (Harper 1996, p. 186) There is a dynamic potential in nature that is inevitable within the strict organizing principle of cause and effect, and one of the effects is that those who are caught up in the active dynamism of nature, and who are weak, unlucky, or simply in harms way, die. Others, who are strong, lucky, or elsewhere, survive. Films that feature the impact of some natural disaster – earthquakes, tidal waves, volcanoes, floods, avalanches, hurricanes, and other powerful and inhuman forces – and the incapacity of humans to escape it are relevant to this human/nature story. *The Perfect Storm*, in which men frantically battle to save their ship against a raging storm, is exemplary. Nature, in this story form, is overwhelmingly powerful, is indifferent to human suffering, and is random in its destruction. The human caught up in this maelstrom cannot in any way protect herself (himself), and is destroyed without any particular reason. The idea of a moral or a just world is irrelevant in this version of the human/nature story.

This story of human/nature interaction can also be extended to a form of natural competition, in which it is possible that certain creatures, with special sensory systems, faster reflexes, greater strength, or quicker intelligence, for example, might be able to withstand the onslaught of the environmental danger. For some, the Hobbesian description of Nature as a war of all against all, is an apt summary of this story. The fittest survive. In this way there is a link to

evolutionary psychology, with its claims that humans with the best combination of genes for survival have managed to overcome some of the natural disasters that have destroyed others with fewer or less relevant survival apparatus. Within this story there is no glorification of nature, which can be seen in other stories, no motivated activity, no emotionality, and no wisdom. There is no great lesson to be learned at the end of the day. The tendency to personify this force, called Nature, is minimal. The humans involved also tend to be de-humanized as random victims. At Pompei, in Italy, for example, those caught up in the flowing lava are vividly captured in stone; visitors to the museum can see the final moments of people and a dog being encased in burning lava; yet these monuments to the fiery blasts of Mount Vesuvius tend to elicit a dispassionate curiosity in an observer rather than any intimate sense of sorrow or regret. Natural forces overwhelmed the existing civilization; the stronger won against the weaker.

Not all natural disasters have this effect on observers, but the distance in time, and the nature of the preservations reduce empathy. The tsunami disaster in 2004 in South Asia, as well as Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, in 2005, on the other hand, are fresher in people's memories. Stories still circulate, and the victims tend to be humanized, especially those who are connected to one's own social group. In these later stories of tidal waves and hurricanes, however, reactions to the event are not merely those of helplessness or apathy. Rather, they include responses directed toward minimizing the possibility of another natural disaster that could strike a land area without warning. Here the human side of the story includes the notion that even natural disasters that are unavoidable can be minimized through human diligence, including creating technological devices that would give earlier warning signals to the affected populations, and means of strengthening the levees so that the waters cannot flood the city. Planning activities related to disaster control serve to give humans the sense that even in this amoral, dynamic and powerful natural world, there is the possibility of human intervention.

This story of human/nature relations is very pessimistic in its finality and impersonal nature. Of all the stories, it is least productive of hope and creative responsiveness in its image of persons as well. Rather, it is highly threatening and often ominous in its implications. We live in a random, indifferent, powerful world. We cannot control our fates. In this story, there is the echo of the relationship of early religions, including Judaism, to the austere, all-powerful and relentless God, who was to be worshipped, but without any expectation of reward. This is a particularly threatening story in cultures where this notion of God no longer persists, and where problem solving orientations and optimism about control are paramount, which is especially true in the United States. Great efforts are often made to conjure up stories of success in overcoming disasters or in mitigating their effects.⁹ We do not wish to be, as the preacher, Jonathan Edwards, called us, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God."

⁹ See M. Gergen (2005) for a commentary on the American media response to the tsunami devastation and its aftermath.

Another facet of this image of nature and the stories to be told is one that is static rather than dynamic. This nature also seems to be beyond measure. And in its grandeur is beyond the capacity of humans to make an impact on it. It would be impossible to use up or finish or exploit its seemingly endless resources. Its magnitude is too vast. The easiest visualization of this facet of the gigantic earth is the “Western” movie. In its prototypical construction, there is a scene in which a small band of men on horseback ride endlessly against a background of soaring mountains under an immense sky. The scale of their lives against the size of the natural elements makes the men appear minute. Their struggles and their travails against this landscape seem trivial when viewed from afar. Only when the camera comes in for a close-up, does the vastness of nature become diminished, and we are able to connect with the drama of their lives.

In relating to Westerns and other movies that emphasize the magnitude and eternal presence of nature, people may feel humble or immaterial on the grand scale of things, but also able to behave in self-gratifying ways, which have no consequences for Nature. It is impossible to affect Nature, no matter what one does. Nature is also endless. Over one mountain, there is another one. *Motorcycle Diaries*, the story of Che Guevara’s trip through South America as a young medical student, is a saga of unending roads and dramatic scenery often far from human habitation. *Lawrence of Arabia* has the same sense of endless desert. The history of the United States in its westward expansion could be told as the story of the pursuit of the endless frontier; in this saga there is no looking back, and no concern for the past actions that could be detrimental to Nature. The frontiersman and his family travel west; the garbage is left behind. In many films, the West became the endless territory in which new beginnings are possible. In one genre of films about the post-Civil war period, for example, the West became the grounds for hope. Penniless Southern soldiers gained a new start in the western territories. John Wayne in *The Searchers*, conveys the pain and the glory of this plot. The state of California has represented the ultimate in this saga for over one hundred years, and the expanding population of this state bears out the seeming truthfulness of this claim.

3.2 Nature is Woman: Goddess, Mother, Lover, Whore and Slave

While angry, powerful and indifferent Nature tends to be associated with male figures, a contrasting and very welcoming personification of Nature is as a woman; Nature is almost always referred to with the pronoun “she” and never as “he” in English. The introductory epigram of this chapter clearly illustrates the convention of calling Nature “she” and the human who names “he.” This tradition is ancient, and is surely related to the connection of women as the source of human life with the Earth as the fertile bearer of food. Cultures extending back to the earliest times connected women and the earth, as evidenced by statues, friezes, pottery decorations, and myths of the nurturing Mother, a figure often revered as a goddess. In the earliest versions of the creation of the universe in Greek

mythology, the Goddess, Gaia, born of Chaos, was the creator of the Earth, and also the mother of the sky and the seas. Other ancient societies from all parts of the globe—Canaanite, Aztec, Norse, Celtic, Hindi, Egyptian, Babylonian—worshiped female goddesses of fertility, again as the symbol of the fruitful earth. There are countless other examples of the connections in ancient tribal groups of the Earth and the feminine. The Biblical story of Genesis begins the story of man with God’s creation of Adam from the dust of the Earth. The major symbolic value of this personification is that Nature is stuff from which humankind is made. Other images and myths emphasize the nurturing power of Nature. From Nature’s breast we live. Nature is profound and the depth of her giving is endless. The quasi-national anthem, *American the Beautiful*, expresses this metaphor in its claims of the bountifulness of nature from “amber fields of grain” to the “fruited plains.” When we frame nature in this fashion, we humans become the children, who are suckled at her breast. We are not responsible to her. We do not take care of her, but rather she cares for us.

Closely allied with the mother role is that of the lover. Here the dominant desire is to be intimate with the earth, not as a wounded bird or as one who is in need of solace, but as a form of joyful expression. Children’s cartoons often contain scenes where the landscape is full of bright flowers and sunny skies, where blue water laps at the shores of sandy beaches. Disney’s *Fantasia*, as well as *Pocahontas* and *The Little Mermaid* are films that represent this view. Perfection and play are linked together, as the children sing and dance. *The Sound of Music*, which has held a prominent place in the hearts of generations of movie-goers, has as its iconic scene the group of von Trapp children with their nanny joyously singing against the backdrop of a mountain range. Romantic scenes in films for adults also tend to bring the affections of the actors into intimate contact with the earth. A strong connection is made between the beauty of nature and the beauty of love. Starry skies, full moons, palm trees, beaches, fields of flowers, and other signals of natural beauty are all associated with scenes of affection and love. The beach scene *From Here to Eternity* with Burt Lancaster and Deborah Kerr in the throes of passion with the waves lapping over their bodies stamped a generation of young lovers in the 50s with this image.

Elvira Madigan, a film about the star-crossed romance between lovers who were of different social backgrounds, has its climax in a field of flowers. The couple laugh and dance, and express their love for one another; then as Elvira prances happily among the flowers, her lover shoots her and then himself. Their last moments of life are joyful, and they are linked forever in this idyllic setting, despite the extremes the social order has driven them to take.

There has been a long philosophical tradition that has given preference to the notion of the natural, and the human/nature connection over the relationships of humans with each other in the social order. In this line of thought, humans live harmoniously in nature, and in this state, have moral virtues that become corrupted in society. Jean Jacques Rousseau, who called the human the “noble savage,” was a prominent proponent of the view that society is the source of perversity, the cause of man’s loss of innocence and his downfall. There are

various reflections of this view in contemporary life, such as the identification of the city and its inhabitants with crime and corruption as opposed to the moral virtues and simple purity of the people who live in the countryside. In this narrative, people who return to nature become purified. Their evil or wary ways become reformed by their connection to nature. The goodness that is “natural” within them is nurtured by the powers of the woods and streams, and they are reborn. A film that exemplifies this notion is *A River Runs Through It*. Here magnificent shots of two sons with their father trout fishing, casting and retrieving their lines in a clean, fast running stream, the line flickering and curling in the air, then landing on the water are studies in tranquility and beauty. Through the connection to nature enmities and distances are healed, and complex bonds of love and reconciliation are created among them.

A prevalent theme in the human/nature connection, which has affinities with the Rousseau idea of a beneficent relationship, is that of a friendship tie, which is intimate, innocent, and generative. It should also be noted that there is a parity between the parties, unlike the power of Nature over humans, which is evident in the God and Goddess versions mentioned before. Here Nature is revealed as a compatriot within a partnership that involves getting to know one another, so to speak. An interesting biography formed in this genre is Evelyn Fox Keller’s story of Barbara McClintock, a scientist who won a Nobel Prize for her work on the process of genetic transposition (Keller 1985). Unlike most scientists, including those in her own field of biology, McClintock developed a noninterventionist strategy in her observations of patterns of growth in corn. For this resistance to the traditional mode of manipulation and control in the experimental tradition, she was shunned by her academic community for most of her career. Yet, she preferred to relate to her plants in an intimate and subtle fashion, and she avoided interfering with their growth and development as much as possible. She did not do experiments on them, but rather tried to develop a feeling for them. As McClintock described her method: “I start with a seedling, and I don’t want to leave it. I don’t feel I really know the story if I don’t watch the plant all the way along. So I know every plant in the field. I know them intimately, and I find it a great pleasure to know them.” Keller summarized McClintock’s approach as “respect for difference [that] constitutes a claim not only on our interest but on our capacity for empathy – in short on the highest form of love: love that allows for intimacy without the annihilation of difference.” (Keller 1985, p. 164).

The human/nature connection that is filled with love and friendship creates the demand for respect and concern for well-being on both sides. Nature is given the role of a tender, virtuous and cooperative partner in ongoing endeavors, and the human becomes respectful, caring and fulfilled by the relationship as well. It is perhaps the most gratifying of relationships in the panoply of possible connections. The fierce, dramatic, cataclysmic side of nature is absent as a personification in this characterization.

The subjugated and wanton aspects of nature go in a direction that is demeaning to both parties in this human/nature connection. However, it is an old and powerful story, which has strong reverberations into the present. As Francis

Bacon described it in his quest for the predominance of science, secrets of nature must be “ripped from her breast.” For Bacon, Nature became the reluctant maiden, who must be raped and pillaged by the scientist in order to discover her workings. “Nature may be coy, but she can be conquered.” He advised scientists to “conquer and subdue her, to shake her to her foundations.” At other times he treated Nature as a fecund creature. “For you have but to hound nature in her wanderings and you will be able when you like to lead and drive her afterwards to the same place again.” The rape metaphor is also a part of this relationship between humans and nature. “Neither ought a man to make scruples of entering and penetrating into those holes and corners when the inquisition of truth is his whole object.” In this sense the scientist who “rapes” nature is justified if his desire is the pursuit of truth. Bacon also suggested that the scientist must “Make her your slave.”¹⁰

The place of Man over Nature is reminiscent of the notion of the Great Chain of Being, the dominant ontology of the universal until the mid-nineteenth century in which there is a natural order that allows all power and dominion first to God, next to angels, and then to Man, and lastly to the Earth. This idea of a fixed natural hierarchy, which remains until the present in latent form, justified all manner of oppression of those who were seen as under Man, including women, children, animals and certain groups of people who were considered to be of a lower order of creatures. This philosophical notion also justified slavery of those who were deemed inferior.

Feminist theorists, especially ecofeminists, among others, have focused on the ways in which this Nature and the Scientist story has stood as a prototype for male-female relationships. Man the scientist uses his expertise to dominate the women in his entourage. Feminist philosopher Sandra Harding (1991), for example, has been critical of this male bias in the explications of nature.

Conquering, subduing, chasing, and taking from Nature are familiar themes in popular movies. The notion of “conquering space,” for example, which is a familiar phrase used by NASA, the popular media and others, is in the mode of the Baconian dreams for science and space exploration, as well. Movies such as *The Right Stuff*, which celebrated the breaking of the sound barrier (symbolic of the breaking of the hymen), and *Apollo 13*, the tale of the moon rocket adventure, both center on the theme of overwhelming the earth and the universe more broadly. Adventure films, such as *Everest*, also emphasize the conquering motif. Other movies in which Nature is forced to give up her resources, her secrets, as Bacon called it, include films about drilling for oil, gold mining, silver mining, and discovering buried treasures, as in the classic film, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*. In *Chinatown*, the conflict is over crooked land dealings and water rights. In this genre of film, Nature is there for the exploitation of Man, and it is the right of the human to take from the entire universe. A clear example of this perspective can be found in a century old report from a Cattlemen’s meeting in west

¹⁰ In a more subservient mode, Bacon described Man as the “servant and interpreter of nature.”

Texas: “Resolved, that none of us know, or care to know, anything about grasses, native or otherwise, outside the fact that for the present there are lots of them, the best on record, and we are after getting the most out of them while they last”¹¹ (Kleckly 1976 in Shepard 1995, p. 22). One might suspect that the descendants of these men, retaining the same sentiments, still might be found in Texas, or in Washington, D.C.

3.3 *Nature as the Source of Spiritual Connection*

Then in the Arctic half-light of the canyon, all existence fades to a being with my soul and memories and the sounds of the Big Blackfoot River and a four-count rhythm and the hope that a fish will rise. Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it.”

The father speaking in “A River Runs Through it.”

Although, in the United States, church membership has not grown, and in some prominent denominations has fallen off in the past two decades, an interest in spirituality seems to be on the rise. Not only is this the case with Evangelical religious movements, but also with spiritual practices associated with Buddhism, Shintoism, and forms of witchcraft, among many others. The martial arts, yoga, and meditation have spread, and in many cases have become integrated into the practices of professional groups, including psychotherapists, medical doctors, physical therapists, personal coaches, and athletic trainers. At the base of Eastern mystical practices is a deep appreciation of the spiritual qualities of Nature. In the Buddhist tradition, for example, all the universe is regarded as one; thus, one must come to appreciate that this principle of unity applies as well to oneself. There is no true separation between seemingly discrete things.

A rise in interest in witchcraft and the occult practices associated with it is evident if one explores the internet world. For example, a website called The Sacred Mists, supported by the Celtic Faerie Eclectic Community, advertises an online Wiccan College, where one can attain various degrees in witchcraft, including the option of becoming a high priestess or priest. The defining feature of the Wiccan religion, according to *Wiccan Beliefs and Practices* by Gary Cantrell, as advertised on their site, is that Wicca is a nature religion. Practices include magic spells, herbal healing, crystal and gem rituals, astrology, and other psychic and spiritual healing practices.

Even without a connection to a religious or spiritual groups, there are cultural orientations that recognize Nature as a spiritual resource. In Native American lore, Nature and the Spirit world are one. The four winds, for example, are four gods, who have forms of power that can be called upon for various purposes. In

¹¹ This attitude becomes the foundation for the Tragedy of the Commons, as Hardin described it in his classic book. Based on the shared grass in the commons, each party tries to maximize his own profit at the expense of the common ground, and each in doing so destroys the basis of their prosperity by overusing the common resource.

many films Nature is personified as a spirit, often interacting with characters, whispering secrets to them, signaling them to follow one path or another. Nature is usually wise and benevolent, as well as filled with animation. In less amiable scenes, the wind in the trees may serve as the voice of doom. In a comic mode, *The Little Shop of Horrors* tells the story of a seemingly benign plant that cannibalizes passersby who get too close.

This idea of nature in a spiritually close connection to humans is paramount in the movement called “Ecopsychology,” which takes its inspiration from Jungian theory. Those who espouse this version of psychology personify nature as the “most profoundly collective and unconscious self” (Hillman 1995). In this version of the human/nature story, the demarcation between the two entities is also undone. As James Hillman expresses this linkage, “Since the cut between self and natural world is arbitrary, we can make it at the skin or we can take it as far out as you like—to the deep oceans and distant stars” (Hillman 1995, p. xvii). We may seek to find ourselves in the sea or in the stars. Theodore Roszak, a prominent ecopsychologist, quoted environmental activist, David Foreman, as saying that their mission at base was to “open our souls to love this glorious, luxuriant, animated planet” (Roszak 1995, p. 3). From this beginning, a form of spiritual healing can take place. To cut ourselves off from this opportunity, this natural order of things, is dangerous to our well-being. “Seeking to heal the soul without reference to the ecological system of which we are an integral part is a form of self-destructive blindness. Ecopsychologists are drawing upon the ecological sciences to reexamine the human psyche as an integral part of the web of nature” (Brown 1995, p. xvi).

This story also contains a reciprocal stance among the actors, in that as we seek a healing connection to the Earth, we are also obligated to it. This connection is based on a different relationship between human and earth than in the story of nature as an arbitrary force. Humans are not random victims or survivors in the face of nature, which is overpowering, nor are they children in the Mother Earth story. In the ecopsychology version, we are a part of this Nature, connected to it in a deep spiritual fashion, and need to be in rapport with it.

One of the classic scenes in film is that of the protagonist going back to nature to be healed from the wounds inflicted upon him or her by the social order. Heroines fling themselves on the earth to cry and to seek solace; men ride off into the sunset to find their own peace in the land. The countryside is often portrayed in films as the source of goodness and purity, unsullied by the evils of the city or town. An unusual rendition of this theme is found in the film, *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, 2003, which portrays the true story of three aboriginal girls, who escape from the state run school where they had been taken to be trained to become “white” servants. They made their 1,500 mile trip home to Western Australia by following a fence put up to control rabbits. The movie contrasts the “civilized” British-imported culture with the indigenous aboriginal one, which was depicted as a culture in harmony with nature.

Mention of the narratives of relatedness between nature and humans would be incomplete without reference to the transcendental movement in America,

which shaped the intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual history of the country. Leading proponents, Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, described Nature as the Material evidence of transcendental Truths, wisdom, and aesthetic wonderment. For them, Nature was the source of personal fulfillment, and spiritual wisdom. While not religious in any traditional sense, both advocated a deep appreciation for Nature; humans, aware of the power and magnificence of Nature, would stand in awe and respect at the majesty of Nature. As worshippers and acolytes, the human being would be moved to spiritual questing, looking for the answers to life's major questions in the order presented by Nature.

Similar to Transcendentalism, is the recent revival of interest in Pantheism which suggests another spiritual pathway offered by affiliating with nature. On their website, <http://www.pantheism.net/> one encounters the following:

Do you feel a deep sense of peace and belonging and wonder in the midst of nature, in a forest, by the ocean, or on a mountain top? Are you speechless with awe when you look up at the sky on a clear moonless night and see the Milky Way strewn with stars as thick as sand on a beach?

When you see breakers crashing on a rocky shore, or hear wind rustling in a poplar's leaves, are you uplifted by the energy and creativity of existence?

Do you find it impossible to believe in supernatural beings, and difficult to conceive of anything more worthy of reverence than the beauty of nature or the power of the universe?

If you answered yes to these questions, then you will feel thoroughly at home in the World Pantheist Movement. Our caring and celebratory approach focuses on nature rather than the supernatural, on what we can see and do and live out rather than on invisible entities that we can only imagine.

4 Human/Nature Connection: Nature as the Wounded Creature

When the Earth hurts, who responds?

Sarah A. Conn

The last narrative of relatedness between humans and Nature to be noted in this chapter is an intriguing new relational form that has evolved over the last fifteen years. Here, a recognition that Nature has become seriously wounded by blatant misuse on the part of humans has become part of the public consciousness. Ravaged by humans for centuries, in this story the Earth is now in need of rescue. As Lester Brown has written, "We cannot restore our own health, our sense of well-being, unless we restore the health of the planet" (Brown 1995, p. xvi). He suggests that to understand the ills of the soul today we should comprehend the suffering of the earth. Various private and public interest groups have grown up with the purpose of reducing the damage and attempting to make reparations. A major international governmental effort to tackle one problem has resulted in the famed Kyoto treaty to reduce global warming; this treaty has been signed by

many countries of the world, although the United States has been so far unwilling to become a part of this agreement.

Taking another look at the issue of reparation, German psychologist, Lenelis Kruse, an environmental expert, has discussed the dynamic in which people recognize that they have been the ones to injure nature and thus are guilty of the damage that is found. This guilt is one source of motivation to change behaviors related to the viability of the Earth. It may also lead to forms of denial, as may be the case with the United States' energy policies.

While there have not been many movies about the healing of nature, per se, the various "whistle blower" movies, such as *Erin Brockovich* in which the heroine become determined to stop the ecological damage done by a utility company polluting the water of a small California town and *Silkwood*, the story of Karen Silkwood, who fought against a nuclear energy giant and may have been murdered to cover up the damages they were producing are important precursors of this sensitivity.

5 Narratives of Relationships and the Global Good

Humans have the idea . . . that we are above natural processes rather than immersed in them. We have thought, and continue to teach our children to think, that we can control nature, at least most of the time

Robert Greenwood (1995)

Each of the narratives of the human/nature relationship presents a particular view of who human beings are, and what they are capable of. They range from being conceived as random victims, as survivors, as patriarchs, children, lovers, friends, exploiters, worshipers, healers and martyrs. Some roles are noted for their impotence, and others for their power. In some, humans are caring, docile, and revering, while in others they are powerful, exploitative, and indifferent to the residues of their actions. The totality of human expression seems to be evidenced in these various narratives.

Each of the characterizations of human nature justifies and normalizes ways of relating to nature. At the extremes, acts of war that are committed in order to regulate human conduct, whether to search for a terrorist, bring down a tyrant, salvage a besieged tribe, stop a genocide, or gain political advantage, rarely are measured in terms of environmental damage. Mountains are obliterated, prairies and fields destroyed, rivers and atmospheres polluted, farmlands flooded, jungles and forests denuded, but little attention is usually given by the media to such devastating effects. On a less dramatic level, but perhaps equally as insidious, so-called "development" in urban and suburban areas in America eats up vast tracts of land formerly used for farming and animal habitats, and now for sprawling McMansions and the mega-malls that thrive on the shopping habits of lusty consumers. There is no place left for animals, plants and trees to exist, and it is all done in the name of progress. Today there are organized groups that are fighting back, trying to save the last vestiges of Nature around them, but it is often

too little too late. There is a powerful political view that a strong tax base, created by allowing for extensive commercial growth is a justifiable reason for humans to conduct themselves in this self-interested way on the Earth.

And as the characterizations of human nature are considered, so is the nature of Nature. Whether Nature is a fierce force, without feelings, a powerful mother, a sweet lover, friend, a spiritual teacher, or a wounded and helpless giant is also open for interpretation. The visions are combined, of course, so that what we imagine of one is combined with what the other must be. The relationship is reciprocal. If the human side is composed of selfish, exploitative decision makers, Nature becomes the victimized rich resource. For example, powerful electric companies, now often privatized, are in service primarily to their stock holders and not to their customers or communities. They are in need of a cheap energy source, and they are not required to attend very closely to the environmental consequences of their decisions. The government is careful not to rein them in too quickly so as to undermine their fiscal feasibility. This is especially true in the George W. Bush administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency is so weak that it cannot stop environmental abuse, even if it wanted to.

What counts most in evaluating this range of options for the narratives of the human/nature connection is how our narratives allow us to continue as a people with a planet that is viable for the forms of life that we have adapted to. If we do not find a compatible fit, as the dinosaurs before us, we shall become extinct. Some scientists today already believe that we have passed the point of no return, and it is now a matter of time before we will either evacuate this planet or die. With this particular scenario taking a central place in the international dialogues, we might predict that strong efforts would be made to refute this particular plot. The human required for this story is one who is capable of vigorous, creative, and self-sustaining action, in concert with others, who will be designed to redress the imbalances that have been created by human-originated abuse. Yet, it is unlikely that human societies will create a new social order that requires deep sacrifices, as some environmental enthusiasts have proposed. The tragedy of the commons, as a result of human greed, is a dangerous possibility (Hardin 1968). More probably, ways will be found that create a story of win-win, for people who wish to live on this planet. We shall save the planet and lead better lives. How this narrative will be created is unclear, but with committed leadership in the political and economic communities of the world, and with the keen support of a knowledgeable public, a story with a plot to save the world for oneself, and for one's children and grandchildren may be produced.

What does narrative theory tell us about how stories are created in a culture? We are in need of knowing how to do this if we are to survive. Perhaps more attention should be given in narrative studies to this dynamic enterprise. Certainly media resources of the most popular and effective type are needed, as well as political rhetoric, and classroom curricular investment. Will these measures suffice? Is this the best way to go? Or despite our own best interests, will we end in an Orwellian world of heat, pollution, flooded coastlines, and Draconian governmental regulations, in a war of all against all, not against nature but against

each other, with the Earth the loser no matter what the human consequence? Will our future environments look like the films of the *Matrix*? Or shall we save ourselves with a better story for humankind? The fervent hope in writing this chapter is to unsettle ourselves sufficient to focus on what might become the most important story of our century, if not the millennium.

The killer story

It sometimes seems that that story is approaching its end. Lest there be no more telling of stories at all, some of us out here in the wild oat . . . think we'd better start telling another one, which maybe people can go on with when the old one's finished. Maybe. This trouble is, we've all let ourselves become part of the killer story, and so we may get finished along with it. Hence it is with a certain feeling of urgency that I seek the nature, subject, words of the other story, the untold one, the life story.

Ursula Le Guin

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Opposite and Coexistent Dialogues: Repeated Voices and the Side-by- Side Position of Self and Other

YOKO YAMADA

1 Introduction

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975) theorized that narratives were basically dialogic and polyphonic, and that they were competitive, with multiple voices. In this paper, I call his dialogue based on the opposite relationship of Self and Other “Opposite Dialogue,” and analyze the theoretical relationships of what I call “Coexistent Dialogue,” using discourses from three scenes in Yasuhiro Ozu’s film, *Tokyo Story*, focusing on repeated voices, side-by-side positions, and harmonious and sympathetic resonance of Self and Other.

The following three key features are identified in a comparison of Coexistent Dialogue and Opposite Dialogue: 1) The relationship of Self and Other: the common mutuality of inter-subjectivity is contrasted with the opposing subject-object relationship. 2) The words, phrases, and rhythms in the discourses: repetitions with similar variations and resonant voices are in contrast to battles among multiple voices. 3) The changing process: the transition from tuning to harmony is contrasted with the conflict for control, from struggle to integration.

Schematic models of the two types of Dialogue are constructed from three perspectives: the relationship of Self and Other, the mode of positioning and communication, and the sequential change.

2 Bakhtin’s Theory of Dialogism

Bakhtin’s way of thinking about language and existence, called dialogism, is attractive to narrative researchers (Todorov 1984; Holquist 1990). His revolutionary view has led to the idea of the “narrative turn,” not only in language and philosophy but also in psychology and sociology (Gergen 1999; Denzin and Lincoln 2000). His fundamental view of dialogic speech and active interactions is that no living word relates to a subject or object in a singular way, but does so in polyphonic

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ways. In a dialogic sense, living words are active interactions between the speaking subject and the listening audience, between the own words of the subject and the alien words of others, between words already spoken and the anticipated answers to questions, and between individual and sociocultural voices.

Bakhtin (1981, 1984, 1986) critiqued traditional linguistics and claimed that the philosophy of language acknowledges only a passive understanding of discourse, that is, it is an understanding of the neutral significance of an utterance and not its actual meaning. In the actual life of speech, every concrete act of understanding is active. The speaker's orientation toward the listener is an orientation toward the specific world of the listener; it introduces totally new elements into the discourse. The speaker strives to get a reading on his/her own word, and on his/her own conceptual system that defines this word, within the alien conceptual system of the understanding receiver. The speaker enters into dialogical relationships with certain aspects of this system, and constructs his/her own utterances in alien territory.

The word, breaking through to its own meaning and its own expression across an environment full of alien words and variously evaluating accents, harmonizing with some of the elements in this environment and striking a dissonance with others, is able, in this dialogized process, to shape its own stylistic profile and tone. (Bakhtin 1981 "Discourse in the novel", p. 277)

The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when the speaker populates it with his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language . . . but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other peoples' intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. (Bakhtin 1981 "Discourse in the Novel," pp. 293–294)

Dialogue is a difficult term to define, mainly because Bakhtin uses the word in so many contexts and in such diverse senses that it often seems devoid of a clear definition. In a general sense, Bakhtin derives his term from the simple act of dialogue, the give-and-take exchange of speech between two individuals.

Although he strongly critiques the traditional view of the Western philosophy of language, the fundamental concepts of Self and Other in dialogue seem to share the presuppositions of Western traditions, which are based on Western philosophies, languages, and cultures.

One such presupposition seems to be the concept of Self as an independent entity with one's own territory. Of course, Bakhtin is not an individualist; instead, he exceeds the boundaries of isolated physiological organisms and presupposes the interaction of several organisms, emphasizing the social character of utterances and sociocultural contexts. "The entire verbal part of human existence (external and internal discourse) can not be charged to the account of the unique subject, taken in isolation; it does not belong to the individual, but to his social group (his social environment)" (Todorov, p. 30). However, he is an individualist in the sense that he emphasizes the self concept as "divided" or "independent"

from others. Self as an individual entity must be distinguished from the other's words, and the self's own word must be distinguished from the properties of others. Bakhtin likes the concept of "his own will" versus others, and that of his own possessions, as seen in terms such as "acquisition" and "appropriation." Furthermore, Wertsch (1991, 1998) has recently emphasized the dynamics of "appropriation and resistance" and "counter claims" in a number of important studies that have expanded on the theories of both Bakhtin and Vygotsky.

Another presupposition seems to be that dialogue is a metaphor for war. Dialogue is considered to be a competitive struggle to communicate, based on the opposite natures of Self and Other as mutual counterparts.

In the course of this paper, I will clarify the fundamental view of the dialogic narrative, and present a complementary view of it. In comparison with Bakhtin's presupposition of the opposite relationship of Self and Other, I attempt to construct a new theoretical model, called "Coexistent Dialogue," which focuses on repeated discourse and the co-existential relationship of Self and Other.

3 Discourses in Ozu's film "Tokyo Story": Side-by-Side Positioning and Repeated Narrative

3.1 *Ozu's film Tokyo Story*

This article focuses on "repetition of voice" and "retelling" in everyday narratives. It analyzes the repetition of discourse, typical in Yasujiro Ozu's film *Tokyo Story*, which involves embodied images of Self and Other sitting side-by-side. This film is unique and culturally specific, but also typical and universal in relation to human beings generally. It is similar to the Dostoevsky novel that Bakhtin (1984) analyzed in the sense that it is possible for anyone in the world to examine the same text. In fact, the film is superior to the novel for the purposes of this study in that it contains actual, vital discourses, with voices, accents, tones, intonations, expressions, and gestures.

The narratives in Ozu's films typically involve a great deal of repetition and similarity, and they operate in cycles (Richie 1974, Bordwell 1988). With respect to repetition, it is important to note that his films are based on an extremely limited number of domestic themes, and that they use repetition to an almost extreme degree (Sato 1984). Moreover, he consistently uses the same crew and actors. In this sense, he has formed his own tightly knit production "family." He has transformed daily greetings, conversations, and ubiquitous patterns of behavior into art. In his films, we see typical narratives of daily life and discover the fundamental principles of "acts of meaning" (Bruner 1990).

Ozu's *Tokyo Story* is generally regarded as one of the finest films ever made (Desser 1997, Schrader 1972); it is indeed home drama, in the highest sense of the term. Richie (2003) has noted that, "The mundane simplicities of everyday life and forced to reveal just what it is they are made of. From this process comes, drop by drop as it were, a sometimes bitter distillation, which is truth (p. 17)."

Kyoko: Isn't life disappointing?
 Noriko: Yes, it is.
 Kyoko (smiling now): You take care of yourself.
 Noriko: Thank you. Goodbye.

(Richie 2003, p. 17)

3.2 *Typical Discourses of Coexistent Dialogue*

Three typical discourses of repeated narrative involving two persons, related by their side-by-side positioning in the text of "Tokyo Story," are analyzed.

3.2.1 *First Discourse: The Repetitions of Similar Sounds*

The first discourse typical of the side-by-side position is the packing scene shown in Discourse 1 and Figure 1 (Libro Port 1984; Ozu and Noda 1992). At the beginning of story, an elderly couple who live in Onomichi, which is near the sea, are packing their bags for their journey to Tokyo, the distant capital where their grown-up son and daughter work and live. The husband is looking for an inflatable pillow, and cannot find it. He asks his wife to "Look for it carefully." Later, he discovers that he has already packed the inflatable pillow. Their discourse related to finding the pillow is as follows: "Ari-yan-sen-yo" (There is not), "Aa, Atta Atta" (There is, there is), "Ari-yan-shita-ka?" (Is there?), "Aa, Atta" (There is). These utterances are repeated, and their meanings are very simple, so later repetitions of the discourse are ignored and omitted in the English translation.

Discourse 1. *The repetitions of similar sounds: The packing scene*

A morning in July. At a home near seaside in Onomichi city.

Shukichi (a husband, 70 years old) and Tomi (his wife, 67 years old) are sitting side-by-side and packing for their journey to Tokyo where their children live.

Tomi: Kuuki-makura, ari-yan-sen-yo kochi-ni-ya.
 (I still cannot find it "the air cushion".)

Shukichi: Nai-koto nai-wa, you sagashite-mi?
 (Oh, but it must be there.)

(He starts to look for it and then finds it among his own belongings. He holds up the air cushion.)

Shukichi: Aa, Atta Atta.
 (Here it is.)

Tomi: Ari-yan-shita-ka?
 (No English translation)

Shukichi: Aa, Atta.
 (No English translation)

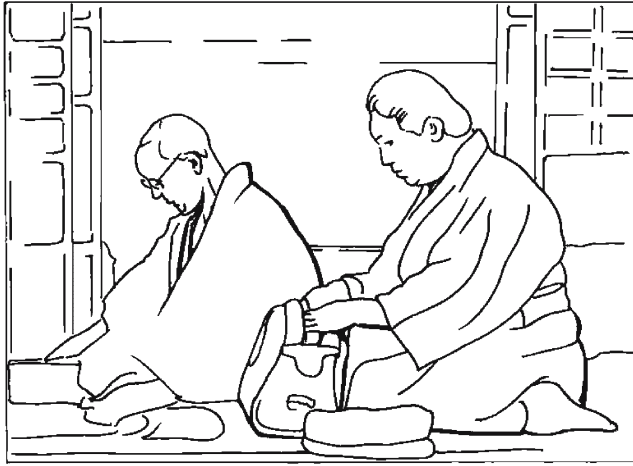


Fig. 1. An illustration of the packing scene

Although their utterances seem like nonsense and useless repetition, they have a significant meaning with respect to the idea of Coexistent Dialogue.

Coexistent Dialogue has the following features (Yamada 2004a). 1) Two subjects exist in the same psychological topos (a place in the here and now) and are constructed jointly, i.e., they use the pronoun “we.” 2) A subject does not need to be distinguished or specified. The two subjects are interchangeable, and they can be both speaker and listener simultaneously. 3) The sound of the repetition has rhythmical variation in its tones, which is reminiscent of a song or a rhyming verse. 4) There is the exchange of sympathetic sounds for expressing shared feelings or emotions, rather than a logical exchange of an opinion, assertion, or claim.

Yamada (1987) originally defined Coexistent Dialogue based on studies of preverbal development in infancy; the essential point constituting acts of meaning was thought to lie in “the mutual singing” rather than the exchange of information. In this study, people were theorized as “we-selves” who live together in a shared psychological topos rather than as separate “individuals” divided by a subject (Self) and object (Other). Unlike the concept of “inter-subjectivity,” the basic concept underlying this idea is not an individual or a subject or a person, but a shared place called a “psychological topos.” A psychological topos is a place located in both time and space, such as “Koko”; it means here and now, and is an ecological-existential base for “we-selves.” The psychological topos has a nested structure; it is an ecological-existential base in which people are embedded, wrapped, and rooted (Yamada 1988). We theorized that there are two basic “psychological topoi” (Here and There) and “transfer” (moving and changing) between them, as opposed to the concept of an individual, subject, or person (Yamada and Kato 2004). These models have been constructed to supplement and to go beyond the ideas of individualism, linear progressivism, unidirectionalism,

and rationalism, as the fundamental concepts underpinning Western cultures (Yamada 2004b; Yamada and Kato 2006a, b). Repeated voices need not be divided or appropriated to Self from Other, because they resound together. These voices do not seek an ending, solution, or victory; they continue, one after another, with citation and addition.

3.2.2 *Second Discourse: Joint Singing for Action*

The second discourse typical of the side-by-side position is the seaside scene. In the central climax of *The Tokyo Story*, there is an impressive scene involving the old couple, who are sitting side by side at the seaside at Atami, near their hotel. Although the old husband and wife went to Tokyo to meet their children, they were not given a warm reception. Their children were too busy and too narrowly focused to accept them into their homes for many days. They did not say so, but the couple was disappointed by their children's heartlessness. As they could not stay at their daughter's home, they left Tokyo and went to the seaside at Atami. At the inn, they slept poorly, because a large group of young people made a lot of noise late into the night.

The next morning is bright. The old couple is wearing similar kimonos (yukata) from the inn, and they are sitting side by side on the seawall, looking at the sea. Their repeated voices and co-existent narrative are shown in Discourse 2 and

Discourse 2. *Joint singing for action: The seaside scene*

A bright morning. At a nearby seaside in Atami city.

The old couple couldn't stay at children's house and came here for one night trip from Tokyo. Shukichi and Tomi, wearing similar yukata from the inn, are sitting side-by-side on the sea wall, and jointly looking at the sea in the breeze and sunshine.

Tomi: Kyoko do shito-ru desiyo-na?

(I wonder what Kyoko "their daughter" is doing at home now.)

Shukichi: Umm . . . Soro-soro kae-rou-ka?

(How about going on back home?)

Tomi: Otousan, mou kae-ri-tai no- ja-nai-desu-ka?

(You must want to get back. <Smiling.>)

Shukichi: Iya, Omae ja-yo, omae-ga kae-ri-tai no- ja-ro?

(No, you're the one who is homesick. <Laughs.>)

Shukichi: Tokyo mo mi-tashi, Atami mo mi-tashi

(We've seen Tokyo. We've seen Atami.)

Shukichi: Mou kae-ru-ka?

(Let's go home.)

Tomi: Soudesu-na, kaeri-masu-ka?

(Shall we?)

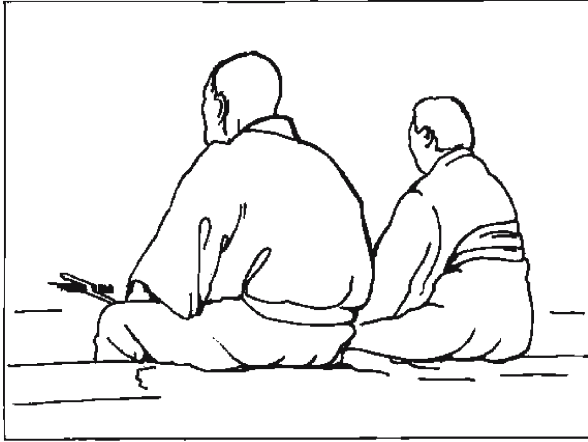


FIG. 2. An illustration of the seaside scene

Figure 2 (Libro Port 1984; Ozu and Noda 1992). They utter different variations on the phrase “going back home”: “Kae-rou-ka?” (Go back home?); “Kae-ri-tai no-ja-nai-desu-ka?” (Don’t you want to go back home?); “Kae-ri-tai no-ja-ro?” (Do you want going back home?); “Kae-ru-ka?” (Go back home?); and “Kae-ri-masu-ka?” (Are we going back home?).

There is no clear role-exchange involving a subject and an object, a speaker and a listener, or a questioner and a responder. There are only repeated voices of similar, key action words: “Go back home?” All the sequences of utterances are constructed as questions. There is no reply and no assertion of their separate selves. Progressing in their repetition of similar voices and questions, they come to care for each other and confirm their feelings; they also arrive at a mutual agreement, which defines their next action, i.e., to “Go back home!”

3.2.3 *Third Discourse: Shared Feeling and Healing Echo*

The third discourse typical of the side-by-side position is the bar scene. The old couple leaves Atami and returns to Tokyo. The husband (Shukichi) visits an old friend’s home, next they meet another old friend at a restaurant, and then eat together there. At the friend’s home and at the restaurant, Shukichi was simply a listener; he did not tell his story or relate his feelings. Late at night, after he and his friends have left the restaurant, they go to a bar. Shukichi and Numata (the old friend) are sitting side by side at the bar, where they talk to each other for the first time about their real feelings, and their disappointments with their children. Their Coexistent Dialogue is shown in Discourse 3 and Figure 3 (Libro Port 1984; Ozu and Noda 1992).

They repeat two types of narrative. One type is the repetition of the noun “anta,” which means “you”: “anta, anta”(you, you); “Anta” (You); “Anta-desura”

Discourse 3. *Shared feeling and healing echo*: The bar scene

A late night. At a drinking place in Tokyo.

Shukich and Numata (Shukichi's old friend) are sitting side-by-side and drinking at a counter in the bar.

Numata: Ja, anta, anta sou omowa-n-ka? nou Anta manzoku shitoru-n-ka?
(But you-you couldn't feel that way. You must be very satisfied.)

Shukichi: Iya, keshite manzoku shitoran-ga.
(Of course, I'm not, but-)

Numata: Sou-jaro? Anta-de-sura manzoku shitoran noja.
(You see? It's gotten so bad that even you can't be satisfied.)

.....

Shukichi: Tokoro-ga anta. Anta-no iu-koto-wa you wakaruu. Anta-no iu-yo-ni washi-mo fuman-ja. Jaga nou Murata-san, kore wa yononaka-no oya iu-mon no yoku-ja, yoku-batta-ra kiriga-nai, kora akirame-na naran to washi-wa omotta-n-ja.

(So, I know how you feel. I'm just as dissatisfied as you are. But we can't expect too much from our children. Times have changed and we have to face it. That's what I think.)

Numata: Ommota-ka?
(You do?)

Shukichi: Ommota.
(Yes)

Numata: Sou-ka? Anta-mo-na?
(There you see? You too.)



FIG. 3. An illustration of the bar scene

(Even, you); “Tokoroga-anta” (But, you); “Anta-no” (Your); “Anta-no” (Your); and “Anta-mo-na?” (You, too?). This is an impressive repetition because there is no repetition in the first person about self, i.e., “I” or “me,” but only an echo of the second person, “you.” Before each repetition of “you,” each shares his friend’s feeling the other’s children and they come to state shared feelings by substituting the pronoun for the second person.

The second type of repetition is the verb “omotta” in the past tense, which means “felt”: “Omowa-n-ka?” (Did’nt you feel?); “Omotta-n-ja” (felt); “Omotta-ka?” (Did you feel?); and “Omotta” (felt). In the first utterance, the verb is in the present tense, but subsequent usage is in the past tense. Initially, they cannot articulate their true feelings about their disappointment with their children but, subsequently, they come to accept their feelings and this heals their sadness. They want to express their feelings, but also to transfer them to a past topos, so they shift their disappointment to the past. Suddenly, they stop their healing echo of “you” and “felt,” and they introduce a supposition in a subjunctive mode; thus, they transform the bad/sad story into a good/happy one. They clearly change the meaning of the story by changing the feeling of the present tense to that of an assumptive feeling, in the subjunctive mood; they rewrite and retell the story, “Their children should be good, because they are better than other young men who would have killed their parents.”

Shukichi: Well, maybe it’s a good thing.

Numata: I suppose I should be happy. Nowadays some young men would kill their parents without a thought. Mine at least wouldn’t do that. (Laughs)

4 Repeated Discourse in Bakhtin’s Texts

I would like to call the type of the dialogue that Bakhtin theorized about “Opposite Dialogue.” By comparison, I call the type of dialogue that emerged in the sympathetic mode of repeated voices between Self and Other in the context of Ozu’s film, *Coexistent Dialogue*. In order to clarify the difference between the two types, I want to consider the relationship of Self and Other and the role of repetition based on text containing a discourse with repeated voices that Bakhtin quoted. By comparing similar examples in his text from the *Discourse in Dostoevsky* (Bakhtin 1984), the difference between Opposite Dialogue and Coexistent Dialogue becomes clear.

4.1 First Example of Repeated Discourse in Bakhtin’s Text

Why, what can one do? I know very well, of course, that I don’t do much by copying; but all the same I am proud of working and earning my bread by the sweat of my brow. Why, what if I am a copying clerk, after all? What harm is there in copying, after all? What harm is there in copying, after all? “He’s a copying clerk,” they say, but what is there discreditable in that? (Vakhtin 1981, p. 207, Dostoevsky *Poor Folk*, Letter of June 12)

In the preceding lines, the word “copy” is repeated three times. In each of these three instances, the other’s potential accent is on the word “copy,” but it is suppressed by the protagonist’s accent; however, this accent gradually becomes stronger, until it finally breaks through and assumes the force of the other’s direct speech. The hero’s own self-utterances are affected by someone else’s words about him. The other’s consciousness and the other’s words, then, determine the hero’s self-awareness and give rise to his protests.

Bakhtin offers a graphic definition and explanation of the phenomena: Let us imagine two rejoinders of the most intense dialogue – which, instead of following one after the other and being uttered by two different mouths, are superimposed one on the other and merge into a single utterance issuing from a single mouth. These two rejoinders move in opposite directions and clash with one another; therefore their overlapping and merging into a single utterance result in a most intense mutual interruption. This collision of two rejoinders – each integral in itself and single-accented – is now transformed, in the new utterance resulting from new fusion, into the most acute interruption of voices, contradictory in every detail, in every atom of utterance (Bakhtin 1984, p. 209).

These sentences express Bakhtin’s views about the adversary relationship of Self and Other. That is, his concept of the relationship is strongly mediated by the words “rejoinder,” “injure,” “interruption,” “collision,” and “contradict.” In this example of repetition in the discourse, I agree with Bakhtin’s views about “concealing a hidden polemic, internally dialogic discourse,” and “the anticipated reply opposed to the other’s anticipated voice.” Nevertheless, I wonder why he always views the repetition of mutual utterances negatively, as an “interruption.” I wonder why he always resists fusion into one voice, and why he wants to separate Self’s own voice from the voices of Others. There seem to be certain assumptions operating in the representation of the relationship of Self and Other in Western culture: Self is a unique individual; Self is divided clearly from Other; Self is located as an opposite to Other; and dialogue means an argument between Self and Other.

In Bakhtin’s explanations of the repeated voices, he did not note or indicate that the voices of Self and Other could easily fuse, or that their co-emotional accents could be enhanced in the course of repetition. However, we should recognize how the repetition of utterances can lead to the voices of Others resembling that of the Self, and the important role such repetition can play in discourse.

4.2 Second example of repeated discourse in Bakhtin’s text

The second example of repeated discourse in Bakhtin’s text is the brilliant one in Dostoevsky’s novel “The Brothers Karamazov” (Bakhtin 1984). Ivan Karamazov fully believes in Dmitry’s guilt. However, in the depths of his soul, as yet almost hidden from himself, he begins to question his own guilt. The internal struggle in his soul is extremely intense. It is at this moment that the following dialogue with Alyosha takes place. Alyosha categorically denies Dmitry’s guilt.

“Who is the murderer then, according to you?” he [Ivan-M.B.] asked, with apparent coldness. There was even a supercilious note in his voice.

“You know who,” Alyosha pronounced in a low penetrating voice.

“Who? You mean the myth about that crazy idiot, the epileptic, Smerdyakov?”

Alyosha suddenly felt himself trembling all over.

“You know who,” broke helplessly from him. He could scarcely breathe.

“Who? Who?” Ivan cried almost fiercely. All his restraint suddenly vanished.

“I only know one thing,” Alyosha went on, still almost in a whisper, “It wasn’t you who killed father.”

“Not you! What do you mean by ‘not you’?” Ivan was thunderstruck.

“It was not you who killed father, not you!” Alyosha repeated firmly.

The silence lasted for half a minute.

(Bakhtin 1984, p. 255)

Bakhtin explains these dialogues as follows: Alyosha says openly that he is answering a question that Ivan has asked himself in an internal dialogue. This excerpt is a highly typical example of the penetrative word and its artistic role in dialogue. Ivan’s own secret words on someone else’s lips evoke in him repulsion and hatred toward Alyosha and, precisely because they have touched a sore spot, he rejects, generally, any discussion of his internal affairs by others. Alyosha understands this perfectly well, but he foresees that Ivan – the “profound conscience” – will inevitably eventually give himself the categorically affirmative answer: I am the murderer. Consequently, that is why Alyosha’s words must make themselves useful as the exact words of another. Alyosha’s words, intersecting with Ivan’s inner speech, must be juxtaposed to the words of the Devil, the other entity who repeats the words and thoughts of Ivan himself. The Devil introduces, into Ivan’s internal dialogue, accents of mockery and hopeless condemnation, similar to voice of the Devil in Trishatov’s projected opera, whose song mingles with the hymns, almost blending with them, although it’s completely different from them. The Devil speaks as Ivan and at the same time as the other person, hostility exaggerating and distorting a different face. Alyosha also introduces someone else’s accents, into Ivan’s interior Dialogue but in precisely the opposite direction. Alyosha, as “other,” carries tones of love and reconciliation. In Dostoevsky’s dialogue, collision and quarrelling occur not between two integral monologic voices but between two divided voices.

Bakhtin describes the inner dialogue as at times having the Other’s accent of the Devil, whose song mingles with the hymns, and at times as having the Other’s tone of love and reconciliation. He considers the same word in various voices as counter-posed to one another, and places the role of Other as the counterpart to Self. Thus, even when Other’s voices have tones of love and reconciliation, as from a friend, Bakhtin still looks for two divided voices, and inner collision and quarrelling, rather than integral harmony. I find deep-rooted assumptions operative here that are similar to those in the first example discourse: Self is a unique individual; Inner Self is distinguished clearly from Other/Another Self; Self is

located as an opposite to Other/Another Self; and the dialogue as a metaphor of the war between Self and Other/Another Self.

In addition, I focus on the repetition of the word “you” that Self and Other each use effectively. It is important that it is not repetition of “I,” which would manifest the claim of the subject as in, for example, “I consider.” The word “I” could mediate division from Other, and the word “you” could mediate care for a partner, and resound in the partner’s heart as Self’s own word. Other’s voice and Self’s voice construct a common world by using the same word, “you.” The word “you” can easily transform into “we.” This second example of dialogue from Dostoevsky’s novel *The Brothers Karamazov* offers a parallel to the effective use of “you” in the discourse from Ozu’s film. With regard to the repetition of “you,” Self can jump into the partner’s world, which results in similarity and sympathy.

5 Models of Opposite Dialogue and Coexistent Dialogue

5.1 Models of Opposite Dialogue

To clarify and contrast the two theoretical concepts, Opposite Dialogue and Coexistent Dialogue, I construct theoretical models of each. Although the models are constructed using the most fundamental and simplest pattern, a two-person relationship, they can be expanded to relationships involving three or more persons using the same diagrams.

The theoretical models of Opposite Dialogue are shown in Figure 4. A schematic model of the opposite relationship of Self and Other is shown in Figure 4.1. Self and Other are positioned in a confrontational situation. A boundary separates the two entities. The key concepts of this opposite relationship are “division” and “war.” The word “division” represents a number of similar concepts, including separation, partition, and classification. It is a functional way of looking at and manipulating people, things, and the world, and it is connected with a value system. The positive value is located on one side of the division. Usually, inside is good and the other side is bad. Self can also be divided into internal self and external self, with each part of the self assuming an opposite value. The word “war” can include a number of related concepts, such as battle, conflict, competition, contrast, and comparison. The idea “war” describes the typical mode of action and communication between Self and Other in an opposite relationship. It creates a divided result, good or bad, victory or loss, success or failure.

A schematic model of the Opposite Dialogue of Self and Other is shown in Figure 4.2. Self is positioned inside, and Other is positioned outside, as an alien. Self and Other are conceptualized as individuals divided between individual psychological topoi. Self and Other are placed on opposite sides: inside or outside. The Opposite Dialogue seems to be like a “war,” or like an exchange in a give-and-take game, or like a competition over acquisition of a goal or target. A model

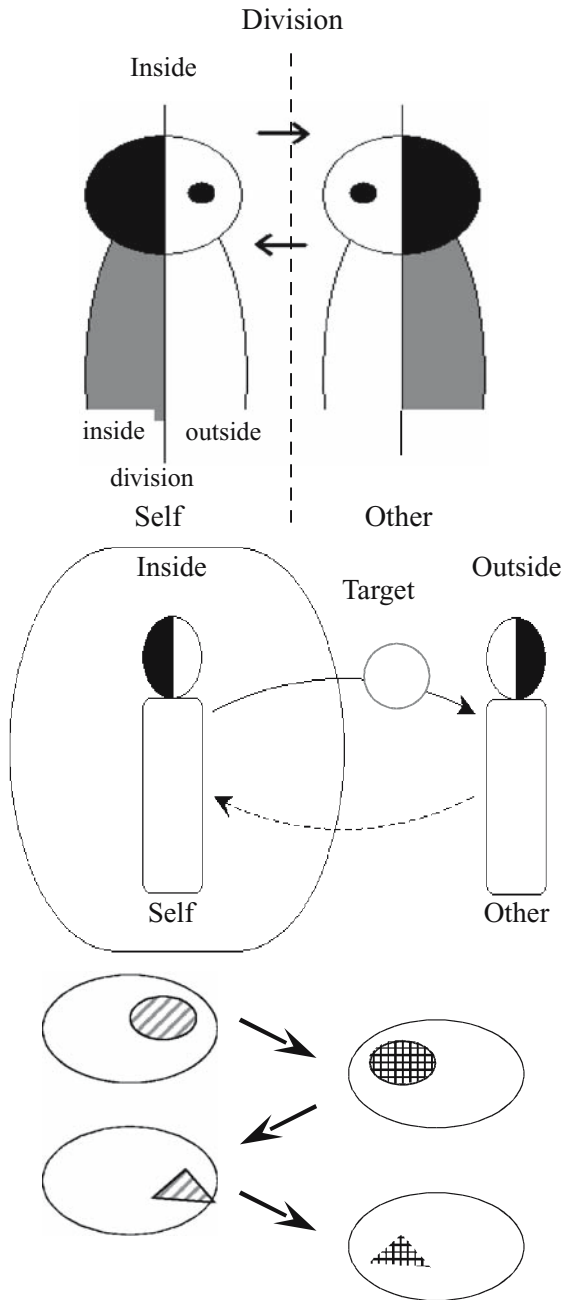


FIG. 4. (1) A model of the opposite relationship of Self and Other. Self and Other are positioned in confrontational and competitive situations. The key concepts of the relationship are “division” and “war.” (2) A model of Opposite Dialogue divided in individual psychological topos. Self is positioned inside, and Other is positioned outside, as an alien. Dialog is like a “war”, or like an exchange in a give- and-take game, or like a competition over acquisition of a goal or target. (3) A model of sequential transfer of Opposite Dialogue. Self and Other battle to acquire or to appropriate the target into their own position from the opposite position

of the sequential transfer of the Opposite Dialogue is shown in Figure 4.3 Self and Other battle to acquire or to appropriate the target into their own position from the opposite position. The acquired target is transformed to conform with the victor's self, while the other self is deformed as a consequence of this transformation.

5.2 *Models of Coexistent Dialogue*

The theoretical models of Coexistent Dialogue are shown in Figure 5. A schematic model of the coexistent relationship of Self and Other is shown in Figure 5.1. Self and Other have repeated bodies and they are positioned side-by-side. They have similar shapes and parallel positions, and duplicated variations of the same fundamental model, such as a "human being." Other seems to be one variant of Self, another Self, or the second Self. Both Self and Other are regarded as similar variants of a basic model "human being," so their acts and lives are considered repetitive and variant patterns, rather than original unique, and separated patterns. Self and Other are positioned in the same part, and are recognized as one of "we" or "us," rather than as separate and unique individuals. For example, they say that, "we collaborate and live on the same Earth."

The key words in this coexistent relationship are "repetition" and "sympathy." "Repetition" can include similar concepts, such as a similarity, identification, modeling, and mimesis. It means a functional way of looking at and manipulating people, things and the world, but it is not connected with a special value system. Repetitive acts sometimes seem to be effective for learning about cultures, and for maintaining peace and a healthy environment, but they sometimes stifle revolutionary or radical creations.

"Sympathy" mediates concepts such as a resonance, empathy, cooperation, and participation. "Sympathy" denotes a typical mode of action, communication, and feeling between Self and Other in a coexistent relationship. It connects separated persons and results in the sharing of similar emotions.

A schematic model of the Coexistent Dialogue of Self and Other is shown in Figure 5.2. Self and Other are both positioned inside, while the target is located outside. Self and Other are conceptualized as "we/partners" in the same psychological topos. Self and Other jointly attend and look at the same target or theme. They share the same goal, theme, or feeling in their discourse.

The Coexistent Dialogue seems to be a "song" with repetitive voices and compensatory harmony, as well as being a collection of similar feelings. A model of the sequential transfer of Coexistent Dialogue is shown in Figure 5.3. Self and Other, both sing a similar song repeatedly, but the different tones and sounds of their voices produce variation. The transfers construct a sequential chain, involving gradual, natural changes, and reform basic themes and melodies in the course of time.

Although the Coexistent Dialogue is not polyphony, it is not a monologue either. As two persons are strictly human beings, and variations on each other, they have different views or personalities. As they are located in parallel, they

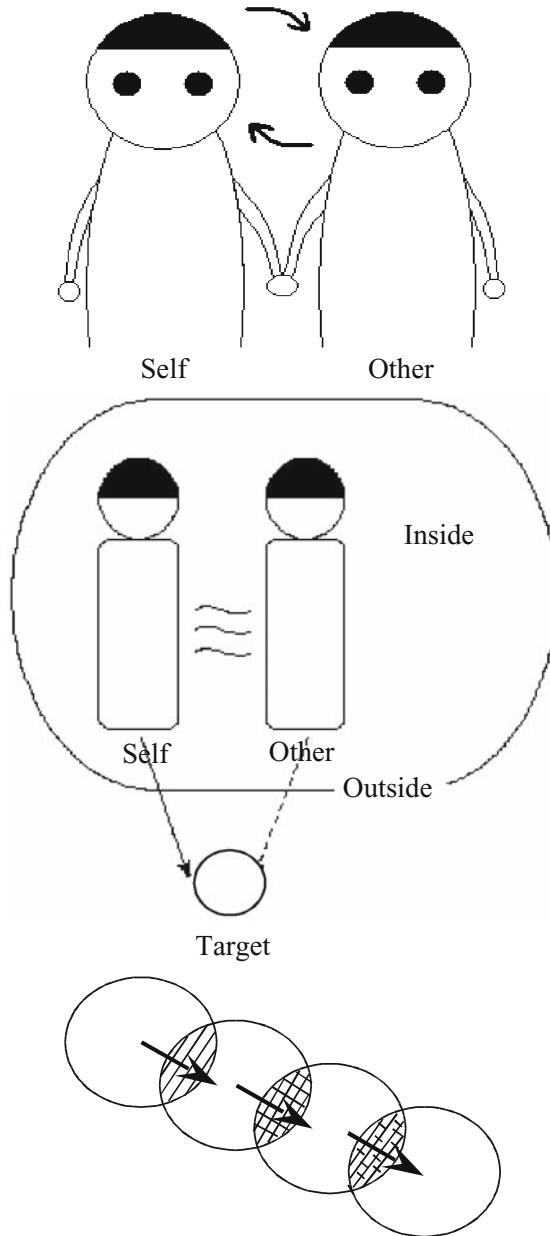


FIG. 5. (1) A model of the coexistent relationship of Self and Other. Self and Other have repeated bodies and they are positioned side-by-side. Other seems to be one variant of Self, another Self, or the second Self. The key concepts are “repetition” and “sympathy.” (2) A model of Coexistent Dialogue of Self and Other. Self and Other as “we/partners” are both positioned in same topos (inside). The coexistent Dialog is like a “song” with repeated voices and compensatory harmony. (3) A model of sequential transfer of Coexistent Dialogue. The transfers construct a sequential chain, involving gradual, natural changes, and reform basic themes and melodies in the course of time

have a short distance or interval between them, and usually they do not fuse. On a continuing bass line, the two persons assume the tones of musical instruments or “voices” playing in parallel. This comes across temporarily and occasionally while they “sing” a Coexistent Dialogue. Their voices do not become a monologue, but remain multiple voices with partial repetition, overlaps, and complements. Their voices are not polyphonic, but are parallel-phonic with continuing multiple voices. If two or more persons are positioned in parallel with different opinions, they can sing the same song and it comes to harmonize during the course of repeating it. After the Coexistent Dialogue, they return to their different home positions and continue to sing their original songs with slight modifications derived from the harmonious experience of repetition.

The view of multiple persons, “we,” rather than that of a unique individual, is not always possible at any given time. However, is it more conducive to harmony to consider dialogue as involving the position of a common place “we-selves,” as opposed to the division or appropriation of Self in relation to an opposition, and dialogue as a struggle against the Other?

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim that a metaphor for an argument is “war.” We have a tendency to consider dialogue as a war, one that involves the ideas of defending, protecting, attacking, shooting, smashing, winning, losing, and killing. Gergen (1999) spoke of the need for other metaphors, including dialogue as game, exploration, and dance. I would like to propose yet another metaphor, dialogue as “singing,” as a form of Coexistent Dialogue.

Coexistent Dialogue is peaceful and harmonious with multiple, parallel voices. Self and Other are we-existences in the same psychological topos, and are recognized as “we-selves. Self and Other do not need to be separated into counterparts, and they can be both speaker and listener simultaneously. The sounds of repetition, along with a rhythmical variation of tones, are like the singing of a song or the recitation of rhyming verse. Exchanges of sympathetic sounds do not function as means of appropriation or possession of one’s own word, but as a means of cooperation and sharing. Such exchanges emphasize the sharing of feelings and emotions rather than a logical exchange of opinion, assertion, or claim. This concept of Coexistent Dialogue offers a different model of narrative, one that has a complementary role in relation to Opposite Dialogue.

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Narrative Mode of Thought in Disaster Damage Reduction: A Crossroad for Narrative and Gaming Approaches

KATSUYA YAMORI

1 “Narrative” vs. “Logico-scientific” or “Paradigmatic” Modes of Thought

The “narrative mode of thought,” proposed by J. S. Bruner (1986), has galvanized research in many fields, from developmental and clinical psychology to sociology, social welfare, management, and even medical science. The narrative mode stands in sharp contrast to “logico-scientific or paradigmatic modes of thought” and, though their objectives vary widely, sets of research studies in each of the above fields now display some common features based on the narrative approach. Their cumulative impact supports the claim that a fundamental epistemological and methodological shift, called “narrative turn,” has occurred almost simultaneously across multiple research domains.

1.1 From Disaster Prevention to Disaster Preparedness

Disaster damage reduction is yet another research area that stands to gain considerably from this “narrative turn.” We see two major drivers for such potential. First, efforts toward disaster reduction may shift the principal concern from disaster prevention or mitigation models, led exclusively by disaster experts, to a more inclusive approach to disaster preparedness or disaster response that involves many more stakeholders, such as local citizens, local government staff, and volunteer aid workers. The former model approached disaster reduction largely as a battle between selected authorities and Mother Nature’s destructive power. The “logico-scientific or paradigmatic mode of thought” fits well with such a model, one that expects disaster experts to describe, predict, and control natural phenomena, while ordinary people are taught to simply follow protocols designed by the “experts.”

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However, such a paradigmatic, top-down approach is now less than optimal, particularly for developed nations. One reason is that as more hardware-based counter-measures are deployed to mitigate the more common hazards, the marginal utility of those measures tends to diminish. It then becomes critical to minimize the remaining risks and to deal with differing views on their reduction by implementing location-specific, uniquely regional and culture-bound measures. Thus, at this stage, disaster damage reduction should focus more on personal, positional, regional, and cultural differences than on universal features common to all locales. Contemporary approaches to disaster reduction need to become more concerned with human-to-human relations, such as conflict resolution and consensus building among people, rather than human-to-nature relations. Disaster reduction also needs more active participation by the various stakeholders than in the past.

The “narrative mode” is more suitable for these purposes than the “logico-scientific mode” that has dominated this field thus far. In a modern “individualized” society (Beck 1986), we are all required to create our own life stories as well as play the leading role. Life stories or narratives are defined in the form of statements that we order and make sense of a series of events, with a special emphasis on specific details and unique experiences. This contrasts sharply with “theories” produced by logico-scientific or paradigmatic modes of thought, by which we may strive to accomplish the same ends, but with a special interest in identifying general mechanisms or universal laws. Though worthwhile, the latter emphasis tends to devalue significant local factors and variations, often retained only through individual experience.

Thus, what we need now is to help local people produce their own disaster reduction related narratives, so they can organize their own ways to survive and manage disasters. Such narratives might not be as universally applicable as theories, but may be more useful when viewed in terms of personal, positional, and regional specificities. For disaster reduction within a specific location at a specific point of time, the narrative mode might help us much more than theory.

Yet, a blindly bottom-up approach would be ineffective. It is not sufficient just to generate personal disaster reduction narratives, without any effort to compare, reach compromises, and combine potentially conflicting narratives. We also need narrative-related tools, devices, and procedures that will allow us to blend competing narratives skillfully into a new, common, base narrative, and to promote collaborative practices led by this base narrative. The process of collaboration should include not only disaster experts, but also local residents, local government officials, and volunteer aid workers.

I introduced gaming activity to this study and combined it with a conventional narrative approach for that reason. As Duke (1975) stressed, gaming is a very effective context for realizing what he refers to as “multi-logues,” a variety of narrative interactions, such as persuasion and negotiation, which occur quite naturally among game players. Thus, a game setting affords the opportunity to air multiple narratives among participants. We will return to the significance of gaming activity later in the discussion section.

1.2 *Generativity*

The second reason that disaster reduction calls for the development of a narrative approach is that natural disasters tend to be localized in space and time. They only impact limited sectors of our global society immediately and directly, no matter how overwhelming the disaster might be. Thus, most people outside a disaster-stricken area remain largely unaffected and devoid of the experience. Moreover, disasters are, by definition, rare events, even if they occasionally recur. This is especially true of major catastrophes, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions. The recurrence time for such major natural events is typically longer than an individual life span, sometimes exceeding 100 or even 1,000 years. Thus, most of us will live out our lives without ever dealing with such events directly.

However, this means that we need effective ways to retain and impart the lessons learned from previous disasters throughout history. The valuable life lessons learned by those who did experience disasters directly may not span the long periods of stability between catastrophes, if we lack effective means and media to communicate those lessons beyond their original domain to the next generation. When social and cultural backgrounds differ between where the lessons were learned and where such lessons may still apply, theories are less effective than narratives. Moreover, when it is necessary to rethink and add new ideas to these lessons, narratives are more powerful than theories, since they adapt better to time and space variability. In other words, narratives are promising and effective means by which we can guarantee what McAdams and Aubin (1998) call the “generativity” of disaster lessons.

This is another reason that I claim that a gaming approach can be combined productively with the narrative mode. Gaming is characterized by Duke (1975) as “future’s language.” Game players can co-construct their future reality by co-narrating it. As I mentioned earlier, gaming interactions lead participants to engage naturally in narrative activities, in the form of persuasions and negotiations, in order to pursue a better future. Thus, participants can not only exchange narratives that view the past and analyze the present, but that also plan for and construct the future. In other words, a game setting promotes the generative as well as descriptive functions of narrative. We will return to this point again when we discuss “Crossroad: Kobe,” a disaster reduction game.

Finally, we discuss an example of how a narrative approach can inform actual disaster response situations. This is the story of “Inamura no hi” or “The fire of rice sheaves.” The story is based on the real actions of Goryo Hamaguchi, the master of a small Japanese village during the 1850s. When the village was hit by a huge earthquake and tsunami, he reportedly saved many people’s lives. Spotting evidence of an imminent tsunami, he quickly set some rice sheaves on fire, which prompted the villagers to drop their tasks immediately and run away from the shore to battle the blaze. Based on the Goryo incident, the original story, “A Living God,” was written by novelist, Lafcadio Hearn, in the 1890s, after Hearn himself experienced another actual tsunami disaster while in Japan. Hearn’s story

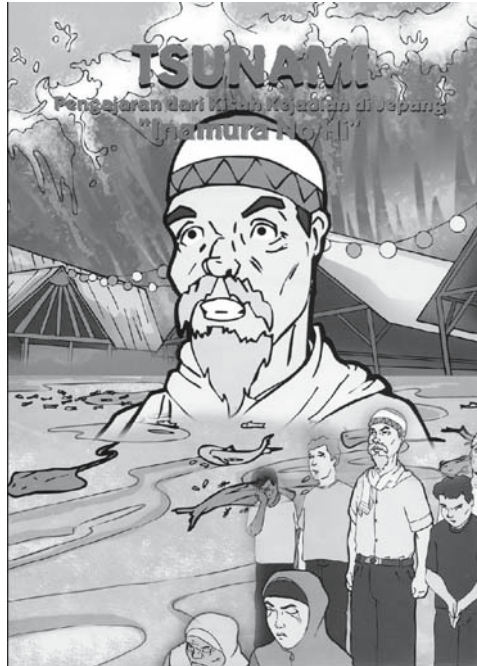


FIG. 1. The Asian language version of the story of “The fire of rice sheaves”

was later revised for a Japanese elementary school textbook during the mid-Twentieth-Century. After several decades, the story attracted attention once more, this time from overseas, because lack of local understanding and preparation had led to horrendous damage and loss of lives from the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004. The story has now been translated into eight Asian languages and modified for local consumption in each of the eight Southeast Asian countries damaged by the tsunami (Asian Disaster Reduction Center 2005, Fig. 1). It is pivotal that the original lesson taken from a Japanese man of the mid-Nineteenth-century remains alive more than 150 years later and in use well beyond its original cultural and regional domain. This continuing power can be attributed to the flexible and adaptive nature of narrative accounts.

2 “Crossroad: Kobe”

2.1 *Outline*

“Crossroad: Kobe” is a gaming tool we developed, based on the idea that the narrative turn could provide a positive impact in disaster reduction research and practice, and that both narrative and gaming approaches could be coupled productively (see Kikkawa et al. 2004 for details). The basic content of “Crossroad:

Kobe” contains lessons we learned from the Great Kobe Earthquake of 1995. This earthquake was one of the most devastating in Japan’s history, leaving more than 6,400 people dead and 15,000 injured.

Here is a summary of how the game process proceeds. During a game session, a group of five players reads 10–20 episodes that are presented on cards, one by one. Each episode, derived from our extensive focus-group interviews of disaster veterans in Kobe, describes a severe dilemma that the veterans of Kobe actually faced. Individual players are required to make an either/or decision (i.e., Yes or No) between two conflicting alternatives in order to deal with the dilemma. Players discuss each episode after they disclose their own personal decisions.

The discussion is systematically enhanced by discussion support materials, including basic background information and related statistics, expert opinions, and video clips. The video clips are recordings of the focus-group interviews, in which Kobe disaster veterans spoke frankly about what really happened during that time. Thus, game participants face the realities of Kobe, both in terms of its summarized form, i.e., a short text on an episode card, and in a more direct form, i.e., narrative accounts. This procedure aims at encouraging game players to narrate their own views on disaster reduction actively rather than listen passively to what the Kobe people had said. An additional game rule, described later, induces participants to inject their own views in persuading others, negotiating with each other, and co-creating a new solution. In summary, “Crossroad: Kobe” is designed to link two sets of narratives, the narratives of Kobe people who actually experienced the earthquake, and the narratives of those who did not but who might very well face a similar, future disaster.

2.2 Contents

Prior to creating “Crossroad: Kobe,” we conducted 35 intensive focus group interviews with three to five interviewees in each group. Each interview lasted about three hours and was recorded by digital video with all participants’ permission. Interview groups were divided into two types: 30 groups consisted of 125 current or former Kobe City officials, who were dedicated emergency response and/or recovery workers following the earthquake and the others were composed of five groups of 15 Kobe residents who had survived the disaster. Interviewees were encouraged to talk freely and frankly about what they experienced, although each of the city workers’ interview sessions focused on a single, main topic such as: search and rescue operations, emergency food supplies, temporary house construction, mental health care for victims, life-line facilities reconstruction, and town reconstruction planning. Groups of survivors spoke of family losses, physical and economic damages, and the disaster’s aftermath (see Yamori 2005 for details). As a result, we obtained about 120 h of DVD recordings and more than 5,000 pages of transcribed text in A4 format.

During our analysis of the text, we discovered a common format that people used to narrate their own experiences of surviving the earthquake and its aftermath, either as local government workers or as disaster victims. The format begins

with an initial phase where they described their experiences as a series of dilemmas that posed critical choices between two conflicting alternatives. Secondly, they stated that they chose one of them with some hesitation or reservation. A typical narration is as follows:

Finally, we decided not to build temporary housing in schoolyards in the damaged areas, but to construct them on tracts of vacant land in unaffected areas owned by Kobe City, regardless of the relocated victims’ original neighborhood. We were criticized severely for this decision, by both survivors and mass media. They claimed that the relocation sites were so remote from the victims’ original residences that it was difficult for them to reconstruct their lives. They lost their socio-economic ties with their old neighborhoods, including relationships with close friends, relatives, and even their workplaces. Some insisted that our relocation of local people further weakened an already severely damaged community. I don’t wish to deny such claims. I understand their views to some extent. But please think about school education, for example. It is also true that many citizens urged us to re-open the schools, as soon as possible. However, current laws would have permitted temporary housing to remain in place for up to two years. Personally, I was afraid that some of the evacuees would not be pleased to relocate again, once they had settled comfortably in a new house in a schoolyard. That’s why I agreed with the idea of not using schoolyards for temporary housing sites, despite knowing that I might be criticized for that. (Yamori et al. 2005)

We then turned such narratives into short episodes, as shown in Table 1, to facilitate their use in an interactive game. Each episode consisted of three parts: the first part depicted the particular role to be played while facing the dilemma, the second was the main body, which described the dilemma, while the third part focused on the “Yes” and “No” decisions. For example, narrative I cited above became Episode 1 in Table 1. Table 1 shows two more examples among the 20 episodes in the gaming kit.

TABLE 1. Sample episodes of “Crossroad: Kobe”

| |
|--|
| [Episode 1] You are: a city employee in charge of temporary housing Situation: A month has passed after the earthquake. You have been procuring sites for temporary housing for homeless victims. An additional hundred houses are still needed. Do you use schoolyards as sites? Choices: Yes (To use)/No (Not to use) |
| [Episode 2] You are: a city employee Situation: The city hall has almost totally collapsed. However, maps and documents that are vital for disaster response are in the collapsed office. Do you dare to enter the office in the off-limits area? Choices: Yes (To enter)/No (Not to enter) |
| [Episode 3] You are: a citizen Situation: City officials are considering a list of people in need of nursing care to distribute to volunteers and communities in case of disasters. Do you support the idea? Choices: Yes (To support)/No (Not to support) |

2.3 Procedure

The game normally involves five players. If five are not possible, an odd number of players is preferable, since majority-based decisions are needed within each group. The players sit around a table to communicate face-to-face and talk freely in a relaxed setting. Many groups can play simultaneously, as long as the room does not get too noisy. The game begins with each player holding exactly the same deck of ten (or, if time permits, twenty) episode cards at hand. She or he also has one “Yes” and one “No” card. Within a group, any player may be the first to choose to read the first episode card from her/his deck. Every episode card has the same format as shown in Table 1.

The basic game consists of the six steps shown in Figure 2. First, each player reads and considers the first episode and privately chooses a “Yes” or “No” to resolve the dilemma. Second, each player places either a “Yes” or “No” card on the table, face down, in front of her/himself. Third, they simultaneously turn their cards face up, disclosing their choices. As the fourth step, each player who shares in the majority opinion gains 1 point (a normal point).

In step five, the players exchange their views. Players are allowed or strongly urged to persuade other members to change their decisions. One other way exists for players to gain points. If she/he is the only person in the group whose choice differs from the others (single minority), as part of step five, she/he can gain a special point, if she/he can explain persuasively why she/he made the opposing choice.

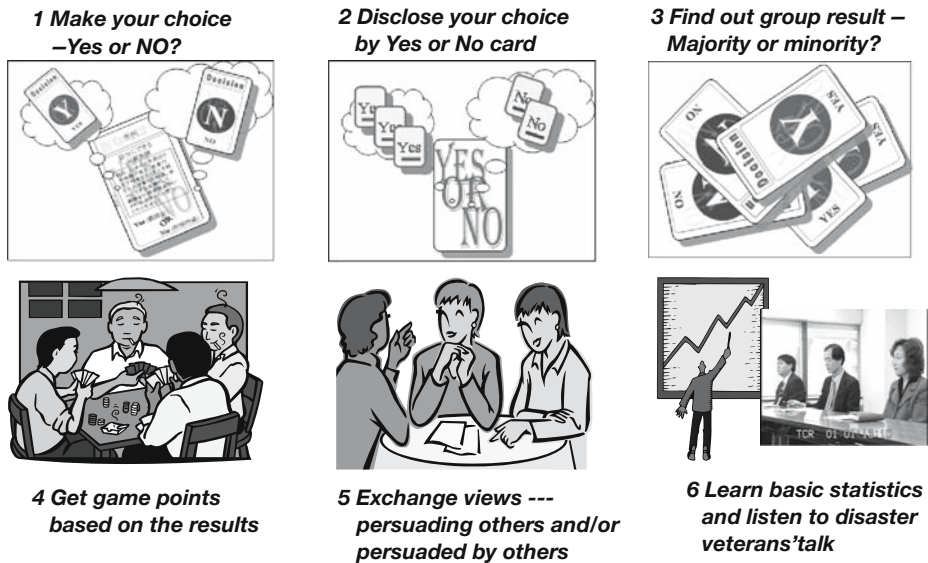


FIG. 2. The basic procedure of the game, “Crossroad: Kobe”

Finally, players are given basic statistics and useful tips when discussing the episode. They watch video clips that show a portion of the interviews of people whose experiences formed the basis for the episode. If time permits, the players return to the first step to rethink their decisions and select their choices once again. This six step procedure and possible rethinking are repeated for all ten (or twenty) cards. At the end of the game, when all ten (or twenty) episodes have been read, the person with the most points wins.

Obviously, in “Crossroad: Kobe,” winning the game is not particularly important. The real point is to involve the participants profoundly in situations that the people of Kobe actually faced. The goal of winning simply helps motivate the players to consider what they should do more intensely – how to rationalize their own choices, and how they might persuade others to change their minds. It is also significant that this interactive process encourages players to create their own narrative accounts rather than passively listen to others.

2.4 Application and Evaluation

“Crossroad: Kobe” has been used in Japan in various settings nationwide, from disaster training for central or local government officers to voluntary disaster drills planned by local people, as well as for disaster education at children’s schools (Fig. 3). More than 15,000 copies have already been published since its release in 2004, and we have monitored more than 300 gaming sessions involving more than 15,000 participants. Since such widespread distribution is quite exceptional for a disaster education tool, this is a simple but unequivocal evidence that “Crossroad: Kobe” is widely used and highly valued.



Fig. 3. “Crossroad: Kobe” played by local government disaster officials at a training workshop

Some quantitative data also show that the game has succeeded in realizing its original objectives. Kikkawa et al. (2004) analyzed the game’s effectiveness in an experimental setting with a pre-post design. They found that participants’ opinions toward ten dilemma situations written on the episode cards became more varied after playing a game, rather than polarized into either “Yes” or “No” solutions. This suggests that the game broadens players’ perspectives and pushes them to account for a larger number of factors when considering disaster preparedness and responses.

Yamori et al. (2005) also presented data obtained from a survey questionnaire with 97 samples. It showed that participants evaluated the game highly. For example, 68% of the participants responded that it was a highly significant experience, 31% felt that it was fairly significant, 1% relatively insignificant, while none claimed total insignificance. Regarding the diversity of opinions, 77% experienced it strongly, 22% relatively, 1% slightly, while again none responded with “not at all.” Yamori and Kikkawa (2005) also showed similar results based on questionnaire data from 512 respondents, as shown in Figure 4. Over 90% of the respondents provided positive feedback.

“Crossroad: Kobe” became so popular that we received many requests to apply the same method to other region-specific problems and to different social issues. As a response to these requests, we created different versions, based on the “Crossroad: Kobe” prototype, for such topics as: typhoon and tsunami disaster reduction in Kochi Prefecture, southern Japan; oil pollution disaster reduction for the Japanese Coast Guard; school security measures; and infectious disease control. These new versions of “Crossroad” were created through joint efforts between the author and those who first played “Crossroad: Kobe” and noticed its broad applicability.

Another notable feature of “Crossroad: Kobe” is its ability to transform initially passive users into more active collaborators. For example, some disaster management workers at Kochi Prefecture have become so familiar with “Crossroad: Kobe” that they can facilitate the gaming, although they began as ordinary users. Now, they are teaching facilitation skills to lower level officials in municipal

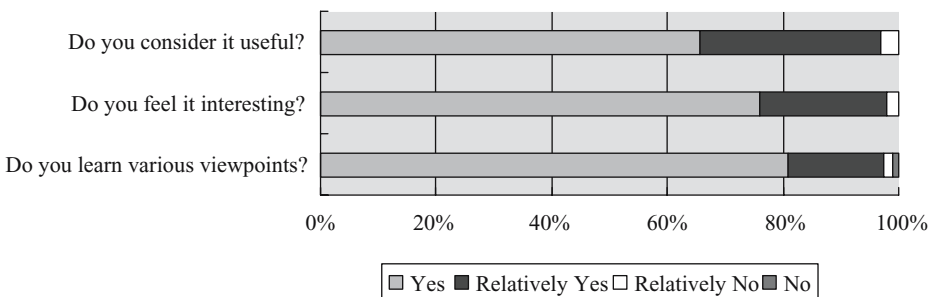


FIG. 4. Participants’ ratings for “Crossroad: Kobe”

governments as well as disaster response leaders in local communities. Moreover, some of the Kobe City staff, who were originally interviewed to create “Crossroad,” are now actively engaged in disaster education for local residents by playing “Crossroad: Kobe.” Through this process, the game is proliferating rapidly to the grassroots level.

3 Discussion

To extend our metaphor, “Crossroad: Kobe” was born at the crossroads of three different domains: narrative theory, gaming approach, and disaster reduction practice. When I view the tool from these three angles, three notable features come to mind, which I will discuss to close this chapter.

3.1 *Active Sense-Making*

First, I would stress that “Crossroad: Kobe” induces participants’ active “sense-making” (Weick 1995). The game looks like just “decision-making” support material, since it deals with either-or situations. However, it is actually more than that. The game procedure requires a group discussion period after all the individual decisions are disclosed, while allowing only a very short time period, usually less than one minute, for the initial decisions.

Thus, the game’s emphasis is not on better decision-making, but on encouraging participants to make sense of their decisions via narration, no matter whether they choose “Yes” or “No”. Thus, pre-analysis of the conditions for better decision-making is not a priority. Post-narration of the decision is the major focus. Active sense-making of a personal decision, especially in the form of narratives directed to other participants, enables people to consider situations more comprehensively.

It is significant that the episode cards leave many details unspecified. For example, in Episode 1 in Table 1, how much damage has occurred? How many people are evacuating? Which season are we in? Are aftershocks possible? – All of these issues remain open. The decision to provide few specifics required considerable deliberation, but was taken in order to leave the door open for game players to assess their situations freely and actively. If details had been supplied, as with most conventional disaster education tools, learners would have had a much easier time making decisions. However, they would remain in a passive information processing mode without having to dig deeper for relevant information on their own. It is better to have learners make sense of deliberately ambiguous situations by personally adding their own details.

This feature of “Crossroad: Kobe” may be regarded as an extension of what Bruner points out, regarding the general nature of a narrative text. He wrote: It is this “relative indeterminacy of a text” that “allows a spectrum of actualizations.” And so, “literary texts initiate ‘performances’ of meaning rather than actually formulating meanings themselves.” (1986, p. 25)

Gaming accelerates a narrative’s power of “performance of meaning.” Narratives help players make sense of and deal with a series of difficult events and choices, which they might face in a future disaster.

3.2 *A Multi-Logue Medium*

The second notable aspect of “Crossroad: Kobe” is its ability to encompass multiple meanings. As stressed above, the game not only elicits personal and unique narratives from each of the participants, it also serves as a medium in which these, sometimes competing and conflicting personal narratives, live together. The personal narratives evoked by this game result from differences in sense-making involving difficult circumstances. On the other hand, a group consensus sometimes emerges with a single interpretation of the situation and agreement on a particular solution, which accompanies a new and unified group narrative.

Such consensus is preferred for practical problem-solving. However, in “Crossroad: Kobe,” this is not a must, since a core feature of gaming lies in the capacity to realize a “multi-logue” (Duke 1975). When viewed as a communication medium, gaming shows more potential to admit different perspectives on the problem at hand than do other types of media, such as mathematical language or computer simulation models. In this regard, “Crossroad: Kobe” never forces players to conform to a uniform solution; rather, it encourages them to face and respect diverse opinions.

This aspect of gaming reaches the very heart of the narrative approach when compared with a logico-scientific approach. Bruner defined the “multi perspective” of narratives as “beholding the world not univocally but simultaneously through a set of prisms, each of which catches some part of it” (Bruner 1986, p. 26). It is clear that Bruner’s idea of “multi-perspective” stands parallel to Duke’s concept of “multi-logue.” Multi-narratives, reflecting multi-sense making by multi-participants with multi-perspectives, coexist within “Crossroad: Kobe,” sometimes with some amount of contradiction and conflict. However, the heterogeneity, preserved as a multi-logue within this game, retains the potential for finding a new solution in the future. This contrasts sharply with conventional disaster education tools, such as response manuals and action flowcharts, which assume univocal solutions, i.e., a single, correct way to deal with a disaster.

3.3 *Disseminating Power*

The final advantage of “Crossroad: Kobe” is its disseminating power. In the section of *Application and evaluation*, I noted the two facts to verify this point: the development of different versions of “Crossroad: Kobe,” and the appearance of active successors. This is partly because “Crossroad: Kobe” is quite simple, both in its gaming procedure and the format of its narrative content, and partly because it is open to personal, positional, and regional modifications. Thus, those who once used it as players can easily assume the role of game creator or facilitator next time. Those who were once learners can turn promptly into coaches.

This characteristic of “Crossroad: Kobe” is all the more important in planning for prospectively long term disaster events, those with recurrence periods exceeding 100 years, such as major earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. For such disasters, since the next one may not occur during our lifetimes, building a community-based learning system is more significant than simply developing the knowledge and skills of individuals. Conducting temporary, short-term, and unidirectional learning is insufficient, while creating a participative and lasting “community of practice” (Lave and Wenger 1991) becomes vital. Here, this gaming strong point synchronizes again with the narrative approach. Narrative communities, with an appreciative audience (Winslade and Monk 1999) created by “Crossroad: Kobe,” can serve as key living media through which collaborative learning for disaster mitigation may transfer to the next generation. Kobe narratives, transformed into “Crossroad: Kobe,” not only preserve the lessons from the Kobe Earthquake, but also exert powerful “generativity” (McAdams and Aubin 1998) to create new narratives to counter the next major disaster that may occur far away during a different era.

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A Dialogical Perspective of Social Representations of Responsibility

IVANA MARKOVÁ

1 Responsibility

1.1 Responsibility as a Concept and a Phenomenon

Discourse about responsibility has become a fashionable contemporary subject. Much of it, at least in the social sciences and humanities, is related to claims that in traditional democracies we can observe decreasing demands on taking individual and collective responsibilities. Instead, we witness an increase in, and magnified claims for, more and more rights for individuals and specific groups. Charles Taylor's (1995) analysis of this phenomenon has become classic, but many others have joined in. "Rights mania" has been viewed as a phenomenon of the twentieth century (e.g. Donahue 1990) continuing well to the present one; rights have become licenses of the media to make caricatures of whatever they like. Strong institutions have the power to judge and misrepresent the positions of their opponents. No wonder that balancing rights and responsibilities (Etzioni 1991, O'Neill 2002) has become an essential requirement of a civil society and democracy.

Yet not all claims about responsibilities belong to this genre. A leading Russian psychologist, Andrei Brushlinski (1994) drew attention to the basic controversies in Russia during the transition to democracy after the fall of Communism. He too noted a general tendency for individuals not to feel responsible for their actions. But in this case the tendency not to feel responsible was not due to the emphasis on rights. Instead, it was something that has been carried over from the past Communist regime. Psychologists often comment that the Soviet totalitarian system, which controlled both individual and collective life, gave individuals so few responsibilities that they internalized an attitude of learned helplessness. Analyzing this problem, Brushlinski argued that the 1990s call of Russian people for reopening the debate on morality and responsibility was an appeal for the restoration of social action based on responsibility.

Thus rights and responsibilities are not always in opposition. Indeed, having and accepting responsibilities can be viewed as one of the basic human rights.

This perspective was clearly expressed in Czechoslovakia in the historical document published in January 1977 known as *Charta 77*. *Charta 77* presented itself as a non-political and a free “open community of people of different convictions, beliefs and professions who are all united by the will, both individually and collectively, to observe that civil and human rights . . . are respected” (*Charta 77*, p. 12, [my translation]). One of such basic rights was responsibility. *Charta 77* insisted that this deeply moral requirement must be attended to at both the individual and at collective levels.

As a concept in moral philosophy, the subject of responsibility has a long history, although it has often been treated under other names, like duty, obligation and morality, among others. One can presuppose that its origin, just like that of language and symbolic communication, goes back to the beginnings of humanity. Praising and blaming individuals and groups, judging actions and interactions as good and bad, all those phenomena take place in and through communication. They also presuppose an awareness of agency and intentionality. The concept of responsibility, moreover, has been linked to those of freedom, will, the person and the selfhood. In addition, accompanied by different adjectives, like “causal”, “intentional”, “legal”, “political” and “moral”, the concept of responsibility displays its heterogeneous nature and multifaceted meanings.

In social psychology, Fritz Heider (1958) showed that in common sense thinking people attach at least five different meanings to responsibility depending how they conceptualize the contribution of the individual and his/her environment to the event in question. In one way or other, attributions of responsibility are related to a variety of societal issues. For example, in this or that case, should it be the jury or the medical professional who makes judgments about the individual’s responsibility? An answer to this question may determine the fate or individuals in question: will they be imprisoned or will they be sent to a mental hospital? A psychiatric hospital during the Soviet regime became a place of sequestration of dissidents (e.g. Grigorenko 1982, Moscovici 2003) when, due to international pressure, it was too embarrassing for the regime to keep them in prison. Treating dissidents as ill rather than criminals seemed to be, at least for a while, a more acceptable manner of depriving them of personal responsibility.

Although people represent both responsibilities and rights as interpersonal symbolic phenomena, they do so in different senses. In the former case, the individual may accept responsibility for other(s) without that being recognized by them; and in turn, others may attribute responsibility to the individual without his/her being aware of that. In other words, responsibility does not necessarily imply the reciprocity of intentions; rather, it may involve control, duty, obligation and action on the part of an agent. As already implied, in the Soviet regime, responsibility as a dialogical symbolic interaction was turned into a monological control. In contrast, with respect to a right, the individual cannot claim to have it unless that right is also recognized by the relevant other party. The struggle of the *Charta 77* for responsibility as a right was the struggle for the acknowledgement of agency and of moral action.

These examples show a tremendous variability in meanings of responsibilities and their dynamic interdependencies with societal phenomena in which they are embedded. Consequently, social representations of responsibility reflect both historical and political conditions of the time and not surprisingly, they manifest themselves in specific ways in traditional democracies and in post-Communist countries. After the fall of Communism in Europe in 1989 the question of responsibility turned into an important issue in the public discourse. It referred not only to contemporary and future responsibilities during the transition towards democracy, but it also became a burning question of coping with and understanding the past. Concerning contemporary and future responsibilities, these were related to good management. For example, how should be obligations and duties distributed between citizens and institutions? How should responsibilities of individuals, groups, collectives and associations be balanced with rights? With respect to the past, the question of responsibilities was very different because it referred to questions of revenge versus forgiveness, and accusations versus benevolence. How should be judged those who, overtly or secretly supported the ancien regime and were responsible for the persecution and suffering of others? It is this question that is directly linked to the subject of this chapter. But before we address it directly, we must first consider what meanings the notion of responsibility could have had for citizens during the totalitarian regime.

1.2 Responsibilities in a Totalitarian Regime

The above discussion suggests that responsibility is not just a mental state. Above all, it is a symbolic dialogical interaction that takes place between the different parties. In democratic systems, there need not be any fundamental contradictions between responsibilities towards one's family, peers, friends and institutions. Cooperation of citizens in democratic systems is usually based on various forms of trust, distrust, confidence, risk and danger that individuals and institutions attribute to one another.

In contrast, totalitarian regimes attempt to achieve citizens' cooperation by promulgating public distrust, uncertainty and fear. Such situations generate several rather different senses of responsibility that are mutually incompatible. This was the case in European Communist countries. The specific case in this chapter is that of Czechoslovakia during the years of "normalization", i.e. after the brutal invasion of the country in 1968 by the armies of the Soviet bloc, in order to crush attempts of citizens to reform the stagnating socialist regime and change it into socialism "with a human face". Among other things, this had an important implication for the meanings of responsibility. While during the nineteen fifties and sixties there still had been many true believers in the Party who defended its policies from conviction, after the invasion in 1968 their number considerably diminished and converted to the opposition. As a result, only a minority of members believed in what the Party did and who were truly committed to their own conduct. Instead, during the period of "normalization" we can identify two prominent senses of responsibility.

One sense of responsibility was focused on one's own welfare, the welfare of one's family and the close circle of relatives and friends. This required acting overtly in accord with the regime of "normalization". Passivity, adaptation, and compromises were the main ways of muddling through the situation. The effort of the majority was not to draw attention to the self, because that could lead to trouble. It was considered that any attempt to change the political situation would be in vain. The majority believed that any resistance would make the life of the individual and his/her family quite unbearable. As the dissident literature tells us, fear dominated much of the public behavior. One of the main dissidents of that period, a historian, Jaroslav Mezník (2005), wrote that under Communism, his daughter, who, despite not living with him because he was divorced from her mother, was not allowed to attend the secondary school. Her life was ruined by her father's dissident activity and because of that, she was not on speaking terms with him for many years. In his profound analysis, Václav Havel (1975) associated the consequences of fear with the loss of human dignity and identity and with the non-involvement in matters of public importance. Many people passively accepted the situation, which, after several unsuccessful attempts to overthrow it or to give it a more "human face", did not expect it to end during their life-times. Their main loyalty was directed towards themselves and their family and they, openly or passively, collaborated with the regime in order to secure a relatively peaceful daily life.

The second main meaning of responsibility emerged due to the uncompromising attitude of dissidents. For this minority, responsibility was a fate as Havel (1983/1999) declared in the title of one of his essays; it was responsibility for "living in truth" and dissidents pursued it despite the problems it caused for them.

The Czech dissident philosopher and the spokesman for Charta 77, Jan Patočka, argued that the sense of the Charta 77 was the right of living in truth and this was the responsibility of each individual involved in that community. Truth was not simply a "theoretical question" which could be attained by "objective methods" and could be used by this or that institution or a person (Patočka 1977a, b). In its deepest sense, truth was an inner struggle of the individual for his/her freedom. Truth was the matter of authenticity. Patočka posed the question: By defending Charta, are we going to make the situation worse in society? "Let us respond openly", he argued, "So far any submission has never led to improvement but only to deterioration of the situation. The greater the fear and servility, the more the powerful one dares and will dare" [to combat its opponents] [my translation] (Patočka 1977b, p. 39. See also Moscovici 2003). Despite the persecution and discomfort that it brought about (for example: Havel 1985–1986/1999; Šimečka 1984; Mezník 2005; Vaculík 1983; Moscovici 1979, 2003) dissidents continued in their effort to live in truth. The only reward for that was the preservation of their own dignity and identity. However, by acting in this way, they made life difficult not only for themselves but for their families, relatives and friends, and not all of them were content with that. It was such a serious problem that much of the dissident literature considered it important to comment on their relations

with families, friends and acquaintances, on their isolation and the special status they created for themselves by being dissidents.

As one would expect, between these the two extreme positions, many people either played a double role or swung from one type of responsibility to the other according to circumstances, and the daily problems they had to cope with from changes of their convictions.

2 Social Representations of Responsibility in Two Corpuses

In the late nineteen nineties we explored social representations of responsibility in several European countries in and through focus group discussions. The presupposition that social representations and communication are interdependent components of a single theory goes back to “La Psychanalyse” (Moscovici 1961/1976). Nevertheless, despite the extensive research over the last forty five years, this conceptual presupposition still presents a significant challenge for social scientists.

Dialogue is a semiotic means of communication which displays, as well as conceals, multifaceted forms of symbolic interactions. For example, dialogical participants may implicitly assume that their interlocutors possess certain kinds of knowledge and therefore, they explicitly elaborate only on selected issues. They may expose certain ideas and strategically hide others; they can defend attitudes that they do not hold; they contradict ideas which they proclaimed some only minutes ago; and so on. And these dialogical processes contain continuities as well as discontinuities in discussing topics. They involve interpersonal tension and relaxation, repetition and creative activities, conformity and innovation, explicit expressions and implicit thoughts; and they adapt to assimilate strangeness. Moreover, participants carry dialogues not only with their co-present participants but also with absent “third parties” reporting their speech. They dialogue internally with themselves, with different kinds of “inner alter” (Marková 2006), e.g. “generalized others”, peers, groups to which they belong, and so on. Given these multiple relations, what can we discover about social representations in and through dialogues in focus groups?

We designed focus groups as part of an international project in the late nineteen nineties on responsibilities and entitlements in post-Communist Europe. I shall refer here to two corpuses, each consisting of eight focus groups, one carried out in Paris, France and the other in Brno, the Czech Republic. I want to emphasize that the study of these representations does not compare the two corpuses. Rather, it illustrates how different histories, political circumstances and interactions bring out different kinds of the dialogical Ego-Alter interdependencies and presuppositions about responsibilities. Their thematizations show, accordingly, different social representations of responsibilities.

Our participants were students in their late teens and early twenties. Each focus group involved four to five participants. Discussions were audio-taped and subsequently transcribed for analysis. Altogether, all focus groups were presented

with six dilemmas concerning different aspects of responsibilities and rights. The dilemma that will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter was based on the real story of someone who, by his behavior, caused the death of a number of fellow prisoners and persecution of others in Communist Czechoslovakia during the nineteen fifties. The subject of “responsibilities” for crimes during Communism and the question concerning justice and punishment of those who supported and sustained the totalitarian regime, was still hot in public discourse. Radio, newspapers, and television programs promoted discourse and it was the topic of discussion and disputes in numerous contexts.

This study was carried out in the years 1999–2000 when newspapers and television were preoccupied with accusations and excusing those who supported the ancien regime. Many people sought revenge for suffering during totalitarianism. As it became apparent from focus group discussions, among our Czech participants, there were several whose parents and grand-parents were not allowed, during totalitarianism, to work in occupations for which they were qualified or who were punished and marginalized in various ways. Collaboration with totalitarianism, for the young Czechs, became part of their oral history, which involved their own families. To that extent, the meaning of this dilemma was different for the French than for the Czechs.

The dilemma we presented to our participants in the focus groups is as follows:

During the 1950's, Jan Horak was sent to one of the toughest sections of the labor camps in Czechoslovakia as someone whom the Communist party thought was politically unreliable. In order to safeguard his own future he decided to offer his services to the Communist regime as an agent of the secret police. To prove his loyalty to the totalitarian Communist party he became a spy and fed information regarding his comrades in the same labor camp who were planning to escape. Due to this behavior some of his friends did not survive. After the fall of Communism in 1989 he presented himself as someone who had suffered under Communism and who had fought bravely against the totalitarian regime. However, information regarding his true behavior was exposed and people who had known him gave testimonies regarding his former behavior. What do you think about this case? How long is a person held responsible for his past actions? Should his activities be restricted today in view of his past, or should he be forgiven?

2.1 A Conventional Social Representation of Responsibility

2.1.1 Contents as a Generic Truth

Not surprisingly, for the French young people, the problem was distant and not highly relevant to their present concerns. They did not invest either time or thought into this dilemma. They had little knowledge of post-War totalitarian regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and of Czechoslovakia in the nineteen fifties because it was long before they had been born. The story evoked the Communist Party of a particular epoch. The Communist Party in France was weak at the time. The young French regarded the fall of the Berlin Wall as part of history, and not relevant to their current interests. The story about the spy and traitor

dilemma presented to them seemed like a textbook case, even more remote and distant.

Under such conditions, what sense can the researcher make of focus group discussions in terms of social representations of responsibility and dialogicality? When individuals are required to speak to a problem or to a phenomenon that is not in their area of interest and attention, and when they have little knowledge of the issue in question, they respond to it in terms of what might be called customary morality (Marková 1990). We can say that such tasks call upon conventional social representations, general “truths” and accepted social values. For example, one should not betray his/her fellow prisoners; it is reprehensible to hurt others; one should not spread AIDS; and so on.

Accordingly, responses of the French young people to the dilemma tended to begin either with a general statement or with a general evaluation of Jan Horak’s action without any attempt to analyze the situation or circumstances in which he lived. What characterized discussions in all focus groups, was the general agreement among participants concerning the blame that they attributed to Horak. These attributions of blame and disapproving evaluations of Horak are all very brief, without any further questions or reflections on the case. A brief utterance of one participant is followed by a similar short utterance by other(s). For example:

1. Anne: I am saying that he should not be forgiven.
Benoit: Why?
Anne: It’s already clear.
2. Miriam: This is exactly the same problem as the resistance during 1939–45. These are people who can betray . . .
Francois: Forgiveness should go to victims!
3. Christian: There are not means to forgive him, he has to pay all his life.
Michel: Either he became a traitor in order to survive, or he did it because he already was a traitor.
4. Guy: Unfortunately, it is human and it stinks.
Sophie: I think this happens all the time, people who betray.
5. Jacques: He should be punished – on guillotine! Next case!
Pierre: No, I am not for the capital punishment, but he should be locked up.

Other kinds of short responses, sometimes interspersed within other sentences, or forming independent exclamations are in the following examples: “It is dreadful!” “It is horrible”; “It is sickening!” “He is crooked !” “He is vicious”! The participants took the story in its literal sense and focused all their attention on the anti-hero, separating him from the context of his life and circumstances.

Such exclamations, which were all negative judgments of Horak’s behavior, are not further thematized. The only examples of what one could call thematization, are analogies. Analogies commonly contain socially shared knowledge related to other historical events. For example: “He is like a Nazi criminal Papon”; “He is like the traitor during resistance during 1939–45”.

In contrast to this case, another study (Orfali and Marková 2002), using a similar dilemma but relevant to the French case, which involved the Nazi traitor

Papon, did not evoke conventional social representations. In fact, this case stimulated a great deal of discussion and thematization of the matter and revealed reflective social representations of responsibility (see below) for crimes in the past. Similarly, the question of the responsibility for transmission of AIDS (Orfali 2004) provoked discussions in which the same participants were deeply involved, showing reflective social representations and multifaceted dialogical relations.

2.2 Dialogical Relations in Conventional Social Representations

Having discussed the content of French focus groups in terms of conventional social representations, what kinds of dialogical relations do they involve? By “dialogical relations” I do not simply mean relations between the speakers in a dialogue as a face-to-face symbolic interaction. Instead, I refer to the theoretical approach that is known as dialogicality (Bakhtin 1979/1986; Linell 1998; Marková 2003). This approach is based on the triangular relations of the Ego-Alter-Object (Moscovici 1972, 1984; Marková 2003). Without going into detail, let us remember that the triad Ego-Alter-Object is a conceptual schema. In specific dialogues, each of the three abstract notions, i.e. Ego, Alter, Object, is substituted by a concrete one. In other words, in a specific dialogue (whether a face-to-face conversation or in a dialogue of ideas, cf. Marková et al. 2007), there is a concrete Ego (e.g. the self, the group, the minority group), a concrete Alter (e.g. the other, “inner alter”, “the third party”, a section of society, another group) and a concrete Object (democracy, AIDS, trust, responsibility). With this in mind, what kinds of Ego-Alter-Object relations are present in conventional social representations of the French focus groups?

In the above brief statements the speaker either presents his/her I-position, like “I think”, “I am saying”, or a generic position (Grossen and Salazar-Orvig 2006), e.g. “He should be punished – on guillotine! Next case!” “It is dreadful!” “He is crooked!” These, however, are not further thematized. Since I-positions in the above cases do not involve any modalizations or qualifications, we can assume that they only emphasize the personal stance of the speaker with respect to what he/she assumes to be a socially shared opinion or a common knowledge. Generic positions, without expressing I-positions, therefore, can be assumed as representing the accepted certainty of the participants in focus groups; there is nothing to be put to a question. In other words, both I-positions and generic statements are references to an established conventional morality e.g. it is terrible to betray your colleagues; it is reprehensible to be a spy; it is sickening to cause suffering of others. There was no conflict or disagreement among the French participants. They all expressed the generally accepted values established in a civil society. Since the case was clear, there was no reason to thematize the subject matter any further and there was minimal argumentative tension in these focus groups. We can say that dialogical relations of the Ego-Alter-Object were spontaneously simple and could be expressed as:

- Ego: a participant
- Alter: other participant or participants in the focus group
- Object: representation of Horak's past action;

or

- Ego: a participant
- Alter: conventional morality of society
- Object: representation of Horak's past action;

Of course it is always possible that some individuals held different positions, disagreed with the majority or had doubts about the case, which they did not express openly. However, since this was neither content-wise nor linguistically apparent in and throughout the dialogues, we cannot comment on it.

2.3 Reflective Social Representations of Responsibility

2.3.1 The Diversity of Contents

Before we get into the details of participants' representations, let us display, as the first approach, examples of the range of meanings that the notion of responsibility for the past crime evoked in the Czech focus groups:

1. Marie: For me this is absolutely clear. One is responsible for past conduct.
2. Jan: Crimes against humanity exist all the time, it is tragic – but it cannot . . . cannot be forgiven
3. Petr: From the moral point of view . . . your behavior leads to persecution of others . . . bad faith is in question
4. Anna: I would sacrifice my own life. Otherwise, I would be dead anyway. My body would live but my mind, myself, would be dead
5. Josef: What if I was in such . . . such a situation? I would not have done that, I would have behaved morally – it would have been a priority to behave morally
6. Jaroslav: Morally – does it mean non-egoistically?
7. Pavel: If I did that, it would mean that I would have died myself. I would have lived – or my body would have lived but I myself, I would have killed myself.
8. Ludmila: To save one's life by sacrificing others is absolutely immoral
9. Karel: There are people who . . . who . . . during Communism had . . . had . . . only one goal; to defend their point of view. They did for that absolutely everything, they sacrificed everything for it. I know personally several such individuals who finished university and who worked as miners . . . who simply defended their beliefs . . . people with a high moral profile . . .
10. Mojmir: According to that situation, if there were lives at stake of his own family, then it is simply difficult to say that his character was bad – when he simply protected the life of his own family. And clearly, each of us would betray someone who one does not know and cause his death rather than the death of our own child, own wife and own family.

11. Milena: When I imagine myself in such a situation at that time, I would also take the easiest way – true – I would not inform against my pals . . .

One can understand the range of these meanings only when one considers the circumstances of the political and historical background in the country. These young people were approximately ten years old when Communism ended its forty-year reign in Czechoslovakia. Thus in one way or other, Communism was part of their life in the sense that they lived in the post-Communist era, that it was talked about in families, in the media and at school. Collaboration with the ancient regime and its forms were discussed, argued, justified or found reprehensible. To that extent, the dilemma about Horak was part of their life.

As in the case of conventional social representations, let us first consider the content of the participants' responses. We can then make some observations about dialogical expressions of these responses and their heterogeneity.

2.3.2 Two Social Representations of Responsibility

The range of attitudes towards Horak's conduct can be broadly divided into two main groups. These groups correspond to the two meanings of responsibility discussed in the first part of this article. On the one hand, attempts to understand and defend the collaborative behavior that "the horrible regime" inflicted upon people; and on the other hand, adopting the dissidents' uncompromising perspective.

Concerning the former, it is not irrelevant to point out that many Czechs (like others who lived in Communist totalitarianism) either passively accepted the authority of the regime or compromised themselves. After the fall of Communism some parents often felt obliged to explain to their children why they had been members of the Party, or why some people resisted more than them.

Concerning the latter attitude, those participants of focus groups who defended an uncompromising dissident stance, gave examples of their parents and grandparents who did not succumb to the external pressure during totalitarianism and/or later during "normalization". They told stories about their grandparents who, having had a university or professional education, worked as laborers during the regime. These participants had no sympathy for Horak.

Yet, these two distinct meanings of responsibility are not separated from one another. Indeed, they are part of all discourses, they conflict and merge into one another and they form the basis for thematizing this important dilemma. Significantly, the majority of participants did not have clearly formulated opinions on the subject matter. Instead, while defending their positions, they raised questions, expressed doubts and took reflective stances. And so we find that while focus group discussions represented the two main views, they also generated the main features of disputes in thematizing responsibility.

In order to answer the question about responsibility for the past conduct, the Czech focus groups did not start the discussion with presenting "general truths" and accepted social values. One cannot make a general judgment about collabo-

ration during the period of “normalization”, but one must consider each case on its own merit because individuals had different reasons for doing this or that.

Let us see some examples:

1. Věra: As far as I am concerned, the question “How long is a person held responsible for his past actions?” is very difficult to answer, because it is necessary to consider an individual case.

Jirka: But I think one can generalize. If in the past one did something, he is always responsible.

2. Jan: According to that situation, if there were lives of his own family at stake, then it is simply difficult to say that his character was bad – when he simply protected the life of his own family. And clearly, each of us would betray someone whom one does not know and cause his death rather than the death of his own child, own wife and own family

Pavel: If you cause the death of your own two children and own wife and if you cause any difficulty to your fellow prisoners – there can be many of those or there can be only two of them – you must simply know – you must simply know what you are doing. And only that – that you are an informer – that you spy on your fellow prisoners that is horrible – that is horrible – a normal person could never, never do that

Jan: Ok, but . . .

Pavel: Under any circumstances a normal person cannot do that.

Jan: No, no . . .

Marie: . . . but he can . . .

Pavel: Perhaps you, but you are nothing in that case. It is totally, totally reprehensible.

Věra: But he has children and he has his fellow prisoner – so, he is closer to you?

Pavel: You cannot, you cannot know that. My view is . . .

Marie: No, we can, but . . .

Věra: No, clearly, you cannot know that.

3. Jan: During the nineteen fifties one had such fear that he would do anything.

Anna: I would too (.) I would too –

Milan: But my grandparents would not have done “anything”.

And my grandfather is a lawyer – He studied the Law at Charles University – and he worked as a miner and during the nineteen fifties he had to move eight times.

Jan: But was he in prison? Was he in such a camp?

Milan: No, but he was imprisoned during the War, he had to work in Austria

Jan: No, clearly no.

Peter: He had to do it against his will.

John: I do not want to make judgments about your grandfather.

Peter: I have discussed these matters with him many times. There are people who have a lot of dignity and strong character. Simply, they sacrifice all to what they believe in . . .

This thematization evoked further comments. For instance, many people would have liked to return to that “horrible system” because for many it had been easier to live under Communism than after its fall. This perspective itself opened up further themes and led to concessions and modalizations, in particular using a conditional style of talk:

Karel: If it is true that he . . . did so and so, then. . . . Therefore, he should . . .

Jitka: If pressed, do you save your live or the life of your co-prisoners?

Petr: If pressed, do you prefer your own family or your co-prisoners?

Among the additional themes, the following kept recurring within the main topics: First, “What would I have done in that situation?” Consider some examples:

Anna: It seems to me that all this is seeking an alibi. I think . . . that it is as . . . I myself do not know what I would have done. I do not want to say that I would have rushed into collaboration with KGB.

Petr: Devil knows how we would have behaved. Like you, I also hope that differently, but how do you know?

Jirka: When I imagine myself in such a situation at that time, I would also take the easiest way – true – I would not inform against my pals . . .

Eva: One needs to see it also from Horak’s side.

This theme, re-appearing in different focus groups, testifies to two facts. First, as was suggested earlier, the participants did not have any ready-made solutions to the problem, i.e. a ready-made social representation of responsibility for past events. And second, following the first, the question “What would I have done?” is an expression of dialogical self-reflective doubt.

Interestingly, the second theme, which kept returning was not part of the original dilemma, but the participants brought it in: it concerned membership in the Communist Party. It was well known that many people had become members of the Party not because of their convictions but as a passport securing them and their families advantages and a more comfortable life. Was that a right or a wrong thing to do?

1. Josef: If I were a child of Jan Horak; if I lived in the camp only because my father did not become a member of the Party, I would consider my dead father to be an ideal person, the best one who has ever lived . . .

2. Helena: There were many people who became Communists only to save themselves . . .

Jan: Only because of that, to be allowed to go to University, that I would take it as an extenuating circumstance . . . it was forbidden to intelligent people to get to university so they became Communists. My father was like that – so I take it as an extenuating circumstance.

Eva: No! One does not enter the Party only in order to obtain some advantages. You must totally agree with the Party in order to become a member, isn’t that so?

- Marie: Our task here is not to make judgements about entering the Party. . .
3. Anna: The question is how long one is responsible for one's conduct?
 Běta: I do not know. But definitely, if he becomes the member of the Party because of that, I think . . .
 Mirek: But at that time everything was different, wasn't it?
 Milan: What is said here is that he decided to serve the Communist regime as an agent of secret police . . . becoming a member of the Party is not the same thing . . .

The third recurring theme was that of morality. All Czech focus groups invoked a moral conflict: was Horak's behavior justifiable considering that his choice was between his family and his fellow prisoners?

1. Marie: I know that it is the question of moral responsibility or the question of morality with respect to oneself.
 Jan: It is about morality but not only about that. This is not ambiguous for people who lived through that regime and who know what it was. But we, who are all about eighteen years old, we do not know what it was. . . .
 Eva: It IS the question of morality.

The case clearly presented a moral dilemma for which there was no solution available in terms of general truths. The participants took pondering and reflective attitudes on the whole case, raising questions, for example: What have the media done about the case? What did the ancien regime represent for their parents and grandparents? The participants in all groups were reminded that they, themselves, did not experience Communism, but that their parents and grandparents suffered both during Nazism and Communism. Are there any circumstances that allow the individual to kill another human being?

2. Pavel: Today there are people in courts because they killed someone in self-defense. That was also an attempt to save oneself. But I agree that they should be prosecuted.
 Marie: You agree that they should be prosecuted?
 Pavel: I think that if someone kills in self-defense, yes he should be prosecuted. I think that the court must judge each case individually. . . .
 Tom: I think it is impossible for us to judge something that happened in the past because we do not know the circumstances as to what happened there.

2.3.3 *Heterogeneity and Multifaceted Features of Dialogical Interactions*

We found that conventional representations of the French focus groups were characterized by two dialogical positions: by the I-position (e.g. "I think") and by generic positions (e.g. "It is sickening", "Unfortunately, it is human and it stinks"). We have commented that neither of these positions was overtly questioned, modalized or thematized.

In contrast, we are finding multifaceted and heterogeneous dialogical relations (Bakhtin 1979/1986, 1981) in the Czech focus groups. They simultaneously express

different kinds of dialogical Ego-Alter-Object relations, forming dynamic patterns of interactions. Each speaker (the Ego) enters the concrete interaction with his/her previous social experience, which calls upon various kinds of Alter, for example:

- The reference groups (e.g. “But we, who are all about eighteen years old, we do not know what it was”);
- Moralities (e.g. “It is the question of moral responsibility or the question of morality with respect to oneself”);
- Individual and collective memories (e.g. “my grandfather is a lawyer – He studied the Law at Charles University – and he worked as a miner and during the nineteen fifties he had to move eight times”);
- Commitments (e.g. “If I lived in the camp only because my father did not become a member of the Party, I would consider my dead father to be an ideal person, the best one who has ever lived”)
- And loyalties (e.g. “And clearly, each of us would betray someone who one does not know and causes his death rather than the death of own child, own wife and own family”).

Equally important, various kinds of Ego-Alter relations also manifest themselves linguistically and through diverse speech activities.

One of the essential features of symbolic communication is that humans have the capacity to express as well as hide their ideas and thoughts. For instance, they can carry out an external dialogue with others while holding an internal (or inner) dialogue with themselves. Moreover, they can carry out a symbolic dialogue with the Alter that is not immediately present. Bakhtin (1979/1986, p. 126) discusses this idea in terms of “the third party”. He maintains that “a *third* party in the dialogue” is not to be taken in an arithmetical sense but in a sense of a symbolic participation, and there can be more than three participants involved. The author and the addressee can have dialogue only because “Each dialogue takes place as if against the background of the responsive understanding of an invisibly present third party who stands above all the participants in the dialogue (partners)” (ibid.). For Bakhtin, the idea of “The third party” is an aspect of heteroglossia: the third part(y/ies) speak/s through dialogical participants in different ways. It could be an invisible super-addressee or a mediator between the author and addressee. The third party is actually the organizer of topics, of ideas and even of positions from which dialogical partners speak.

The dialogical strategies of hiding and revealing are particularly important if the Ego considers him-/herself to be in a threatening situation (e.g. interrogation), if his/her social recognition is at stake (e.g. holding views that are not “politically correct”) or if there is a danger that the Ego might offend the Alter. In such situations the Ego may keep external and inner dialogue separate from one another and be selective with respect to the former.

I have found no evidence, in the present study, of a separation between external and internal dialogues. After all, the participants were fellow students discussing their views in a democratic environment. They took risks with respect to express-

ing their ideas and they argued about and defended their positions. Thus, it seems to me that in the present study an external/internal dialogue merged into one as they spoke out their thoughts and what they imagined. In other kinds of dialogical situations, that would be more risky for one reason or other; one could expect a separation of external and internal dialogues.

Let us see in a concrete way, what kinds of Ego-Alter-Object interactions can be identified in the Czech focus groups: First, and not surprisingly, participants have dialogue with one another.

- Ego: participant
- Alter: another participant(s)
- Object: Jan Horak's conduct

Petr: If it is said like that, Jan Horak looks horrible; but if it were said in the style that, in the nineteen fifties, he refused collaboration with the Communist party and because of that he caused, say, the death of his child . . .

Jana: So you admit that what actually Horak did was more simple! You admit that ?!

Petr: Yes of course.

Jana: But, more simple does not mean better.

Petr: What is worse? If your child dies or if your fellow prisoners die?

Jana: This is a question.

Pavel: This is NOT a question.

Second, we have observed externally verbalized inner reflections and self-doubts that have a character of a dialogical discourse (Grossen and Salazar-Orvig 2006).

- Ego: participant
- Alter: an imagined self speaking to others
- Object: the regime in the nineteen fifties

Milena: When I imagine myself in such a situation at that time, I would also take the easiest way – true – I would not inform against my pals, I would not draw attention to myself, I would pay one percent from my salary for membership in the party – and scratch my back, all of you.

Jirka: Well, but there were those who had so much dignity and character who totally disagreed with that horrible regime and sacrificed everything . . .

But we can observe another dialogue taking place here. The imagined self carries out a dialogue with the imagined “third party” of the Communist regime, i.e. with those in power, like the Communist Party or that “horrible regime”: “I scratch your back, you scratch mine”.

- Ego: participant
- Alter: the imagined ancien regime
- Object: living a lie

3 Social Representations Through the Lens of Dialogicality

Finally, what can we say about exploration of social representations in and through dialogue in focus groups? And what further potential, if any, does this kind of work imply? On the one hand, clearly, we are touching the tip of an iceberg; as researchers, we are dependent on what people express in words or symbolically communicate by other means. On the other hand, from doing such interpretative work, like historians, ethnographers or anthropologists, we learn a great deal from observation, from the ways symbols are expressed and communicated, from what is being said and what is being veiled by silence. Social representations are interdependencies between symbolic cultural phenomena and intersubjective interactions and therefore, they are generated both from relatively stabilized contents and dynamic interactions. The dialogical approach focuses the theory on multifaceted dynamic structures that simultaneously and sequentially take place in discourse.

Our discussion of conventional and reflective social representations indicates that the types of dialogical relations involved in each kind of social representation partly overlap and partly show clearly different patterns. Conventional social representations are phenomena that are not in center of public discourse. We could say that they are our thinking environment in a Durkheimian sense. They are sleeping social representations, aspects of common sense knowledge – or socially shared knowledge that is taken for granted – and therefore something to which people do not attend, about which we do not need to speak or reflect upon. Yet, they can become activated at any time and transformed into reflective ones.

From the point of view of human and social sciences, reflective social representations are more interesting. Above all, they are in the center of public debate as we have seen in this chapter with respect to responsibility for the past conduct in Czech focus groups. Deeply embedded in life-activities, whether political, health care, educational or environmental ones, they cannot be discovered solely from the discourse. Ethnographic, archival, and observational evidence about the environment in which the phenomena in question take place, must be an essential component of research.

Because reflective social representations are theories of knowledge of social phenomena, they offer new perspectives and dialogically based reflections on traditional topics of social psychology like stereotypes, prejudice and identity, turning them into more lively and dynamically conceived subjects of study. Moreover, since they turn phenomena of concern into problems of research, dialogically based social representations may significantly contribute towards finding a new place for our subject in the study of social phenomena of relevance.

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Part IV

Action

The Social and the Cultural: Where do They Meet?

JAAN VALSINER

1 Introduction

Meetings of ideas are not scripted events like handshakes of politicians at diplomatic summits. Rather, ideas meet as if they were clandestine lovers – at first secretly, passionately, and later – if discovered – as parts of a scenario of a public scandal or a reconstituted legally accepted relationship. Meta-theoretical discourse in the social sciences is part of that latter social legitimation.

The meeting of the social and the cultural in the minds of contemporary social scientists comes close to theoretical incest – both terms, *the cultural* and *the social* – are in some ways sibling terms. Both are widely used – and both are vague in their generalities. Yet they are important for guiding the social sciences as meta-theoretical constructs – performing the functions of promoter signs (Valsiner 2004) at that level.

In the history of human societies, culture has been a difficult term to use in everyday and scientific discourse. As a term, it implies constructive modification of the natural course of affairs (Lotman 1990, 2002). In this respect, culture acts destructively towards nature – yet within the act of destruction is the act of construction. This can take the form of some kind of goal-directed cultivation of features or properties of objects – be those plants, domesticated animals, or children – in the process of their development.

These acts of cultivation are social in their origin – hence the issue of the linkages of the cultural and the social as goals of understanding in this chapter seem easy to resolve. Yet the meaning of “social” is equally general – and vague. Social scientists have for over a century been telling one another that “human beings are social” (Valsiner and van der Veer 2000) – and descriptions of social interaction are abundant in the empirical work.

2 The World of the Social: Construction of Norms and Creating Value

2.1 *Cultivating the Social World*

Here I link the construction of social norms with that of semiotic mediating devices which are the central focus of culture (Valsiner 2007). Norms emerge from the flow of semiotically mediated everyday life activities as interpersonal constructions that maintain themselves through social interaction. They belong to the realm of collective culture (Valsiner 2000a, 2007) and canalize the subjective worlds of persons (personal cultures) as well as give rise to hyper-generalized semiotic fields – cultural values.

The whole world of human beings is a cultivated world, where natural resources – of ourselves, and of our environment – are transformed into a meaningful world of objects. Some of those objects become exchangeable as commodities – while others attain the status of personalized and sacred non-exchangeable belongings.

2.2 *Value Addition to Cultivation*

Meanings of objects carry their cultivated value – and objects have their own “cultural biographies.” Thus, cars lose value as they age, until about the age of thirty when they start to belong to the category of “antiques” and as such rise in value year by year (Kopytoff 1986, p. 80). The same applies to furniture or other household objects of durable character such as vases, silverware, rugs – but not plastic cups and plates that are functional, precisely in their planned disposability – only at a different time scale. In parallel with cultural value being made by the wear and tear of the “antiques” human beings operate within the meaning system of some objects’ dramatically losing their value after first use – “disposable” napkins, newspapers, flowers in a vase, or water in the bath tub. This contrast is basic – all of our ecological concerns are linked with intervention by society in the course of natural processes by way of creating an ever-increasing stockpile of non-organic disposed results of our ways of living – “the waste.”

Similar value becomes applied to human beings – they become symbols for regulating other peoples’ social relationships. Traditionally, together with assuming social roles – in different areas of the world differently – with age, people may acquire more social value as “wise persons” and may be trusted with complex decisions. This cultural model preserves the accumulation of experiences of peoples’ lifetimes, and is the analogue of non-disposability. Our ancestors are the best “human antiques” whom we value highly, honor with elaborate rituals, and keep as part of our subjective worlds in many important ways. They are relatives – perhaps deceased for a long time – who still play a social role for the living.

However, in the historical process of moving into the dominance of anonymous social institutions, persons-in-roles become replaced by roles-by-persons. The multi-generational family ties of the persons-in-roles model becomes replaced by one where social roles have continuity, and people in these roles become dis-

posable. The move from politically dominant family lines of kings to those of democratically elected governing bodies – or employment of CEOs in large corporations – exemplifies this change. Narrative histories of countries may keep including stories about the lineage from “King X the First” to “King X the Eighth” – but similar historical documentation of the memories would not be found for “Bill the First” (of Microsoft) as he exits from corporate leadership to better, more enjoyable (?) areas of human existence.

In the latter focus, social actions privilege the value of the young and inexperienced – therefore trainable and usable – over the older persons. The “wisdom of the age” becomes replaced by the “flexible non-wisdom of the young.” In various social institutions, older people may be forced into retirement and their social value may be limited to family circles in the role of loving grandparents. Often the value of human beings is expressed in monetary terms. The size of payments made to individuals in the social roles of slaves, business leaders, professional athletes, lawyers, doctors or academics as communicated in public are examples of creating collective value for the cultivation of social role images. The astronomically high salaries of these present day executives are not payments for what they have accomplished – but signs to mark the positive valuation of their social roles in communication, e.g., a CEO whose salary is reported as 500,000 EUR looks symbolically more valuable than another at 100,000 EUR level.

Human beings become commodities – a path historically set up by the social framework of enslaving and re-selling of enslaved persons – in human history.

2.3 Culture as a Verb – Not a Noun

Cultivation has its varied time lines and areas of focus. All human socially differentiated roles are cultivated. What are the ways in which such cultivation takes place in human relations? Note that the noun – culture – does not carry the functions that its verb-kind extensions – “to cultivate” or “to culture” – might carry. The crucial tension in psychologists’ discourse about culture is that between treating it as an existing entity (e.g., “culture is X”), and a process of becoming (e.g., “culturing leads to X”). That latter process is socially guided – but not determined. Human beings live in the world of “bounded indeterminacy” (Valsiner 1997) within which the social actors attempt to guide the indeterminate process of culturing – through setting up redundant social constraint systems upon acting and meaning-making.

3 Social Norms as Culturing Tools

3.1 A Tribute to Muzafer Sherif

How does temporary stability of cultural forms emerge from the bi-directional culture transfer process? A productive answer to that question was provided by Muzafer Sherif in the 1930s. Given the readiness of our contemporary social sciences to habitually overlook its own history of ideas – similarly to the discounting

of the wisdom of the aged – it is worthwhile to learn from our elders. We may discover that our contemporary social sciences are by far less innovative and original than we like to present ourselves (Valsiner and van der Veer 2000).

Sherif's classic work *The Psychology of Social Norms* (1936), and his ingenious experimental study of the autokinetic movement (Sherif 1937) are known in social psychology. However, as it happens, "being known" is often the end of the constructive usefulness of an idea. Frequent superficial references to persons (and ideas) "known" that dominate the writing style of contemporary social sciences (I call it "democracy of the literature" – Valsiner, 2000b) actually keep these sciences away from constructive uses of the ideas in question.

The developmental and cultural basis that led Sherif to his clever experimental demonstrations is often overlooked – through social blinders:

When, in his studies, a psychologist or sociologist imposes the norms of his own community-centrism upon the community-centrism of other peoples, the outcome is an impossible confusion. (Sherif 1936, p. 16)

Thus, already starting from looking at "the others," human beings are social – their ways of seeing are oriented by their position in the social organization. For example, a researcher who has personally internalized – through ardent academic studies – the notion that societies are either "individualist" or "collectivist" (Sinha and Tripathi 2001), or that gender is strictly classifiable into either "male" or "female" (cf. Oyewumi 1997) – is likely to remain blind to the obvious nature of the unity of such opposites in all usual cases. For example, the unity of "individualist" and "collectivist" (group conformity) tendencies have been elaborated in the U.S. by social scientists for a long time (Mead 1930) – yet the prevailing axiomatic stance of empirical researchers in cross-cultural psychology remains blinded by the "either I or C" mentality.

Sherif saw the necessity for scientists to rise above their own culturally constructed values and beliefs, as well as those of the people under study. The emergence and transformation of social norms is a dynamic developmental process:

Social norms are not absolutes. They develop in the course of actual relationships between individuals. They presuppose for their formation the contact of individuals striving toward the satisfaction of their needs and the realization of what they consider "I" or "We," the latter indicating the group with which "I" identifies itself. Therefore the norms may change, and do change eventually with the important changes in the structure of the situation that gave rise to those norms in the beginning. (Sherif 1936, p. 17)

For Sherif it was important to take into account the entire cultural history of different societies. The cultural history is often closely intertwined by the history of major social institutions – especially those which have guided individuals over many generations toward their internalized reconstruction of the value systems, exemplified in specific activity practices (or their avoidance). History of cultural belief systems entails constructive replication – at times involving attenuation, at times – amplification – of the specific meaning ↔ action complexes by people in each new generation.

A particular historically maintained belief – religious or political – can be reconstructed by the young in a given society in an exaggerated way – as a means to negotiate their roles within the changing society. This negotiation process has a parallel at the level of social organizations. Within a larger social organization (state) new religious cults emerge, may proliferate and disappear. In the third and fourth centuries, Christianity was persecuted and stigmatized as a cult. Its survival and proliferation into a worldwide religious system is a historical product – which by now creates the axis of opposition in the world with another – also formerly a small cult – Islam.

3.2 Experimental Demonstration of Social Norm Construction

The autokinetic movement occurs if a single point of light, fixed at some distance from the viewers, in a completely dark room, is perceived as moving, since it lacks any background framework relative to which its location can be fixed subjectively. If a person *is asked to report, the extent of* evaluating the movement differs from one participant to another. Yet if they are requested to report their estimated *movement*, they establish a range and a point in the dark, relative to which the stationary point is subjectively seen as moving (due to the viewer’s own eye movements).

When different people view the same light point, and discuss them in the group, their subjective norm system becomes collectively coordinated. A *group* norm for how to see the stationary point “moving” becomes established. Sherif’s experiments with autokinetic movement demonstrated clearly how human beings create mental evaluation norms (for illusory perceptual experiences – such as the perceived movement of a non-moving light point), and how they homogenize these norms inter-personally to create group norms. Furthermore, once such group norms are established, the members of the group can turn those into their internal standards of evaluation. Group consensus can create social illusions (based on perceptual ones) which evolve to regulate the person’s own psychological system, as well as his or her expectations for others.

3.3 Social Norms Co-constructed within a Group

The social construction of group norms, and the resiliency of these norms, is constantly demonstrated by various religious sects that establish their own standards for how to live, and how to evaluate others’ lives.

A classic description of such a cult is given by Festinger et al. (1956). A group of people unites around the calling by the cult leader to be “prepared for the end of the world.” The expected event – the collapse of the whole world – was fortified by the “miracle of God’s revelation” to the group leader. It constituted the “symbolic version” of the stationary light (viewed as moving) in Sherif’s autokinetic experiment. An event expected in the future – but prepared for today – is

indeterminate – and therefore open for the construction of group norms by people oriented towards that outcome. The goal-oriented group establishes its internal norms, ingroup/outgroup distinction (“We the special people versus” “The others”). The only difficulty may arise if the known doomsday passes without the event. Under conditions of rationality, this should falsify the system of group norms and beliefs. Yet, under the circumstances of sect-like groups, the *disconfirmation can fortify the norms*. Thus, any social norm (or belief) can develop in three possible ways when being challenged (see Fig. 1)

The crucial issue is how to understand the mechanisms operating in that bifurcation point (Directionality Node). Under what conditions would the norm be fortified, and under what other conditions may it become extinct? The person’s constructed intention to maintain the present social norm may distinguish between the two trajectories following disconfirmation:

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Disconfirmation → Extinction: | Disconfirmation → Fortification: |
| X is the current norm | X is the current norm |
| Evidence disconfirms X | Evidence disconfirms X |
| “I don’t care about X” | “I want to believe in X” |
| X becomes extinguished | X becomes defended & fortified |

The return to the discredited notion of personal will is an inevitable link between person and the social world. In psychology, since the beginning of 20th century, the notion of personal will – intention, determination, etc – has been rarely considered as a central psychological notion. It allows the person the freedom to break out of the structural confines set up by social norms, behavioral

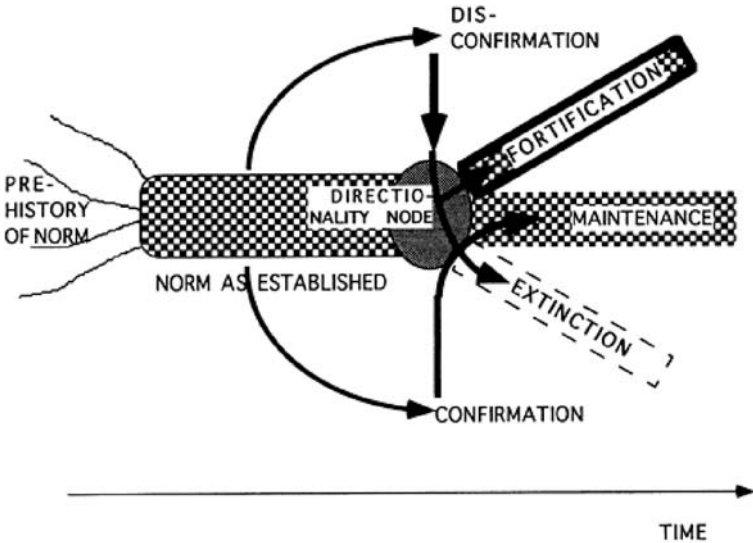


FIG. 1. Transformation of social norms

rules, etc. – in total, it forces psychology to recognize the principled uncontrollability (and unpredictability) of human psyche. This idea was anathema to the behavioral control ethos that governed much of psychology through the 20th century. However, we will give that notion a different meaning. Personal will can be viewed as a means that provides generic orientation of the self towards the future, selectively highlighting some aspects of the present.

When viewed from this angle, culture (as the system of semiotic operators) guarantees that any person would be ready to resist and counter-act social suggestions (and disconfirmation of beliefs) by the environment (Lotman 1993). Culture makes persons free from the demands of the immediate social environments – by making them dependent upon those very same environments! This is not a paradox but a depiction of the helical nature of development of all social (and other open) systems. We are all “dependently independent” (Valsiner 1997) upon our environments.

4 Cultural Mediation of Personal Autonomy: Personal Culture

4.1 *The Personal and the Collective Culture*

At the human level, ontogeny entails the construction and use of signs to regulate both inter-personal and intra-personal emergent psychological phenomena. The latter are described as the build-up of hierarchical regulatory mechanisms of increasing generality: through the use of signs, human beings can transcend any here-and-now situated activity context by way of subjectively constructed personal meanings (or “personal culture”). The personal culture is interdependent with (but not determined by) the realm of inter-personal signs-mediated communicative processes, which are goal-oriented by the active efforts of persons-in-their-assumed social roles. The multiplicity of such communicative messages (or “collective culture” in the present terminology) constitutes the heterogeneous “input” into self-construction by individual human beings (Valsiner 2000a, 2007).

The power of the personal culture can be observed in the case of food related actions. Sherif’s example illustrates that as follows:

Present freshly boiled pork chops to two hungry men. One of our hungry men is a Moham-medan whose religion tells him that anything connected with pigs is disgusting – this is an established taboo, a norm. The other person is a Christian. He will seize the chops and eat them with gusto. The first person will *not only not touch the chops, he will be filled with disgust for them and for the person who eats such filthy things.* (Sherif 1936, p. 28, added emphases)

This example illustrates the ways in which cultural internalization works at the level of person’s affective processes. Not only is a distinction made that affectively separates social categories of human beings, but the stable prejudicial meaning of “the other” is created, or fortified. The rejection of the “inedible” in

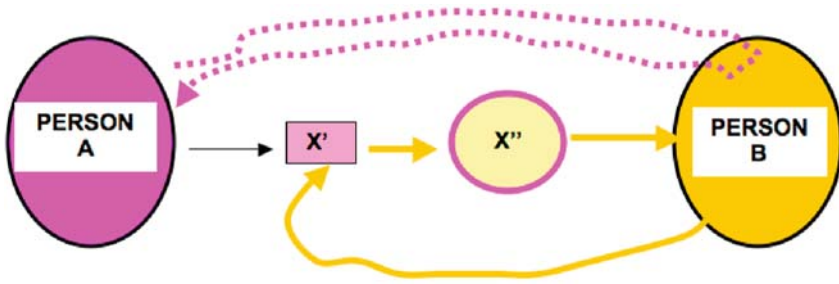


FIG. 2. The bi-directional (mutually constructive) culture transfer scheme

the collective-cultural meaning system by a person takes place at the level of deep subjective feelings (and at times – of physiological responses). At the same time, the externalization of that personal-cultural sense enters into the making of distinctions between the social unit one claims to belong (ingroup) in contrast to a dis-valued outgroup.

The dual process of *internalization and externalization* guarantees a *lack* of isomorphism between the collective and personal cultures, thus making each individual into a unique person, while based on the same general background of collective culture. This is guaranteed by the bi-directional culture transfer notion (Fig. 2) – while the “incoming messages” can be similar for different individuals, the ways in which these messages become transformed and reconstructed is necessarily personally unique.

In Figure 2, the role of the recipient (B) is depicted as active analyzer of the suggested message (X') into its components, together with a synthesis of a new internalized form of message (X''). In that process, some parts of the initial message are eliminated, others modified, and still others added.

4.2 *Relative Autonomy of the Person*

Why such focus on autonomy? And how can autonomy emerge? In ontogeny, the developing child constantly operates upon breaking of current relations with the immediate activity settings. Semiotic mediation allows for both such a break, and for retaining the breaking experience for later encounters.

In their generalized form, acts of personal-cultural creation can be summarized by the following (Fig. 3)

Most of the world’s religious architecture, art, rituals, and reasons for all kinds of quarrels are due to this simple projective-constructive process. We construct the meanings that lead us to reconstruct the objective world – and the reconstructed world guides our further construction of meanings. Both Notre Dame and McDonalds are architectural objective realities in this subjective chain of meaning construction. The history of clothing provides abundant evidence of the major social distinctions made on the basis of minor decisions of what kind of

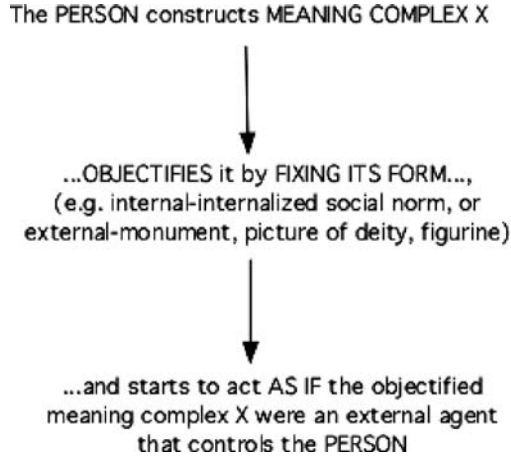


Fig. 3. Schema of personal-cultural creation

body wraps one uses in social settings (Roche 1994). Human beings – thanks to their capacity for transcending the here-and-now settings through signs – constantly live with the tension of “the world AS IS” and the imaginary – anticipated or treaded – “world AS-IF” (Vaihinger 1935). When human psychological issues are considered from a developmental angle, the “world AS-IF” becomes differentiated into that of the worlds “AS-COULD-BE” (Josephs 1998) and “AS-SHOULD-BE.” Through such differentiation of meaningful relation of the person to the world both fearful and fearless actions happen within human social relationships.

5 From Being to Becoming

5.1 *The Mind as an “AS-IF Creator”*

It is here where culture enters into the human *psyche* – and infinitely complicates the construction of the sciences of the human mind. Not only do these sciences need to depict the realms of psychological phenomena as those are – be these behavioral, emotional, or cognitive – they also have to capture the domain of what they seem to be (the “AS-IF” worlds), and what they might become. The methodological innovation needed is of the kind of developing new scientific promoter signs for better study of psychological realities. All scientific terminology – similar to its everyday counterpart – is in fact a version of such a regulating system that entails promoter signs (Valsiner 2004) of an abstract kind. A promoter sign is a generalized meaning that guides further construction of meaning and acting.

That part is meant to objectively and abstractly explain the complexity of our psychological phenomena – a scientific theory is a kind of a mental cathedral that

stands in the center of the booming and buzzing confusion we call living a life. That confusion is pre-emptively counter-acted by semiotic mediation. Growth of semiotic control systems guarantees human psychological flexibility, together with its opposite (inflexible fixing of a way of thinking or feeling about something). *The cultural* enables *the social* to be flexible in relation to the constantly changing circumstances of the environmental demands.

6 Cultural Processes have Future Orientation

From both the level of the psychological function that is to be regulated (base level) and that of semiotic mediators (first meta-level), we can posit the existence of directionality. The psychological functions are historical, in the sense of bounded within the irreversibility of time. Their directionality can be described in terms of goal orientation. It is posited here that human lower psychological functions are goal-oriented (rather than goal-directed), as their directionality can be specified (but specific goals cannot be, as these are constructions about some possible future). Similarly, signs are specifiable by their presentational orientation. A use or invention of a word depicting something is not only a referring to the denoted referent, but presenting that referent for some purpose or direction.

7 The Social World of Signs: Pleromatic Abundance

7.1 *Culturing as Semiosis*

Human worlds are social – and as such are over-abundant in all kinds of sign constructions. Culture is semiosis (Lotman 1990, 2002). Iconic signs emerge as a result of human activities – visual, acoustic, or of any other sense system – as generalized presentations of life experience. Most of such experience becomes encoded iconically – through generalized visual, haptic, olfactory, or auditory images that the person creates within an encounter with the surrounding world. This experience is socially organized – through cultural rituals that include the totality of bodily experience:

Ritual proceedings must be marked off from the normal events of everyday life both in space and in time. Thus it is not sufficient that the proceedings take place in a specially allocated building such as a church; the specifically sacred nature of the occasion must be marked in some additional way – very commonly by means of music and other kinds of noise. But the special ritual space may also be indicated by smell – the burning of incense. By convention, the smell of incense is rated as sweet and pleasant (Leach 2000, p. 240).

Social norms constructed to reference the total experience of smelling create iconic signs. Icon – combined with index (in the triad of signs ICON/INDEX/SYMBOL of C.S. Peirce) is the locus for emerging abstraction – which subsequently loses the feeling of being abstract. There are two parallel directions in

abstraction – making of abbreviated symbols (words, conventional graphic signs – schemata) or making of hyper-abundant fields of meaning that are generalized into vague overwhelming meanings that are used instantly and “intuitively.” For example, the notion of “summer night’s silence,” or for the Brazilians and Portuguese the notion of *saudade* (Lourenço 1999) – are easily communicable interpersonally shared general meanings. Yet, they are not simple symbols (e.g. words). To convey the whole richness of the silence of a summer’s night, it would

... require verbose explanations of the different Finnish seasons, the light of the Nordic summer, the softness of the green, and especially the mental state from which the meaning of this expression or image wells forth. As a matter of fact, the silence of a summer night is not composed of mere silence; instead, it is a state of mind filled with multitudes of meanings and sensations of nature. It is also an illusion representing an ideal concept of reality. (Vainomäki 2004, p. 349)

Or, as I am writing this chapter – it happens in an ambience that could be described as a “serene summer morning” – yet the fullness of that experience is not covered by those words. Furthermore, the totality of experience entails the encoding of such complex experiences into more complex signs – a symphony (i.e., a system of music – a version on non-silence) on the theme of the silence of the summer’s night.

Icons can transform by two trajectories. If they move along the abbreviation trajectory, icons become *schemata* – simplified replicas of the object they present. If icons transform towards greater generalized complexity they become *pleromata* (from the Greek, *pleroma*, or fullness) hyper-rich depictions of reality that stand for some other realities (or unrealities). As Mieczyslaw Wallis explained,

Schemata occur in the pictograms of many people, in traffic signs, in diagrams of scientific works, in children’s drawings, [and] in the works of some modern painters such as Klee or Dubuffet. Pleromata occur in fifteenth century Dutch painting, in seventeenth century Dutch still-lives, in paintings by the nineteenth century Naturalists or the twentieth century Surrealists, [and] in many photographs and films. (Wallis 1973, p. 487)

The immediate perception of an object can thus become *either less* rich in detail (schematizing) *or more* rich (pleromatizing) in detail than its original object, while becoming an icon (see Fig. 4). Both trajectories of sign transformation are abstracting from the original event (losing some features of that event) and generalizing – creating meaning that transcends the immediate event.

Furthermore, schematization and pleromatization can be viewed as processes of semiosis that are always present as two parts of the same whole. Schematization results in the making of categorical distinction (e.g. “This is A” as extracted from some complex experience), while pleromatization generalizes meaning from the non-A counterpart field of the full meaning (A and non-A) (Josephs et al. 1999). Pleromatization is the growth of the non-A field in terms of field-like signs (Valsiner 2007).

Pleromatic signs present a generalized concept of what is depicted by way of transcending the particular object that is depicted by the sign. A realist painting

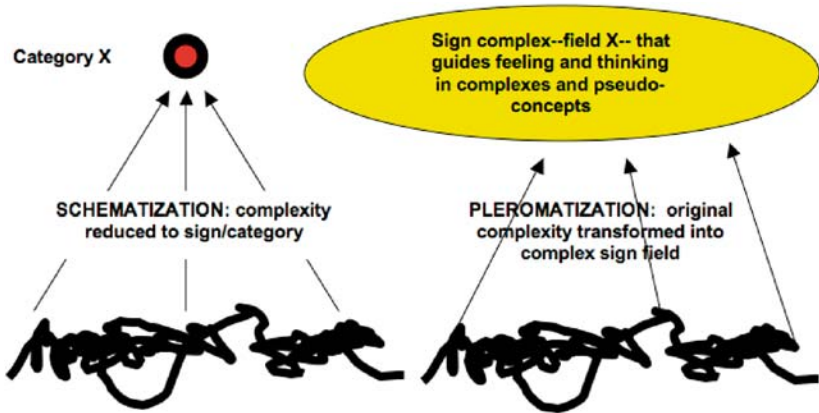


Fig. 4. Semiotic making of cultural categories (schematization) and diffuse sign-fields (pleromatization) in human social action

does not seem abstract, yet it is an iconic pleromatic sign that operates as a sign-field. As such, it provides nonverbal meaning for the person encountering such painting. Similarly, graphic designs that saturate our visual environments, or music we overhear in public are examples of the pleromatic guidance of our personal cultures. The poetic rhythm of human living is cultural in its most general sense – with dynamic patterning that guides our lives (Hocevar 2003). Architecture is filled with iconic abstractions of pleromatic kind – temples and churches are rich in detail, yet their holistic meaning is in the abstract messages these details carry (Wallis 1975)

7.2 Pleromatic Generalization

The pleromatic semiotic universe we inhabit matches with our abductive generalization readiness (Magariños de Morentin 2005) and operates through a socialized nonverbal level. We “feel that” something “means something” that we cannot put into words, yet use in guiding our actions. That “something” is not a vague emerging idea of the realities surrounding the person, but a hyper-generalized field-like sign – a meaning that guides the person’s ways of acting in the social world, without the need to be involved in constant rational decision making processes. Generalized social values – internalized by persons to become unique personal values (the core of the personal culture) are of this kind. The feelings – “this is me,” “this is true,” the feeling of trust in a parent, or in a religious or political movement, in humanity, in luck – are all examples of pleromatic generalization. Our socialized intuition operates through pleromatic signs, while our social discourse works with the help of schematic signs. Pleromatic generalization creates the semiotic context for the operation of our “rational reasoning” that utilizes schematic signs.

7.3 From Ruptures to Closures: Social Negotiation of Cultural Self-Creation

The semiotic regulatory processes of the person meet up with the social dynamics of distinctions-making at moments of crucial movement of personal life transitions or “ruptures” (Zittoun 2006). These transitions are semiotically mediated – making use of existing symbolic resources as well as creating new meanings based on those, moving towards a new state of equilibrium (“closure”).

The social negotiation process entails co-regulation across four levels of organization – cultural-historical, macrogenetic (collective-cultural), mesogenetic (personal-cultural) and microgenetic. The immediate experience of a person consists of a sequence of highly variable microgenetic events, some of which are social (e.g. interactions with different partners, participation in social events).

The meanings emerging from these encounters make up the mesogenetic level of personal culture that preserves the emerged semiotic mediators in a state of readiness for further use. It is guided by the cultural-historical level – through encoding of the life-world of the person by pleromatic signs (centuries-old buildings for living – or very new hyper-modern architecture; “antique” eating utensils or disposable paper cups and plastic cutlery, the smell of cut flowers in a vase or of blossoming cherry trees in a park). Pleromatic signs give the general direction for social events to guide the schematization of one’s mind towards the next closure.

8 Conclusion: The Cultural and the Social Meet in the Immediate Living Process

Human collective cultures set up, for individuals, expected ruptures of highly meaningful kinds (rituals of transition), promoting the construction of action directions along the lines of social expectations. The social system introduces “breaks” in the continuity of life – persons move from home to school, from childhood to adulthood, from unmarried to married and divorced, and widowed states of being, from being poor to being rich or vice versa, from home village (or country) to another village (or city, or country), from home into the street (and back) – and so on. We are in constant movement between where we have been and where we have not yet been.

The personal culture complements its collective counterpart, the generation of ruptures. People get drunk, engage in dangerous liaisons breaking moral and social norms, change spouses, abandon and adopt children, go on pilgrimages or visit psychologists, get depressed or gossip about celebrities – all these everyday life events are parts of *the social* that is organized by the cultural.

Yet the ruptures are created to bring the developing people to new qualitative states of mind or social being. These are far from equilibrium states that lead to re-constitution of the dynamic structure. The existing conceptual models of the social sciences need to take into account this developmental orientation. So far,

that has been rare – hence the need for a rupture in the ways of theorizing and its corresponding empirical efforts of our contemporary social sciences.

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Moral Responsibility and Social Fiction

TOSHIAKI KOZAKAI

This chapter proposes to analyze the nature of moral responsibility. It does not explore how moral responsibility is practiced in specific cultural communities, in certain periods of time, or what kind of cognitive biases are observed according to social circumstances (Heider 1958; Weiner 1995). My concern is neither how human beings learn the attribution pattern of responsibility (Piaget 1932; Kohlberg 1981), nor what is the best conceptualization of moral responsibility. The first approach, typically socio-psychological, addresses biases of accounting for a criminal deed, but does not ask what moral responsibility is; the second, developmental, studies children's evolution in causal attribution of responsibility, but does not determine what moral responsibility is; the third, philosophical, contends that moral responsibility can and should be founded transcendently out of socio-historical context. On the contrary, I affirm that moral responsibility is a social phenomenon, and that it is impossible to found or justify any "truth" independently of social contexts, because truth is a synonym of collective representation. I do not consider what one ought to be or to do, but what one is, and what one does effectively.

The following pages will reveal that any attempt to justify moral responsibility collides with certain logical difficulties and that responsibility is a socio-psychological fiction, no matter when and where. In fact, social psychology has produced a considerable amount of research on bias in responsibility attribution, but few reflections propose to clarify the notion of responsibility itself, as this question is generally confused with that of causal attribution (Fincham and Jaspars 1980). After considering the logical problems involved in imputing responsibility to the perpetrator of a criminal deed, I assert that the concept of moral responsibility cannot be understood in a causal logic of action, but as an anthropologic process to settle the social order.

1 Determination of Behaviors by Situational Factors

Social psychology reveals that human liberty is fragile. The most spectacular work on this issue is Stanley Milgram's unforgettable experiment on obedience to authority (Milgram 1974). One of the crucial questions raised by his study concerned the possibility that responsibility for heinous deeds attributed to the perpetrator could be the result of powerful authoritarian influences. In that experiment, the subjects' demographic characteristics such as sex, education, religion, profession or political affiliation had no statistical significance in the data. Studies carried out in other countries and in later periods of time resulted in similar obedience rates: 88% in South Africa (Edwards et al. 1969, cited by Blass 2002); 73% (Shanab and Yahya 1977) and 63% (Shanab and Yahya 1978) in Jordan; 80% in Austria (Schurz 1985); 85% in Germany (Mantell 1971); 90% in Spain (Miranda 1981). However, situational factors influenced the decision of whether to shock or not shock and the obedience rate using those parameters varied from zero to 93% according to circumstances (Milgram 1974). How can such results be conciliated with our customary image of the human being, responsible and capable to act intentionally and consciously?

Beside Milgram's research in particular, social psychology in general challenges the concepts of freedom and responsibility. In our common sense or actual legal conception, one is responsible for one's acts because one is free and can choose to behave otherwise. But is one really free and autonomous? Researches in social psychology disclose that what we call "freedom" is often nothing other than an illusion of freedom (Beauvois and Joule 1981). We are constantly under the strong influence of others and our external cognitive environment.

At the same time, we feel autonomous thanks to multiple mechanisms of illusion. The expression of "fundamental attribution error" (Ross 1977) was proposed to point out the strong tendency to ignore situational causes and to attribute a deed to intentional or dispositional factors of the agent. Milgram described the scenario of his experiment to people from various social strata and asked them to estimate how many people they thought would inflict electric shocks of 450 volts to an innocent victim if told to do so. The interviewed people estimated extremely low proportions: i.e., an average of 1.2% in the general population (Milgram 1963) and 0.125% by psychiatrists (Milgram 1965), whereas in reality 65% of the participants inflicted maximum intensity shocks. Thus, they ignored the tremendous force exerted by the external social environment on their behavior.

People use subtle mechanisms of rationalization to bring about the impression of autonomy. Human behaviors are not a consequence of their conscious decision, but in reality a reversal of the chronological order of this causal chain. In short, human beings are not rational but instead, rationalizing animals (Festinger 1957). And this psychological readaptation is often achieved unconsciously (Nisbett and Wilson 1977). These studies reject the usual schema that intention brings about the action and suggest that intention, on the contrary, is a byproduct derived from the behavior.

In opposition to the Cartesian thesis, a “subject” has no privileged access to his or her own mental state. When subjects account for their behavior, they cannot reach it by introspection, but find the reasons for their behavior through external observation of their own behavior, as if they had analyzed another person’s behavior (Bem 1972). Bem’s theory of self-perception and Festinger’s theory of cognitive dissonance are based on different epistemological positions, but both challenge the modern image of human beings: autonomous, rational and independent. Nisbett and Wilson (1977) proposed to interpret their subject’s account of their behavior as an application of certain explicative patterns at large in their culture. The researches on illusion of control (Langer 1975) and the “just world hypothesis” of Lerner (Lerner and Simmons 1966) should be also invoked in the same vein. Social psychology thus objects to the common view that human behaviors are an outcome of free will.

2 Paradox Between Personal Dispositions and Responsibility

To be sure, not all of Milgram’s (1974) subjects obeyed the experimenter’s order. Hence, some human behaviors were not totally determined by external situational factors. When personal factors intervene in the occurrence of a behavior, human beings cannot escape from their moral responsibility. Such is the usual answer when it comes to account for the troublesome results of Milgram’s study. But the concept of moral responsibility cannot be preserved, even if personal dispositions contribute to determine one’s behavior. To be morally responsible for what one does because of the way one is, one must be responsible for the way one *is*. But one cannot be responsible for the way one is, because one is the way one is, initially, as a result of heredity and early experience (Strawson 2003). The predispositional attribution is not sufficient to impute moral responsibility.

Compare the following two cases to clarify the problem. Suppose a pedophile recidivist who was abused in his childhood was unable to resist his libidinous drives. And suppose we decide to confine him in a prison or psychiatric hospital in order to protect children from him. If he cannot resist his impulses while being aware of the illicit character of his deed, or even if he unable to realize it, he is not free because his mental predispositions do not allow him to control his behavior. Even though society justifies his internment in an isolated place, nevertheless he is not responsible for his deed. On the other hand, a “normal” individual who commits the same deed only one time is deemed responsible. His predispositions do not lead him inevitably to criminal behavior and he is able to resist immoral temptations. He is free and therefore must assume responsibility for what he did. We now encounter a paradox. The former, unable to take responsibility, must be punished more severely in order to protect society from him than the latter, who was solely responsible for his behavior, but less dangerous because of his lesser tendency to repeat similar crimes. The reasonable punishment is not proportional to the responsibility, but on the contrary: an

individual must be punished all the more severely because he is *less* free and *less* responsible.

It is, of course, possible to consider that the punishment is not inflicted because the perpetrator is responsible: As biological machines, some individuals must be repaired (reeducated or hospitalized), put out of circulation (imprisoned or confined), or even destroyed (executed) because of their dysfunction vis-à-vis social rules. But then we abandon the modern concept of moral responsibility based on free will.

3 Intention Revisited

It is not enough in the modern sense of responsibility to attribute the cause of a behavior to predisposition: it is necessary to link it to the agent's intention. Neurobiological studies prove that human behaviors, even when entirely conscious, are not triggered by intention. Libet (2004) asked subjects to perform a freely voluntary act, a simple but sudden flexion of the wrist at any time they felt like doing so. They were also asked to associate their awareness of the intention to move their wrist with the clock position of a revolving light spot in 2.56 s. The readiness potential was measured with suitable electrodes applied to the head. The result showed that event order does not correspond to the Cartesian view of action. It is usually believed that the will produces a brain signal to set the wrist in motion and the transmission of this information then leads to the effective movement. However, it became obvious that the departure point was an unconscious trigger of two simultaneous processes, namely the transmission of information leading to the flexion of the wrist, and the production of conscious will. In other words, the subjects ignored that they "wanted" to do the action at the moment of their unconscious "decision," and this unconscious "decision" provoked two processes in parallel: they become conscious of it ("I now want to move my wrist") approximately 300 to 400 ms later, and wrist flexion took place about 200 ms still later. As the subjects became aware of their "will" before the flexion of the wrist, they could deceive themselves that the decision was taken freely and that this "decision" or "will" provoked effective movement of the wrist.

Similar results were found in an experiment by Grey Walter (1963, cited by Dennett 1991, pp. 167–168). The subject was asked to look at slides from a carousel projector. He could advance the carousel at will, by pressing the button on the controller. Unbeknown to the subject, however, the controller button was a dummy, not attached to the slide projector. What actually advanced the slides was the amplified signal from the electrode implanted in the subject's motor cortex. The projector was thus connected to the subject's cerebral state via a computer. Contrary to Libet's experiment in which the transmission of the signal toward the wrist took more time than the subject's becoming aware of the "will", slides changed almost instantly and before the subject pressed the button. The subject was startled by the effect, because it seemed to him as if the slide

projector was anticipating his decision. He reported that just as he was “about to” push the button, but before he had actually decided to do so, the projector would advance the slide.

The human brain is organized in many functional units, relatively independent of each other, working in parallel. These processes remain largely unconscious. What comes to the conscious surface is already structured in a coherent and rational form. The will is not the starting point of an action, but a later stage of various cognitive processes carried out unconsciously. This connectionist conception of human behaviors has been widely accepted in neurosciences (Gazzaniga 1985).

Predispositional factors of each individual participate undeniably in determining their behavior. But behavior is not triggered by intention or free will. While social psychology criticizes the illusion of endogenous causality, neurosciences object to the Cartesian view of intentional causality. Hence, moral responsibility cannot be founded in the modern meaning of the term.

4 Logical Dead Point

Let us detour momentarily, to emphasize the gravity of the logical situation we face now. Milgram’s obedience study is often associated with the Holocaust in Nazi Germany (Blass 2002; Browning 1992; Milgram 1974; Miller et al. 2002; Saltzman 2000). Additionally, a number of analyses of this tragedy insist on the importance of factors relating to bureaucratic structures and circumstances (Arendt 1963; Bauman 1989; Browning 1992; Hilberg 1961). Browning studied the activities of men in a reserve battalion deployed in Poland. Most of them were middle-aged family men, too old to be of use to the German army. All went through their formative period in the pre-Nazi era and had known political standards and moral norms other than those of the Nazis. Nevertheless, in less than one and one half years, these five hundred ordinary men shot 38 thousand Jews and deported 45 thousand to the gas chambers of Treblinka. In general, the German killers were not especially chosen for their dark task, thus everyone could be assigned to a destructive mission (Hilberg 1961).

It should be noted that the situationalist and functionalist interpretations face a serious logical problem concerning the Nazis’ responsibility. Uneasiness is clearly perceived among social psychologists, because their discipline is characterized by the emphasis on the force of situational factors determining human behaviors (Miller et al. 2002). In fact, they face the horns of a delicate dilemma: either assuming the logical conclusion of their approach and doubting, or at least attenuating the guilt of the Nazis for the Genocide, or holding the killers responsible for their deeds and considerably weakening the explicative power of their discipline.

Goldhagen (1996), who studied the same archives of the reserve battalion, fiercely disputed Browning’s interpretation. Although they shared the observation that the killers were no different from other Germans, Browning and

Goldhagen drew opposite conclusions. For the former, these ordinary men – this is the title of his book – were led to kill because they were precipitated in particular circumstances; for the latter, ordinary Germans voluntarily carried out the massacres, hence his book title: *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*.

For Goldhagen, the murderous deeds are explained by an “eliminationist anti-Semitism” formed during the 19th century specific to all Germans. But here is not the place to examine which explanation can better account for the tragedy which occurred from a complex combination of economical, political, ideological, cultural and psychological factors. Let us instead focus on the paradoxical relationship between the causal explanation and the moral responsibility. The further the explanation advances, the more the responsibility inevitably fades out. Suppose with Goldhagen, that a particular form of German anti-Semitism was the crucial cause of the Holocaust. In other words, impute the responsibility to the Germans through their predispositions: national character or personality. Then the responsibility of the Nazis is at risk to disappear just like the case of functionalist explanations, as Rosenbaum puts it:

If the German people were so relentlessly and inexorably driven by their eliminationist anti-Semitic ideology, then they had no choice but to act the way they did, and having no choice, they have no responsibility, any more than a schizophrenic who hears delusory voices in his head urging him to kill, voices he has no power to resist, has responsibility. (Rosenbaum 1999, pp. 361–362)

By portraying the German people as pregnant with inevitable, inexorable murder by reducing Hitler to a marginal midwife role, Goldhagen's thesis does what Browning's more sophisticated explainers seemed to be doing: attributing the crime to an irresistible abstraction that overwhelmed ordinary Germans. In effect, he makes the perpetrators themselves a kind of victim – victims of ideological poisoning which robbed them of the power to resist, robbed them of agency, of choice, any possibility of pursuing another – any other – course than the one they'd been driven to. They weren't following the order of a HITLER, but like Hitler, they were driven by the “orders” of an abstract impersonal idea that deprived them – deprived even Hitler – of responsibility and thus of culpability. (p. 366)

Goldhagen cannot escape this troublesome conclusion, as he himself affirms: “it was Hitler, but then again it could have been someone else, someone like Hitler” (Rosenbaum 1999, p. 349). The logical difficulty we face here cannot be resolved by moralizing words like: Understanding does not mean forgiving because it is the unavoidable conclusion as far as the responsibility is conceptualized in causal terms. The visceral repugnance and obstinate condemnation of Claude Lanzmann, the director of the film *Shoah*, against any attempt to explain the Holocaust reveals something essential to our problem:

If you start to explain and to answer the question of Why you are led, whether you want it or not, to justification, The question as such shows its own obscenity: Why are the Jews being killed? Because there is no answer to the question of Why. (Lanzmann, interviewed by Rosenbaum, p. 260)

5 Action and Event

Let us more rigorously reformulate the logical problem we confront. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant distinguished two categories of causalities: causality of nature and causality of freedom. The former is our usual notion of causality. An event occurs from another or other causes which occur in their turn from another event. The causal chain thus continues infinitely and the attempt to find the ultimate cause makes no sense. This way of describing events in the world also applies to human behaviors.

A voluntary action is usually distinguished from a mere event which occurs without intention. But the empirical studies cited above indicate that what we interpret to be a free action is also a result of interactions between personal predispositions and the external socio-cognitive environment. Remember Wittgenstein's famous aphorism (1921, §621):

When I raise my arm, my arm goes up. And the problem arises: what is left over if I subtract the fact that my arm goes up from the fact that I raise my arm?

It is tempting to say that the subject, the volition or the intention are left over. However it is not the answer of the philosopher: they are two descriptions of the same phenomenon. Each corresponds to two ways of apprehending the world; the same body movement – with its physiological mechanisms – is qualified at one time as an “event,” but at another time as an “action” according to the social context. The intention is not a psychological entity situated in the individual, but a social phenomenon. It is a psychological reality only by social reconstruction. Many things we do are not considered to be actions, and conversely, what we don't do is sometimes perceived as action. This fact stresses the fundamentally social nature of the intention (Kuroda 1992).

The action is usually distinguished from a mere event, according to the presence or the absence of an internal function called intention. [...] But a lot of actions are achieved obviously without the actor's being aware of their intention. Besides, how is it possible to distinguish an action from a mere event without asking the actor or examining their consciousness? The intention that we invoke as a definitional criteria of the “action” is an internal process *supposed and required by the common sense*. (my italics) It is in general *a purely fictive entity* (my italics). (Kuroda 1992, pp. 9–11)

Can the notion of responsibility still survive? The logical structure of moral responsibility is as follows: 1) To be morally responsible of an action, one should be *causa sui*; 2) But nothing can be *causa sui*; 3) And therefore nothing can be responsible. The concept of responsibility cannot be thus founded as far as it is considered within this perspective of causality of nature (Strawson 2003).

When the responsibility is at issue, one calls on another type of description of human behavior that Kant named causality of freedom. In this approach, the agent is considered as the ultimate cause of action and the causal relation does not regress infinitely as is the case of causality by nature, even though a specific human behavior is an event which occurs in the natural world.

In order to examine this question, let us consider the following two cases. A woman has just broken up with her husband and run away with her lover. Enraged by jealousy, the husband decides to avenge the deed and shoots the lover. In a first scenario, the lover dies several hours later. He was really unlucky: the ambulance took too much time to arrive at the hospital because of a traffic jam and because all the experienced doctors were away during a holiday, there was only a young intern available. Compare this situation with another scenario. Everything is identical until the gun fire. But this time, chance smiles on the lover, because he is driven immediately to a luxury hospital where skilled doctors take care of him. The lover is rescued without severe sequelae.

What would the verdict be against the husband? In the first case, he would be indicted for murder and condemned to imprisonment for a long period, perhaps to a life sentence. In the second case, he would only be charged with attempted murder. The punishment would not go further than a couple of years of imprisonment. But what distinguishes these cases? The deed exacted by the husband remains identical: the same motive (mad because of jealousy, he wants to avenge); the same intention (to kill the lover); the same behavior (using a gun to shoot the lover). Although the consequences for the victim are very different in these scenarios, the causes of the difference are totally foreign to the husband. It didn't affect the husband if the road to the hospital was congested or not, or whether the doctor was competent or inexperienced.

Why do the responsibility and the punishment vary, while the motive, the intention and the behavior remain perfectly identical? It is because responsibility is not based on causal logic but follows another type of reasoning, as a Kantian philosopher notes (Nakajima 1999):

The "transcendental freedom" means that the description of a body movement as an action requires necessarily a corresponding intention. Saying that X accomplishes an action to 'go for a walk' – whether he is conscious or not of it – amounts to affirming his intention to 'go for a walk'. Saying that X 'killed' amounts *in this sense* to recognizing that he had the intention to 'kill', independently of his psychological state at that moment. Beside himself, a man rushes to save a drowning child in a river and says: 'I have no idea of what I did.' He had at this moment the intention to 'save the child', simply because he saved the child. The other people who remained at the riverside shouting: 'I want to save the child!' did not have the intention to 'save', just because they did not save the child. (p. 121, original italics)

One invokes an intention corresponding to the action in order to impute to an individual the responsibility of the irretrievable action of the past. [. . .] By imputing the responsibility of an action to the perpetrator, one *reconstructs afterthought* his intention as the cause of the action. (pp. 161–162, my italics)

6 Inverted Relation Between Freedom and Responsibility

Responsibility is usually believed to imply the agent's freedom: one must assume the responsibility of one's deed because one had a choice not to do so. However, freedom seems impossibility if it means exemption from causal laws. In fact, it is

just the other way around: because we need to impute responsibility, society declares us free. The freedom is not a necessary condition of responsibility, but a social fiction that the idea of responsibility requires as its logical consequence (Fauconnet 1928).

It is highly significant in this respect that the Greek word for cause, *αιτια*, originally meant guilt (Kelsen 1957). Responsibility is not a concept originated from causal relations (as usually believed today). It is just the opposite. Responsibility constituted a more fundamental idea and the causal description of the world of nature, including the human behavior, was a byproduct that became gradually independent in conjunction with the objectification of the universe.

Clinical psychologists or psychiatrists play a distinctive social role when they are summoned to courtrooms for psychological expertise or invited by the mass media to account for the criminal's personality. Social psychology denounces this practice which is tantamount to overestimating the predispositional factors of the perpetrator at the expense of circumstantial conditions (Leyens 1983). This "fundamental attribution error" is not a mere cognitive bias, but constitutes a collective mechanism of responsabilization. When social psychologists disapprove of the psychologism of legal experts, they ignore being caught themselves in the causal fiction. The function of the court is not to find and punish the ultimate or principal cause of the evil, but to "settle" the offending incident (Girard 1978; Hart and Honoré 1959). The causal analyses by clinical psychologists or psychiatrists are certainly wrong or at least insufficient, but society still continues to call for their expertise. It is anthropologically relevant to have recourse to these social agents who supply the juridical institutions with an ideological justification.

Freedom is not exemption from causal laws. An action determined neither by dispositional nor by situational factors, if it ever existed, would be an action without cause, therefore random, which is far from our usual image of freedom. Free will is profoundly rooted in the personality or the predispositions of each individual. To the extent that they are a kind of exogenous sedimentations, innate or acquired in the past, determinism is not necessarily opposed to freedom. On the contrary, an action appears free to us all the more when it is determined by our predispositions. The criteria of freedom is not the exemption of the behavior from causal laws, but the subjective impression to be able to behave ourselves as we want without feeling constraint by others or the social environment.

7 Socio-psychological Fiction and Social Order

My argument so far denies neither moral responsibility as a socio-psychological fact nor the necessity of punishment in consequence. I characterize the concept of moral responsibility as *anthropo*-logic neither to diminish its importance in human and social life nor to affirm that it is flimsy and chimerical. It is just the opposite. The human bond is not based on a rational consensus. It cannot be understood as a social contract artificially constructed as Rousseau once dreamed. The social order is a fiction, collectively and historically fabricated, and maintained

thanks to our ignorance of the arbitrary nature of its foundation as Pascal puts it:

Custom creates the whole of equity, for the simple reason that it is accepted. It is the mystical foundation of its authority; whoever carries it back to first principles destroys it. Nothing is so faulty as those laws which correct faults. He who obeys them because they are just obeys a justice which is imaginary and not the essence of law; it is quite self-contained, it is law and nothing more. He who will examine its motive will find it so feeble and so trifling that, if he be not accustomed to contemplate the wonders of human imagination, he will marvel that one century has gained for it so much pomp and reverence. The art of opposition and of revolution is to unsettle established customs, sounding them even to their source, to point out their want of authority and justice. [. . .] We must not see the fact of usurpation; law was once introduced without reason, and has become reasonable. We must make it regarded as authoritative, eternal, and conceal its origin, if we do not wish that it should soon come to an end. (Pascal 1977, pp. 87–88)

Fiction and reality are consubstantial. Responsibility is a socio-psychological phenomenon and cannot be derived from causal logic. We do not condemn an agent on account of his own deed, but we choose a patient to punish in order to restore the authority of the flouted social order. According to our common sense, the juridical moments are structured as follows: 1) occurrence of a criminal deed; 2) search for the responsible perpetrator (cause of the deed); 3) judgment and necessity of punishment. However, the real order of the juridical procedure is different: 1) occurrence of a criminal deed; 2) necessity of punishment; 3) choice of a patient to punish as a symbol or a substitute of the crime, and this patient is declared *ipso facto* responsible (Fauconnet 1928). The justice and the responsibility are collective institutions whose function is to maintain the social order through punishment of the offender's actions against the community. The sanction is the outcome of the reactions of the society against an incident that violated social rules. When they are transgressed, affirms Fauconnet, the society must destroy the crime in question in order to restore the moral order of the community. However, since the crime has already been committed, it is now impossible to destroy that crime itself. The society then begins to find a being that serves as a symbolic substitute for this crime. We again set up the social order through the destruction of this symbol of profanation.

The convict is thus a scapegoat. But this scapegoat is the true culprit by definition. There is no other culprit who could have substituted for the one condemned of the crime. The chosen condemned is a substitute for the crime itself and not for its perpetrator. The perpetrator is certainly the most often selected as the patient of the punishment. But it is not because the perpetrator is tied to the crime by a causal relation:

Imagine a scene of crime; a principal figure is at the center of the theater: it is the perpetrator [auteur]; the word actor [acteur] might express their situation much better. Other actors play a role, but out of the limelight; the perpetrator is in the spotlight – In these conditions, the responsibility of the perpetrator is explained the same way as that of any other responsible: if the perpetrator is chosen, the most often, as the patient of the punishment, it is because the representation of the perpetrator holds particularly narrow rela-

tionships with that of the crime: it is thus the only or the first representation, or one struck the most strongly by the emotion the crime provoked. (Fauconnet 1928, p. 273)

In medieval Europe or in other regions of the world, not only the perpetrator of a deed but other family members who, themselves, did not participate in the crime were condemned. And more surprisingly, dead bodies, animals, plants, or inanimate objects like stones were indicted and publicly sentenced (Fauconnet 1928). As observed typically in the witch hunts, abnormal or uncontrollable situations like epidemics are attributed to some beings that serve as scapegoats, alive or dead, human or not.

Why do the rules for responsibility and punishment vary considerably according to time and place? Usual explanations are evolutionist: As humanity progresses, past errors are corrected and barbarous customs are replaced by more rational institutions. However, peculiar rules regarding justice that convicted dead bodies or animals were due neither to ignorance nor to anthropomorphism in the past. If the responsibility of insane people, animals or family members was imagined through erroneous beliefs, it should be logically proportional to the force of these beliefs. For example, the more animist superstition is prevalent, the more animals and inanimate objects should be taken to be responsible; the responsibility of the insane should be recognized all the more because the mental disorder is ignored. However, this is far from the historical fact. Animism did not reach its summit in Europe between the 14th and the 17th centuries when animal trials became most frequent. If the Athenians maintained a similar institution, it is not because they confounded the psychological aptitude of animals and things with that of the human being. It is absurd to suppose that contemporaries of Louis XIV attributed the capacity to feel pain to the dead body, in order to explain the French ordinance of 1670 regulating criminal procedures against the dead body. Were the Athenians and the French of the 18th century, who punished the whole family for the crime of one of its members, incapable to distinguish an individual from a group? (Fauconnet 1928)

Diversity in morals should be, without doubt, attributed to cultural and historical factors. And there is no reason to think our moral sense of today is an exception. As Fauconnet puts it, "The aberrant variations of the responsibility have social causes. Why doesn't the true responsibility also have a social cause?" (Fauconnet 1928, p. 222). A human being is not constituted only of a spirit but also of a body. Or more precisely, one does not have a body, but one is a body. The social order emerges from the interactions between these bodies which feel, grieve and get furious through omnipresent socio-cognitive biases. Morals cannot be reduced to a social contract elaborated rationally and voluntarily, but impose themselves to humans as a transcendent force that surpasses them. It resembles the sacred in this respect (Durkheim 1996). The social order is not transparent to human agents and individuals cannot manipulate, freely and consciously, different aspects of the social life. Moral responsibility like other collective phenomena is possible not in spite of, but thanks to innumerable social fictions (Kozakai 2000).

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Social Psychology and Literature: Toward Possible Correspondence

ALBERTA CONTARELLO

1 Introduction

“We are all social psychologists” declare Tajfel and Fraser (1978) and, by way of explanation, they offer one of the most complete definitions of the discipline. It is the study of “the various aspects of the interaction between individuals, between and within social groups, and between individuals and social systems, small or large, of which they are part” (Tajfel and Fraser 1978, p. 22). Similar in their interests and passions, what, above all, distinguishes a professional social psychologist from an “amateur” or naive one is the method, or rather methods, used. The former follows strict research rules and procedures which are logical and systematic, explicitly sets out the hypotheses and tries to support them with references to scholarly shared criteria. The latter worries much less about the logical consistency of his or her convictions, develops naive, often post hoc, theories to explain events – especially when faced with the unexpected – and, being closely tied to pre-existing ideas, tends to confirm the underlying bias in a kind of vicious circle. There is, however, a third category. Because of their mastery and competence in treating psychosocial phenomena, authors of literary texts emerge as bearers of a type of knowledge which is different both from that of the scientist and that of the “practical” person, busy getting on with everyday life. Psychologists tend to appreciate this ability and often refer to the richness and depth shown by poets and writers when considering the psychic and relational aspects of life, or the familiarity with which they approach such extreme themes as life, love and death.

The aim of the present paper is to seek possible links between social psychology and the literary treatment of social interaction, in the belief that social psychology and similar disciplines might gain useful insights from the analysis of literary texts as well as provide new ways to study the texts themselves. This is particularly the case if we take into account long term processes, i.e. an historical

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perspective, following Gergen's masterly invitation (1973, 1984). Together with fellow social psychologist, Chiara Volpato, I have investigated this area for almost twenty years, intrigued and challenged by the idea of making use of literary sources, and searching for the most suitable methodology. During this time, social psychology and social sciences have faced radical changes, encountering various shifts (cf. Flick 1998), some which sharply favor and support our perspective. Notwithstanding, research with literary works remains relatively rare, possibly a proof of awareness of the risks underlying the assumption of texts based in their construction on rules and designs defined by their own autonomy.

One of the first voices we found on our side was that of Moscovici (1986), who proposed the study of imaginary groups from the literary world as if they were real. His suggestion to rely on *Gedankenexperimenten*, to use Freud's terminology, is based on the idea that relationships, emotions and behavior described in fiction might prove useful in social psychological research in various ways. First, they might be taken at face value and read, as if they were data, through socio-psychological models. This would encounter the auspice of writers and historians of the *Annales* (cf. works by Duby, LeGoff) to involve social psychology in the study and understanding of narrative and history, replacing ad hoc theories by literary critics, historians, sociologists with social psychological theories which can explain relations, feelings, behavior depicted in literary works. Second, the implicit views or theories of literary authors might be taken into account as a source of theoretical thought (i.e. Literary sources might be fruitful at the generative level of theorizing). This does not mean to consider them in the same way scientific theories and artistic views: the latter offer content more than form, style that constitutes the mark of an author and makes the reader say: "This is Stendhal's or Balzac's world, Dickens' or Hemingway's" (p. 25); the researcher's task is to rationally reconstruct the artists' theories. Third, specific contributions by authors who use social psychological models as a starting point for their novels, or the reverse, might be considered, in a thought-provoking interplay between data and theory. Moscovici mentions, for instance, Canetti and Broch with their studies on the psychology of masses and leaders, but also cites Balzac, Flaubert, Maupassant and Tolstoy for their extremely careful and refined contributions. The author himself re-read the pages in Proust's *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu* dedicated to the Dreyfus affair, finding evidence and support to the theories of social recombination and of active minorities, which he was forming in those years, as well as interesting reflections on the phenomenon of social status and ostracism.

I would like to take Moscovici's reflections as a starting point to review some studies which use literature from a social psychological viewpoint and, more broadly, from perspectives linked to psychological inquiry. As is often the case, it is perhaps simpler to say what will not be treated: the psychology of the reader, and literature and psychoanalysis. Both these topics, however, are of great interest and will be left aside for reasons of space and coherence. Neither will we concern ourselves with cultural studies and psychohistory, although some contributions from these areas will be mentioned. This paper is divided into three parts.

The first deals with some research carried out in related fields to social psychology; the second, with some studies from the cross-cultural domain. Finally, some space is devoted to social psychological research, including our own, paying particular attention to the strengths and weaknesses of the methods employed, with some general considerations on the use of literature in social psychology.

2 Literature versus Human and Social Sciences: Elective Affinities or Incompatibilities of Character?

2.1 *The Mind and its Metaphors*

Our work is concerned with certain aspects of the relationship between literature and human behavior. An interesting body of work from the field of literary studies which shares our aim is that of Michael S. Kearns (1987). His interest was in metaphors offered by eighteenth and nineteenth century literary writers and psychologists. The author defines his essay as “a study of the search for a language of the mind in the midst of changing concepts of the mind” (p. 3). He turns first to the philosophical-psychological language of the period and then to literary language in order to detect the significant metaphors and, particularly, the passage from a metaphor of mind-as-entity – with its key features of passivity, impressibility and extension – to a metaphor of mind as a living organism – as a sentient web in functional interaction with the surrounding environment.

Kearns begins by stating that:

During the period from the seventeenth century until the second third of the nineteenth, the theory of the formation of ideas was based on relatively mechanical and automatic processes. Locke was regarded as essentially correct in tracing all ideas to sensations and therefore all knowledge ultimately to combinations of sense impressions. . . . (p. 49)

He then gives some representative samples of Locke’s metaphors: Mind is “white paper, void of all characters”; our senses “convey into the mind” perceptions; the brain is “the mind’s presence-room” (p. 48).

Writers’ and theorists’ ideas are analyzed, observing the mutual exchange and influence, which flows mainly from the former to the latter. Even in early works, such as Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) in particular, Kearns identifies some innovative cues with respect to a metaphor of the mind-as-an-entity. However, there is never a substantial transformation of such a metaphor. It is in the works of Henry James and George Eliot that an explicit and structured metaphor of mind as-a-living-organism emerges, the same generative metaphor that William James was developing, implicitly, with his concept of the “stream of consciousness.”

For example, in *Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James places his “heroine [Isabel] in a mindscape at a crucial moment of her life and returns to it several times to demonstrate the physical distance she travels during her story” (p. 185). Kearns extracts some examples from the novel, introducing them with brief summaries

to give the context, before analyzing and commenting on them. Through such passages, he points out the connection between Henry James' and William James' "radical empiricism, an empiricism which must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced" (p. 187). The author concludes: "[O]ne of my findings is that the language did not develop at the same rate in fiction and psychology; new metaphors are quite visible in novels by the middle of the seventeenth century but do not emerge in psychological works until later" (p. 16).

Conceived as a contribution to the history of literature, and, indirectly, to the history of psychology (a term which, as we saw, the author uses *ante litteram*, mainly with reference to philosophical-psychological thought), Kearns' analysis of "how the actual language used to talk about mind changed during these two centuries and how the changes correlate with change in the concept of mind" (p. 16) is pertinent to our theme in a number of ways. Kearns gives equal importance to scientific and literary writing and awards both the status of basic knowledge sources, embedded in their *zeitgeist*. He seems also to pick up and expand the third use suggested by Moscovici for literary works, searching for metaphors which then give rise to theories, not so much in the works of one author, as in that of several authors (sometimes closely connected) of the same cultural context, both in the literary and the "psychological" framework. His methods, however, are almost alien to mainstream social psychology. Admittedly, he has "aimed at a 'comprehensive humanistic study' whose goal is to illustrate the 'inevitable interaction between art and society'" (p. 18) and contrasts his study with others, "more impressionistically than empirically" (p. 16) based. However, he singles out parts of the text or summarizes the content in his search for examples, illustrations and confirmation for his thesis. In this way, Kearns provides us with an expert reading of the texts. However, researchers trained in the scientific or systematic method typical of the social psychological field would find much to object to in his research procedure.

2.2 *Creativity and Mental Illness*

An interdisciplinary team from Oxford combined psychological and literary analysis in an investigation about creativity and mental disease. The team consisted of Gordon Claridge, an academic and clinical psychologist; Ruth Pryor, a mediaevalist; and Gwen Watkins, a critic of Victorian literature. Together, they aimed to show the influence of creativity and psychosis in authors considered by critics and clinicians to be gifted artists as well as being mentally ill (at least at some time in their lives). According to Claridge et al. (1990), the mental processes underlying creativity and madness are basically similar, being characterized by a combination of a high of divergent or "overinclusive" thinking with a similarly high level of convergent thinking. Such a combination, probably due to an unusual form of communication between the cerebral hemispheres through the corpus callosum, would give rise to a particularly rich production of associations, sometimes difficult to formalize in abstract concepts. During a phase of illness, the

person would be overwhelmed by a remarkable stream of thoughts and images. As Sylvia Plath said: "When you are insane you are busy being insane – all the time . . . When I was crazy that was all I was." During a creative phase, however, she would be able to contain it through a higher of intellectual control, more precisely, to filter it more functionally through cognitive processes driven by the right hemisphere.

The method adopted by Claridge et al. (1990) to support their thesis consists of examining the texts (mainly autobiographical) and the lives of ten writers from different historical periods (including Margery Temple, John Ruskin, and Virginia Woolf). To this end, they consider both original texts and biographies or collected letters, and extract information which tends to support and exemplify the hypothesized relationship between creativity and madness. For each writer a "case description" is then provided, guided by the application of a schedule for the diagnosis of affective and schizophrenic disorders (SADS-L), adopted by the psychiatric community (Endicott and Spitzer 1978) and slightly modified for use with archive data.

Most of the analysis is based on biographical information provided by the writers themselves and their biographers. Literary works are also taken into account, sometimes excerpts are reported, but mostly summaries and comments are used. Here again, though in a very different way from Kearns, we find a refined reading of the texts as well as an interpretation of them which gives support to the authors' thesis, i.e. the connection between creativity and mental illness. Literary material is selected in order to find signs of mental disorder, providing both examples and proof. In the preface, both literary critics express their gratitude to the psychologist, who "saved [them] from high-flying, always the occupational disease of the literary critic" (p. xi). However, the lack of explicit criteria for the analysis of the material makes the thesis less powerful.

Despite the authors' expressed intentions and probably due to the need to classify the writers in psychiatric terms as abnormal, their portraits sometimes end up being less than gratifying. The insane flux of images and thoughts in the writers' life becomes overwhelming, documented with various kinds of information of which literary texts are only a part, and as a reader I found myself wondering how people afflicted by such profound and frequent psychotic episodes could possibly have contributed works of value to the culture of their time. Yet, this aspect, which initially I felt was a weakness, might turn out to be a fine-honed tool for combating the "halo effect" which often extends an overall favorable judgment about an artistic work to its author.

2.3 Friendship Relationships

William K. Rawlins, a North American scholar working in the field of communication studies, makes use of fictional texts in his innovative study of friendship (Rawlins 1992). The author endorses a view stressing the basic principles in the communication of this relationship and discusses what he calls the contextual dialectics of a) private versus public, b) ideal versus real, and the interactional

dialectics of c) freedom to be independent versus freedom to be dependent, d) affection versus instrumentality, e) judgment versus acceptance, f) expressiveness versus protectiveness. Rawlins' attempt to analyze friendship throughout the life cycle goes from childhood to late adulthood. He provides a comprehensive review of theoretical and empirical studies of friendship from a range of social disciplines and open-ended, in-depth interviews. Moreover, as the author openly declares:

Supplementing these interviews, my wife, Sandy, and myself assembled an extensive collection of fictional literature, that is, novels, plays and short stories, written for and about children, adolescents, and adults of all ages, depicting the interactions of friends in diverse circumstances. (p. 3)

In examining the situational, interactive, and dialectical nature of friendship, the author's aim is to provide a link between individualistic and social structural accounts of friendship as well as a bridge between empirical and fictional views of the relationship. As he states, he "want[s] to cultivate conversation and interplay among extant social scientific and humanistic research on friendship, people's verbal descriptions and the actual discourse of friends, fictional representations of person/writer/social investigator, and those of the reader" of his book, happily entitled *Friendship Matters*. "Accordingly" he "composed the work as a sequence of paired chapters" (p. 4) focusing each one on a particular stage of life. The initial chapter reviewed the social scientific research available, while a companion chapter illustrated the main points discussed "using the words of real participants and/or fictional excerpts" (p. 4). He interviewed over 100 participants, including adolescents, young, middle aged and older adults. The author points out that:

This method of presentation juxtaposes and compares the voices of lived experience and of literary depictions with the abstract, modal trends observed and reported in traditional social scientific analyses of friendship. The illustrative chapters seek to vivify and dramatize rather than verify concepts, and to connect them with actual persons' words and experiences, and imagined individuals' enactments of meaningful episodes. (p. 4)

These illustrations are provided by accounts or open-ended interviews and portrayals found in literature. Regarding the latter, the author sometimes speaks of a "typical predicament found in literature" (p. 79) in the chapter on adolescence, or of "fictional excerpts exemplify[ing] further specific predicaments" (p. 125) in the chapter on young adulthood. Concluding his study, Rawlins indicates the light and dark aspects of friendship and notes that "robust friendship is not merely a convenient technique for self-confirmation, but an exacting interpersonal relationship, a responsible co-ordination of actual and possible worlds" (p. 277). To develop his argument, he has "compared, contrasted, and synthesized insights from a variety of authors, ranging from everyday actors to professional social scientists and writers of 'fiction'" being:

convinced of the value of collecting and bringing to bear as diverse an array of cultural texts as possible when investigating the communicative construction of social lives and worlds. Certainly as we enact our relationships with others, the cultural resources and

images of social being we draw on and reproduce are not limited to specified or narrowly authoritative genres. Rather . . . we use and continue to create whatever there is in the symbolic realm of human action. (p. 278)

The reason why I quoted Rawlins' justifications in full is that, although the author makes some points that are readily acceptable (the cultural origin, the communicative construction of social lives), the particular evidence he produces is more debatable. It may be true that "we use and continue to create whatever there is in the symbolic realm of human action," but it is also true that some voices are more authoritative than others. In particular, the fictional excerpts taken into account might not be so generative. Their selection, and this the author clearly admits, appears to be random. However, both the choice of texts and the selection of extracts are delicate steps in any study which makes use of fiction and literary texts.

In the research discussed so far, scholars of different disciplinary areas – English, Psychology, Literary Critics, Communication Studies – made use of literary texts in various ways: Some sought new ideas from art and science, others looked for evidence of a stream of thoughts and images common to creativity and madness; yet others were in search of examples of dialectical friendships. Coming back to Moscovici on the use of literature in social research, his third suggestion seems to have been taken up to some extent, the first has sometimes been considered and the second has remained basically untouched. Cross-cultural psychology and social psychology appear to have taken up these suggestions more systematically.

3 Literature and Cross-Cultural Psychology: Space and Time under Investigation

The use of literary texts as a source of data to test ideas and theories is not unusual in cross-cultural and historically-oriented research. There are a number of such studies aimed at illustrating and corroborating socio-psychological theories and models (cf. Contarello and Volpato 1991; Volpato and Contarello 1995). Harary (1963, 1966), for example, analyzed Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and Murdoch's *The Severed Head* in order to explore, within them, the tendency towards balance in personal relationships as maintained in Fritz Heider's (1958) Balance theory. Similarly, Seymour Rosenberg analyzed Theodore Dreiser's *A Gallery of Women* using multidimensional scaling in order to detect Dreiser's implicit theory of personality (Rosenberg and Jones 1972). He also developed a method of analysis and a computer based algorithm (HICLAS) in order to study Thomas Wolf's personality as depicted in his autobiography (Rosenberg 1988) and has compared the use of personality and emotional terms in some U.S. and Hungarian novels to investigate possible personality and emotional differences linked to cultural variables (Rosenberg 1990, cf. also Rosenberg 1997). We might consider a few comparative examples of research at some length.

3.1 *Basic Needs in Popular Literature and Fairy Tales*

One of the best known cross-cultural and historical studies using literary texts is the research on needs of achievement, power and affiliation initiated by McClelland (1961). Extending Max Weber's thesis linking Protestantism and the spirit of modern capitalism, McClelland hypothesized that this connection was mediated by two social psychological variables, namely early independence and mastery training by parents, and high achievement motivation in children, mainly sons. To test his hypothesis, the author examined various cultures and assessed motivational levels among them using material from a variety of sources. He analyzed folk tales in contemporary pre-literate cultures and children's stories in literate ones, chosen to represent "popular culture" (p. 71). The texts were analyzed to detect items regarding the need for achievement following a specific scoring system whose validity underwent many tests. The central link in McClelland's model – between high motivation and economic growth – was tested for ancient Greek culture using imaginative literature of authoritative writers of the time and for late Middle Ages and Baroque Spain, considering such masterpieces as *El Cid* and *Don Quixote*. The theory was also applied to English society from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century using texts of three different kinds: drama, accounts of sea voyages and street ballads, and to the United States from 1800 to 1950 sampling four American reading textbooks typical of each twenty-year period. On the basis of these and other sources, McClelland supported his thesis that there existed a causal link between exposition to "need for achievement" messages during childhood and entrepreneurial behavior in adulthood promoting economic well-being in society at large.

3.2 *Social Behavior in Epic Works*

Adamopoulos (1982) and Adamopoulos and Bontempo (1986) used literature to test Triandis' theory (1978), developed within the research paradigm of "subjective culture," according to which three basic dimensions – affect, status, and intimacy – underlie social behavior, but display specific modes and features in different times and places (Adamopoulos and Kashima 1999). The authors content-analyzed epic works from different historical periods (*The Iliad*, *Beowulf* and *The Red Badge of Courage* in the first paper, *The Odyssey* and *La Chanson de Roland* in the second), selecting the role-couples portrayed in the texts and coding the instances of behavioral units encountered. Their method consists of selecting the role-couples portrayed in the texts (e.g., Greek king – Trojan king, Olympian king – Trojan king, Greek king – Greek leader in *The Iliad* or soldier – soldier, officer – soldier, friend – friend in *The Red Badge of Courage*) and coding the instances of behavioral units encountered. They defined social behavior as "a situation in which a person does something to or with another person" (p. 159). Applying factor analysis to the matrix of social behavior, the authors found substantial support for Triandis' theory. They also observed that the intimacy dimension was of minor importance in the earlier works, probably – in the

authors' opinion – developing later, due to a shift from hunting-based to agricultural societies. As they note, in the oldest texts, intimacy appears intertwined with other psychological dimensions: “For instance, the kind of love and closeness that motivated the behavior of ancient Greek heroes like Achilles or Odysseus, at least as we glean that behavior from the Homeric epics, was inseparable from their role as kings in charge of their households, their extended families, and their property – in other words, their superordinate status-vis a vis their fellow human beings” (Adamopoulos 2002, p. 4).

3.3 *Emotion Terms in the Bible*

Mayer (1994) turned to the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Bible, which span roughly twelve centuries, in order to explore the different uses of terms referring to emotion. His research is more exploratory than theoretical, and aims to test, on the one hand, the presence of terms linked to basic emotions, especially in the earlier books, and, on the other, changes in the use of those terms which might reflect an improvement in emotional experience over time. The author proceeds by classifying emotion terms into emotion categories suggested, in part, by the literature on emotions. Both his hypotheses are supported by the empirical analysis of the texts and a comparison with the Roman Canon Old Testament. He concludes that emotions experienced may have been fairly stable over time, with references to happiness increasing over the twelve-century period.

McClelland, Adamopoulos and Mayer proceed to detect the frequency with which “social motives”, “social behaviors” or “emotional terms” are encountered in the sources they analyzed and justify the choice of their archive material by stressing the profound cultural significance that folk, epic and biblical sources played in their own times. McClelland (1961), in particular, pays a great deal of attention to the criteria for selecting literary material for this kind of research. Above all, to minimize stylistic factors, a wide range of writers, writing for different purposes, should be used. But the writers' popularity should be beyond question to ensure the importance of the work in any given culture. As regards choice of texts, cross-cultural research, for its own part, lays down clear guidelines for the selection of archive material, the basic criteria being relevance, availability and popularity (Brislin 1980). Thus, texts suitable for examination in the social psychological domain will be those which have left a mark on their culture, are easily retrievable and widely read. Other important choices concern methodology. Often, as we have seen, the studies which turn to systematic analysis make use of content analysis, checked for reliability, and are followed by various multivariate analyses: MDS (Rosenberg and Jones 1972), factor analysis (Adamopoulos 1982; Adamopoulos and Bontempo 1986), specially designed structural analysis (Rosenberg 1988). However, these are counterbalanced by some shortcomings. Chiefly, the fact that quantitative methods in general tend to translate vast amounts of knowledge into oversimplified structures, thus undermining the potential for interpretation.

4 Literary Texts and Social Psychological Theories: Contents, Processes and Structures of Social Knowledge

In social psychology, as previously mentioned, the use of literary texts is less common. However, the discipline is typified by a variety of approaches, some of which may usefully employ literary material. The following section examines how such texts may be used in different approaches: cognitive, discursive, socio-constructionist, and socio-constructivist.

4.1 Cognitive Psychology and Texts: A Communicative Theory of Emotions in Search of Verstehen

Oatley (1992), with Johnson-Laird, puts forward a pluralist analysis of emotions and an integrative theory derived from cognitive science. He turns to literary texts to illustrate certain aspects and literary extracts are chosen carefully although in an admittedly “patchy” (p. 7) way. The author discusses at length the relationship between cognitive psychology and literature and is very explicit as regards their mutual roles. Oatley and Johnson-Laird’s (1987) communicative theory of emotions states that emotions function to help humans construct new parts of their own cognitive system, mainly signaling conflicts of goals and disjunctions of personal or mutual plans. This theory was created within a scientific framework, by considering emotional events, describing them with reliable quantitative measures and framing theoretical indications in order to draw valid inferences regarding the events themselves (cf. p. 414). But Oatley emphasizes that it is only through experience that we may cover a fourth and fundamental aspect of understanding emotions – Verstehen or imaginative “reliving” – and this is provided masterfully in good art. In the author’s view, all four elements are needed for a full understanding, which makes the role of literature fundamental.

Oatley’s method for analyzing literary texts is based on two criteria, similar to those used in history or literary criticism for inferring intention and conflict in narratives: the criteria of consensual understanding and that of consistency. In this vein, the analysis of texts, a kind of literary criticism, runs parallel to previous more scientifically-oriented research. But while the author often distinguishes between the rules of natural and human science, or between causal and narrative accounts, he also emphasizes the similarities between psychoanalytic and computational understanding of narratives, and stresses the special potential of (cognitive) psychology to combine usefulness and insight. It would appear that “literature offers an emotional version of a laboratory” (p. 357) and, together, they may mutually contribute to a fuller understanding of emotion and of their communicative function both within and between individuals. The method chosen by the author to analyze literary texts owes a lot, however, to human sciences and makes little attempt to intertwine humanistic and scientific knowledge. It is almost as if the author had decided to take time off from the “harsh mainstream”

of cognitive psychology and had deliberately looked elsewhere not only for his sources but also his research method.

4.2 *The Discursive Turn: Literature and Social Psychology as Texts*

While also stressing the importance of language, Potter et al. (1984), advance a different view. They argue that literature and social psychology “in certain important respects . . . share their concerns, methods and theoretical perspectives” (p. 1). Promoting the “discursive turn” in social psychology (Potter and Wetherell 1987, Potter 1996; Harré 1979; Harré and Gillett 1994), the authors examine topics such as gender identity, environment, groups, and the Self, recommending for social psychology the same kind of critical deconstruction which has been influential in recent literary criticism. According to these authors, literary texts have been erroneously employed as depositories of real life facts. On the contrary, they should be analyzed as discourses involved with sense-making as a constructive activity, just as social psychological discourse should be.

The chosen texts are, again, important passages of literature relevant to the various topics treated. But throughout the book, the authors consider works with varying degrees of authoritativeness, touching on Musil’s *A Man without Qualities*, and works by Tolstoy and Shakespeare (through Harré’s reading), both revising and criticizing previous uses of such texts and proposing their own perspective. The method which they suggest is framed within a post-modern and deconstructionist perspective, close to contemporary literary criticism (cf. Barthes 1970; Culler 1981). In their view, discourse analysis is a craft which shares features with ethnomethodology and which, according to contemporary philosophy of science, regards the search for variability and consistency in either the content or form of accounts (as well as their function and consequences), as the most important route to validation. It would thus appear that discourse analysts are looking for clues, giving themselves some stricter rules than historians or literary scholars (cf. Potter and Wetherell’s ten stages in research proceedings), and stressing the “reflexivity” of this approach, i.e. they seek to apply the same kind of analysis to their own written texts.

In advocating for themselves a “radically non-cognitive form of social psychology” (p. 178), the authors provide an interesting end-point in dramatic contrast to that of Oatley as well as radically opposing theoretical (or metatheoretical) stands. Both these approaches suggest some interpretative analyses of texts which have their roots in literary or narrative analysis.

4.3 *The Narrative Turn: Time, Self and Narrative*

Other theoretical frameworks developed in the last decades give voice to literary texts more directly, mainly through the success of perspectives derived from different disciplines, from philosophy (the second Wittgenstein, MacIntyre, Ricoeur), philosophy of language and pragmatics (Austin, Searle, Grice), to literary critics

(Bakhtin, Todorov) and which contributed to the formation of a new “paradigm” or, better, a new tradition (Mecacci 1992, 1999) or metaphor (Trzebinski 1997) or, more properly, a narrative “shift” (Flick 1998; cf. also Sarbin 1986).

Within the social psychological context, Jerome Bruner refers to literary texts as privileged sources for the study of regularities and deviations in the construction of the Self (as well as of the world, and “life”):

. . . literary inventions are inspirations to new modes of life, invitations to experience fresh ways of violating the banalities of folk psychology, and we honor the Laurence Sternes and Natalia Ginzburgs, the Virginia Woolfs and Anaïs Nins as much for their “human insights” as for their literary skills (Bruner 2001, p. 30; cf. also Bruner 1964, 2003).

They have the auspices to construct and reconstruct new possible worlds with the active and resolute participation of the reader (Eco 1979). Yet, research performed by Bruner and his school turns to everyday-life narratives more than to literary ones, e.g., autobiographies of a whole family (Bruner 1990) or group narratives (Bruner and Feldman 1996).

4.4 The Social Constructionist Movement: Self, Narrative and Relationships

The central importance of language in the social construction of the world and of narration in psychological theory is further emphasized in the social constructionist approach proposed by Kenneth and Mary Gergen (Gergen and Gergen 1988; Gergen 1994). “Aware of the potentials of language as a means of creating reality” (p. 20), they focus their attention on the potential that literary forms have to shape reality. They also analyze themes which are highly relevant to this paper – mainly matters of truth and multiplicity in narrative forms, and focus their attention on narrative processes, particularly on accounts of how relationships develop over time (cf. also Gergen and Gergen 1987). Kenneth Gergen underlines the special power of persons of letters and thus their potential voice in the study of the development of self-understanding and self-construction. He wrote:

Although the unfolding of psychological discourse frequently takes place on the level of daily relationships, special power may reside in certain enclaves. Specifically, the culture and/or its various interest groups may rely on those with well-honed language skills. If the language is to be forcibly reshaped or transformed, then those with a talent for games of language are required. Persons of letters – including poets, historians, journalists, essayists, philosophers, novelists and the like – are of special interest in the study of the diachronic development of self-understanding. It is such groups in particular that have most effectively pushed forward the dialogue of self-construction (Gergen 1989, p 76) and, later,

By using . . . narrative conventions we generate a sense of coherence and direction in our lives. They acquire meaning, and what happens is suffused with significance. Certain forms of narrative are broadly shared within the culture; they are frequently used, easily identified, and highly functional. In a sense, they constitute a *syllabary of possible selves*. (Gergen 1994, pp 193–4) (my italics)

High literature, especially contemporary texts, might be a particularly suitable data-bank for Gergen's observations and for his analyses of the "saturated self" (Gergen 1991). Within this framework, Mary Gergen (1994) turned to literature, and, more specifically, to autobiography (see also Gergen and Gergen 1993; Gergen 1994). Her point is that "people magazines, gossip columns in newspapers, television news, movies, dreams and books all provide narrative models for people's self-understanding" (p. 20). Autobiographies, in particular, are of great value for social psychologists interested in the construction and development of the self: "Narrative forms shape the sense of what it means to live, to know, and to feel" (p. 22). From a feminist perspective, Gergen reflects that the autobiography well suits "individuality . . . the most dominant personality conception of modern western man" (p. 23) and mainly takes the form of the heroic tale, which while unisex in appearance, is ultimately only appropriate to a man's biography. Autobiographies constitute convenient and familiar repositories for life histories and there are dramatic differences in the roles appropriate for successful men and women in the "mono-myth" which seems to shape the basic story of western civilization (p. 23). For this reason, Mary Gergen has investigated gender-related differences in this genre. She chose not literary masterpieces but twenty or so autobiographies of men and women published in the U.S. in the last century's eighties and nineties, selecting famous people outside the world of literature. The published books are often written to a formula meant to attract a large readership and are co-written with a professional, in order to keep historical, cultural and literary style variation under control. Among them, there are the autobiographies by the photographer Ansel Adams, the folk singer Joan Baez, the tennis player Martina Navratilova. In her initial approach, the author used quantitative methods of analysis, computing instances of behavior and psychological constructs (e.g. achievement) in each book. But later, disappointed by the "lengthy and tedious process of sorting samples of prose into categories of contents and form" and finding this process "more destructive and uninformative than helpful in assessing the overall flow of the book's content and form," she opted for a "qualitatively tuned method that attempts to encompass the narrative form in a more integrated manner." Gergen commented: "the precision and apparent reliability of the first method is lost, but the interpretative strength of the latter in maintaining the holistic integrity of the book is appealing" (p. 26). Four different themes are chosen and variations in narrative form, context of the life history, themes of individuality versus relatedness, and self-understanding are explored. In this way, the results showed that, in agreement with gender stereotypes: a) the theme of achievement is present both in men and women with differences in how crucially important it is in a person's life, b) the range of emotional bonds varies, with more pervading emotional ties in women's autobiographies, c) physical embodiment assumes different trends, the body being an integral part of a woman's identity, but often an impediment or simply a "house where personhood is merely" contained for men (p. 36).

In the closing lines of the paper, Mary Gergen defines her study as an "exercise in a possibility . . . not the last word" (p. 41) and invites her readers to take into

account various artistic and literary forms which mold people's understanding of their lives. (See the chapter by Mary Gergen in this volume.)

4.5 *Social Representations and Literary Texts*

4.5.1 *Relationships in Literary Texts: Quality and Quantity Revised*

In previous studies, we have also turned to literary texts to find clues for a deeper understanding of social topics – especially interpersonal and intergroup relations – but tried to combine quantitative and qualitative research and to exploit the potentials of social psychological tools – mainly content and multivariate analyses – in order to study the texts. Along time, the social representations theoretical perspective, with its methodological devices, proved to be a most suitable one within which to explore and deepen our research topics (cf. Contarello and Volpatò 2002).

First, friendship was observed through the ages. Works of writers from the twelfth to the last century were selected (Contarello and Volpatò 1991). Choosing the texts in order to cover a wide time-span (twelfth to the twentieth centuries), our aim was first to distinguish enduring characteristics from those linked to a particular historical period and, second, using more recent depictions, to further our knowledge of friendship. Novels and tales by French women writers were chosen, both to correspond to our own interest in women writers and to facilitate the selection of our material. Following Moscovici's proposals, we carried out a systematic inquiry to detect the writers' more or less implicit theoretical formulations, analyzing, at the same time, the groups of friends described. The choice of relationships to be examined was based on those described in the text: every couple referred to in the text with the terms "friend" or "friendship" was selected; every interaction between these characters was then coded and defined as a unit of "social behavior" (following Adamopoulos 1982), including explicit reference to emotions, feelings, thoughts, intuitions (Pepitone and Triandis 1987). The coding scheme was developed mainly inductively, by examining the content of the text, and partly deductively, following the theoretical lines suggested in Triandis' dimensional study of relationships. Content analysis was performed, as suggested by Adamopoulos (1982) and Adamopoulos and Bontempo (1986), and cluster and correspondence analyses were then applied.

Our categorical and dimensional analyses illustrated a wide range of friendship features which largely support Triandis' cross-cultural theory of social behavior (stressing the importance of affect, intimacy and status), and render literary "theories" explicit. In De Beauvoir's *Les Mandarins*, for instance, a model of friendship emerges which is very similar to the dialectic model of relationships proposed by Baxter (1988) and Baxter and Montgomery (1996) (cf. Rawlins 1992). Here, friendship is portrayed as a deep and intense bond, involving dialectical instances of autonomy-connection, predictability-novelty and openness-closeness contradictions.

Later, using the same approach, we turned attention to women and family relationships faced with cultural transition, particularly migration (Contarello and

Volpato 1995). To this end, two autobiographical texts were chosen and each of the various interpersonal relationships depicted were considered. Again, we found clear links between the writers' portrayals of relationships and theoretical thought developed in social psychology, both with regard to the relevance of the macro-context in the development of personal relationships and social identity (Levinger 1994; Montgomery 1992) and with regard to the construct of individualism-collectivism which Triandis reintroduced into social-psychological research (cf. Triandis et al. 1988).

The importance of the macro-context, social positions and identities, and their influence on personal relationships has long been of considerable interest to us. In further studies, we content-analyzed, in the manner mentioned above, novels by South African writers (Volpato and Contarello 1995) as well as collections of short stories and novels written and placed in different contexts (from Mexico to India) (Contarello et al. 2003; Contarello and Vellico 2003). From the analyses of the texts, very different relational worlds were illustrated, enabling us, again, to highlight various patterns of relationships coming from different cultural frameworks along (and above) the continuum spanning from individualism to collectivism and to point out the interchange between interpersonal links and social macro-contexts. Using the same methods, we studied social relationships in the extreme situation of the concentration camp, analyzing Primo Levi's *If This Is a Man*. In this case, to highlight specific themes which content analysis tended to overlook, we also performed a purely qualitative analysis (Volpato and Contarello 1999).

In our research, what we explored were representations: of friendship, of selves and relationships in different contexts, of social life in a country divided by apartheid, of interpersonal and intergroup relations in extreme situations. The descriptions of phenomena were analyzed using cluster analysis to give categories, and through correspondence analysis to give dimensions of relationships and social behaviors. Although undoubtedly linked to certain weaknesses (cf. Contarello and Volpato 2002), we believe that our approach has a number of points in its favor. First, it enables us to illustrate social psychological theories through literary material using the systematic methods typical of our discipline, in our case close to Doise's socio-dynamic approach to the study of social representations (cfr. Doise et al. 1992). Secondly, it stimulates the expansion of these theories following the ideas of writers, who are often particularly keen on this type of speculation. Lastly, it provides a systematic framework in which those ideas might find an explicit order and structure.

4.5.2 The Narrative Organization of Social Representations: The Case of National Identity and Hungarian Classics

Within the theoretical framework of social representations, meant to assume a narrative form (László and Stainton Rogers 2002), recently László and Vince (2002, cf. László et al. 2003) proposed to study representations of national identity through successful historical novels. The chosen texts are "classics" of the Hungarian historical literature of the second half of the nineteenth century: *Golden*

Age of Transylvania by Mor Jokai, in the 2002 paper; *Stars of Eger* by Geza Gardonyi and *Sons of the Cold-hearted Man* by Mor Jokai in 2003. The first treats the golden period in which Transylvania, pivotal in Hungarian culture and identity, preserved its own relative independence both from the Ottoman Empire and the Hapsburg Empire. The second deals with a victorious battle against the Turks in a war which let Hungary be subdued to the Ottoman Empire for more than a century. The third regards the 1848 revolution, an independence war against the Hapsburg Empire. The authors chose a method consisting in computer assisted content analysis (with Atlas-ti) followed by statistical tests to measure similarities and differences in features and values embodied in the characters or by qualitative analysis of the strategies enacted to cope with existential personal and inter-group challenges. In the depicted war contexts, in fact, it appears that the characters are often threatened in terms of physical survival, but mostly in terms of national or group identity.

Reflecting upon the central role played by the chosen genre in the socialization process and in the construction of national identity (a genre which is highly regarded within Hungarian literature: these books are included in the school programs), the authors note, with Ricoeur (1984–85, 1991) that: “The role of narrative mediation is to develop variations of our own personality through identification that is the third-person construction of the self” (László et al. 2003, p. 78) and conclude, following Vygotskij (1971), that part of the success of a work of art relies on its capability to satisfy social needs, in this case the winning strategies outlined in the texts appear to support and transmit “a coping strategy characteristic of the Hungarian culture, i.e., transforming real defeat into moral victory” (p. 79). This proposal is challenging, both on theoretical and methodological grounds. On the one hand psychological processes and socio-cognitive strategies are singled out within historical contingencies, thus contributing to develop a more social or “societal” social psychology (László and Wagner 2003). Moreover, qualitative analyses help to select coping strategies (e.g., resistance, compliance, confrontation with acting out, negotiated compliance . . .) in ways which, on the one hand, help to draw a data-driven theoretical model and, on the other, is reminiscent of Propp’s (1928) masterly lesson and his morphology of folk tales (cf. also Péley 2002).

4.5.3 *Discursive Constructions and Emerging Social Representations: Witch Hunt or Quest for Meaning*

From the social representations framework comes Wagner (in this volume) proposal to study the relation between the emerging properties and the institutionalized version of a representation via a thorough analysis of Arthur Miller’s play *The Crucible*. The text is submitted to a careful reading in which both events and related discourses are taken into account in order to detect what, with Moscovici (1981), the authors see as a consensual space which paves the way to new and frightening social “realities.” Both the analysis of talk as depicted in the script and the “observation of situated social interaction over time” (p. 44) allow the

passage to unveil from a consensual to a reified – institutionalized – phase of the representation, one in which the existence of witchcraft in the village of Salem is taken for granted giving rise to incarcerations and executions of several citizens. Although embedded in the same theoretical framework as the previous approaches, the study suggests different methodological stances: the analysis of the web of discourse a “highly non-linear and recursive process” (p. 46) is intertwined with the analysis of the “opaque reality preceding and surrounding the creation of institutionalized facts” (p. 47). To this last aim, interpretive theoretical devices, informed by discourse and conversation theories, are called for. Again, literary texts prove to be a most suitable arena, models of real life, through which to outline and test social psychological interpretations, in this case, the construction of power.

5 Conclusions

In our overview of research from different disciplinary contexts, we have examined topics such as the mind, the self, creativity, emotions, social roles, plots and relationships, as illustrated in literature. The three motives Moscovici suggested for using literary sources in social psychological inquiry were encountered: literary sources are often used as data with which to illustrate, corroborate and give evidence to social psychological theories, less frequently to enhance generative thinking, but rarely to consider the interplay between art and science in the formation of ideas and the pursuit of knowledge. Various uses of literary material have been met. Sometimes a literary text has been seen as microcosm within which to detect a world of relationships, sometimes as a container of events which may be extracted from it or, following historians and their “clue paradigm”, as precious sources of information, sometimes again as text or discourse which, as much as any other kind of discourse, deserves accurate interpretation and deconstruction, or as a template to be considered, together with other sources, in the analysis of the construction of social phenomena.

Now, as social scientists, we have been trained to distinguish “fact from fiction”. In our research, is it legitimate to use “fiction” to speculate on “facts”? We encountered various answers and different positions to these questions. From the empiricist and positivist viewpoint, the scientific use of literary texts is out of the question; at most they might prove useful as parallel exemplifications. However, with its increasing recognition of the social construction of psychological processes – such that it has become almost a truism (Taylor 1998) – contemporary social psychology no longer precludes such use. Along these lines, the use of qualitative alongside quantitative analysis is increasingly often deemed acceptable, particularly within socio-constructivist perspectives (Contarello and Mazzara 1999). More importantly, while recognizing the specific features of two underlying modes of thinking, which Bruner (1986) named paradigmatic vs. narrative – rooted in two cultures with many centuries of tradition behind them – there is a growing perception of the legitimacy and usefulness of bringing the two modes together.

Sometimes authors define the two modes as irreducible, though complementary (Bruner 1986). At other times, while recognizing the sharp contrast in which they are held in western culture, they describe them as overlapping or “imbri-cated” (Smorti 1994) up to evoke a “double helix” of the mind (Mininni 2004).

I am well aware that various knots remain a challenge and still need to be dis-entangled but I think that within the rich realms of literature we might find a suitable arena, from the narrative mode of thinking, to test our ideas. The differ-ent approaches encountered in the present overview all contribute to strengthen and legitimize the use of literary texts to study social phenomena. From within psychology and social psychology, different viewpoints have been highlighted, with authors either suggesting to parallel formal knowledge with literary extracts or radically changing usual research methods in the light of a post-empiricist and post-modern framework.

But if the aims are those suggested by Moscovici and re-proposed by ourselves, I think that traditional social psychological methods should not be neglected. The strengths of the paradigmatic mode, which help us to play devil’s advocate against ourselves and our possible biases, may be usefully combined with those of the narrative one – the main aim being to blend rather than parallel experience and conceptualization. What we suggest is a sort of handicraft, consisting of content analysis, enriched with multivariate analyses with the aim of revealing underlying patterns and structures.

In a monograph on emotions and the analysis of literary texts, Scheff (1997) similarly put forward the idea of a convergence among various disciplines and methods. The “part/whole” analysis proposed by the author mixed qualitative analyses and microanalysis of interaction, and aimed to integrate the human sciences to obtain a deeper understanding of social psychological processes. While differing from the viewpoint adopted in the present paper, Sheff’s view shares with it two concerns: the need to integrate quantitative and qualitative studies and the need to keep a distance between the researcher and the researched texts. This can only come about through clear rules and methods. In his view, microanalysis of interaction is the key to this distance: “By getting beneath the smooth surface of behavior, it exposes the invisible process and structure that give order and meaning. Estrangement is most obvious” (p. 231).

More central to our concerns is a recent paper by Moghaddam (2004) which attempts to explore the boundaries and relationships between psychology and literature. In his thought-provoking work, the author proposes an overview of psychological studies involving literary texts, which, in part, runs parallel to the present one but, interestingly, overlaps it. He also suggests three categories of possible relationships between the two domains. These vary in their level of abstraction from literature as a source of insight for psychology to literature as understood through psychology, and from psychology as nomothetic vs. litera-ture as idiographic to psychology as culture-free vs. literature as culture-bound. The classification he proposes culminates in the idea that “psychology is litera-

ture.” Recalling Gergen’s (1973) and Billig’s (1982) arguments linking social psychology and history, the author points out “the idea that the discipline of psychology and its research ‘products’ are located in, and shaped by, a particular historical and cultural context” (p. 519). I fully agree with some points he makes which are of great importance: first, that “major literary works” can be conceived of as “a series of vast mineral deposits” (p. 507) of “data,” or rather of “new and deeper theoretical insights” (p. 508); and second, that the distinction between the world “as it is” and “as it might be” or “as if” comes across both in psychology and literature. However, I find myself less in agreement with the author’s theoretical and methodological preferences, oriented towards discourse analysis. Moghaddam concludes by stating that metaphors and figurative language might represent a key to a better understanding, by overcoming cultural gaps. This conclusion, in my opinion, deserves great attention and might constitute a convergence point for research carried out using different methodologies.

An unexpected support – more properly, a “correspondence” – to the idea of a quali-quantitative analysis of literary texts comes from a recent work by Franco Moretti (2005). In three talks given in Berkeley in 2002, later gathered in a splendid little book, the author proposed a convergence between the history of literature and human sciences. Defending the processes of reduction and abstraction which allow the reader to take a distance from the texts – in contrast with a closer reading more typical of literary studies – Moretti invited the reader to analyze the relations, the pattern, the forms in the history of literature, employing instruments usual in different branches of science, like graphs, charts, trees. Although different in its aims and contents from the present one, the literary perspective of the author shares with it the basic challenge, and tries to give answers to the question which opens the book, in Musil’s words:

A man who wants the truth becomes a scholar; a man who wants to give free play to his subjectivity may become a writer; but what should a man do who wants something in between? (Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, p. 274).

Our research, on the other hand, aimed to analyze structures of relationships. Based on content and multivariate analyses, it encountered shortcomings, as we admitted, mainly the peril of reductionism. However, it enabled the researchers to keep a beneficial distance and obliged them to take into account what is and what is not in line with their expectations. With the growing availability of computer procedures assisting interpretative analyses, moreover, the demands of a thorough inquiry of texts may become less burdensome. With analogous procedures, it will also be possible to investigate processes which develop along the time dimension. The analysis of structures and processes underlying social life represents the focus of social psychology. It is for this reason that a careful and systematic use of literary texts by social psychologists, together with less episodic interchanges between the two areas of knowledge, can make a major contribution to the study of social phenomena.

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Historical Conflict and Resolution between Japan and China: Developing and Applying a Narrative Theory of History and Identity

JAMES H. LIU¹ and TOMOHIDE ATSUMI²

1 Conflict, Reconciliation, and Collective Remembering

In the social science literature on peace-making, some scholars have found it useful to distinguish between conflict resolution and reconciliation (Nadler and Liviatan 2004). Conflict resolution involves formal or structural changes to inter-group relations, often initiated by leadership, in the form of signing and honoring peace treaties, maintaining regular exchanges of group representatives, transferring land or other assets (Pruitt and Carneval 1993). However, the formal cessation of hostilities (e.g., warfare) does not mean that the two groups have reconciled. Nadler and Liviatan (2004) argue that a reconciliation perspective defines “a conflict as ending once the parties have resolved the emotional issues that may have previously left them estranged” (p. 217). In their view, conflict resolution refers to the actual cessation of hostilities, whereas reconciliation refers to more psychological factors such as removing socio-emotional barriers and building trust. Reconciliation thus can be thought of as reducing or removing the potential for future conflict by changing the hearts and minds of the people.

A special case is what we refer to as historical reconciliation, where actual hostilities have ceased for a long time, together with the political conditions that motivated the original conflict, but where bitter memories of conflict still prejudice the entire spectrum of relations from high level diplomacy to personal likes and dislikes. Our focus is on the collective remembering of the Sino-Japanese War and World War II (WWII) that is at the heart of recurring friction in international relations between China and Japan. “Peace-making” in this case does not work using processes central to conflict resolution, like the transfer of resources, but instead with psychological issues such as the social representation of historical conflict (Liu et al. 2005) and symbolic processes of apology and

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forgiveness (Barkan 2000; Tavuchis 1991). These issues, we shall argue, are not intractable (see Bar-Tal 2000), but progress requires an historical analysis (Liu and Hilton 2005) that pays attention to an indigenous psychology (Enriquez 1994; Yang 2000) of social face and shame.

Historian Chalmers Johnson writes in an article quoted in Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org) that “It may be pointless to try to establish which World War Two aggressor, Germany or Japan, was the more brutal to the people it victimized. The Germans killed six million Jews and 20 million Russians; the Japanese slaughtered as many as 30 million Filipinos, Malays, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Indonesians and Burmese, at least 23 million of them ethnic Chinese. Both nations looted the countries they conquered on a monumental scale, though the Japanese plundered more, over a longer period, than the Nazis” (Johnson 2003).

While there remains considerable debate about the extent of Japanese war crimes, often influenced by non-historians (see for example Honda 1993; Kobayashi 1998; Li 2003; Takahashi 2002; Yoshida 2005), what is undisputed is that historical reconciliation has progressed much further between Germany and its neighbors than in East Asia (Hein and Selden 2000; Burma 2002). An “Asian Union” where there is economic cooperation and political integration between Japan, China, and Korea on a scale as has been achieved between former enemies Germany, France, and Poland in the European Union is not even being imagined at present. There are good historical reasons for this that will be examined in detail, but a brief sketch will provide the necessary overview for theoretical purposes.

Japan is an island nation that was defeated and occupied not by its Asian neighbors, against which it committed most of its war crimes, but by the United States (USA). The American agenda for post-war Japan was dominated by its strategic Cold War considerations of neutralizing Communism rather than reconciling Japan with its neighbors, especially China (He 2003; Wang 2000). This was because after WWII, Chiang Kaishek’s American-backed Nationalist Party (KMT) was defeated by Mao Zedong’s Russian-backed Communist Party in a bitter civil war for control of China. Consequently, America and the island of Taiwan (to which the Nationalists retreated) became narrated as the principle wartime villains for China in a Marxist version of history along with or instead of Japan (Gries 2004; He 2003). As Japan was not answerable to Chinese opinion in any way during the Cold War, the largest single Japanese massacre of civilians,¹ during the sacking of Nanjing in 1937, was erased from Japanese historical textbooks following Ministry of Education directives from the 1950s until the 1970s (Hicks 1997; Li 2003). This changed to greater accountability after internal debate was launched in 1972 in articles appearing in *Asahi Shimbun* (Honda 1993). It was not until 1982, after both China and South Korea had concluded peace treaties with Japan, including state-level compensations for South Korea, that the first major “historical conflict” erupted. Full public debate of such issues as the Nanjing

¹ The exact number killed is controversial, but many historians put the figure around 200,000–300,000.

massacre and the comfort women do not appear frequently in Japanese mass media until the mid 1990s (Atsumi et al. 2004). Since then, such historical conflict between Japan on the one hand and China, and to a lesser extent South Korea on the other, has become a regular feature of East Asian politics, engaging the passions of citizenry and exploited by political leaders. This is a costly game. In 2005, considerable damage was caused to Japanese franchise business by rioting in China after the latest textbook row (see www.wikipedia.org for an account).

How are we to understand political conflict that only erupts almost four decades after the formal cessation of hostilities, among countries that have never been to war since, and between whom there is more than 160 billion dollars of trade per annum, critical to the economies of both? The thumbnail sketch above, to be elaborated, is sufficient to illustrate the theoretical elements of a narrative theory of historical representations used to describe and then offer a solution to this historical conflict. This path of seeking not only theoretical description but a theory-based vision for reconciliation is a central feature of what Atsumi (2007) has called narrative design science. This is a science that acknowledges that social reality is constructed by a process of creative consent involving human beings, and as such can also be changed by them when they can see a new perspective. Historical conflict and reconciliation is a symbolic process involving active meaning making among people and the institutions they support; narrative design science is aimed at channeling these processes in a way to provide a better future for all concerned (see also Liu and Ng 2007; Enriquez 1994). This involves dialogue at every level, beginning with elites and including ordinary citizens and non-governmental organizations.

The narrative theory of history and identity draws from social representations theory (Moscovici 1984, 1988. For a review see Wagner and Hayes 2005), social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner et al. 1987), collective remembering (Halbwachs 1980; Pennebaker et al. 1997). For a review see Wertsch (2002); and narrative psychology (Bruner 1986, 1990). We shall not elaborate on these, but refer readers to Liu and Hilton (2005) or Liu and László (in press) for lengthier reviews. Here, we focus on applying and developing the theory in the context of historical conflict and reconciliation between Japan and China. There is a paucity of psychological literature on East Asian collective remembering, with a recent search on PsycInfo finding over 1,000 entries indexed to the Holocaust, but none to the Nanjing Massacre.

According to Liu and Hilton (2005), social representations of history provide peoples with a set of socially shared beliefs that legitimize their arrangements for society, especially government and relationships between groups. Historical representations condition the collective so as to make the same action (e.g. sending troops abroad) easy for some peoples and almost impossible for others even where their objective interests are similar. They furnish content and context for the social identities of peoples through such things as traditions (Halbwachs 1980; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), and collective memories of past conflicts (Liu et al. 2005). Reciprocally, as social identities are constructed in the context of relationships with relevant out-groups (Turner et al. 1987) and act to preserve

in-group unity and self esteem (Tajfel and Turner 1979), histories tend to be in-group favoring, emphasizing either positive aspects or important lessons from the group's past, and concealing the group's shameful deeds or focusing on its own victimhood while denying that of others (Paez et al. in press; Branscombe and Doosje 2004). Because of their critical role in identity politics, social representations of history are strongly linked to state production and control, through such institutions as the public education system and official commemorations (LeGoff 1992; Olick 2003; Wertsch 2002). However, this control must be negotiated internally with its own citizens, who often keep alternative versions of history alive through word-of-mouth, and externally with other states that may dispute versions of history that they view as biased or untrue.

Finally, historical representations may be used as a "symbolic reserve" to mobilize public opinion, furnishing support for political leaders' agendas and marginalizing alternatives (Reicher and Hopkins 2001). This is often done by communication as narrative, linking past to present through culturally accepted stories and themes (Liu and László, in press). Hence, the rules of plausibility and verisimilitude more than the rules of factuality and logic govern their acceptability (Bruner 1986). Even professional historians, whose disciplinary training is to minimize bias, have contributed to the revitalization of forgotten aspects of the past or causing previously valorized aspects of the past to be rewritten or downplayed to serve state political agendas (Kohl and Fawcett 1996; Zerubavel 1994; Schwartz 1997). Liu and László (in press) argue that lay representations of history are not organized as cognitive categories so much as stories, whose validity hinges on "credibility, authenticity and coherence, which in turn are dependent on the proper use of narratives – time, plot, characters, perspective, narrative intentions and evaluation." To this we would add "rich in symbolism" as well. Empirical research has found that national lay histories are biased in favor of recent and foundational events (Liu et al. 1999, 2002; Huang et al. 2004) central to constructing a sense of nationhood, whereas world histories contain recency bias and privilege warfare (Liu et al. 2005).

Because representations of history are an integral part of the identity politics, there is a regular interplay between the past and present: in how the present is perceived through various lenses of the past (Liu and Hilton 2005), and in how and what of the past is remembered through the political agendas of the present. Both of these factors contribute to a sense of continuity amidst change in the social identity of a "people," a group with ambitions of maintaining themselves as an autonomous society.

The historical conflict between Japan and China provides a cogent illustration of these principles of collective remembering in action over time. Moreover, it is important to remember that the identities at play here are Asian in the sense that the predominant social control emotion is shame rather than guilt as in Western societies (e.g., Bedford and Hwang 2003; Benedict 1946). Japanese and Chinese are more likely to react against a potentially legitimate accusation of wrongdoing with a feeling of shame rather than guilt. Shame is something about the self, whereas guilt is directed at a specific action of the self, so the literature

suggests that shame is more associated with wanting to hide whereas guilt is associated with wanting to make amends (see Branscombe and Doosje 2004). However, shame for the Nazi past was correlated with wanting to make amends, not hide, among a sample of young Germans (Dresler-Hawke and Liu 2006). A theory of social face (see Hwang 1998; Choi et al. 1997) should be able to turn an Asian sense of shame into reparative actions as well.

The psychological literature on intergroup reconciliation is almost entirely based on Western examples, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (e.g., Bar-Tal 2001; Nadler and Liviatan 2004), sectarian violence in Northern Ireland (Devine-Wright and Lyons 1997; McLernon et al. 2004), and the settling of grievances against Germany after WWII (Rensmann 2004; Rosoux 2001). The analysis and thinking behind these cases except for post-WWII Germany cannot be directly applied, because in these cases the problems of the past are still causally related to present conflicts over land, sovereignty, or wealth. According to our theory, this forces a biased and polarized representation of the past, where each group mobilizes a selective view of the past that justifies their current agenda and status. There are more degrees of freedom in East Asia, because Chinese and Japanese do not have to live together in a single society, they have no major outstanding territorial disputes, they have not been fighting, and their economies are increasingly mutually beneficial. Hence, we argue that the current friction between these two countries is predominantly symbolic in nature, motivated by hopes and fears generated by a particular reading of the past, and resolvable by symbolic action based on an indigenous understanding of East Asian psychology.

2 The Historical Evolution of Japanese and Chinese Collective Remembrances

There are abundant symbolic resources available from the past to construct a shared sense of identity or at least empathy between Japanese and Chinese. One of the three forms of script used in Japanese writing is Chinese pictographs, borrowed from China during the Tang dynasty (Roberts 1990) along with other useful features of Chinese society. As late as the Tokugawa era (1600–1868), Japanese governance and elite social life was strongly influenced by Chinese civilization (Jansen 1992). The Japanese strength of selective borrowing from others while retaining cultural identity was transferred with brilliant success in encounters with the West, enabling Japan to modernize very quickly.

By contrast, Japan is not central to Chinese historical narratives of the ancient past. These are dominated by a conception of China as a culturally superior “Middle Kingdom” that must be vigilant against internal corruption making it vulnerable to invasion from the north. The dynastic periods of unity are portrayed as superior to, and more important than, the periodic “chaos” where disunity prevailed (Roberts 1990). Historical narratives of ancient China express confidence at the ability of Chinese culture to assimilate outside influences, from Buddhist sutras to military conquerors (like the Mongols or Manchurians). This

sense of cultural superiority was to prove disastrous for China in its 19th century encounters with the West, and is satirized most famously by Lu Xun, whose fictional character Ah Q is blind to the reasons for his many defeats.

The preceding paragraphs covering a more than millennia of recorded history are not fiction, but neither are they meant to be read as fact (see White 1987). They selectively mobilize certain elements of history that may be used in narrating Sino-Japanese relations. They illustrate in Japanese people a cultural strength of selective borrowing and adaptation, and among Chinese people a cultural strength of benevolent paternalism and cultural confidence, both of which will be important to our proposed historical reconciliation.

These positives are important to provide a counter-weight to the predominantly negative character of more recent history, beginning with the war of 1894–1895 where a modernizing Japan defeated the failing Qing dynasty and forced it to cede Taiwan. This was just one in a humiliating chain of defeats for China beginning with the Opium War with Britain in 1840. Newly industrializing under a revitalized Meiji emperor, Japan joined Western powers in carving up China, and received important concessions in the Treaty of Versailles that solidified its position as the sole Great Power of Asia. Although the separation of Taiwan from China has had long-term implications for world peace, Japan has not particularly been blamed for this. Thousands of Chinese studied in Japan at the turn of the century and many, including Sun Yat-sen, were inspired by Japanese success at modernization (Schiffrin 1980). The key theoretical point is that historical representation is mobilized by current political agenda, and in the dispute over the sovereignty of Taiwan, Japan was removed from the equation in 1945.

The historical conflict begins seriously with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria beginning in 1931, accelerating irreversibly after the civilian Prime Minister of Japan, Inukai Tsoyoshi, was assassinated by right-wing Japanese militants in 1932 (Buruma 2003). Retrospectively, this period has become important to Chinese collective remembering not only because of the magnitude of the events, but because this was the last in a century of foreign invasions and humiliations. It serves as a narrative fulcrum launching China from a bitter past to the difficult present (see Gong 1996). The 1982 textbook controversy, for instance, involved an officially sanctioned Japanese schoolbook describing the military incursion as an “advance.” The Chinese are sensitive to such language because during that period, not only Japanese, but Westerners, routinely referred to China as backwards. Unfortunately, the issues involved are more than semantic. Numerous sources have documented the extent of the Japanese military’s transgressions: the killing of millions of civilians (Li 2003; Gong 1996), the expropriation of billions of dollars of property (Seagrave and Seagrave 2003), and the use of women in forced prostitution (Yoshida 2005. See Takahashi 2002 for an overview). Countless people still living remember this brutality, and have told their stories to their children and their children’s children from Burma to the Philippines.

While poor and developing Asian governments were quick to settle peace treaties including indemnities or renouncing indemnities with post-war Japan, the

ordinary people who suffered under the Japanese Imperial Army saw little to no reparation flow down to them. The largest amount of wartime indemnity was paid to Japanese people who suffered as a consequence of the war (Yoshida 2005), followed by British and American prisoners of war. The Japanese government's official position on indemnity to Asian civilians is that treaties were signed, sometimes involving indemnities at the governmental level, and it was up to the governments of the civilians killed to offer them restitution.

This has contributed to an enduring disjuncture between what Assmann (1992) calls "cultural memory," or official, institutionalized memories as compared to communicative memories that live primarily in the hearts, minds, and stories of lay people. Empirical research suggests that such informal collective remembering lives on about three to four generations, or about 80 years after an event, after which it either fades or becomes converted into history (Candau 2005). Forty years after a traumatic event is a critical watershed period as those who experienced an event in their impressionable youth feel the need to convert their impressions into written accounts or else watch the memory fade into oblivion as they approach old age. Such a pattern has been observed for the Spanish Civil War (Igartua and Paez 1997), Holocaust survivors, and is also the pattern observed among Chinese regarding the Sino-Japanese War.

In East Asian collective remembering, it was the Cold War aftermath that set the political agendas for the initial accounts of WWII (He 2007). Qualitative and critical differences in collective remembering between Germany and Japan began immediately with the treatment of the regimes responsible: Germany was treated as "ground zero," with an attempt to narrate the Nazi regime as a complete break with what went on before and afterwards, whereas the maintenance of the Showa regime under Emperor Hirohito was instrumental in pacifying Japan under American military occupation (He 2003; Wang 2000). Crimes against peace (i.e., making war against the West) were the main feature of the Tokyo War Crimes trials rather than crimes against humanity (e.g., killing Asian civilians).² Soldiers in the Japanese imperial army, while guilty of initiating an unjust war, were also narrated as heroically sacrificing themselves for the nation (Orr 2001); in right wing accounts they were portrayed as leading an Asian war against Western imperialism (Fusao 1964). Such a face saving account is not compatible with Japanese soldiers as war criminals who victimized other Asians. Rather, the most powerful symbol of WWII victimhood for Japanese was the atomic bombings (Orr 2001; Atsumi et al. 2004). While the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were commemorated, America was not officially or consensually blamed for this action.³ According to Buruma (2003), Hiroshima is narrated as a singularity, not

² The Tokyo trials have been perceived as "victor's justice" by both the left and the right for these and other reasons including the unevenness of the standards applied.

³ Historical conflict between Japanese and American interpretations of the atomic bombings erupted when a recent American exhibit on the Enola Gay was cancelled over interpretation of how justified the bombing was (Harwit 1996; Yokokawa 1997) describes Japanese civil movements protesting the bombing and American Cold War nuclear policies, whereas Horiba (1995) documents censorship of criticism against America.

connected to the causal events of history, but as a universal symbol of peace. Japanese and American elites collaborated on this account that facilitated their Cold War alliance against the Soviet Union and Communist China. The “Yoshida doctrine” of Japan relying on the United States to guarantee Japanese military safety while concentrating economic development has continued to this day (Wang 2000). This can be viewed theoretically as a compromise between elite political interests of both countries and the need for a face-saving account to satisfy the Japanese public following the disastrous end of WWII for Japan.

Most egregiously, in terms of present day historical conflict, a conservative Japanese Ministry of Education gained control over schoolbook content in the 1950s through a textbook certification system, and suppressed texts that portrayed inglorious Japanese wartime actions. This has succeeded in providing generations of post-war young Japanese with little knowledge of why historical grievances are harbored against their nation throughout Asia (Atsumi et al. 2004). One Japanese historian, Saburo Ienaga, filed three separate lawsuits against the Japanese government from 1965–1993 for censorship. He eventually won substantial monetary awards against the government for unconstitutional censoring of historical events such as the Nanjing Massacre and Unit 731 (a biological warfare unit) from textbooks after about three decades of legal battles (see Ienaga 2001).

China had a different post-war political agenda. First and foremost, warfare did not cease in 1945 but civil war continued until 1949 when Chiang Kai-shek’s American-backed Nationalists were expelled from the mainland to Taiwan. No peace treaty was signed between the Communists and Nationalists to mark an official end to hostilities.⁴ US-backed anti-Communist insurgency continued in the mainland for several years and this, coupled with the undeclared war between the two nations in Korea, sealed America’s fate as the primary enemy of China in the “Cold War.”

Consequently, Western and American imperialism was emphasized in Chinese accounts of WWII together with Japanese imperialism. A triumphal narrative of the victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) over the combined forces of imperialism did not require special emphasis on Japanese cruelty (Yuan and Yang 2002). Rather collaboration between Chiang Kai-shek and the Japanese,⁵ American capitalist funding of the Japanese military-industrial complex, and the Sino-Japanese war itself was narrated as part of a continuous hundred year struggle against reactionary and imperial forces. For Mao, “modern history began with the invasion of the West” (Kahn and Feuerwerker 1968, p. 13). In a Marxist account of history, nationalist sentiments against Japan were peripheral to the central theme of the inevitable triumph of the working class led by the

⁴ The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial in the center of Taipei today carries on its walls a giant mural of the leader’s unfulfilled ambition to retake China.

⁵ Chiang viewed the Communists as his long-term enemy, and was open to peace negotiations with Japan to exterminate this threat, see Boyle (1972).

CCP, and the dialectics of class struggle (Feuerwerker 1968). In this narrative, a clear dividing line is drawn between ordinary Japanese people and the military elite as part of the ideology of class struggle (He 2003). The CCP imprisoned few Japanese soldiers as war criminals, and executed none, in marked contrast to other WWII powers that held Japanese prisoners of war, including Nationalist China (Yuan and Yang 2002). CCP re-education policies in the 1950s were successful in convincing a large group of Japanese prisoners of war to repent their war crimes and after their release form a veterans association in Japan that has lobbied for better relations with China for half a century (Yuan and Yang 2002). Neither did the CCP seek wartime reparations from Japan. By the 1970s, when relations between the two countries were normalized, its interests were more on receiving diplomatic recognition as the legitimate government of China, and isolating Taiwan.

It was not until after the death of Mao and the assumption of the more pragmatic Deng that nationalist sentiments began to re-emerge as a part of public and official Chinese cultural memories of the war. The new Chinese strategy of acknowledging the importance of Western technology and investment had to be balanced against an ideological assertion of China's national interests against political interference. An outpouring of collective remembering of the Sino-Japanese War emerged in the 1980s, including best-selling books and films about the Nanjing massacre (He 2007), as the wartime generation felt old age approaching and began converting their memories into a record for future generations. Concurrently, a new nationalism became more important as Marxist ideology became less persuasive following the collapse of the Soviet block (see Gries 2004).

The consequence of the liberalization of the Chinese economy has been not only to greatly increase China's wealth and power, growing its economy by 10% per year for 25 years beginning in 1980, but also to greatly increase income inequality, producing a modernizing coastal economy and a backwards interior, and vast differences between the countryside and cities. This wealth differential is locked in by a *hukou* system that strictly regulates internal migration, and a political system, that is more open to both external influence and internal debate, but does not allow overt political dissent. This growing inequality has sparked internal problems, with protests and riots becoming a semi-regular feature of Chinese political life, famously presaged by the Tiananmen square uprising of 1989 (Nathan 2001. See also the PBS documentary *The Tank Man* available online at www.pbs.org).

Political legitimacy is no longer sustained by Communist ideology and the international solidarity of the working classes, but a more traditional form of Chinese nationalism. According to our theory, history can be thought of as a symbolic reserve, selectively mobilized to face new challenges. Political elites contest one another to articulate group narratives that offer alternative readings of what has worked in the past and will succeed in the future. In the ferment of ideas following the decay of Marxism, China has effectively returned to a more traditional reading of history. The humiliations of the past, beginning with the Opium War are narrated as part of national victimization by foreigners, the most

recent and worst of whom was Japan (see Gong 1996; Gries 2004). The CCP is the only legitimate authority capable of protecting China. The other features of a traditional historical narrative, including vigilance against internal corruption, emphasizing unity as the only antidote to chaos, and cultural confidence in the assimilation of foreign influences (this time technological) have all become prominent. They fit well with China's drive towards economic and technological modernization while maintaining politically authoritarian rule. In this context, the symbolic markers of Japan's whitewashing of its historical past assume a significance they never had under a Marxist reading of history. Historical conflict against Japan combines elite aspirations to maintain the present trajectory of development with popular memories of suffering and victimization. It serves as a pressure release valve, uniting the nation against outsiders at a time when inequality, regional fragmentation, and regime legitimacy are important issues (Yayama 2005).

Reactions in Japan to the easing of Cold War tensions have been more diverse. On the one hand, from the 1970s on, liberal newspapers such as *Asahi Shimbun* and progressive Japanese citizens groups have pressed the more conservative government to debunk its wartime myths by engaging in truth-telling campaigns (Honda 1993; Yoshibumi 1998; Ienaga 2001; Yoshida 2005). On the other hand, as a democracy, such efforts have produced a conservative response. The trigger for the 2005 protests and riots in China against Japanese interests was the recertification of a textbook published by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform in 2001 that makes virtually no mention of Japanese war crimes. The fury of Chinese response appeared out of proportion to a text that had already been officially denounced by the Japan Teachers Union, and adopted by only 18 among Japan's 11,000+ junior high schools as of April 2004. As critics have noted, the lack of swift official Chinese action against the rioting may have signaled tacit condoning of anti-Japanese sentiments. Another major issue fuelling symbolic conflict has been Japanese Prime Ministers' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine commemorating the Japanese war dead. For Chinese and Koreans, the problem is that 14 Class A war criminals from WWII (sentenced for crimes against humanity) are buried there; Japanese face a more complex set of issues that reach to the core of their modern identity established during the Meiji era. According to Takahashi (2005), Yasukuni provides an "alchemy of emotion" where sadness and anger at the loss of a loved one in war is transformed into an honorable sacrifice for nation. Nakasonewas the first prime minister to visit the shrine (once only in 1985) as part of a conscious effort to produce a new nationalism "casting disgrace aside, advancing forward in pursuit of glory" (see Yoshibumi 1998). Recent Prime Minister Koizumi made a regular practice of visiting the shrine, amidst a chorus of protests from China and South Korea. Given the entirely predictable nature of these international protests, their purpose was to court the right wing vote, and show Japan that this was a leader capable of resisting external pressure. Such a show of strength was important to Koizumi because he was leader of a factional reform movement within the traditionally conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). It defused criticisms of

weakness from within his party. Koizumi's successor Abe has followed in his footsteps by making controversial remarks about the Japanese Army's use of "comfort women".

Hence, it appears that the current historical conflict between China and Japan serves ruling party interests in both countries. For China, it provides a pressure release valve by unifying and directing elite and popular concerns against an external foe. For the ruling faction of the LDP, it provides a way of placating the right wing by demonstrating symbolic strength and fidelity while instituting far-reaching economic reforms that may hurt its traditional power base. These elite agendas play on genuine fears among ordinary Japanese of a resurgent China and its historical grievances, and genuine anger among ordinary Chinese at the suffering inflicted on them in the past by Japan, and its perceived lack of contrition. Following such an analysis, there appears to be an impasse. But looking ahead to the future, there is reason for optimism.

3 Narrative Design Science in the Historical Reconciliation of China and Japan

The key is to recognize long versus short terms interests of the ruling elites of Japan and China. Our review has shown that it is these interests that have dominated the evolution of historical representations, not popular concerns. While popular opinion is more difficult to ignore now than at the height of the Cold War, it is elite interests that produced the present historical conflict between these two countries, and in our view it is elite interests that can begin the process of reconciliation. This premise is based on our theory that historical representations are mobilized by current political agenda. In the long term, particularly from the perspective of Japanese interests, these favor the evolution of less polemical representations.

First, it is not within long-term Japanese interests to be portrayed as the principle historical enemy of a nuclear powered neighbor with the largest standing army in the world. This forces Japan to continue to align itself with the American military in a way that severely compromises its own security options, especially concerning North Korea. Second, it is not within Japanese business interests to have periodic popular uprisings directed against its capital in its fastest growing area of investment and trade. By contrast, the struggle between the rival factions of the LDP may have been resolved by Koizumi's triumph in the snap election of 2005. With this consolidation of power, the ruling clique of the LDP may be able to turn their attention to changing not only economic policies, but education and foreign policy agendas to reflect a post Cold War, multi-polar world. It remains for narrative design science to offer a solution to the dilemma posed by Japanese who genuinely would like a solution to their historical conflict with China.

Why is Japan perceived to not have apologized sufficiently for its historical transgressions when this has been a fairly regular feature of its Prime Ministers'

pronouncements in foreign relations with China since the normalization of relations?⁶ Research on the apology-forgiveness cycle (Barkan 2000; Nadler and Liviatan 2004) provides the answer: the key to the completion of the ameliorative cycle lies in the hands of the victims, not the perpetrators. The positive effects of apology are only realized when the victim perceives the perpetrator to be sincere and trustworthy. Using widely independent methods and samples, Darby and Schlenker (1989) and Nadler and Liviatan (2004) concurred that an insincere apology or an apology from an untrustworthy source is worse than no apology at all. In this case, the apology is viewed as a manipulative ploy, adding deceit to injury. This is precisely the case regarding Chinese perceptions of Japanese apologies for their historical transgressions. First and foremost, apologies are accompanied by government approval of historical texts that teach that no transgressions occurred, and suppression of texts that provide an account of the transgressions (Ienaga 2001). Second, Japanese Prime Ministers pay regular visits to a shrine that glorifies Japanese war dead, including Hideki Tojo, a principal architect of Japan's military policies during the 1930s-1940s (Takahashi 2005). Third, relatively little indemnity or reparation has been made to those who suffered or their families (He 2007; Yoshida 2005).

While this may appear to be a daunting list of objections, the costs of not dealing with them now will be greater in ten years when China's economy exceeds that of Japan. First, Japan should return to the neighboring country clause instituted after the first textbook controversy in 1982. This mandates that textbooks ought to show understanding and seek international harmony in their treatment of historical issues. The findings of international commissions of historians could be used in jointly narrating controversies. It is not to Japan's advantage to treat this as an internal political matter when China shows signs of similarly treating the destruction of Japanese property interests as an internal political matter in response. Second, South Korea has signaled its willingness to remove its objections to Prime Ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine on the condition that the Class A war criminals interred there are removed. This is a more serious problem because under Japan's constitution the government cannot order the shrine officials to do this and the shrine officials show no signs of being willing to do so. The solution would therefore require a declaration that while ordinary Japanese should feel comfortable honoring their ancestors at Yasukuni, representatives of the government of Japan cannot do so as long as class A war criminals remain interred there.

While there are many pressing issues of foreign policy to be resolved between these countries, the historical conflict between them involves a symbolic core that can be likened to an open sore that festers? other issues. These issues, while important, are symptoms of a deeper cause: the loss of face suffered by Chinese and Korean dignity at the hands of Japanese during their imperial era that is now being freely narrated as a part of national identity.

⁶ See the Wikipedia for a comprehensive list of apologies.

Similarly, the Japanese whitewashing of its historical transgressions was not simply a matter of fulfilling a Cold War agenda, but also a response to the humiliation of total defeat and occupation. To acknowledge one's father or grandfather as a war criminal would entail shame and a loss of face that would have been unbearable. But now that the Showa era has ended and most of the WWII generation has passed on, a more honest appraisal of the past may be possible. The acknowledgement of historical transgressions can now be treated as a problem more symbolic and collective than personal and familial. Of course, this will still involve costs for Japanese identity. The Germans, who have been far more direct in facing their Nazi past, have experienced serious psychological costs to admitting their historical transgressions (Rensmann 2004). Periodically new accusations of wrong-doing erupt (see Goldhagen 1996) despite their best efforts at atonement. But for both Germany and especially Japan, with costs there will be rewards as well: for unlike self-esteem, face is not something that belongs to the person, it is given as a token of respect from someone else. Face reflects social standing in a community (Choi et al. 1997). Japan's first community among its family of nations, historically, genealogically, and geographically, is Asian. It cannot secure international standing simply by an alliance with the USA while there is such a strong sense of grievance from its neighbors.

In our view, the solution to Japan's historical dilemma involves the giving of face to its neighbors. It will take a symbolic act similar in magnitude to what Willy Brandt did in falling to his knees and weeping at a Warsaw ghetto, but in a manner in more in keeping with East Asian norms of emotional restraint. In East Asian politics little is spontaneous, and the ground must be laid for an agreement, preferably negotiated behind closed doors. Relationships must be established, with official means to maintain these through dialogue. A Japanese leader will then need to visit Nanjing, to show remorse for what happened there and in other wartime transgressions. The leader will need to articulate a new agenda, perhaps beginning with the ancient contribution of Chinese to Japanese culture, moving to the shared experience of humiliation by the West, to the different strategies for dealing with this, to a sincere apology for the historical transgressions of the Showa period. This apology should be accompanied by substantive policy declarations, at minimum regarding historical texts, visits to the Yasukuni shrine, and wartime indemnity. The indemnity should be well-thought out, designed in consultation with Chinese, and show humanitarian concern for the suffering of Chinese people, like a fund for Chinese disaster or poverty relief; it does not have to be tied directly to wartime victimization. Only apology accompanied by substantive action will be perceived as sincere, and only sincere apology is likely to be accepted. Furthermore, as the issue is to be resolved is symbolic, quiet diplomacy will not work – the symbolic act must resonate in the collective imagination. Paying homage to the victims of Nanjing would be a story worth telling, as was Brandt's apology. The symbolic power of the Brandt apology helped provide a narrative fulcrum for change not just in Germany, but in neighboring countries as well; to interpret their identities not in contradistinction to a demonized "Other," but within the framework of a

shared identity that provides safe anchorage from which to reflect on one's own historical failings.

Of course this involves substantial risk for the leader involved. While he may restore face to aggrieved parties, he may lose face before the Japanese people. On the plus side, given an East Asian understanding of face, if such an endeavor is undertaken in good faith by a Japanese leader, there would be little risk of rejection by Chinese leaders. If a Japanese leader gives them the amount of face described here, Chinese mores of generosity and benevolent paternalism (Hwang 1998) will not allow anything but the most generous of responses. A sincere apology (that is, one accompanied by substantive action) can become a good starting point to build a more cooperative future together. The Chinese narrative of history has been traditionally constructed around strength, and in the modern era this can be satisfied by the achievement of standing among nations rather than continually referring to a past involving victimization. For China, the costs of engaging in a new arms race against a technologically advanced and economically powerful neighbor are too high; Chinese political elites from Chou En-lai forward have acknowledged this, but they must now accommodate public opinion as well. After public opinion has shifted, a return visit by a Chinese leader to Nagasaki, the principle port of trade between the two countries in the Tokugawa era (Jensen 1992) to pay respect to the victims of the second atomic bombing (including Christians and outcasts) would be a fitting symbolic reply; Nagasaki is under-narrated compared to Hiroshima, and could afford an opportunity for outsiders to contribute to new, more collaborative narratives. This would increase the prestige of the Japanese leader, and begin a positive cycle rather than a negative cycle of reciprocity in accord with East Asian norms about face.

In East Asian society, many things flow from top-down, and we feel confident that things will improve rapidly at the interpersonal level after the necessary symbolic steps have been taken by the leaders. However, it would be naïve to believe that one or two symbolic acts, regardless how powerful, can bring about reconciliation to Sino-Japanese relations. Individuals, companies, foreign ministries, historians, all have a part to play in constructing a more collaborative efforts at remembering of the past visioning the future (Bar-Tal 2000); trust-building and interdependence, the staples of peace-making (see Kelman 1997) gain importance here. The German experience has been of gradual and incremental improvement, marked by ups and downs, but in so firm a direction that past transgressions cannot now be repeated, nor is retribution an issue that can be stoked (Rensmann 2004). The future of Germany has been sealed among the European family of nations. We believe and hope that such a future is within the reach of Japan and its neighbors as well.

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