Unity and Diversity in Culture and Psychology:

Identity and Living Between World-views

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Abstract

In examining the history of psychological practice in Canada and abroad it is observed that much of modern psychology and most of cross-cultural psychology have been founded upon a "natural science" model of univocalism, universalism, realism and objectivism. Recent developments in psychology have included taking a closer look at the "human science" model which shows a greater sensitivity towards indigenous, ethno, and cultural psychologies; a model which openly recognizes pluralism, historicism, constructivism, and relativism. In addition to outlining these two world-views of science, this

paper also discusses potential prospects and problems regarding the integration or separation of these two scientific world-views as they apply to the ongoing debates over unity and diversity in both the practice of psychology in Canada as well as in the everyday lives of Canadians. The underlying theme of analysis that is present throughout this examination of psychological practice is the formation of personal, professional, and collective identities, as outlined by Erik Erikson in his psycho-social framework. It is also suggested that taking a socially responsible approach to psychological praxis would encourage ethical-moral virtues in psychologists along with ongoing dialogue over the nature of our identities.

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Long before the 1939 establishment of the Canadian Psychological Association, psychologists have been searching for an identity as a scientific discipline (Danziger, 1990). From the days of the first Canadian course on psychology, taught by Thomas McCulloch in 1838, through the 1885 publication of William Lyall's The Intellect, the Emotions, and the Moral Nature and John Clark Murray's Handbook of Psychology to today's plethora of psychological praxes, Canadian psychologists have expressed both diversity and unity in thought and practice. As pointed out by Charles Tolman (1996), these and many other early Canadians maintained psychologies that were centred on common moral and social concerns in spite of them having diverse "backgrounds and philosophical commitments" (p. 137).

In search of the identity of psychology in Canada one might find a clear example of the development of "a unified and coherent voice" in the establishment of the Canadian Psychological Association and the test construction committee by Canadian psychologists of diverse interests who pulled together "in guiding psychology's contributions to the anticipated war" (Ferguson, 1992, p. 697). After the second world war, great concern over the nature of psychological praxis was expressed by Robert B. MacLeod (1955) who identified a distinction between psychology as a science and as a profession; cautioning psychologists against the premature diversification of their discipline. More recently, the issue of the unity and diversity of the identity of Canadian psychologists has been addressed as we continue to wrestle with our identities as scientists, practitioners, and scientist-practitioners (Wand, 1993). Keith Dobson (1995) has also recently addressed the issue of unity and diversity, pointing out that it continues to take centre stage between psychologists of two worlds as they fight over power and control in Canadian psychology.

The Interface Between Unity, Diversity & Identity

Presently, in considering the issues of unity and diversity in the practice of psychology as a science, I must first reveal the psychological perspective in which this account can be said to be "situated". Being heavily informed by the hermeneutical perspective of Erik Erikson (1964; 1968), this account attempts to provide a dialogue on the issue of unity and diversity in the practice of psychology by considering the historical

background of this present conflict in psychology . As such, this account considers an understanding of identity formation as a central theme to be brought into discussion of issues of unity and diversity. In doing so, it is possible to use our understanding of personal and collective identities as a tool to help us comprehend and improve upon our own identities as psychologists, as citizens, and as human beings. Here, psycho-social identity is seen to be comprised of rituals and practices involving shared values and ideologies (Erikson, 1964). Being part of a present dialogue, identity also extends into the past and future with the histories and goals that are integral to its various expressions.

Central to Erikson's psychosocial framework for understanding identities stands the concept of _mutuality_. According to Erikson (1964), mutuality is the basis of human psycho-social life where each person in a relationship depends upon the other(s) for the development of ego strengths or virtues. He describes persons in relationships as "_cogwheeling_" each other where their psychosocial needs are enmeshed. As such, persons jointly develop through the cycles of life, revealing the "whole life cycle as an integrated psychosocial phenomenon" (Erikson, 1964, p. 114).

Erikson further describes cogwheeling as:

> the most immediate connection between the basic _virtues_ and the _essentials of an organized human community_ ... for the purpose of deriving from the collectivity and from its tradition a fund of reassurance and a set of methods which enable [adults] to meet the needs of the next generation" (1964, p. 152, italics original).

Furthermore, in bridging the collective with the personal, Erikson states that: "true identity, ... depends on the support which the young individual receives from the _collective sense of identity_ characterizing the social groups significant to him [sic]: his class, his _nation_, his _culture_" (1964, p. 93, italics added). One might add profession to this list of social identities, as Erikson also indicates that one's role of occupation (e.g., as a therapist) cannot be extricated from one's everyday roles as a person.

Looking from this perspective, the acceptance, by psychologists, of various paradigms or perspectives of psychology is seen as the formation of ideological identity commitments by these persons. As such, commitments to various paradigms of psychology can be considered in conjunction with the personal, national and cultural identity formation of psychologists (Tonks, 1995) where the current debate over the unity or diversity of perspective and practice _in_ and _of_ psychology (Berry, 1993) can be seen as evidence of a state of identity crisis for psychologists (Wand, 1993; Belanger, 1992; Pyke, 1992).

Against this backdrop of identity formation, an examination of the issue of unity and diversity is presently made with respect to the legitimation of alternative ideologies of psychology as a science by various academics and practitioners within the context of the general practice of psychology. Here a consideration of two models of science (human and natural) is made which provides another context against which the contemporary identity debates over unity and diversity can be understood. Additionally, the unity issue is considered within the contexts of the practice of the psychology of culture and the practice of psychology in Canada. Finally, a comparison

is made between these various facets of professional identity crisis for psychologists along with the ongoing crisis of identity for all Canadians over issues of the unity and diversity of culture in our country as well as in our national identity.

Four Contexts for the Crisis of Unity and Diversity in Identity

Taking a closer look at four exemplary groups, one can examine the roles that unity and diversity play in the collective and personal identities of their members, revealing both communalities and differences. While it may be possible to synthesise the identity concerns from all of these domains, any discussion about such attempts will be held until later sections.

Unity and Diversity in General Psychology

Since before the 1879 establishment of Wundt's laboratory in Leipzig, psychologically minded scholars have debated over the most appropriate methods for having a science of human psychology and culture (Danziger, 1990; Jahoda, 1982; Kim & Berry, 1993). Positivists such as Auguste Comte (1856/1957) and John Stuart Mill (1843/1968) have proclaimed various utopian visions for the natural sciences (Abbagnano, 1967). With a foundation in naturalism, materialism, empiricism, and being value-free, the presentist (Stocking, 1965) natural science perspective attempts to provide objective causal explanations within a univocalist framework (Hesse, 1973; Staats, 1987; Paranjpe, 1989; Leahey, 1994).

Charles Tolman (1992) and other Canadian psychologists have recently provided a well rounded account of the nature of positivism and its role as a natural science world-view for psychology. To elaborate briefly on the nature of this world-view one might add that naturalism involves the belief that only the phenomena studied in "science" (e.g., nature) are real and that they can be explained without reference to external (e.g., supernatural) phenomena (Speake, 1979). Often accompanying naturalism is materialism, or the belief that all that exists is physical matter (e.g., takes up space, has mass, ...) or is explainable by or reduced to matter (Robinson, 1986). Also central to the natural science world-view is empiricism, or the belief that experience (e.g., the senses) is the only source of knowledge as well as the only means of the justification of knowledge (e.g., verification or corroboration by/with observations). Finally, positivism, as a philosophy of natural science, has attempted to provide "objective" or public knowledge (e.g., the universal laws of nature) which stands beyond ethics (or moral evaluation) and metaphysics (or speculation about the nature of 'the real world').

Alternatively, others have strongly spoken out against these uniformist perspectives. Dilthey (1883/1989), for example, was one of the first to clearly articulate a distinction between the "human" and "natural" science perspectives or world-views. In contrast to Comte, Dilthey provided a human or hermeneutical science which involved the recognition that all of human psychological activity entails the production of interpretations or understandings which are developed against contexts of continually revisable pre-understandings. This human science perspective also involves a value and historically sensitive approach which openly recognizes human agency and equivocal pluralism as central tenets (Hesse, 1973; Woolfolk, Sass & Messer, 1988).

To elaborate on the hermeneutical/human science perspective of Dilthey, one might add that there is a "historical" methodology that has emerged which follows the dictum: <u>there is no understanding without pre-understanding</u>. This <u>hermeneutical circle</u> of understanding has no final resting place; suggesting that our pre-understanding will always involve accommodation and change. As in the reading of an introductory psychology text book, people will interpret the text differently each time they read it as their contexts of pre-understanding (or background knowledge) forever change with growing experience or understanding. Additionally, whether a college frosh or tenured professor reads the text, markedly different understandings of the text's meaning will emerge through the different historically situated perspectives and value orientations of these persons.

Dilthey and other hermeneuticists also explicitly recognize this plurality of interpretations while acknowledging the central process of <u>critical self appraisal</u> to the unfolding of these understandings. Foreshadowing Erikson's notion of mutuality, Dilthey also recognized the "active and productive" (p. 440) relations between the understandings created by persons as well as the "self sameness" (or identity) of human "acting and suffering" (1989, p. 449) which is accompanied by a "supraindividual system" that provides a means for "the consciousness of values and purposes" (p. 443). This recognition of the human ethical or moral agent reveals the value-sensitive orientation that is central to this hermeneutical/human science world-view.

According to Kurt Danziger (1990), Wilhelm Wundt openly accepted <u>both</u> of these perspectives as he maintained a division between these two scientific orientations. Wundt held that thinking, affect, voluntary activity and social psychology needed to be studied through historical methods while sensation and perception were best studied through experimental methods; with memory, attention and imagery falling in between the two perspectives. Following from the time of Wundt, there has been a long standing debate over the boundaries and practices of legitimate psychology in Canada, the United States, and many other places around the world (Danziger 1990; Leahey, 1994; Paranjpe, 1988).

John Conway (1992) has identified the crux of a common manifestation of this debate in the life and works of William James where he suggests that James was caught in a crisis of identity between the roles and world-views of the "tough minded scientist" and the "tender minded humanist". Viney (1989) also has elaborated on James' position as one of pragmatic pluralism that was open to the pursuit of unity; accepting unity <u>and</u> diversity at the same time. Other historians of psychology have also pointed to this debate in the form of the marriage between the pure (natural) scientists and the humanistic practitioners (Leahey, 1994; Wand, 1993; Kimble, 1989), a marriage that has been filled with many disputes and threats of divorce; e.g., the CSBBCS split from CPA (Dobson, 1995), the APS split from the APA (Leahey, 1994), as well as the division between human and natural sciences (Kendler, 1987).

<u>Unity and Diversity in Canadian Psychology</u>

Wright and Myers (1982) have pointed to the philosophical roots of academic psychology in Canada as having developed from the mental and moral philosophy of the Scottish "Common Sense" school. From the beginnings in

the nineteenth century to early twentieth century, Canadian philosophers and psychologists have variously accepted the ideologies of spiritualism, evolution, physiology and statistics, and many others as being relevant to their identities as psychologists (Tolman, 1996; Wright & Myers, 1982; Armour & Trott, 1981).

Over the past 57 years, since the beginning of the Canadian Psychological Association, Canadian psychologists have expressed great concern over the nature of psychological practice in Canada and whether or not it should be scientifically or professionally organized. As elsewhere, this deep seated concern over the proper relationship between these two methodological perspectives or world-views can be seen as evidence of an underlying identity crisis of the discipline in Canada (Wand, 1993; Belanger, 1992; Pyke, 1992). Are we to be diversified, embracing something other than the "Boulder model" of scientist and scientist-practitioner? Are we going to opt for some type of uniformism of perspective where the disciplinary boundaries are drawn clearly and divisively between "psychologists" who are oriented towards applied vs. pure? Naturalist vs. Humanist? Legitimate or not? These are the kinds of questions that Canadian psychologists have asked about their own professional identity.

There has been diversity ever since the beginning of the Canadian Psychological Association, as identified with the "founding fathers" of Ned Bott, Roy Liddy and George Humphrey who, respectively, studied such widespread topics as Greek philosophy, theology, and experimental psychology (Ferguson, 1992). Despite such differences, these and many other individuals pulled together to establish the Canadian Psychological Association in 1939. Also establishing several committees and projects contributing to "the war effort", these pioneer Canadian psychologists sought to provide an applied scientific psychology to serve the people of Canada and the British Commonwealth. During the 1950's, a year after the International Congress of Psychology first met here in Canada (Williams, 1992), Robert MacLeod, expatriate Canadian, cautioned against "premature professionalism" which might be "detrimental to the development of psychology as a scientific discipline" (Belanger, 1992, p. 711). Since that time, many CPA conferences have been dedicated to establishing some form of unity amongst the diversity of interests, including the scientists vs. practitioners (Belanger, 1992), the objectivists vs. subjectivists (Pyke, 1992) and the traditional androcentrics vs. feminists (Pyke, 1992; Kimball, 1994) expressing concern over the loss of identity (Wand, 1993) and the withering of the discipline (Conway, 1991; Craik, 1991; Furedy, 1991) to a state of crisis (Paranjpe, 1989).

Barbara Wand (1993) has pointed out that Canadian psychologists should try to avoid the problems of a fractured identity and a lack of communication by searching for common ground in training an awareness of the social alliances and value systems that make up our academic identities. Furthermore, Jean Pettifor (1996) outlines the importance of encouraging the development of virtues like care, responsibility, authenticity, and fidelity in our identities as psychologists. As also suggested by John Shotter (1993), such practical knowledge of identity and belonging is developed and fostered through a recognition of joint action (mutuality) between persons. Providing a psychology that is socially responsible is important here, as supported by the mandate of the CPA (Belanger, 1992;

Pyke, 1992), offering the prospect of a common identity through a value-sensitive approach centred on the establishment of ethical standards where practitioners can lead researchers to relevant social problems and scientifically minded researchers can help practitioners with rigorous empirical testing (Wand, 1993). Likewise, in terms of Canadian social psychology, Wallace Lambert (1970) has called upon Canadian psychologists to diagnose and solve social problems while John Berry (1993) also has called for a psychology <u>in</u> and <u>of</u> Canada that is sensitive our everyday cultural life.

In making choices about academic identities we are like enculturating persons having to choose between cultural world-views, both collectively and personally (Berry, 1987; Paranjpe, 1992; Tonks, 1995). Thus, we are left with many choices, many possibilities for the separation or integration of our practices, values and perspectives; our identities as psychologists, as citizens and as human beings. Richard Rorty (1979) has pointed out that it is important to consider that "education has to start from acculturation" where we can develop our "self-conscious awareness of the social practices" (p. 365) that make up our scientific world-views. By recognizing edification and <u>Bildung</u> (self making and remaking) in the educational process, we can make a valuable contribution to our own identity formations (Erikson, 1970). It is in this vein that Jean Pettifor urges Canadian psychologists to get back to the "virtues of being of good character" (p. 5) by having care and compassion in practice along with integrity in teaching and scholarship.

<u>Unity and Diversity in the Psychology of Culture</u>

> <u>Diversity and the cultural divide</u>

As with both general psychology and Canadian psychology, the psychology of culture too has been mired with debate over unity and diversity. A recent collection of articles in the <u>International Journal of Psychology</u> both outlines and characterizes the identity crisis of psychologists of culture. In a provocative account of "cross-cultural" psychology, Misra and Gergen (1993) point out many shortfalls of this typically natural science oriented approach. Instead, they offer a human/hermeneutical science alternative which attempts to provide an approach that is more suitable to the study of human collective phenomena. Like Wundt and Dilthey, these authors suggest that the decontextualized, acultural, ahistorical, natural science of behaviour must be replaced with a pluralistic human science that openly recognizes a diversity of <u>emic</u> (local cultural) perspectives and contexts in which psychological meaning and knowledge are constructed.

In response to these assertions, others have defended the natural science model because of its role in de-mythologizing and its description of cultural relativism as being meaningless (Poortinga, 1993) and because of its power of generalization (Triandis, 1993). By keeping the natural and human science perspectives separate, the problems of a lack of understanding, intolerance and prejudice are encouraged where a greater fractioning of identity occurs between <u>us</u> and <u>them</u> in the psychology of culture.

Another example of diversification in the discipline is seen in the emergence of a new journal <u>Culture & Psychology</u> which is dedicated to the

development of historically oriented interdisciplinary syntheses of theory pertaining to culture and psychology. Reflecting a hermeneutical/human science orientation, Valsiner (1995) points out that this journal represents an attempt to get away from the empirically (natural science) centred approach of other journals. This can be seen as a potential problem for unity with the possibility of further breaches of communication between readers of these two types of journals. Alternatively, this can be seen as a prospect for the multicultural ideology--seeking unity through diversity--where the addition of voices leads to the production of a richer chorus for the expression of our ideologies of psychology, our value systems as scientists.

<u>Two prospects for unity amongst diversity.</u>

Additional prospects for unity amongst diversity can be seen in the works of two Canadian Psychologists of culture who have provided similar but different ways to resolve this debate over pluralism and univocalism

John Berry (1994) has recently suggested that such concerns over unity and diversity can be understood through the issues of: knowledge within vs. across culture, cultural contact vs. none, and culture given vs. created. By embracing these issues as dimensions of a <u>single</u> space, it is possible to get into that space and engage in a dialogue over these issues of identity. Being rooted in a natural science perspective, Berry considers issues of value and ontology as "meta-issues", outside of the domain of psychological science and he also shows a greater concern for the present and <u>future</u> goals of an integrated psychology of culture through the development of a cultural universal or derived <u>etic</u> (Berry, 1969; 1989). By focusing on these goals we can find a <u>derived unity</u> amongst the diversity of psychological perspectives across cultures.

Anand Paranjpe (1996) offers a different perspective on unity where he reveals his human science rooting through an interest in the historical traditions from which various psychologies have arisen. Additionally, Paranjpe (1993) wishes to bring issues of epistemology, ontology and power into the centre of discourse on psychological practice where a value sensitive approach is paramount. Like Berry, Paranjpe opts for the integration of emic perspectives. Unlike Berry, however, he calls for theoretical <u>pluralism</u> of many forms of possible integration, not a single set of Cartesian dimensions, largely due to a greater concern over the hegemonic creation of universal etics <u>at the expense of</u> indigenous emics (Paranjpe, 1992).

Taken together, Berry and Paranjpe's solutions represent two facets of one possible synthesis of our identity crisis with their concern for the traditions and foundations to the psychology of culture along with the goals and aspirations of the bridging of culture with psychology. Not to suggest that these are mutually exclusive perspectives--as Berry does not call for eliminative etics (recognizing his account as one of many) and he will openly talk about meta-issues while Paranjpe is not averse to empirical testing nor does he ignore goals--I believe that both Berry and Paranjpe would agree with John Shotter (1993) that the way to dissolve such crises of academic identity is through shared dialogue over issues of common concern. The form of such dialogue involves joint action in addition

to _phronesis_ or ethical know-how (Bernstein, 1983). Both of these psychologists accept the value orientation of multiculturalism as an important social policy and cultural practice (Berry & Kalin, 1995; Berry, 1984; Paranjpe, 1992).

While it may be possible for proponents of these two orientations to the psychology of culture to become disengaged and relate in an adversarial manner, it is also possible for them to engage in open and critical dialogue over the nature of their supraindividual identity. Such collective self-reflection in the form of joint action can move towards a synthesis of world-views and concerns over the nature of psychological praxis. This edificatory process of the practical understanding of our identities involves a search for shared judgment on the issues and concerns that are _significant_ to us (Taylor, 1994), concerns that really move us towards the development of understanding that _makes a difference_ (James, 1907) in our everyday lives. A recent example of one such issue that "moved" thousands of Canadians is seen in the "Unity Rally" held in Montreal just prior to the October 30, 1995 Quebec referendum on separation.

Unity and Diversity in Canadian Culture

Canadians at large have also been pondering their identity as a group along with the relevance of multiculturalism to that identity (Berry & Kalin, 1995; Tonks & Bhatt, 1991). Since 1971, we Canadians have been living under the influence of an official governmental policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework (Esses & Gardiner, 1996; Berry, 1984). As evidenced by both the recent referendum over the separation of Quebec and various other uprisings over native land claims, Canadians have been challenged to decide upon if and how much of a diversity of cultural traditions we would like to have as our own in constructing personal and collective identities; facing assimilation, separation, marginalisation or integration. We must ask ourselves what are the human and natural limitations and conditions for the maintenance and development of Canadian identity and what importance do we place on the historical legacies of our ancestors and our responsibilities to the futures of our descendants? Likewise, Canadian psychologists in general, and Canadian psychologists of culture in particular, are being challenged to decide amongst the types of world-views presented above, facing assimilation, separation, marginalisation and integration.

While, as citizens of this country, we have to face the potential problems of cultural, economic, geographic and ethical ruin should we separate and fractionate into many groups and territories fighting over land and resources, we also face the prospect of living a happy and peaceful existence through the pursuit of ethical solutions to our differences by pulling together and embracing our differences as our strength. Likewise, as Canadian psychologists of culture we have to face the problems of a crisis of identity and the prospects of some form of unity and integrity as a group. Perhaps by examining the parallel conflicts that we face as citizens of Canada and as members of psychological associations we can see the common paradoxes of the crises of unity and diversity and engage in meaningful dialogue over real possible solutions that each of us can accept personally. By being ready to listen to and take each other's world-views seriously we can begin to show the strength of our many voices as we bring

them into harmony where each individual or group offers its virtue and together we all benefit as a whole.

Summary and Conclusions

By examining the ideologies of identity that we accept as psychologists, as Canadians, and as human beings, we can find both diversity of expression and unity of commitment in our identities. Accepting the multicultural ideology of unity through diversity we can integrate the past and future oriented perspectives of human and natural science with the present through a willingness to engage in identity debates with open minds. By doing so, we can continue to engage in the rituals of identity formation through dialogue consisting of a diversity of perspectives that occur in the symposia and business meetings of our national congress as well as the publications of our national association.

Some might add that potential problems arising from this pluralistic approach are wasted time and energy with the proliferation of a greater diversity of perspectives without any form of integration between them. Alternatively, the prospect of this flexible orientation towards personal and group enculturation is that it sets the stage for future generations of psychologists and citizens to continue to develop their professional, civilian, and personal identities in an informed manner where open dialogue and "transvaluation", or the search for evaluative common ground, is encouraged throughout (Taylor, 1994). The result is an orientation to psychological practice that is dedicated to the integrity of the discipline (Mos, 1987), the value of social responsibility, and is one that recognizes the concerns of our ancestors and descendants along with the present concerns of citizens, academics and practitioners who are trained to serve those citizens and ourselves.

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