ADVANCES IN DESCRIPTIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Volume 10 ❖ 2013

Published by
Descriptive Psychology Press
Anthony O. Putman, Director of the Press
3110 Bolgos Circle
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

ADVANCES IN DESCRIPTIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Editors:

Keith E. Davis
Department of Psychology
University of South Carolina

Raymond M. Bergner
Department of Psychology
Illinois State University

Fernand Lubuguin
University of Denver

Wynn Schwartz
Harvard University
The Massachusetts School of
Professional Psychology

Official Publication of
The Society for Descriptive Psychology

Volume 10 ❖ 2013
Descriptive Psychology Press
Ann Arbor, Michigan

3110 Bolgos Circle
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105

ISBN: 978-1-891700-10-1

Manufactured in the United States of America

Contents

Foreword

This volume is the tenth in the *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* series. The series as a whole has been devoted to advancing the nonreductionistic, non-mechanistic systematic formulation of persons and their behavior that originated with the work of Peter G. Ossorio back in the 1960s. At the present historical moment, the trend in scientific and academic circles is very much against what Descriptive Psychology stands for. Everywhere we turn, we are told that we persons are, in E.O. Wilson's phrase, "marvelous robots, wired (neuronally) with awesome precision"; that our beliefs, ideas, and thoughts are at bottom nothing over and above collectivities of synaptic events; that we do as we do in order to derive the reinforcement attendant upon the secretion of dopamine in our brains; and the like. The ten volumes of *Advances*, as well as Descriptive Psychology in general, present a strong, intellectually rigorous, scientifically sophisticated voice against these (to our mind harmful) cultural trends.

This series, again like Descriptive Psychology in general, has been devoted to something further. There is widespread agreement that the field of psychology is a conceptual wasteland. We pick up textbooks on "abnormal" psychology and on "personality" and are routinely told in the first chapter that the author does not know what these terms mean since there is no consensus in the field. If we seek definitions or other explications of such core concepts as "behavior" and "person", we find that virtually no attempt has been made within the field to formulate these concepts. Indeed, the latter term is not even included in the 1024 page *A .P. A. Dictionary of Psychology*. The situation is akin to a biology that has never explicated the concepts of "cell" or "natural selection", or a physics that has never formulated those of "atom" or "galaxy." We go around, like Chicken Little, reporting empirical findings without ever having clearly articulated the nature of our subject matter. These volumes, beginning with the seminal contributions of Peter Ossorio in volume 1, have made

massive inroads into correcting this deplorable state of affairs.

In addition to providing a portrayal of persons as persons and not organic robots, and to providing conceptual clarity on numerous key concepts, the many contributors to the ten volumes of *Advances* have made numerous groundbreaking contributions to many content areas. These include, to name but a few, novel formulations of spirituality, cognition, romantic love, the therapeutic relationship, organizations, consciousness, communities, personal worlds, artificial intelligence, behavioral economics, and a number of psychopathological conditions. To date, these works have attracted some attention from mainstream readers, but admittedly not the level of such attention and acceptance that we have hoped for. Nonetheless, we remain highly invested in *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* as an invaluable archive for those who, now and in the future, are seeking rigorous alternative answers to the many issues addressed in these volumes.

We wish to acknowledge the very important contributions of several Society members who served as reviewers for the papers in this volume. They include Joe Jeffrey, Mary K. Roberts, Suzanne Swan, Carolyn Zeiger and Paul Zeiger. It is with pleasure that we acknowledge Tony Putman's heroic efforts to bring this volume out in 2013 and to ensure its quality in all ways.

Raymond Bergner & Keith E. Davis
July, 2013

Introduction to Part One: Worlds

Raymond Bergner

The four chapters in this section center in various ways around the Descriptive Psychological concept of "worlds". They explore ideas regarding such matters as the core concept of "the real world", of knowledge of this world, of the worlds of individual persons, and of applications of worlds thinking to understanding dreams and the clinical treatment of suicidal persons. In this introduction, we present brief sketches of the four chapters in order to orient the reader to the ideas of each of their authors.

"All The World's A Stage: A Person-Centered View of Science"

In Raymond Bergner's paper, "All the world's a stage: A person-centered view of science," an alternative, Descriptive Psychologically based view of the nature of science is presented. This view rests centrally on what one takes "the real world" to be. Bergner rejects the currently prevalent scientific outlook which maintains that the real world is just the totality of physical states of affairs, that it is independent of us and our human distinctions, and that we persons are mere spectators whose job it is to understand it. In the paper, a number of arguments are advanced against this view of science, culminating in a positive view wherein science is seen as a far more person-centered venture.

In this more person-centered scientific view, the real world emerges fundamentally as the human behavioral world. On this view, the currently prevailing physicalist view just articulated encounters serious difficulties. First, the real world contains countless elements (human behavioral practices, languages, mathematical systems, currencies etc.) of extreme interest to science that, far from being physical realities independent of persons and their distinctions, are (a) clearly the *creation* of persons; (b) include many nonphysical aspects; and (c) in which the place humanly assigned to elements (e.g., "it's a means of exchange," a "conveyor of meaning from one person to another") is fundamental to what that something is. Second, where the realities of the natural world are concerned, Bergner underscores how these centrally involve what people, playing important "games" such as chemistry and biology and cosmology, and having the aims and concerns that go with those games, have found a point to discriminating and acting upon--always inescapably in human terms. Third, Bergner notes that the traditional notion that science must comprehend "the real world as it is without us" (Smolin, 2006), would, if followed,

leave us with absolutely nothing to say. It is a placeholder concept whose content cannot be filled in--a hopeless candidate for what we mean by the real world. The moment that Newton or Darwin or Einstein fill in some content of the real world, as soon as they utter a single proposition about how the world is and works, they have left forever such a Kantian noumenal world.

In this more person-centered conception of science, Bergner concludes, "'all the world's a stage', and we persons are the dramatis personae. We are center stage. We are Hamlet and Lear and Juliet, and all the rest our props and stories. Science is one human activity. Its theories, while extremely important to many of us, are but one of many human stories, and are important because we persons have given them importance, something we did not always do. They are conceived by human minds, based on human perceptions, and articulated in humanly constructed languages and theoretical frameworks....On the person-centered view, finally, the science of psychology assumes a certain unique potential importance: as the study of persons and their behavior (which necessarily involves their 'props and stories'), it encompasses all else" (p. 17). Bergner ends his chapter with a quote from the philosoper Santayana, who once observed that "Human life is a peculiar reality in that every other reality, effective or presumptive, must in one way or another find a place within it."

"At a Glance and Out of Nowhere"

In this intriguing chapter, an address given at a national conference, Anthony Putman explores the phenomenon in which persons, "at a glance," are routinely able to recognize states of affairs whose instantaneous recognition strikes us as extraordinary. They perceive instantly that the allegedly antique statue is a fake, that the married couple is headed for trouble, that the tennis player is about to double fault, and the like. Putman's presentation takes issue with the prevailing view, famously articulated in Malcolm Gladwell's bestselling book, "Blink," that this phenomenon is explicable in terms of the human brain being "a giant computer" that is capable of scanning a "torrent of megapixels" and, employing its "pattern recognition software," extracting the relevant pattern, "processing it," and issuing some conclusory "output." In addition to criticizing this view on several grounds, Putman presents an alternative, Descriptive Psychologically based account of such human "at a glance" capabilities. This view is built around the following contentions.

First, philosophical realism, understood as entailing a commitment to the proposition that there is a real world out there that exists independently of any view of it, cannot be a serious candidate for behavioral science. "While physics", Putman states, "may be able to get away with ignoring the physicist and the doing of physics, behavioral science cannot. Any science that sets out to account for all behavior (which is the point of behavioral science) must straightforwardly apply to the behavior *of* behavioral scientists *doing* behavioral science. After all, *doing* behavioral science is one form of behavior. This 'reflexivity' standard eliminates the RWOT ('real world out there') view as a candidate for behavioral science" (p. 25).

Second, Putman argues, the Real World is fundamentally and essentially "a

world of persons and their ways" (Ossorio, 2006, p. 3). It is not, per realism, "out there" in any sense, but is instead a world that people "construct, maintain, and reconstruct through their behavior". It is so constructed, not in the sense that we persons "create stuff and move it around", but that we make things what they are by assigning them places or statuses in our behavioral worlds (cf. Bergner). In doing so, Putman notes, "We can't just create any old world we like; we run into actual constraints on what we can get away with. Such boundary conditions on our behavior are what we mean by 'Reality'" (p. 26).

Third, rejecting the notion of the mind/brain as a giant computer, Putman turns to DP's notion that "*the way* in which things are known is different for the Actor as compared to the Observer and Critic. And this difference is not small or merely technical – Actor knowing is *categorically* different from Observer and Critic knowing....This one fact unlocks the 'closed door' Gladwell referred to, and provides the means to formulating the extraordinary findings reported in *Blink* without resorting to misleading metaphors" (p.29). Instead, by "knowing," we mean that "a person has made relevant distinctions, and we know this is so because they have acted on those distinctions. 'Knowing' is an aspect of doing, in the same way that hue is an aspect of color. All colors have a specific hue, and hue does not exist separately from color; likewise, all actions involve specific knowing, and knowing does not exist separately from action" (p. 30). In the Descriptive view, departing dramatically from the standard one, knowing is not a process and does not require thought or thinking. Putman proceeds to discuss and clarify these radically unorthodox contentions. Central to his discussion is the notion of "Actor's Knowledge." Such knowledge, states Putman, is "the immediate, first-hand, before-the-fact knowledge of the author of an action. It is not observation or inference; it is *recognition*. I only recognize things that have a place in my world. What I recognize something *as* is in terms of its place in my ongoing structure of behavior, and I may or may not have a thought about it. And of course, what I am capable of recognizing essentially depends on my developed competence" (p. 32). Actor's Knowledge, further is "first-hand, direct knowing (that) takes various forms which are quite familiar to us (in both senses of that word.) They include feelings, images, insights, decisions, impulses and, yes, thoughts – the kind of thoughts that seem to pop into our minds, out of nowhere" (p. 32). Finally, relating back to Gladwell's experts, Putman states that, "As with the experts, so it is with ordinary persons, moment-to-moment, day-to-day. What appears to be some extraordinary production of a giant unconscious computer turns out to be what all of us do, routinely, all the time" (p. 32)—that is, have and employ Actor's knowledge.

"Knowing the World"

In "Knowing the World," Mary Roberts is also centrally concerned with *knowledge* of the world. She approaches this topic in a way that is consistent with, but very different from Putman. In the first part of this chapter, she reviews two historical paradigms for such knowledge, those of knowing the world (a) through divine illumination and (b) through scientific observation and evidence.

In the first of these paradigms, Roberts relates, "The standard for true knowledge was knowing how things were in the mind of God", and it was given to persons (in this world but not in the next) to observe the world around them and to know it only incompletely and fallibly. Saint Paul's famous phrasing captures this notion well: "For now we see as through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then (in the next world) shall I know even as also I am known" (Corinthians 13:12). How can things be known to our mind directly? Roberts reports that an answer to this question, one that involves some inconsistency with the foregoing, is that true knowledge comes to us through divine illumination. While the idea of knowledge through divine revelation declined in prevalence for a considerable historical period, it enjoyed a revival during the Protestant Reformation (for example when members of certain sects entered trance-like states which they believed permitted receptivity to divine illumination).

The second, and still dominant, paradigm of knowledge of the world is that of knowing it through scientific observation and evidence. To quote Roberts, "The new standard for knowledge was not a matter of knowing how things were in the mind of God. Instead, it was a matter of knowing how things were from the *point of view* of God. From that standpoint, scientific observation would transcend the viewpoint of any particular person, and not be vulnerable to misperceptions, illusions, and personal biases. In time God was dropped from the account, and the standard became how things *"really are*" from the point of view of a completely objective 'Outside Observer'" (p. 39). The scientific dream here is that a complete and all-encompassing understanding of the world will come about as the result of a steadfast application of "the scientific method". While this paradigm continues to be the dominant one, Roberts documents a growing recognition that this all-concompassing "Big Picture" was emerging as a mechanistic, materialistic, and deterministic formulation that left no place for a wide range of humanly important facts.

Having sketched out these two paradigms, Roberts proffers what she refers to as "an alternative view". In introducing this paradigm, she states that, "...in Descriptive Psychology, we take it that 'the most fundamental way of knowing the world is knowing what it calls for by way of behavior' (Ossorio, 2010, p. 226)". Such knowledge, she reports, (a) comes not from the standpoint of God or some completely objective outside observer, but from "the point of view of a Person in the world"; (b) is not in the mind of God or in the Big Picture of the world, but is a Person Characteristic, namely, "the structure of facts and concepts that a person has the competence to act on" (p. 40); and (c) does not come with a guarantee of being complete, correct, or immutable, but is instead always under construction, maintenance, and reconstruction. The standard for knowledge in this *behavioral paradigm* is not how things are either in the mind of God or an Outside Observer who sees things "as they really are." Instead, it is knowing what the world calls for by way of behavior; paradigmatically, we are in contact with the world when we spontaneously act on what the situation calls for" (p. 41). Someone asks me a question and I answer him. Someone invites me to go along, and I go with her.

Roberts proceeds in her chapter to explore several implications and applications of the notion that a person's Knowledge is "the structure of facts and concepts that a person has the competence to act on", and is essentially identical to his or her "world." She discusses, among other things, such matters as this World [a] being a codification of our behavioral possibilities and impossibilities, [b] having a potential for change – for world reconstruction – through various modalities, and [c] embodying a potential for such reconstruction through the particular vehicle that is our creation of dreams. Roberts concludes her chapter with two intriguing interpretations of famous dreams reported by Rene Descartes and Ludwig Wittgenstein.

"Suicide and Impossible Worlds."

In "Suicide and impossible worlds", Raymond Bergner and Nora Bunford undertake two basic tasks. The first of these is to provide an updated, expanded, and clarified discussion of the Descriptive Psychological concept of *a person's world*. The second is to demonstrate the therapeutic power and utility of worlds thinking by using it to analyze five clinical cases involving suicidal individuals.

In the first section of this chapter, Bergner and Bunford state what they mean by their central concept: "A person's 'world', as the term is intended here, is a totality. It is, with respect to what this individual takes to be the case, everything that is actually, or could possibly...be the case. It is the state of affairs that includes all other states of affairs--that includes all actual and possible objects, processes, events, and states of affairs. This world, considered from the present (actor's) perspective, is not merely a collection of detachedly observed facts, but is the total behavioral field within which each person conducts his or her life." From this definition, the authors go on to articulate the many implications of worlds thinking for such vital matters as an individual's self-concept, personality, states of consciousness, and more. Most pertinent to the issue of suicide, they discuss the notion of an individual's *impossible world*. Linking this notion to the suicidal state of mind, the authors state: "The extreme case of a problematic world may be termed an 'impossible world'. Such a world is one that renders behavior impossible, that reduces the person's behavior potential to zero or virtually zero. While no one is able to see the world as completely impossible, persons approaching this limitation are immobilized by their current formulation of self's position in the world" (p. 61). They analogize such a person to a chess player who recognizes that his board position has become impossible—i.e., that "there is no way to go on."

In the second and final part of this chapter, Bergner and Bunford, drawing upon Roberts" (1985) characterization, describe the essence of *world reconstruction therapy*: "In world reconstruction-focused psychotherapy, the task of the therapist is threefold. It is, first of all, to assess the client's world, conceived here as coming to an understanding, both empathic and objective, of this world and of the client's perceived position in it. Secondly, it is to figure out why and in what respects this world is problematic or virtually impossible for the client. Third, and most critically, it is to help the client to *reconstruct* his or her world in such a way that it is no longer problematic or impossible" (p. 62). Pursuant to this, the authors

apply the ideas of worlds and world reconstruction therapy to five different clinical cases. These involve, respectively, persons who have been rendered suicidal in connection with (1) post-traumatic stress disorder; (2) rejection in a core romantic relationship; (3) loss of an entire world as a consequence of being publicly accused of a criminal act; (4) an unwillingness to go on in a world in which the individual could no longer maintain his deeply valued core identity; and (5) an inability to find meaning in life.

References

Gladwell, M. (2005). *Blink. The power of thinking without thinking.* New York: Little, Brown.

Ossorio, P. G. (2006). *The behavior of persons. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. V*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Smolin, L. (2006). *The trouble with physics*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Roberts, M. (1985). Worlds and world reconstruction. In K. Davis and T. Mitchell (Eds.). *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Volume 4, pp. 17-54). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

All the World's a Stage: A Person-centered View of Science

Raymond M. Bergner

Department of Psychology

Illinois State University

Abstract

In this paper, an alternative, more person-centered view of the nature of science is presented. In the paper, I argue against the currently prevalent scientific outlook which maintains, among other things, that (a) the real world is just the totality of physical states of affairs; (b) it is logically (categorically) independent of us and our human distinctions; and (c) we are essentially spectators whose job it is to understand it. In the paper, several arguments and a final reminder are advanced against this view of science, culminating in a positive view wherein science emerges as a far more person-centered venture and the real world itself emerges as essentially the world of persons and their behavior.

Keywords: science, physicalism, philosophy of science, science of psychology

> "…the real world is essentially the world of people and their behavior. All the world's a stage and the non-person portions of it are props which are called for by the drama."
>
> --P.G. Ossorio, 1998, p. 76.

Some 14 billion or so years ago, a familiar story goes, there was a "big bang." An unimaginably hot, dense and energetic singularity exploded, expanded outward, and became the universe. In time, matter clustered into many billions of

galaxies, each with many billions of suns, and many of these in turn with their own planetary systems. In one otherwise ordinary galaxy, one ordinary sun formed and on one of its planets, the one we now call "earth," conditions came about in time such that life forms emerged. Over the course of some 3.7 billion years (Ricardo & Szostak, 2009), these life forms evolved and exhibited ever increasing complexity, until in the extremely recent cosmological past an especially complex organism emerged, homo sapiens. This organism, then, is a very recent, accidentally evolved one that has existed for one microsecond of cosmic time on one ordinary planet in the vastness of the cosmos.

Without in any way questioning the factual matters in the preceding paragraph, they seem to have lent themselves historically to what on the present view is a certain unfortunate line of thinking. First of all, center stage in this story is the physical universe and its evolution both on the broadest possible scale and more locally. This evolution began with a singularity that contained all of the material constituents then and now present in the universe--everything from quarks to biological organisms to galaxies and beyond. Thus, it has seemed natural to equate the real world with the world of matter--with the *physical world*--and to conclude that the scientific understanding of everything must ultimately lie in the understanding of material reality (Churchland & Churchland, 1994; Smart, 1978; Stoljar, 2009). Any claim to the contrary, i.e., any claim having to do with alleged non-material realities, must conjure up the likes of such scientifically suspect entities as souls, spirits, or ghosts.

The second element in this line of thinking is that, in the history of the cosmos, human beings have a very secondary and derivative status. We are, after all, but one among billions of biological organisms, evolved accidentally via the random vagaries of genetic mutation, and extremely recent in origin. In the end, on all of these counts, we human beings are often seen to be rather cosmologically insignificant (Gould, 1992).

Third and finally, the place that is assigned to scientists in this view is that essentially of *spectators of inexorable physical processes* that are not of our making, that preceded our appearance on the scene, and that will doubtless continue when we are gone. This notion is nicely captured in the following quote from the noted physicist Richard Feynman who, despite his awareness of certain quantum level observer effects, nonetheless asserted the following broad picture:

> "We can imagine that this complicated array of moving things which constitutes 'the world' is something like a great chess game being played by the gods, and we are observers of the game. We do not know what the rules of the game are; all we are allowed to do is to watch the playing. Of course, if we watch long enough, we may eventually catch on to a few of the rules…" (1966, p. 24).

The purpose of this paper is to present an alternative view of science. It is a view in which persons play a far more central role, one quite different than that of insignificant spectators of inexorable physical processes that have nothing to do with us, and one in which the very concept of the "real world" assumes a rather different form than Feynman's "complicated array of moving things." The position advanced here was developed employing ideas and conceptual resources from the discipline of Descriptive Psychology (Ossorio, 1981, 1990, 1998, 2006; Putman, 2013; Roberts, 2010).

Science as an Account of How Things Are *For Us*

Lee Smolin, a highly respected and influential theoretical physicist, has written:

> "Physicists have traditionally expected that science should give an account of reality as it would be in our absence. Physics should be more than a set of formulas that predict what we will observe in an experiment; it should give a picture of what reality is. We are accidental descendants of an ancient primate, who appeared very recently in the history of the world. It cannot be that reality depends on our existence...Philosophers call this view realism. It can be summarized by saying that the real world out there... must exist independently of us. It follows that the terms by which science describes reality cannot involve in any essential way what we choose to measure or not measure" (2006, pp. 6-7).

The traditional views of a prominent physicist notwithstanding, Kant (1781/1996) pointed out long ago that we have no access to what he termed "noumenal" reality. That is, we have no access to reality conceived as how things are independent of us, our perceptions, and our conceptual distinctions. There is clearly *nothing to be said* about such a world (Grier, 2009). Were one to say to Dr. Smolin, "Tell us about this 'real world as it would be in our absence' and that 'in no way involves what we choose to measure or not measure,'" there is nothing he could say. Scientific accounts, necessarily couched in our concepts and based on our (aided or unaided) observations, must therefore of necessity always be *our* accounts--accounts of what *we* make of things--as well as accounts of how things are *for us*.

What is this "Real World" Anyway?"

We say that science is concerned with describing and explaining how things are and have been in "the real world." But just what is this real world? What do we mean when we talk about "the real world?"

The formulation that will be argued here is the following: *The real world is the state of affairs that includes all other states of affairs* (Ossorio, 2006). Alternatively phrased, it is the set that contains everything that is the case--the set that contains

every object, process, event, and state of affairs that is real, factual, actual, or existent, as opposed to false, fictional, imaginary, nonexistent, or illusory. This formulation, though not identical in how it will be cashed out, has commonalities with Wittgenstein's famous assertion that "The world is everything that is the case. The world divides into facts, not things" (1922, #1.0, 1.1).

What justifies such a formulation of this concept? And why, especially, should it be preferred to the widely advanced, and arguably most favored, physicalist contention that the real world just is the totality of all *physical* objects, processes, events, and states of affairs (Churchland & Churchland, 1994; Smart, 1978; Stoljar, 2009). On this physicalist view, any claim that there are non-physical realities--that the physical does not exhaust the real--can only be considered metaphysical and scientific nonsense since it would seem to conjure up the likes of such scientifically suspect entities as souls, spirits, and ghosts.

To say that something is "physical," however, is to make a certain kind of claim. I am free to *say* anything. I can say, for example, that "the second amendment to the Constitution is located at latitude X and longitude Y," or that "the square root of minus one has a mass of one gram." But clearly, I would be talking nonsense in either case. Concepts have assertability conditions (Kripke, 1982). If I say, "X is a triangle," then, if pressed, it is incumbent upon me to show that X meets the conceptual criteria for "triangle"; i.e., that it is a two dimensional, enclosed geometric figure with three straight sides. Correspondingly, to say that something is "physical" is to say that it has certain characteristics or properties such as, depending on the particular something, mass, spatial extension, location, energy, charge, wave characteristics, and so forth.

With respect to many objects, processes, events, and states of affairs that we collectively take to be real and act upon, however, it makes no sense to predicate any such properties of them. It is nonsensical, and a category error (Ryle, 1949, Thomasson, 2010), to say of these things, for example, that they can be found at some location, that they weigh so many grams, that they have a certain electrical charge, or that they are accelerating at a rate of such and such. If we wish to confine the category (or set) of the real to the physical, it would follow that all of the items in the following list would have to be declared unreal--as fictitious or imaginary or illusory or somehow not the case--since physical predicates cannot be applied to any of them without incurring nonsense and category error:

Thoughts (e.g., that I must get to the airport by noon, or that my dinner guests prefer red wine)
Beliefs (e.g., that Shakespeare wrote Hamlet, or that God exists)
Laws (e.g., those contained in the U.S. Constitution)
Rules (e.g., of chess, baseball, or parliamentary procedure)
Ideas (e.g., of matter-energy equivalence, relativity, heritability, or indeterminacy)
Human relationships (e.g., of *mistrust* between Arabs and

Israelis; of *rivalry* between the two chess grandmasters)
Human disciplines (e.g., mathematics, history, biology, and law)
Language (e.g., words and grammar)
Human agreements (e.g., contracts, vows, and promises)
Mathematical realities (e.g., numbers, logarithms, and calculus).

Unless we wish to declare every state of affairs of which physical properties cannot be sensibly predicated unreal or nonexistent, and perhaps to render the logically entailed claim that they therefore could not have had any influence on events in the real world such as wars, nuclear holocausts and Supreme Court decisions, we cannot confine our concept of the real world to physical realities only. All of the above are clearly realities whose actualization and utilization (a) involve embodied human beings, and (b) depend, on any given occasion, on relevant physical states of affairs obtaining. An embodied person (so far as we know) is required to think about how best to get to a destination, interpret a law, or employ the calculus to solve a problem. But can it sensibly be said, for example, that the calculus *qua calculus--qua mathematical system*--designates a reality of which physical attributes can be sensibly predicated? Or, lacking such attributes, must we conclude that "there is no such thing as the calculus" or that the calculus seems "ghostly" in nature?

There are other reasons to question the claim that physicalism is true, and a large literature exists regarding this issue (see Stoljar, 2009, for an excellent summary). I shall present only two further arguments, and very briefly. First, at the present historical juncture, the physicalist claim represents a massive I.O.U.--a massive promise to deliver in the future--and not cash on the barrelhead. For example, consider the joke: "What did the Zen novice say to the hot dog vendor?" Answer: "Make me one with everything." At present (and perhaps in principle and thus for perpetuity [see Bergner, 2004]), there is no conceivable reduction or explanation of this joke in biological terms. That is, there is no alternative description or explanation in terms, for example, of synaptic events in a listener, for phenomena such as the listener "getting" the joke or finding it "funny." There remains by virtually universal consensus an uncrossed "explanatory gap" (Levine, 1983) between the physical and the mental states of affairs here, and thus no strong, evidentially based reason to conclude that physicalism is true.

Second, as many have noted, human mental phenomena (consciousness, thoughts, beliefs, etc.), aside from the fact that physical properties cannot be sensibly predicated of them, have certain distinctive properties unlike any physical phenomenon (McGinn, 2004). These include *intentionality* (they are always *about* something), *subjectivity or qualia* (there is something that it is like, something experiential, about the having of them), and *transparency* (the haver of them cannot be wrong, for example, in knowing that he or she is experiencing pain or thinking about the Eiffel tower). Since such phenomena, as Descartes famously argued, exist indubitably, they further call into question any claim that the physical exhausts the real.

If the concept of the real is to comprehend *all* real states of affairs, then, it would seem best characterized simply as the state of affairs that includes or encompasses all other states of affairs--as the set that includes all other sets, or the world that includes all other worlds. (I am assuming here that certain other historical claims, such as that the real world is all number, all water, or all spirit, need not be entertained here.) One upshot of this formulation of the real world is that it designates a world that *contains, at least as a subset, the human world*, the world of persons and their behavior: their sub-worlds (of science, law, music, baseball, etc.), their institutions (family, church, judicial system, etc.), inventions (the calculus, the computer, etc.), their ideas (of gravity, natural selection, etc.), their languages (English, Spanish), and their social practices/forms of behavior (dancing, writing programs, doing sums, etc.). That alone being the case, we are far more than spectators. We are *creators of and participants in countless aspects of the real world*, many of these the subject historically of very significant scientific attention.

The Real World as the Human Behavioral World

Above, one of the paraphrases of the real world as the state of affairs that includes all other states of affairs was that it was "the world that includes all other worlds." It is the world that includes the sub-worlds of law, history, mathematics, music, and all the myriad other worlds evolved by human beings. Is there any logical candidate for the designation, "the world that includes all other worlds." I will argue here, consistent with the position of Ossorio (1998, 2006), that such a world would be *the human behavioral world--the world of persons and their behavior* (see also Putman. 2013; Roberts, 2010).

It is easily observed that many objects, processes, events, and states of affairs in the real world are what they are *entirely* by virtue of the place we have given them in our human behavioral practices and ways of life. Objects such as dollar bills and chess pawns, events such as getting a "thumbs up" signal or a traffic light turning green, processes such as singing a requiem mass or dribbling a basketball, and states of affairs such as an experimental finding having $p. < .05$ or any word in a language having the meanings that it does--*all of these are what they are by virtue of the places we have created for and given to them in human behavioral practices*. Thus, for an enormous array of real world phenomena--essentially those portions of the real world we might call the "humanly created world" ("the days and works of man") with its cultures, institutions, social practices, inventions, artistic works, intellectual creations, and more--things are what they are in this world by virtue of their place in human behavioral practices. A chess piece is a chess piece, a dollar is a dollar, a signal is a signal, a word is a word, not by virtue of its physical characteristics, but by virtue of its place in human behavioral practices.

An Objection.

Perhaps we can all agree that elements of the real world such as chess pawns and dollar bills and the words of a language are what they are by virtue of their place in human behavioral practices. However, it may be objected, what about objects such

as atoms and genes, processes such as the genetic transmission of characteristics and volcanic eruptions, events such as the big bang and solar eclipses, and states of affairs such as the earth revolving around the sun and humans having evolved from infrahuman species. All of these and more, it would seem, just are what they are quite independently of us. Atoms, for example, were here before we were and will survive our likely passing. We may have discovered them, but they are elements of the real world that in no way depend on us. We did not and do not create them and we do not dictate either their structure or the manner of their functioning.

In considering this objection, let us focus on this iconic object that is the atom, and let it stand proxy in our argument for all the elements of the natural world. Like "pawn" and "queen of spades," "atom" is a concept that certain people, playing certain "games" such as chemistry and atomic physics, act upon. And, certainly, these people neither created atoms nor determined their inner workings. What they did do, however, was *to make atoms what they are.* What does this mean?

Increasingly, since early in the 19th century, we have seen fit to give atoms a prominent place in certain kinds of accounts of the real world (Pullman, 1998). Why atoms? We have cared about atoms, and have given them a central place in our real world ontologies, because it was found that, *in certain human behavioral practices, there were enormous payoffs for doing so*. There was a point--indeed there were and are many vital points--to drawing this particular distinction in the real world and acting on it. Employing it, we were able to systematize the elements in the periodic table, explain the properties of these different elements and their compounds, explore its applications to energy production, and much more, all of which jobs we had not accomplished by thinking in terms of other (real or hypothetical) objects (processes, etc.) such as the molecule, the alchemical philosopher's stone, or the classical Greek elements air, earth, fire, and water (Pullman, 1998). Thus, "atom" became a central element in our ontology of what there is in the real world.

In the future, it may turn out that there will come a time when there is a far lesser point, or perhaps even no point, in discriminating and acting on the concept of "atom." It is not of course that atoms as we conceive them will cease to exist. Rather, some physics of the future may find a better way to talk (e.g., in terms of now hypothetical "superstrings"), which may do all the descriptive and explanatory work now done by "atom," and more. In this scenario, we may demote, or even abandon, the concept of atom in our bookkeeping systems of the real world. Like Newtonian mechanics, in which we once had such vast confidence as the ultimate truth about the workings of the physical universe, it will have been superceded by a new and more advantageous way of talking. In such a scenario, historians of science may one day say, "Oh yes, that was once a very useful level at which to break down the constituents of matter, and it had its day; but now we have better ways to talk about matter and, aside from histories of science, we rarely include atoms in our scientific treatises."

So, we do not create atoms ex nihilo and we do not dictate their structures or functioning. However, like certain cinematic and political figures, we "made it a star." We gave it a central place in the scheme of things, which place, unlike other candidates for the job, it was extraordinarily well suited to fill by virtue of its properties. We made atoms what they are in this sense; i.e., *by assigning them a status*--by giving them a *place*--in certain human practices, and did so because *there were and are enormous advantages to doing so.* And, if past is prologue, we may one day, as we often do with those politicians, demote it from its star status in favor of something that conveys greater advantage in our human projects. (Compare: I notice a rock in my garden. I might assign it no status in the real world beyond "the little stone by the mulberry bush." Alternatively, I might pick it up, wash it off, assign it the status of "my favorite paperweight," find that it is admirably suited to fill that role in the world, and decide to retain it unless and until I find a better paper weight. The rock never leaps out, never comes forward and demands that I give it any status at all. If it is ever to be more than "just a rock in my garden," it is up to me or some other person to give it that status.)

In the end, we did not create this subset of realities we call "the natural world," and we do not dictate its structure or its functioning. However, in filling in the contents of the real world, this state of affairs that includes all other states of affairs, we make things what they are on the basis of their value in our human projects--on the basis of whether they forward our understanding, enable us to do things better, or enable us to do things that we couldn't do before. We give them a status for better or for worse. If discriminating and thinking in terms of Xs buys us something, we assign Xs an important status in our real world ontologies. If it does not, we do not. If X continues to have behavioral value while Y does not, a certain "survival of the fittest", of the most "adaptive", prevails.

An Ex Post Facto World

In the scientific realm, some advances, such as technological ones, change the contents of the real world in important ways. The radio, the airplane, the computer, the internet all become new elements in the ever expanding real world. However, other advances, such as those involving the discoveries of evolution, atoms, relativity, bacteria, and indeterminacy at the quantum level, cause us not only to expand our construction of the real world, but to *reconstruct how the real world has been all along*. In other words, they cause us to reconstruct the real world *ex post facto* (Ossorio, 1981, 2006; Roberts, 2010). With these discoveries, not only are there now in our ontologies such objects as atoms and such processes as natural selection (etc.), but it becomes the case, once we have accepted them, that the real world has suddenly become, ex post facto, one that has been this way all along. Further, we realize that with scientific advances our current real world, like that of those confidently settled Newtonians of a previous era, will almost certainly itself be replaced by some future ex post facto world.

With this in mind, consider the following thought experiment (from Ossorio,

2006). Suppose we are standing watching a game of chess. I pick up one of the pieces, a carved piece of onyx, and say to you, "If you encountered this object three thousand years ago, before the invention of chess, would it have been a pawn?" You reply, "Of course not. Nothing could have been a pawn until such time as the game of chess was created." I inquire further: "Could it have been a piece of onyx before such time as an at least rudimentary precursor of mineralogy began, and onyx was distinguished from other rocks?" You reply, "Well, it would have been something, but I guess at that point it could not have been a piece of onyx, since 'onyx' was not a category in anybody's ontology." I say, "I agree, and there is an interesting difference between the two cases. In the case of 'pawn,' nothing *could ever* have been a pawn before there was chess. In the case of onyx, once we had created a human practice of distinguishing one kind of rock from another, and distinguished onyx from other rocks, at that point *it became true, ex post facto,* that onyx had existed for eons.

Over time, we humans create new "games," new human practices. And it is only when we have created these behavioral practices that places within them such as "pawn," "home run," "dollar," "b flat," and "impressionism" come to be categories of reality. But the same is true, though less obviously, of "onyx," bacterium," "genetic transmission," "electromagnetic field," and "atom." Before we invented the relevant behavioral practices, there was something. But it was only once we had created our practices and given different objects (processes, etc.) places within them did it *become* the case that (a) these somethings appeared in our ontologies at all, and (b) ex post facto, they had always or long since been elements in the real world.

The critical upshot of this point is to recognize that the real world, the state of affairs that includes all other states of affairs, is a *humanly constructed world*. It is we who created these behavioral practices, decided that certain phenomena deserved place of pride within them and that others did not, tried out various candidates (e.g., the ether and the atom) for places in our ontologies, and constructed ex post facto accounts of how the real world has been all along (which accounts may or may not survive the test of time). Finally, this world is humanly constructed, not in some idealistic Berkeleyan sense, but in the sense that this world--the one you see when you look around you, the one that includes, not only human creations (languages, currencies, poems, chess games, etc.), but also elements of the natural world (atoms, trees, planets, genes, evolutionary processes, etc.)--is one that we construct via our creation of human behavioral practices. The epistemology, if this may clarify the matter, is realist and not idealist. Now that we have distinguished a certain X and agreed to call it "cow," there is indeed a cow over there in the meadow.

"You Can't Construct Just Any Old World"

Lest I seem here to be advocating a postmodernist position wherein "There is no truth, only a plethora of interpretations...There is no objective reality, only a plurality of perspectives" (Flew & Priest, 2002, p. 323), it must be noted that *there are limitations on our world constructions*. I might, for example, believe and claim that "I can fly unaided," or "glass is an excellent conductor of electricity," or "this

rock can be used as a calculator." However, I will prove unable to act on these claims successfully. I cannot fly unaided, get an electrical current to flow through glass, or perform arithmetic operations on a rock. Thus, in the words of Ossorio, "you can't construct just any old world and get away with it" (1998, p. 73). While the real world is open to numerous apt or correct descriptions, and while there is no uniquely correct description of any of its elements, *there are incorrect descriptions*. The real world possesses a certain recalcitrance in the face of some of our descriptions of it; there are r*eality constraints*. These are brought home to us when we find ourselves, in science and in everyday life, unable to act successfully on these descriptions.

Significance a Product of Human Appraisal

This final point may be considered, not an argument, but simply a reminder. In the scientific outlook characterized at the outset, it was stated that, due to their accidental evolution and extremely recent arrival on the cosmic scene, people are unimportant and insignificant in the grand scheme of things. They are merely, as quoted previously, "accidental descendants of an ancient primate, who appeared very recently in the history of the world" (Smolin, 2006, pp. 6-7). From a person-centered perspective, however, it may be noted that, without persons, there are quite literally and obviously *no such things as importance or significance*. Both are inescapably the product of human appraisal. Nothing is important to planets and suns and atoms and dark energy. Without us (and other persons who may exist in the universe), it's a cosmos devoid of *any* importance or significance whatsoever. We are, by virtue of our higher level consciousness, the sole locus of meaning and significance in the universe. We are, paraphrasing Heidegger (1967), the only being who is there for being.

Conclusion: On Being "Center Stage"

On the present, more person-centered scientific view, then, the human behavioral world is fundamental. On this view, the currently prevalent view that "the real world is just the totality of physical states of affairs; it is independent of us and our human distinctions; and we persons are mere spectators whose job it is to understand it," encounters serious difficulties. First, the real world contains countless elements (human behavioral practices, languages, mathematical systems, currencies etc.) of extreme interest to science that are clearly the creation of persons, that include many nonphysical aspects, and in which the place humanly assigned to elements (e.g., "it's a means of exchange," a "conveyor of meaning from one person to another," etc.) is fundamental to what that something is. Second, where the realities of the natural world are concerned, it comes back to what persons, playing important "games" such as chemistry and biology and cosmology, and having the aims and concerns that go with those games, have found a point to discriminating and acting upon--always inescapably in human terms. Third, the goal that science must comprehend "the real world as it is without us" (Smolin, 2006) leaves us with absolutely nothing to say. It is a placeholder concept whose content cannot be filled

in--a hopeless candidate for what we mean by the real world. As soon as Newton or Darwin or Einstein fill in some content of the real world, as soon as they utter a single proposition about how the world is and works, they have left forever such a Kantian noumenal world.

In this more person-centered conception of science, if we may be permitted a borrowed dramaturgical metaphor, "all the world's a stage," and we persons are the dramatis personae. We are center stage. We are Hamlet and Lear and Juliet, and all the rest our props and stories. Science is one human activity. Its theories, while extremely important to many of us, are but one of many human stories, and are important because we persons have given them importance, something we did not always do. They are conceived by human minds, based on human perceptions, and articulated in humanly constructed languages and theoretical frameworks. In the end, these theories are successful when we find that there is a point to talking the way that the theory does--when it provides distinctions and ideas we can act upon successfully, and thus forwards our projects. On the person-centered view, the science of psychology assumes a certain unique potential importance: as the study of persons and their behavior (which necessarily involves their "props and stories"), it encompasses all else. As Santayana once observed, "Human life is a peculiar reality in that every other reality, effective or presumptive, must in one way or another find a place within it (quoted in Ossorio, 2006, p. 7)."

Author Notes

The author wishes to thank Joe Jeffrey, Nora Bunford, Wynn Schwartz, Ned Kirsch, Mary Roberts, Paul Zeiger, and Pat Aucoin for their helpful suggestions for improving an earlier version of this paper. Please direct all correspondence to: Raymond M. Bergner, Department of Psychology, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4620.

References

Bergner, R. (2004). Is it all really biological? *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, 24,* 30-49.

Churchland, P. M., & Churchland, P.S. (1994). Intertheoretic reduction: A neuroscientist's field guide. In R. Warner & T. Szubka (Eds.), *The mind-body problem*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Feynman, R. (1996). *Six easy pieces: Essentials of physics explained by its most brilliant teacher*. New York: Basic Books.

Flew, A., & Priest, S. (2002). *A dictionary of philosophy*. London: Pan Macmillan.

Gould, S. J. (1992). Uniformity and catastrophe. In S. J. Gould (Ed.), *Ever since Darwin* (pp. 147-170). New York: Norton.

Heidegger, M. (1967). *Being and time.* (trans. J. Macquarry & E. Robison). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Kripke, S. (1982). *Wittgenstein on rules and private language*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Levine, J. (1983). Materialism and qualia: The explanatory gap. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly, 64*; 354-361.

McGinn, C. (2004) *Consciousness and its objects.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Ossorio, P. G. (1981). *Ex post facto: The source of intractable origin problems and their resolution* (LRI Report No. 28a). Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.

Ossorio, P. G. (1990). *The human condition: Some formal aspects*. LRI Report No. 47a. Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.

Ossorio, P. G. (1998). *Place. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. III*. Ann Arbor, MI. Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P.G. (2006). *The behavior of persons: The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. V*. Ann Arbor: MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Pullman, B. (1998). *The atom in the history of human thought.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Putman, A. (2013). At a glance and out of nowhere. In R. Bergner, K. Davis, F. Lubuguin & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 19-36). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ricardo, A., & Szostak, J. (2009). The origin of life on earth: Fresh clues hint at how the first living organism arose from inanimate matter. *Scientific American, 247*, URL =<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=origin-of-life-on-earth>

Roberts, M. (2010). An indeterminate and expansive world. In K. Davis, F. Lubuguin, & W. Schwartz, (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol 9, pp. 231-256). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ryle, G. (1949). *The concept of mind.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Smart, J. J. C. (1978). The content of physicalism. *Philosophical Quarterly, 28,*239-241.

Stoljar, D. (2009). Physicalism. In E. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* URL =<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/physicalism/>.

Thomasson, A. (2010). Categories. In E. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/categories/>.

Wittgenstein, L. (1922). *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.* (trans. C.K. Ogden & F.P. Ramsey). London: Routledge.

At a Glance and Out of Nowhere: How Ordinary People Create the Real World

Anthony O. Putman
Descriptive Psychology Institute

Abstract

This paper explores in depth the ways in which persons spontaneously create the real world they live in. It offers an appreciation of the material in Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink*, including his observations on knowing that takes place in the "blink of an eye", along with a detailed re-formulation of the science underlying it. "Actor" concepts from Descriptive Psychology take the surprise out of Gladwell's observations and account for them systematically as simply a straightforward statement of what ordinary persons, exercising ordinary competence, do.

Key words: Descriptive Psychology, Ossorio, knowing,
A-O-C, reality, real world, Malcolm Gladwell, Blink

Human competence exercised at the highest levels looks a lot like magic, a phenomenon explored in depth in "Ordinary Magic" (Putman, 2009). But human competence exercised at *ordinary* levels might as well be magic, since people routinely accomplish things that strike us as remarkable, and we have no credible account of how they do it.

Consider the following five examples, from Malcolm Gladwell's influential bestselling book, *Blink* (Gladwell, 2005):

- The J. Paul Getty Museum in California acquired a major work dating from the sixth century BC: a previously unknown marble sculpture, called a *kouros*. This sculpture was in remarkable condition. The Getty hired an esteemed scientist to run numerous tests on the kouros, using state-of-the-art equipment such as mass spectrometers and electron microscopes. He concluded without a doubt that the kouros was in fact as claimed. Subsequently and separately, six experienced experts were

shown the kouros. Each of the six had substantially different immediate reactions, but they amounted to the same thing: at a glance, they *all* knew that the kouros was a fake. To quote Gladwell: "In the first two seconds of looking – in a single glance – they were able to understand more about the essence of the statue than the team at the Getty were able to understand after fourteen months" (pp. 3-8)

- A research scientist, John Gottman, has shown that, by watching and analyzing a fifteen-minute segment of a husband and wife talking, he can predict with 90% accuracy whether the couple will be married fifteen years later. When the segment is reduced to *three* minutes, the accuracy of the prediction drops, but is still impressively high. (pp. 20-22)
- Another researcher, Samuel Gosling, asked total strangers, who had never met the students they were judging, to spend fifteen minutes with clipboards just looking around students' dorm rooms. They were given no further orientation. The clipboard crew were then asked to answer a number of questions regarding the students' personality, based solely on what they saw. Their answers were then compared to answers to the same questions which were provided by close friends of the students. To quote Gladwell: "… the strangers with the clipboard came out on top. They were more accurate at measuring conscientiousness, and … much more accurate at predicting both the students' emotional stability and their openness to new experiences." (pp. 34-36)
- The psychologist Nalini Ambady took tape-recorded conversations between surgeons and their patients, picked two conversations for each surgeon, selected two 10-second segments from each conversation, and then removed from these segments the high-frequency sounds from speech that enable us to recognize individual words. The resulting 40-second "garble", consisting of intonation, pitch and rhythm but with no content, was then played for judges who rated what they heard for such qualities as warmth, hostility, dominance and anxiousness. From these ratings alone, Ambady was able to predict accurately which doctors would be subsequently sued for malpractice. In other words, the accurate predictions were made based on 40 seconds of listening to nothing more than tone of voice. (pp. 42-43)
- The former tennis champion Vic Braden, when he turned to coaching, discovered that he always knew when a player would "double-fault" on the serve *before* the player even struck the ball. This wasn't simple luck on Braden's part; double-faulting among professionals is rare, happening perhaps three or four times in hundreds of serves each match. At one professional tennis tournament Braden set out to test his ability; he correctly predicted sixteen out of seventeen double faults in the matches he watched. But, try as he might, Braden has never been able to figure out *how* he knows. (pp. 48-49)

These examples are remarkable, without a doubt–and Gladwell has plenty more where these came from. It is as if we discovered that weekend golfers were capable of making a hole-in-one, and then doing it again, and again, routinely and consistently. We might suspect this to be magic (or, more likely, very clever cheating) because this does not fit with our common understanding of what ordinary people are capable of doing. We need some explanations.

Gladwell goes on to extrapolate from these facts to reach some interesting conclusions, to wit:

- When the truth about the kouros finally emerged, the Getty's curator of antiquities Marion True said, "I always considered scientific opinion as more objective than esthetic judgments. Now I realize I was wrong." (p. 17)
- Referring to the expert's at-a-glance judgments of the Getty's kouros, Gladwell writes: "Can that kind of mysterious reaction be controlled? The truth is that it can. The power of knowing, in that first few seconds, is not a gift given magically to a fortunate few. It is an ability that we can all cultivate for ourselves." (p. 16)
- Further: "[This] is not an exotic gift. It is a central part of what it means to be human. We [do it] whenever we meet a new person or have to make sense of something quickly or encounter a novel situation. We [do it] because we have to, and we come to rely on that ability because there are … lots of situations where careful attention to the details even for no more than a second or two, can tell us an awful lot." (pp. 43-44)
- And further: "… if we could not make sense of complicated situations in a flash, basketball would be chaotic, and birdwatchers would be helpless." (p. 46)
- Further still: "I think this is the way[it] works. When we leap to a conclusion or have a hunch … [we're] sifting through the situation in front of us, throwing out all that is irrelevant while we zero in on what matters. And the truth is that [we] are really good at this, to the point where [it] often delvers a better answer than more deliberate and exhaustive ways of thinking." (p. 34)
- And finally: "We need to respect the fact that it is possible to know something without knowing why we know and accept that–sometimes–we are better off that way." (p. 52)

So far, so very good – and again, there's a lot more good stuff where that comes from. But Gladwell also offers *explanations* in *Blink,* and at this point we decisively part ways, because the "explanations" offered are inadequate–indeed, if one were not trying to be polite here, one would be inclined to say "absurdly inadequate." Consider the following:

> "The part of our brain that leaps to conclusions like this is called the adaptive unconscious … not to be confused with the unconscious described by Sigmund Freud, which was a dark and murky

> place filled with desires and memories and fantasies that were too disturbing to think about consciously. This new version of the unconscious is … a kind of giant computer that quickly and quietly processes a lot of data we need in order to keep functioning as human beings." (p. 11)

Gladwell quotes a psychologist named Timothy D. Wilson as follows: "The mind operates most efficiently by relegating a good deal of high-level, sophisticated thinking to the unconscious, just as a modern jetliner is able to fly on automatic pilot with little or no input from the human, 'conscious' pilot." (p. 12)

"When [the expert] looked at the newly-acquired kouros and blurted out, "I'm sorry to hear that", she was 'thin-slicing' … which refers to the ability of our unconscious to find patterns in situations and behavior based on very narrow slices of experience. … [W]hen our unconscious engages in thin-slicing, what we are doing is an automated, accelerated unconscious version of what Gottman does with his videotapes and equations." (p. 23)

And about Vic Braden, the tennis coach: "The evidence he used to draw his conclusions seemed to be buried somewhere in his unconscious, and he could not dredge it up … Snap judgments and rapid cognition take place behind a locked door." (pp. 50-51)

Alas, there is a lot more where these came from as well.

These explanations are painfully inadequate–but in case that's not immediately obvious to you, we will look at them in depth later. And this has little to do with Gladwell himself; although as a journalist he adds some evocative terminology, he essentially uses the "explanations" offered by the scientists whose studies he documents. Indeed, both the American Psychological Association and the Association for Psychological Science invited Gladwell to address their national conferences, and the American Sociological Association has given him an award for this writings on social issues.

So let's be clear from the start: I have no problem with Malcolm Gladwell. I am in fact a fan of Gladwell. His writing is clear and engaging; he chooses interesting topics, does justice to his sources and offers coherent and thought-provoking analyses. You really can't ask for much more from a journalist. And the material we're considering here by no means exhausts what Gladwell covered in *Blink*. It's a terrific book; I urge you to read it if you have not already done so.

Malcolm is a messenger, and the issues are with the message. To paraphrase Marc Antony: "We come here, not to *praise* Gladwell, but to *bury* – not him, but his science."

The Science Behind *Blink*

Let's look at some of those "explanations" in *Blink*: "thin-slicing", "adaptive unconscious", "the closed door." Notice the obvious: while *Blink's* findings and conclusions are about persons, their abilities and behavior, *not one* of the explanations uses person or behavioral concepts. (The "adaptive unconscious" comes closest, if you ignore the fact that it is "a kind of giant computer".)

What's wrong with that? If you go by what you read every day, not much, because we constantly find reports of people doing things accompanied by explanations just like Gladwell used in *Blink*. But if you dig a little deeper, using the tools of Descriptive Psychology, you see that there's a great deal seriously wrong with this kind of "explanation".

A little background: In the 1960's Peter G. Ossorio, the founder of Descriptive Psychology, made a very simple observation about science. He pointed out that, in order to theorize about some aspect of behavior and do empirical research on it, you need a shared framework of concepts within which to make the distinctions required to *describe* what you are theorizing about. Suppose for example that you want to study what happens in the brain when a person expresses hostility in an intimate relationship. You must first be able to describe and accurately recognize instances of "hostility" and "intimate relationships". Some neuroscientists refer to this as the "metatheory", in recognition of the fact that concepts of "hostility" and "intimate relationships" are part of a larger conceptual structure of human behavior.

This is just common sense. After all, if you want to study the frequency of attacks on people by pit-bulls, you need to be able to describe pit-bulls well enough to distinguish a pit-bull from a terrier or spaniel (or a panther).

This seems pretty obvious. But you may find it surprising to hear that, at the time, it was a radical insight. In the 1960's, you actually found personality texts saying things like "Personality is defined as whatever a particular theory says it is." Ossorio went on to articulate such a conceptual framework, which we have already encountered in "Ordinary Magic", as the core of Descriptive Psychology.

Here's the really astonishing part: standard behavioral science in 2012 is still making the obvious mistake Ossorio pointed out over 40 years ago! They "study" persons and behavior without a shared framework of concepts that include persons or behavior. So they patch together findings expressed with some special purpose labels, and "explain" those findings by, essentially, changing the subject.

Take "thin-slicing", for example. That's the label Gladwell's scientists used to refer to a person's ability to reach highly accurate conclusions in a very short time. This is an example of a common practice among behavioral scientists that amounts to a kind of institutional identity theft: seeking reflected credibility by borrowing established terms from more prestigious sciences. In the 1960's the prestigious target was physics; today we tend to dress in the clothes of biology.

"Thin-slicing" is in fact borrowed from biology, which has an actual practice of taking tissue samples and slicing them into very thin slices. These thin slices, perhaps treated with dyes to enhance contrast, can then be viewed under microscopes, and things can be seen that are not visible in thicker samples. Thus, in biology, "thin-slicing" is a term that refers to an actual and useful practice. And since the original research reported by Gladwell took tape recordings of behavior and presented only a brief segment for viewing, one can see how someone familiar with biological practice might, with a chuckle, refer to the method as "thin-slicing".

Used as a metaphor, not to be taken literally or seriously, "thin-slicing" could be a clever substitute for the actual and accurate description of what is going on. But there's a big problem here – *no other description is offered*. The research led to the conclusion that people have the ability to "thin-slice". But in real life, when there is no tape-recording, what exactly are people "slicing", and how? The real danger here is that once scientists take their "thin-slicing" metaphor seriously, they might take these "what" and "how" questions seriously as well, and set out to do research on them. Which, alas, is exactly what they have done.

What is called for here is not just pointing out that this emperor is seriously naked; what is called for is to provide some appropriate clothes. In other words, we need to replace "thin-slicing" and so on with explanations that *can* be taken seriously at face value. Descriptive Psychology can do that, as we shall see now.

Real World and Reality

The lack of a conceptual framework for persons and behavior is bad enough. But a bigger problem with the explanations in *Blink* is the view of the real world they are built on.

We customarily think of "the real world" as singular and existing independently of any view of it. But one of the great and useful insights of Descriptive Psychology is that this common "one-and-only-one real world" idea is a very partial view. You can't do justice to the reality of persons and behavior within it, any more than you could do justice to the motions of planets within a view that puts the earth at the center of the universe. So let's look at the "one-and-only one" view a little closer.

Physics is widely acknowledged as the gold standard of science: science if ever there was a science. As such, its view of the Real World is as close as we can get to a certified cultural given.

That view was nicely summarized in a 2006 book by Lee Smolin, a theoretical physicist with impeccable credentials and standing in the physics community. Smolin writes:

> "Physicists have traditionally expected that science should give an account of reality as it would be in our absence. Physics should be more than a set of formulas that predict what we will observe in an experiment; it should give a picture of what reality *is*. We are accidental descendants of an ancient primate, who appeared very recently in the history of the world. It cannot be that reality depends on our existence. …
>
> "Philosophers call this view *realism*. It can be summarized by saying that the real world out there (or RWOT, as my first philosophy professor used to put it) must exist independently of us. It follows that the terms by which science describes reality cannot involve in any essential way what we choose to measure or not measure." (Smolin, 2006, pp. 6-7)

Smolin's quote highlights precisely two inherent aspects of the physicist's view of the Real World which disqualify it for being taken seriously in behavioral science: While physics may be able to get away with ignoring the physicist and the doing of physics, behavioral science cannot. Any science that sets out to account for all behavior (which is the point of behavioral science) must straightforwardly apply to the behavior *of* behavioral scientists *doing* behavioral science. After all, *doing* behavioral science is one form of behavior. This "reflexivity" standard eliminates the RWOT view as a candidate for behavioral science. (Interestingly, it may have proved to be rather inconvenient for physicists as well in the 21st century; the title of Smolin's book is *The Trouble with Physics*.)

Smolin follows standard practice in physics in using "reality" as equivalent to the real world. As it turns out, this doesn't work in behavioral science; one of Descriptive Psychology's truly profound contributions is its articulation of Real World and Reality as related but separate concepts. To do justice to persons and behavior, we need both.

If the "one-and-only-one" view of the real world doesn't work for understanding behavior, what does? We are about to head into some deep waters here–not Einstein-relativity-theory deep, but at least pay-close-attention-for-a-while deep. What follows is definitely *not* the current common view.

The Real World as a World of Persons, not Things

The Real World

The Real World is, fundamentally and essentially, "a world of persons and their ways". (Ossorio, 2006a, p. 3) The world consists essentially of persons and their actions. Everything that appears in the physicist's view–apples, trees, stars, birds, beasts, quarks and quacking ducks–all appear in here as well, as parts of actions taken by people. Furthermore, the Real World is not "out there" in any sense; it is a world I "construct, maintain, and reconstruct through my behavior." Ossorio (2009b, p. 220).

In other words, we ordinary people create the Real World.

This is a rather breath-taking assertion. Taking it seriously requires some reflection and explanation. Here's Ossorio on this exact issue (Ossorio, 2009):

> Outside of Descriptive Psychology a reference to world construction, world maintenance, and world reconstruction is not unlikely to meet with a bright smile and a disclaimer: "You must be speaking metaphorically. *Surely*, you don't mean, *literally*, world construction, maintenance, and reconstruction." The appropriate answer in the present case is, "No, it's not a metaphor, and, yes, I mean *literally* world construction, maintenance, and reconstruction." Questions then tend to be along the lines of how one could do that, why one would do that, what guarantees does one have that it has been done right, and so on.
>
> When it comes to world reconstruction, we can sometimes use the

> poets as one source of ideas. For example, we have our old friend Omar Khayyam, who says:
> "Ah, love, could you and I with Him conspire
> To change this sorry scheme of things entire
> Would we not shatter it to bits, and then
> Remold it nearer to our hearts' desire?"
> To those who look askance when we say, "No, I mean, *literally*, …" I suspect it must seem that we are referring to some Godly exercise of power such as this. What Khayyam describes so vividly is what one might call a brute force, straight wish-fulfillment approach to the matter. And it is not open to us. We can't "shatter it to bits, and then remold it nearer to our hearts' desire." Unless we can, of course.
> How, then, and what, then? What mechanism, what procedure, what agency is available for reconstructing my world?
> There is a certain kind of alternative to the "shatter it to bits" approach. A philosopher, Stanley Cavell, in explaining the difference between Wittgenstein's philosophy and traditional philosophy, said roughly the following: "For Aristotle, to speak the truth is to say of what is *that* it is. In this new way of talking, to speak the truth is to say of what is *what* it is."
> In creating worlds, and in reconstructing worlds, we don't do it by creating stuff and moving it around. Rather, what we create is its being what it is. (pp. 220-221).

This orientation turns out to be essential to understanding and re-formulating the science in *Blink*. The research establishes *that* it is; the re-formulation says *what* it is.

Reality

Having recognized that we create the Real World, we immediately confront the fact that we do not, in fact have God-like powers. We can't just create any old world we like; we run into actual constraints on what we can get away with. Our old friend Gil can talk about his "comebacker" golf shot which goes past the green, pauses in the air, and comes back to land near the hole, but neither he nor anyone else can actually make that shot. I might want a world in which I am a billionaire, or a Nobel Prize winner, or Paul Newman's best friend, but no real world *I* know how to create includes those heart's desires.

These inherent limits on what we can actually do are articulated in Descriptive Psychology in the concept of Reality. Reality is *not* just another word for the Real World. Nor is it, as in common usage, some special and privileged kind of Real World (the *really* real world, so to speak). Instead, Reality is viewed as a set of boundary conditions on our behavior as Persons. Since our behavior as Persons includes constructing, maintaining and re-constructing worlds, Reality is a set of constraints on our Real Worlds. (Ossorio, 1969/1978/2010)

"So we create the Real World, which can vary depending on lots of things, but Reality is in fact fixed and secure, which keeps us honest, right?"

Well, almost, but not exactly. It is true that Reality is fixed at any given time; we either can, or cannot, actually bring off a given behavior. But it is also true that the limits on human behavior change over time, sometimes dramatically. In the 18th century if you wanted to hear a Beethoven symphony you would need to find a public performance of it somewhere, get invited to a private performance, or hire an orchestra to perform it for you. Today, if I want to hear a Beethoven symphony, I take my iPod out of my pocket, put on earphones and plug them in, look for the right file and press Play. I can listen to a Beethoven symphony anytime I like; the real world of the 18th century *in reality* did not include that behavioral possibility.

Reality itself, then, can change as our behavior potential changes. This will prove to be both exciting and challenging in the light of our formulation of the material in *Blink*, which we turn to now.

Blink: A Descriptive Psychology Formulation

The science underlying *Blink* conceives of the mind (or the brain, or the adaptive unconscious) as "a kind of giant computer".

This is a very common conception in both popular culture and various sciences.

It is perhaps best illustrated by an iconic sequence of images found in every Terminator film and TV episode:

The killer robot enters, scanning the room with its camera-eyes. A torrent of pixels is sent to its central processing unit, where specialized software extracts images of objects from the data stream. Pattern-recognition software identifies one object as a face. The processor then uses facial-recognition software to check the face against a database of persons of interest to the robot, makes a match, checks the person's identifier against the robot's purposive protocols, finds a matching protocol and initiates a sequence: "Terminate."

"See, that's sort of how people do it, only with eyes and brains instead of cameras and computers and stuff – right?"

Well, no. Not even close. To begin with, this doesn't even describe how actual robots function, let alone people; the sequence just described is far beyond the capabilities of any hardware/software configuration on our planet in 2012. Take that little first step, extracting images from a torrent of pixels. It can't be done–not even close–no matter how many times the detective on television says: "We ran it through our facial recognition software and got a match." The very best, top-of-the-game software we have today can take a pre-selected set of pixels and do a reasonable job of identifying the presence of a specific object, like a face. That's a little like having an adult walk alongside the robot, saying "Look there, just in this small area. Can you see the face? Show me the face. *Good* robot." And no, we haven't a clue as to how to have another robot take the place of the adult.

More to the point, we have no evidence whatsoever that this cybernetic image in fact describes how people know things. Let me repeat that: *We have no evidence whatsoever.* Quite the contrary: both research and common experience indicate that the cybernetic image not only *does not* describe how people know things, it *could not* describe it. As a literal description, the cybernetic image is a non-starter, and it's a lousy metaphor because it invites us to pursue dead-end lines of research such as pattern recognition processes in the brain. (Contrary to what you may have read in the popular scientific press, scientists haven't found any of those, either, and it has not been for lack of trying. The best scientists have is some "encouraging" studies which show that certain parts of the brain "light up" when a certain pattern is recognized. That's roughly equivalent to saying that certain circuits in your iPod "light up" when you play "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds", and then claiming this to be encouraging evidence that those circuits will soon be shown to be the true source of Beatles songs.)

"But hold on here; surely you're not saying we don't store and access information, just like computers do, only with brains instead of computer chips?"

That's exactly what I am saying. We'll get to that "store and access information" part soon, but first let's take a hard look at the so-called parallel between brains and computer chips.

A memory chip is made up essentially of a very large number of transistors, tiny objects made of silicon and/or other inert materials, whose sole purpose is to be exposed to an external charge that sets it to "1" or "0" and remain in that state for future inspection. These transistors are "hard-wired" into a connected whole by miniscule wires etched on the surface of the chip.

A brain contains a truly gigantic number of neurons, which are tiny, living, growing, self-regulating cells which actively and reactively connect to other neurons in a complex biochemical soup involving genetic structures that affect neurons in ways we are only beginning to understand.

Even if we take it that the brain is somehow in charge of knowing (we will abandon that notion soon enough), in what meaningful way are memory chips and brains alike? Other than the article of faith that says they both "process and store information"–none. In fact they are obviously, wildly different on any number of counts. (This issue is explored in substantial detail in the literature of Descriptive Psychology; see in particular Jeffrey, 2007.)

Bluntly: The mind/brain/unconscious as giant computer is a *metaphor* and nothing more: a fictive way of talking, which turns out to be an *inconvenient* fiction, leading us astray more than it adds clarity. There is a point to ***not*** talking that way–and so, we will not. Instead, we will work within a framework that does bear the weight required.

A-O-C

When we look at the world of persons and their ways, what do we see?

We see people living their lives in one of the ways known to their culture, in the world as they find it to be. We see people being who they are; and who they

are–in addition to themselves, of course–depends essentially on what place they occupy within their communities. We see people doing and saying things, typically engaged with other people in some social context such as a family or organization or group of friends. In doing what they do, we see people using facts that are known to them, as well as the concepts and locutions of their communities, to participate in social practices in one of the ways that can be done. They use available objects to engage, to the best of their abilities and in their own particular ways, in specific actions that result, typically, in what they are after.

These are the fundamental facts of the world of persons and their ways. It is indeed a very complex world we all live in. But then, we already knew that, didn't we?

To help make sense of all this complexity, Descriptive Psychology has articulated a very important concept known technically as "A-O-C": Actor-Observer-Critic. Briefly:

When a person does something – anything at all – he simultaneously has three relationships to that action and the world within which it takes place:

- Actor, who actually does the behavior,
- Observer, who observes and as needed describes what is done, and
- Critic, who compares what is done and its outcome to relevant standards and, as needed, draws conclusions on what corrections are required.

There is *no* implication here that these are three distinct entities or sub-persons or systems or ego states (whatever those might be). A-O-C refers to the simply observable fact that ordinary people routinely accomplish all three of these when they act. Ossorio referred to them as "jobs" we perform in behaving, and we seem to do all three automatically and competently; that is, when we act, we don't make an effort to become an Actor and then become an Observer/Critic – it's all part of the package.

Now here's an obvious but perhaps tricky point: all three–Actor, Observer and Critic–are engaging in Intentional Action: the Actor in the action itself, the Observer in observing and, as needed, describing, and the Critic in assessing and, as needed, correcting. Therefore, each job requires "Knowing"–the making of relevant distinctions – in order to succeed. But here's where it gets really interesting, because on closer examination, it turns out that *the way* in which things are known is different for the Actor as compared to the Observer and Critic. And this difference is not small or merely technical – Actor knowing is *categorically* different from Observer and Critic knowing.

This one fact unlocks the "closed door" Gladwell referred to, and provides the means to formulating the extraordinary findings reported in *Blink* without resorting to misleading metaphors.

Knowing

In Real-World-Out-There talk, "knowing" is used to refer to a process that results in a true conclusion. Knowing is some form of data-processing–like a "giant computer"–involving some form of information storage and retrieval along with

automatic pattern-recognition processes. Knowing often takes place on both conscious and unconscious levels; in either case, it involves thought and thinking.

We leave all that behind in making the transition to the world of persons and their ways. In Descriptive Psychology we show the power of a new and different starting place for understanding "knowing".

In our world of persons and their ways, what do we mean when we use the word "knowing"? We mean that a person has made relevant distinctions, and we know this is so because they have acted on those distinctions. "Knowing" is an aspect of doing, in the same way that hue is an aspect of color. All colors have a specific hue, and hue does not exist separately from color; likewise, all actions involve specific knowing, and knowing does not exist separately from action.

Note that this is substantially different from "knowing" in the RWOT world. In particular, note:

1. Knowing is not a process.
2. Knowing does not require thought or thinking.

These two points plainly mark departure points from standard behavioral conceptualization as seen in *Blink*. Let's dig into them.

Knowing is not a process. A time-tested move in science is to create explanations by looking for an underlying causal process. We explain motion completely by looking at underlying processes involving force, mass and inertia. We explain chemical reactions completely by looking at underlying processes involving valence and bonding of chemical elements. We explain disease completely by looking at underlying processes involving germs and cells. (OK, so at this point we acknowledge that germs and cells aren't the whole story of disease, but that just means there are other underlying processes we need to account for.) This move has been so successful that it has become scientific dogma: To give an explanation *is* to look at underlying causal processes.

But of course that's nothing resembling the whole story. "Causal" is only one among many relationships that can exist between elements of the real world, and it is quite limited in its range of application: The more you dig into it, the fewer places you find where it actually fits. And "underlying" when applied to knowing turns out to be nothing more that a case of the old con-game "bait and switch". Every *successful* instance of underlying process explanation involves processes and elements within the same conceptual realm as that which is being explained. Motion, force, mass and inertia are all physical concepts; reaction, valence and bonding are all chemical concepts; disease, germs and cells are biological concepts.

But as we noticed earlier, "underlying causal explanations" for the behavioral concept "knowing" all take the form of brain (biological) processes or information-processing (cybernetic) processes. As behavioral scientists we have been acting like the drunk who looks for his lost keys under the streetlight even though he lost them in a dark alley; he looks under the streetlight because the light is better there.

The problem here isn't just that biological or cybernetic processes *don't* explain behavioral facts; it's that biological or cybernetic processes *couldn't possibly*

explain behavioral facts, any more than you can explain texture by underlying color processes, or drive a nail with b-flat. (An extensive discussion of this issue can be found in "Can Psychological Science be Replaced With Biological Science?" (Bergner, 2006)

In our world of persons and their ways, knowing is *not* a process, and it is not explained by underlying processes of any sort. Knowing is a fact (technically, a state-of-affairs) which is explained by its place in a complex state-of-affairs called behavior. In the spirit of the Cavell quote cited earlier: "For 'realist' scientists, to speak the truth about knowing is to say *how* something is known. In this new way of talking, to speak the truth about knowing is to say *what* is known, and by whom." That "by whom" part will prove to be remarkably interesting.

Knowing does not require thought or thinking. At this point it may seem as if we have stepped through Alice's Looking Glass.

"What could he possibly mean by that: 'Knowing does not require thought or thinking'? What else is there to knowing, if you eliminate thought and thinking? Why, going all the way back to the Greeks, everything we have said about knowledge has emphasized the importance of thought and careful reasoning. Descartes even said, 'Cogito, ergo sum' which in plain English says 'I think, therefore I am.' And this guy is asking us to throw all that out for what–instinct? I don't think so."

These are understandable objections, and they deserve a considered response. First, let's acknowledge the validity of the historical points, and recognize that they remind us of exactly how deeply rooted, and for how long, the "realist" view of the world has been in our cultural history. Our traditional views of knowledge and knowing have all been Observer/Critic views for a very simple reason: they couldn't be anything else! What counts and has always counted in intellectual discourse is what is publicly stated and debated; but of course, that's Observer/Critic knowledge. Actor knowledge is for the person to engage in his own action; Observer/Critic knowledge is for making things public and discussable.

But remember: making an observation is itself an action, and as such requires Actor knowledge. For instance, that gnawing feeling in the gut telling you that something's fishy here, or that excitement that says this may be really new and useful, is your Actor's knowing informing your action of observing and critiquing.

Let's further recognize that we are not "throwing out the baby with the bathwater". We do not claim that thought and thinking is somehow an illusion, or is unimportant, and we would be the last to dispute the importance of careful reasoning. Thought, thinking, reasoning: all these are central and crucial to knowing by Observers and Critics.

But knowing by the Actor is a different matter entirely. It is categorically different from Observer/Critic knowing. Although Actor knowing can at times involve thought, it does not *require* thought and thinking. And, no, it is not some variety of "instinct". This alternative view, at least in its articulation, is indeed new and significantly different. It might be provocatively characterized by reversing Descartes: "I am, therefore I think."

Now that we have said what Actor knowing is *not*, let's turn our attention to what it *is*.

Actor's Knowledge

Actor's knowledge is the immediate, first-hand, before-the-fact knowledge of the author of an action. It is not observation nor inference; it is *recognition*. I only recognize things that have a place in my world. What I recognize something *as* is in terms of its place in my on-going structure of behavior, and I may or may not have a thought about it. And of course, what I am capable of recognizing essentially depends on my developed competence.

Let's examine this view in some detail.

Recall Ossorio's classic image, "The Picture of Winston Churchill" (Ossorio, 2006a, p. 196) as re-told in "Ordinary Magic" (Putman, 2009, p.32):

Wil hands Gil a picture and asks: "What is this?"

Gil takes one look and says: "That's a picture of Winston Churchill."

Wil : "Hold on a minute. How do you know that's not a picture of someone else who looks a lot like Winston Churchill?"

Gil: "You got me there. I can't be sure it's Winston Churchill." Then Gil picks up a pencil and draws something on the paper. He hands it to Wil and says: "That's a picture of Winston Churchill."

Wil: "Hold on. How can you be sure that's not a picture of someone else who just looks like Winston Churchill?"

Gil: "I'm sure it's a picture of Winston Churchill because I produced it, and that's what I produced it as."

This image reminds us that we are the authors and producers of our own behavior; our behavior is what we produce it *as*. We know what our behavior is before-the-fact, otherwise we could not do it on purpose. As Actor, we do not know our behavior as the Observer does, by observation; we know it directly, first-hand.

First-hand, direct knowing takes various forms which are quite familiar to us (in both senses of that word.) They include feelings, images, insights, decisions, impulses and, yes, thoughts – the kind of thoughts that seem to pop into our minds, out of nowhere.

In this light let's revisit those art experts who all knew at a glance that something was wrong with the Getty's kouros. When one was shown the statue and told it would soon become Getty's property, she found herself impulsively exclaiming: "I'm sorry to hear that"–but she didn't know why she said it. Another expert, on first glance, found that the word "fresh" popped into mind–definitely *not* a word one associates with 2600-year-old statues. A third took one look and "blanched" –his complexion literally lost color. Another reports that "I felt as if there was a glass between me and the work"; another reports " a wave of intuitive repulsion". Gladwell, (2005, p. 5-6). All Actor's knowledge, all direct and first-hand recognition, and none involving a process of deduction, inference or thinking.

As with the experts, so it is with ordinary persons, moment-to-moment, day-to-day. What appears to be some extraordinary production of a giant unconscious

computer turns out to be what all of us do, routinely, all the time.

"But wait a minute. Surely you're not saying any of us would have recognized the fake at a glance? Those were remarkable insights by experts!"

Yes, they were, and of course I'm not saying any of us could do it, any more than just any of us could recognize what went wrong in a knitting pattern (which my wife can do, at a glance), or any of us could recognize a corner blitz in football before it happens, which any quarterback in the NFL must do at a glance, or recognize an augmented fifth as it's played, as any concert pianist does.

Every person has developed competence in recognizing those aspects of the world that are have meaning for them, and we use that competence to create, maintain and navigate our way through our world. In fact, our Actor's knowledge enables us to create meaning in our lives, by what we treat things and situations as being. Persons do not *find* meaning in the world; we *create* it on an on-going basis.

What do Actors recognize? We recognize whatever has a place in our world, that is, whatever we require to fill a role in our on-going drama. If something has no place in what we are doing, we literally may not recognize it even if it is clearly "there" and we will certainly not recognize it if we do not have the competence to do so (unlike my wife, I wouldn't recognize a dropped stitch in knitting if my life depended on it.) This is nicely illustrated by a delightful quote from a book titled *Inside of a Dog: What Dogs See, Smell and Know*:

> To a dog, a hammer doesn't exist. A dog doesn't act with or on a hammer, and so it has no significance to a dog. At least, not unless it overlaps with some other, meaningful object: it is wielded by a loved person; it is urinated on by the cute dog down the street; its dense wooden handle can be chewed like a stick. (Horowitz, 2009).

As with dogs, so with people; if we don't act "with or on" something, it has no significance for us, and we will not recognize it for what it is in the public, Observer/Critic world.

Conclusions

We have acknowledged the important observations in Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink*, that:

> The power of knowing, in that first few seconds, is not a gift given magically to a fortunate few… [It] is not an exotic gift. It is a central part of what it means to be human. We [do it] whenever we meet a new person or have to make sense of something quickly or encounter a novel situation. We [do it] because we have to, and we come to rely on that ability… When we leap to a conclusion or have a hunch … [we're] sifting through the situation in front of us, throwing out all that is irrelevant while we zero in on what matters. And the truth is that [we] are really good at this, to the point where [it] often delvers a better answer than more deliberate and exhaustive ways of thinking ... We need to respect the fact that it is

> possible to know something without knowing why we know and accept that–sometimes–we are better off that way. (pp. 16-52)

We have offered a fresh, substantially different scientific approach to making sense of these observations that does not rely on misleading metaphors derived from an inadequate view of science and the world. We have seen that, far from being the exceptional product of unconscious processes, this "at a glance" knowing is a common, everyday aspect of Actor's knowledge as we create and navigate our world.

Many questions arise that have not been addressed. I take this to be the expected and desirable result of offering a new conceptualization to a set of established but misconstrued facts. In particular, very briefly:

- How can we understand the relation of brain to person? Part of the answer is obvious: we use our brains to think, just as we use our hands to pick things up. But that's by no means the whole story, and that story is interesting; it is currently being explored by members of the Descriptive Psychology Institute's Center for Descriptive Psychology and Social Neuroscience (http://dpicdn.wordpress.com/).
- A good scientific account does a better job of explaining the facts at hand than does the theory it supplants. I take it that this is evidently the case here. But a sterner additional test is traditionally applied: does the new view generate research and predictions that are interesting, and different from the standard view? As it turns out, the Descriptive Psychology view of behavioral science is particularly rich in this aspect. For an example, see "The Irrationality Illusion: A New Paradigm for Economics and Behavioral Economics" (Jeffrey & Putman, 2012).

Let's conclude with, literally, a vision, from Ossorio's masterful summation of his life's work, *The Behavior of Persons*. I call this a vision because it is a depiction of what the Actor sees, and unlike the "torrent of pixels from which we extract patterns", it is meant to be taken literally:

> As an Actor I see the real world as a field of action, as the domain within which I live my life. In it are givens and possibilities, opportunities and non-opportunities, hindrances and facilitations for behavior. In it are reasons for acting one way or another. I am sensitized to behaviors that are available and ways of being that are available. There is no question of who or what I am–I am *me*. There is no question of my inclinations and proclivities; I do not need to *know* what they are, although I often do–what is primary is that I *have* them, and my having them is not something different from being me. In particular, they are not peculiar entities or forces that *cause* me to do what I do. Ideas come–I do not send for them nor do I receive them as information. Theories come. Visions and inklings of the future come, and their coming is not something different from *being* me. All of this is embedded in my actions and

> in the short term and long term structures of action and being that I compose, sometimes ad lib, sometimes without realizing it until later, and sometimes upon casual or serious reflection. (Ossorio, 2006a, p. 254)

This may seem to be claiming extraordinary power. With the help of Descriptive Psychology, we can recognize it as simply a straightforward statement of what ordinary persons, exercising ordinary competence, do.

Acknowledgements

This is a revised version of a talk by the same name given to the 31st Annual Conference of The Society for Descriptive Psychology on October 10, 2009. In the revision a major section entitled "Descriptive Psychology and Science" was removed, mildly edited, and published as a separate paper (Putman, 2009b). Thanks to C.J. Peek, Ken Anbender, and members of the conference audience whose reactions informed the revisions and to Keith E. Davis and Raymond Bergner for their helpful editorial comments.

References

Bergner, R. M. (2006). Can psychological science be replaced with biological sciences? In K. E. Davis & R. M. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 8, pp. 43-68). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Jeffrey, H.J . (2007). Cognition without processes. In H. J. Jeffrey & R. M. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 7, pp. 33-66). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Jeffrey, H.J. and Putman, A. O. (2013). The irrationality illusion: A new paradigm for economics and behavioral economics. *Journal of Behavioral Finance*, 14, 3.

Gladwell, M. (2005). *Blink. The power of thinking without thinking.* New York: Little, Brown.

Horowitz, A. (2009). *Inside of a dog: what dogs see, smell and know*. New York: Scribner.

Ossorio, P. G. (1966/1995). *Persons. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. I.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press. (Original work published 1966 as LRI Report No. 3. Los Angeles, CA & Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.)

Ossorio, P.G. (1969/1979/2010). *Meaning and Symbolism. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. VI.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press. (Original work published 1969 as LRI Report No. 10. Los Angeles, CA & Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute. Later listed as LRI Report No. 15.)

Ossorio, P. G. (1971/1975/1978/2005). "*What actually happens*": *The representation of real world phenomena. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. IV*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press. Also published Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1975, 1978. (Original work published 1971 as LRI Report No. 10a. Whittier, CA & Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute. Later listed as LRI Report No. 20.)

Ossorio, P. G. (1982/1998). *Place. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. III*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press. (Original work published 1982 as LRI Report No. 30a. Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.)

Ossorio, P. G. (2006a). *The behavior of persons. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. V*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P. G. (2006b). Out of nowhere. In K. E. Davis & R. M. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 8, pp. 107-144). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P.G. (2009). Out of nowhere (complete version). In K. E. Davis, F.L. Lubuguin & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 9, pp. 203-230). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A.O. (2009a). Ordinary magic: what Descriptive Psychology is, and why it matters. In K. E. Davis, F.L. Lubuguin & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 9, pp. 203-230). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A.O. (2009b). Descriptive Psychology and science. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Institute. www.descriptivepsychologyinstitute.org

Smolin, L. (2006). *The trouble with physics*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Knowing the World

Mary Kathleen Roberts
Independent Scholar

Abstract

How do we know the world? Paradigmatic answers to that question include knowing what God reveals to us through divine illumination, knowing what we discover through scientific observation and evidence, and knowing what it calls for by way of behavior. What is it to be in contact with the world? And how do we know a dream? The answers to those questions depend on the paradigm for knowledge that is taken as fundamental. The use of the behavioral paradigm is illustrated in analyzing dreams by René Descartes and Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Keywords: knowledge, dreams, Descartes, Wittgenstein

Over the centuries, communities have rejected outdated paradigms and standards for knowing the world, and accepted new paradigms in their place (cf. Kuhn, 1996). One way to see this change in action is to look at the dreams of innovative individuals living in times when an old paradigm is being challenged. By interpreting such dreams, we can see the new possibilities for understanding the world — and for behaving — that are being created.

This paper looks at two such dreams, one from René Descartes (1596-1650) and one from Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), and interprets them in light of a small set of concepts from Descriptive Psychology. In order to provide background for understanding the dreams, we start by reviewing the foundations for knowledge that were in question during the dreamers' lifetimes.

Divine Illumination

How do we know the world? For centuries in the Christian world, it was a given that God was the creator of the world, and only He had full, intuitive knowledge of the divine order of things. God's understanding in all its fullness was not open to us while we were alive, but the blessed would share in it when they were united with God after death.

For now we had knowledge obtained by observing the world around us. That knowledge was incomplete and fallible. We could not count on it, because the information that our senses gave us might be illusory, as when an oar appears bent in water. Our perception of the world was "through a glass, darkly" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

The standard for true knowledge was knowing how things were in the mind of God. His knowledge was non-sensory, complete, and immutable. Mathematics was taken as a model for God's knowledge because it was "known to our minds directly" rather than through our senses.

How can things be known to our minds directly? In the 5th century, St. Augustine's answer was that true knowledge came to us through divine illumination (cf. "Our thoughts come from God."). Even though that answer "conflates ordinary knowledge in this life … with the 'face-to-face' knowledge of God that is supposed to be reserved for the blessed in the next life", it was nonetheless accepted (Spade, 2001, p. 95).

In the 13th century, Latin translations of Aristotle became widely available, and an Aristotelian confidence in the senses replaced the old distrust. St. Thomas Aquinas abandoned the Augustinian theory of divine illumination, and affirmed that our God-given powers were sufficient to account for the knowledge that we acquired by these powers.

In the 16th century, the paradigm of divine illumination was given new life by the Protestant Reformation. Some Protestant sects took literally Christ's promise to his disciples that after His death, "the Spirit of Truth" would come to them and guide them into "all truth" (John 16:13). They encouraged their members to enter into trance-like states in which they would be personally receptive to illumination. To be "filled with enthusiasm" meant to be blessed and inspired by the Holy Spirit (Knox, 1950/1994).

There was an alternative path to divine knowledge, not sanctioned by the Church. Those who were hungry for knowledge – especially scientific knowledge – could turn to the Devil. The legend of Faust, on which Goethe's play was later based, was known throughout Europe in the 16th century. It is the story of an alchemist who forfeits his soul in exchange for the Devil's knowledge.

The Devil had a reality and dangerousness that is hard for us to appreciate. One verse of Luther's mighty hymn, written in 1529, expresses the Devil's status:

> "Our ancient vicious foe
> Still seeks to work his woe.
> His craft and power are great,
> And armed with cruel hate
> On earth is not his equal."

In medical practice, devils had pride of place in diagnosis and treatment. Although there was skepticism about diabolically-based diseases throughout the 16th and 17th century, as late as 1724, the conclusion of the faculty at a major medical university was "that attempts of the devil at seducing a person must be accepted [as

real]" (Diethelm, 1970, p. 12).

Even the first great British empiricist, Francis Bacon, treated devils as real. In 1605, in his ground-breaking work *The Advancement of Learning Divine and Human*, Bacon addressed the eligibility of angels and evil spirits for scientific study. Regarding angels, he concluded that "the sober and guarded inquiry, which may arise out of the passages of holy scriptures, or out of the gradations of nature, is not restrained." Regarding "degenerate and revolted spirits", he reminded us that while conversing with them or employing them is prohibited, "it is no more unlawful to inquire the nature of evil spirits, than to inquire the force of poisons in nature" (Bacon, 1605/2001, pp. 93-94).

This was the world in which Descartes had his dream in 1619.

Scientific Observation and Evidence

At roughly the same time, Copernicus's heliocentric formulation of the solar system (published in 1543) was becoming more widely known throughout Europe. It had a world-shattering ("Face in the Wall") effect on people who took it seriously: If the earth revolves around the sun, what kind of world is this? The Copernican formulation undermined all knowledge that had been accepted as revealed by God, as well as the Aristotelian trust in our senses.

If we cannot count on knowledge from revelation, and we cannot count on knowledge from our senses, what can we count on? People turned to scientific knowledge for certainty.

The new standard for knowledge was not a matter of knowing how things were in the mind of God. Instead, it was a matter of knowing how things were from the *point of view* of God. From that standpoint, scientific observation would transcend the viewpoint of any particular person, and not be vulnerable to misperceptions, illusions, and personal biases. In time God was dropped from the account, and the standard became how things were from the point of view of an Outside Observer.

The hope for complete and immutable knowledge of the real world was not forsaken. It would be achieved by using the scientific method to discover the truth of things, and then putting all of the results together into one, all-encompassing picture of the real world. It was a given that it was only a matter of time before the picture would be complete.

Scientists working on the Big Picture achieved an extraordinary understanding of the natural world. The picture only had places for things that could be verified on the basis of scientific evidence, so angels, spirits, and other non-material entities were now excluded. (Numbers were an exception.) The devil and his minions were eventually eliminated from medical practice, and evidence-based knowledge became the new standard.

Despite the enormous achievements, some critics condemned the preemptive place given to evidence. In the 19th century, for example, the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1849/1955) wrote about "the confusion from which the concept of revelation suffers in our confused age" (p. xvi). He deplored the fact that even the Church treated a revelation as a delusion, unless evidence to the contrary

could be provided. He pointed out that God cannot help his ambassador in the way that a king can. A king can give his ambassador something to present to the authorities, like "his ring, or a letter in his handwriting which everybody recognizes". But who would accept a letter that has fallen from heaven?

> It is nonsense to get *sensible* certitude that an apostle is an apostle… just as it is nonsense to get *sensible* certitude of the fact that God exists, since God indeed is spirit. (p. 24, p. 109)
>
> A person who stands "under the direct outpouring of the Spirit" is called upon to act, not to supply evidence (p. 21).

For most scientists, such criticism was easily dismissed as irrelevant if not nonsensical. Nonetheless, by the turn of the century, there was growing recognition that the Big Picture was a mechanistic, materialistic, and deterministic formulation. It had no place for a wide range of humanly important facts. Novels like Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) vividly portrayed dimensions and aspects of human life that could not be understood within the scientific way of knowing the world.

This was the world in which Ludwig Wittgenstein had his dream in 1920.

An Alternative View

In contrast to the two paradigms we have just reviewed, in Descriptive Psychology we take it that "the most fundamental way of knowing the world is knowing what it calls for by way of behavior" (Ossorio, 2010, p. 226). How is the concept of behavior-based knowledge different from illumination-based or evidence-based knowledge?

It's not from the standpoint of God or the standpoint of an Outside Observer. It's from the point of view of a Person in the world.

It's not something in the Mind of God or in a Big Picture of the world. It's a Characteristic of a Person. Formally, it is defined as "the structure of facts and concepts that a person has the competence to act on".

It does not come with a guarantee of being complete, correct, or immutable, either now or in the future. Instead, the structure of facts is always under construction, maintenance, and reconstruction.

The use of this alternative is illustrated in the discussion below, as well as in the interpretation of Descartes's and Wittgenstein's dreams.

Contact with the Real World

Our understanding of what it is to be in contact with the real world is different, depending on which way of knowing we take as fundamental. When the standard for knowledge is knowing how things are in the Mind of God, paradigmatically we are in contact with the world when we are in union with God. This is in fact what mystics sometimes report: a profoundly heightened sense of being in touch with the whole world. They describe this as "awakening" to what is real, in contrast to being "asleep" or "half-asleep".

When the standard for knowledge is knowing how things look to an Outside Observer, paradigmatically we are in contact with the world when we "see things as

they (really) are". If we think that a person doesn't have an objective view of things, we might say that the person is "seeing the world through rose-colored glasses", and exhort him to take off the distorting lenses and see the world as it (really) is.

When the standard is knowing what the world calls for by way of behavior, paradigmatically we are in contact with the world when we spontaneously act on what the situation calls for.[1] If a rattlesnake is poised to strike me, I escape the danger. If someone invites me to go with him, I respond to the invitation. If someone asks me a question, I answer.

When a person's behavior is *not* appropriate for how things are, we look for what sense the person's behavior does make. Is the behavior unexpected but in fact reasonable in light of a wider range of circumstances? If not, our explanations take the form of "He didn't because he couldn't." That is, he didn't [do what the situation called for] because he couldn't [do what the situation called for] because he lacked the necessary knowledge, motivation, or ability (cf. Ossorio, 1982/1998, p. 116).

Things that do not make sense

What happens if the situation calls for a person to respond to something that does not make sense? For example, if someone looks at a still life and asks, "How much water is in the pitcher?", an answer to that "question" cannot be given. A person who has the requisite knowledge, motivation, and competence will recognize that the other person has not succeeded at asking a question. He will treat it as confusion ("Huh?"), or a chance to respond to nonsense with nonsense ("It's all evaporated by now."), or in some other way.

As a second example, consider a passage from Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*:

> 'I set the brake by connecting up rod and lever.' – Yes, given the whole of the rest of the mechanism. Only in conjunction with that is it a brake-lever, and separated from its support it is not even a lever; it may be anything, or nothing. (1958, §6)

If someone insisted on asking, "What is it?", Wittgenstein's response could be a series of "It might be *x*", "It might be *y*", "It might be *z*", "It might be…" until the interlocutor got the point that there is no question of *what it is* without a context. This is one option from the range of behaviors that we have for responding to people who are under the illusion that they are asking a question. The range also includes silence as an option.

The danger of non-questions is that they "seduce us into an illusion of understanding" (Conant, 1991, p. 137). If we fail to reject the question, we may end up talking nonsense, too. Or we may end up walking away in frustration and disgust, like Alice does when she makes her exit from the Mad Hatter's tea-party.

Things that I don't think of as possible for me

What happens if the situation calls for me to do something that I don't think of as possible for me, *but I do it*? For example, imagine a 4-year-old who is very afraid of dogs. If someone asks her to "pet the dog", she's apt to look terrified, or confused, or like she just plain doesn't understand what the person is saying. Pet-

ting a dog is not a possibility for her. One day she sees a small group of kids from the neighborhood in front of her house, and she takes off to join them. Too late, she sees that there is a large, black Labrador retriever in their midst, licking each of the kids' hands to their immense delight. Before our frozen 4-year-old can take another step, the lab comes and gives her a big lick, too. She hesitates, then giggles, and eventually reaches out her hand for another lick.

As Descriptive Psychologists, what do we say about what happened here? If we use the Person Characteristics/Circumstances model (Ossorio, 2006b, pp. 212-229), we can say that these were just the right circumstances for the child to discover that some dogs are not dangerous. She "had it in her" all along to be friends with a dog, and this episode in her life history made that potential actual.

If we use the Relationship/Status model (Ossorio, 2006b, pp. 230-241), we can say that the child's position vis-à-vis the dog changed. The child used to assign all dogs to the status of dangerous, and avoided them accordingly. But she assigned *this* dog to the status of possiblefriend, and actualized the corresponding behavior potential.

If we use the Dramaturgical model (Ossorio, 2006b, pp. 289-308), we might say that by reaching out her hand, she was "casting" the dog as a possiblefriend. When he responded accordingly, i.e., he played the part for which she had "cast" him through her behavior, her play was successful, and her world was changed.

A Structure of Facts and Concepts

Whichever model we use, there has been a change in the child's Knowledge, i.e., in the structure of facts and concepts that the child has the ability to act on. Historically, the definition of Knowledge was "the *set* of conceptual discriminations…" or "the *repertoire* of facts…". But in one of his last talks, Ossorio changed the definition to "the *structure* of facts and concepts…", and noted, "Whenever you're dealing with that particular Person Characteristic, just think 'world'" (Ossorio, 2006a, p. 126).

This structure is analogous to a mathematical coordinate system in its representational power. Just as a Cartesian coordinate system has places for every real number, this system has places for everything that is the case in the real world, i.e., what there is, what goes on, what occurs, and how things are.

By necessity there are many more dimensions in this system than the two or three familiar to us from high school mathematics. Quoting Ossorio (1998), "Personal, interpersonal, and social phenomena require many additional conceptual dimensions in order to delineate the various phenomena adequately. We live in the real world, not an abstract world of time and space." (p. 31)

What is the point of having a structure of facts? The point is to codify our behavioral possibilities and impossibilities. We put the results of our observation and experience of the world into the framework, and draw upon that when we're making our way in the world.

Lest this sound complex, note that by the time normal children are between 3-5 years old, they have put things together in this way. Parents sometimes say, "He

has his own world now" (or "She's her own person"). We can say that the child has a simple conceptual structure in which everything fits together, and everything is related to everything else. Thus I could say of my young friend, "The dog's position changed on the danger dimension of her world, and also on the friend dimension. The new place that the dog has in the child's scheme of things codifies her new possibilities for behavior."

Before children have a world of their own, they operate within the scene/situation of the moment, and their parents provide the overall structure in which all of their activities have a place. But once children have integrated the various scenes/situations of their lives into a simple, coherent world, that serves as the overall context for everything they do. They still naturally operate within situations, but those situations are now part of a larger whole, which becomes increasingly complex and comprehensive.

We might be tempted to ask, "*Where* is this holistic structure?" That's one of those non-questions we just discussed. Nonsense begins the moment we start to look for the location of a Kubla Khan palace of facts, even one that is under renovation so that the dog can play in the fountain.

Nonetheless, we might insist, "Something *that* important has got to be *somewhere*." As an antidote, we can point out that the structure of facts has a place in reality as a power of persons. That is to say that it's a Person Characteristic. It also has a place in reality as an aspect of behavior. That is to say that it's a parameter of Deliberate Action. But it's *not* part of the real world in any other way. That's why logically, categorically, there are no worlds without real persons and real behavior.

But what about this paper I am writing? Or this cup of coffee I am sipping? They better have a place within my structure of facts, or I won't know how to act effectively in relation to them, i.e., I won't know what they call for by way of behavior. But like all the things that are present to our senses here and now, they are secondary. What is primary is the concept of a totality in which the paper, the cup of coffee, and everything else that we see around us, has a place.

Knowing the Dream World

How do we know a dream? Not surprisingly, the answer depends on the paradigm for knowledge that is taken as fundamental. If divine illumination is the accepted paradigm, then dreams are one of the means by which God speaks to us directly. As expressed in the book of Job, "in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while they slumber on their beds, then He opens the ears of men, and terrifies them with warnings, that He may turn man aside from his deed…" (Job 33:15-17).

If the accepted paradigm is one of observation and evidence, then dreams suffer the same fate as angels and spirits, revelations and God. No empirical support, no status – at least among observers of the 'outer' world.

The idea that we could station ourselves outside the world was applied not only to the 'outer' world, however, but also to the 'inner' world. For observers of the 'inner' world, dreams are a means by which we can understand the dynamics of

the mind. In this model, our knowledge of our dreams is an Observer's knowledge. We 'see' a succession of scenes in our minds, and on awakening, report what we have 'observed'. That report is treated as evidence of what is taking place within us.

When we say that we 'see the dream' in our minds, we are speaking metaphorically. This is easy to see if the metaphor is extended. Nabokov (1981), for example, offers a delightful definition of dreams:

> A dream is a show – a theatrical piece staged within the brain in a subdued light before a somewhat muddleheaded audience. The show is generally a very mediocre one, carelessly performed, with amateur actors and haphazard props and a wobbly backdrop… (p. 176).

In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud (1900/1961) reassures us that: "No matter what impulses from the normally inhibited *Ucs.* may prance upon the stage, we need feel no concern; they remain harmless, since they are unable to set in motion the motor apparatus by which alone they might modify the external world" (p. 568).

Ryle (1949) has shown that talking about dreams in this way is nonsense. It involves a fundamental category mistake. The mind is not a place, "not even a metaphorical 'place'" (p. 51). Just as there is no Kubla Khan palace of facts in the mind, there is no mental stage where unruly impulses and amateur actors prance upon "the ghostly boards" (p. 64). My dreams "are not the sorts of things of which it makes sense to say that they are witnessed or unwitnessed at all, even by me…" (p. 205).

"But doesn't it seem like we're watching a movie when we dream?" Simply think of the last time that you dreamt that you were swimming in the high seas, or thrusting a spade in spring soil, or galloping through waves of grass, or making love. I bet it didn't seem like you were watching a movie.

What is the alternative to talking about dreams as 'inner' observables? In the behavioral paradigm, we know our dreams as their *authors*. Just as we *produce* our behaviors, we *create* our dreams. We start with a dramaturgical pattern, cast charactors for the parts, and enact the pattern.

Because we're not engaging in overt behavior when we're dreaming, we're free of the usual reality constraints on casting and implementation. We can cast as arbitrarily as Don Quixote, and have windmills for giants, barbers' basins for helmets, trollops for ladies, etc. As a result, the dream may not appear to make sense on awakening. To interpret it, we drop the casting and implementation details, and look for the (dramaturgical) pattern that we had in mind (cf. Roberts, 1985, 1998; Ossorio, 2010).

What we enact in the dream, whether successful or not, may make a difference in how we take the world to be. A dream may "turn us aside" from a deed that we had been pursuing as a viable option, or it may pave the way for a behavior that we had mistakenly codified as an impossibility. What can be changed – or affirmed – by a dream is our fundamental understanding of the world, i.e., our codification

of our possibilities and impossibilities.

Imagine in the Saga of the Black Lab if our young heroine had stood, alone and frozen, merely watching the other kids. But that night in a dream, she bravely approached a giant beast, who bestowed upon her a hug with its huge paws. The dream would be sufficient to mark a change in her world, because it affirms that she could relate to the black Lab in a new way.

Whether a change occurs in an actual situation or in a dream, the behavioral follow-through is what serves as evidence that it has taken place. For a moment, you can almost hear the sigh of relief: "Ahhhh… evidence." And then the recoil: "Wait a minute. Are you saying that the subsequent behavior is *evidence* that a hypothetical 'inner' change occurred in a dream?"

We're not talking about hypothetical 'inner' changes. What we're talking about is behavior. Any behavior that calls for knowledge that a person doesn't have is *not* possible for that person. But if a person acquires the requisite knowledge, i.e., the relevant facts are now available to him as part of the structure of facts and concepts that he has the ability to act on, then (tautologically) he can engage in the range of behaviors that call for that knowledge, given the relevant motivation and motivational priority. These are logical connections, not hypothetical ones.

Whether or not a dream in fact makes a difference to a person is a matter of choice and sensitivity, not necessity. A person always has the option to reject the reality of a dream: "It was only a dream." "I'd never really do that." "It must have been the anchovies." And of course a person may be troubled by a dream, but be unable to interpret it.

Dream Interpretation

There is a long tradition in dream interpretation, dating back to antiquity, of dividing a dream into objects, looking at the meaning of each of the individual objects, and then putting the pieces together to form an interpretation. For example, in the dream of Descartes discussed below, there is a "melon from a foreign land". It is an object that has long tantalized interpreters of the dream, and much has been written about its possible sexual, archetypal, and historical significance, e.g., Franz (1970/1998), Cole (1992), Rodis-Lewis (1998). In the traditional approach, the meaning of the melon is essential for an interpretation.

In contrast, in the behavioral model, the dream world divides into situations, not things (*pace* Wittgenstein). The emphasis is on the behavioral patterns that are occurring (or not occurring) in the circumstances portrayed in the dream, and pattern recognition is essential for interpretation. The melon is a detail that can be dropped.

In seeing patterns, we draw on the forms of representation codified in the Person Concept, e.g., the emotion formulas (Ossorio, 2006b), all of the images and heuristics in *Clinical Topics* (Ossorio, 1976/2013), the maxims in *Place* (Ossorio, 1982/1998), and so forth. Mastery of these forms give us the conceptual and technical resources to recognize a wide range of human patterns and dilemmas in our lives and in our dreams.

The Invitation

From the time he was 10 years old, René Descartes attended a Jesuit college that allowed students only minimal contact with the outside world. After graduation at age 18, he went on to earn a law degree. But instead of practicing law, he joined the army as a gentleman soldier. He was returning from leave when "the onset of winter detained him in quarters where, finding no conversation to divert him and fortunately having no cares or passions to trouble him, he stayed all day shut up alone in a stove-heated room where he was completely free to converse with himself about his own thoughts" (Descartes, 1637/1985, p. 116).

There he had the following dream.[2]

> Some ghosts presented themselves to him and so frightened him that, believing he was walking in the streets, he had to lean to his left side in order to be able to advance to the place where he wanted to go, because he felt a great weakness on his right side, such that he could not hold himself upright. Being ashamed to walk in this way, he made an effort to straighten up, but he felt an impetuous wind, which carrying him off in a sort of a whirlwind, made him make 3-4 turns on his left foot. Even that wasn't what frightened him most. The difficulty of having to drag himself made him believe that he'd fall at each step.
>
> Having noticed a school open on his route, he entered to find a retreat and a remedy for his trouble. He tried to reach the Church of the school, where his first thought was to go to make his prayer, but having noticed that he had passed an acquaintance without acknowledging him, he wanted to turn back in his steps in order to treat him with civility.
>
> He was violently pushed back by the wind blowing against the Church. At the same time he saw in the middle of the school courtyard another person who called him by name in terms that were civil and obliging and told him that, if he wanted to go with him to find Monsieur N., he had something to give him. Descartes imagined that it was a melon from a foreign land.
>
> What surprised him even more was to see that those who were gathering around that person in order to foster him were upright and firm on their feet, although he was still crooked and wobbly on the very same terrain. The wind, which had thought to tumble him several times, was now much diminished.

The dream divides naturally into four situations, corresponding to the four paragraphs used above.

Situation 1: It's a dangerous world.

In the first paragraph/situation, Descartes is beset by forces outside of his control: ghosts present themselves, and a whirlwind makes him go round in circles. Weak from fear, he cannot hold himself upright. He is afraid of falling at every step.

Situation 2: Something counts more than safety.

The second situation offers protection from the ghosts and shelter from the wind. But something counts more with Descartes than sanctuary. (Cf. "A person will not choose less behavior potential over more.")

Situation 3: A new possibility presents itself.

The forces outside of his control are now stronger — a violent wind pushes him back. At the same time, a man appears and invites him to go with him to receive a gift.[3] Descartes considers the offer.

Situation 4: The world is different from what I had taken it to be.

People gather around the inviter to support him. They stand without difficulty, while Descartes is wobbly. He is surprised that the world is different for them, but it is now different for him, too. The forces outside of his control have diminished.

The Inviter

In appreciating the significance of the dream, it may be helpful to see the pattern implemented with different details. Imagine, for example, that someone grew up in a tough, inner city neighborhood, and heard all his life about the dangers of dealing with gangs. Now he is on his own, and has the following dream:

> As he is walking in the street, some gang members approach him. He is so frightened that he is barely able to keep walking. He reaches a place that offers protection, but wants to take care of something else. Two thugs block his path. At the same time, a smooth talker addresses him by name, promising that if he goes with him, there will be something in it for him. There are people gathering around the smooth talker. They are not afraid. He wakes up.

If we drop the details of this "dream", we find that the dreamer is portraying three possibilities for behavior: (1) to operate from fear, (2) to retreat to a safe place, or (3) to accept an invitation from a smooth talker. Who is the smooth talker? For someone who knows about inner city gangs, there is no question about who he is. If the dreamer has been approached by gang members, and then stopped by two thugs on the street, the inviter is a spokesman for a gang.

We see these same possibilities in the dream of Descartes:

- Weak and afraid, he can struggle against malevolent ghosts and violent winds.
- He can retreat to familiar ground, seeking sanctuary in the Church.
- He can accept the invitation to go along with the man in the courtyard.

Who is the man in the courtyard? For someone who knows about evil spirits and evil winds, there is no question. He is an agent of the Devil.

That is exactly how Descartes experienced it. He reported that when he woke up, he was afraid that the dream was "the operation of some evil genie who would have liked to seduce him". He made his prayer to God for "protection against the bad effects of the dream", and lay awake for almost two hours, thinking about good

and evil. He finally fell back to sleep, but woke up almost immediately with an ocular migraine (Descartes, 1691/1965).

In 1619, there was nothing unusual about Descartes dreaming/thinking he had received a proposition from the Devil. As everyone knew then, the Devil did that kind of thing. And there was nothing unusual about Descartes being afraid and praying for protection. The Devil exacted a high price from those who accepted his offers. He possessed bodies, made them feverish, swollen, convulsive, and ultimately, took the immortal souls of his victims.

What *is* extraordinary is the possibility that Descartes affirms in the final situation of his dream — some people interact with the Devil without fear. If some people can gather around the Devil and be "firm and upright", maybe Descartes can, too. *Maybe dealing with the Devil is not dangerous*. Considering that possibility is what changes Descartes's world.

A Genie of Uncertain Status

Having seen the pattern of the dream, the next step is to ask, "How does this pattern apply to Descartes's actual life situation?"

According to Descartes (1637/1985), when he spent the day of the dream thinking, one of the things he thought about was the uncertainty of knowledge. He had seen the diversity of customs of men, and the diversity of opinions of philosophers, and concluded that much of what we take to be true is a matter of "custom and example, rather than any certain knowledge" (p. 119). Not wanting to live his life relying upon principles he had accepted without question in his youth, he resolved to examine all the opinions he had previously accepted as true, and to uproot from his mind all those that were false.

We could take his dream as an instance of acting on that resolution. In his youth, he would certainly have taken it on faith that the Devil was dangerous. All of the trusted sources in his world would have affirmed that fact. But did he have evidence of the Devil's dangerousness? Or was it just customary to avoid him?

If we understand the dream in that context, Descartes's reaction on awakening gives us an indication of the courage he brought to his chosen task. It was not an idle intellectual exercise to question the givens of his world. It was a fear-inspiring, migraine-inducing project.

There is an additional fact about Descartes's life situation that is worth noting. At the end of his account of the dream, Descartes (1691/1965) adds that "the Genie who excited in him the enthusiasm from which he had felt his brain heated up for several days, predicted to him these dreams before he went to bed. The human spirit had absolutely no role in it."

What are we to make of this Genie, who has been an embarrassment to Cartesian scholars for centuries? In the past century, he has been treated as an hallucination of the sane (Medlicott, 1958, p. 666), taken as evidence of a nervous breakdown (Gaukroger, 1995, pp. 109-110), dismissed as difficult to understand (Rodis-Lewis, 1998, p. 43), and invoked to discredit Descartes (Maritain, 1946). Maritain, a French Catholic philosopher, scoffed: "The historians of rationalism

ought to settle for us once and for all, the identity of this Genius. Could it be by any chance, cousin to the *Mischievous Genius of the Meditations*?" (p. 11).

We can understand him as a "companion of uncertain status" (Roberts, 1991, 2006). The conditions were ideal for having such a companion. Descartes was not living in the mechanistic, materialistic real world that evolved from his philosophy. Instead, there was cultural support in the early 17th century for angels and demons, as well as social practices for dealing with them. Moreover, Descartes had a place in his world for someone who would inspire him, a place that was empty after a serious quarrel with his mentor (Curley, 2006, p. 722). Like Carl Jung after his break with Freud, Descartes may have found that having a fellow 'genius' to talk with — even one whose status was uncertain — represented a significant gain in behavioral potential.[4]

If such a companion "presented himself" in his winter quarters, Descartes would have needed to decide how to treat him. Was it dangerous to interact with him? Could he hold his own with him? What status should he give him? His dream may have been responsive to these sorts of questions.

If we treat the Genie as a companion of uncertain status, then we can respond to Maritain's challenge, once and for all. The Genie of the stove-heated room is *not* a cousin of the Evil Demon of the *Meditations*. He is a brother. Both are the progeny of a singular thinker who changed our world.

Of course, in 1619, Descartes did not see the Genie — or his dream — as his own creation. He understood them in light of the divine illumination model. But not long after, he examined and rejected that model. As one of his biographers notes, "A few years later, once he had developed his critical mind, he returned to the interpretation of dreams, seeing them as a function of pure coincidence...It was the superstitious who judged there was something divine about them" (Rodis-Lewis, 1998, p. 43).

The Prayer Rug

Almost three hundred years after the birth of Descartes, Ludwig Wittgenstein was born to a wealthy Viennese family. With the resources and freedom to pursue any vocation he wanted, he first studied engineering, then aeronautics, and then the philosophy of mathematics. On the advice of Gottlob Frege, the great German logician and mathematician, he went to Cambridge in 1911 to work with Bertrand Russell, who gave him a place as a protégé and collaborator.

Wittgenstein returned to Austria at the start of World War I and served with distinction in the Austrian Army. While on extended leave from the army, he completed the manuscript for the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. It was dedicated to Frege and Russell, but neither man understood the work. Four publishers rejected it. Unable to get it published unless he included a misleading introduction by Russell, Wittgenstein became suicidally depressed (Monk, 1990, p. 184).

Later that year, he had the following dream.[5]

> I was a priest. In the front hall of my house there was an altar; to the right of the altar a stairway led off. It was a grand stairway

> carpeted in red, rather like that at the Alleegasse [the family home]. At the foot of the altar, and partly covering it, was an oriental carpet. And certain other religious objects and regalia were placed on and beside the altar. One of these was a rod of precious metal. But a theft had occurred. A thief entered from the left and stole the rod. This had to be reported to the police, who sent a representative who wanted a description of the rod. For instance, of what sort of metal was it made? I could not say; I could not even say whether it was of silver or of gold. The police officer questioned whether the rod had ever existed in the first place.
>
> I then began to examine the other parts and fittings of the altar and noticed that the carpet was a prayer rug. My eyes began to focus on the border of the rug. The border was lighter in colour than the beautiful centre. In a curious way it seemed to be faded. It was, nonetheless, still strong and firm. (Monk, 1990, p. 199)

The dream divides naturally into three situations, corresponding to the three paragraphs above.

Situation 1: "This is the cat that ate the mouse that ate the cheese..."

There is no action in the first paragraph of the dream. Instead, Wittgenstein carefully and precisely establishes the context of the rod and the carpet. With apologies to Mother Goose, we can say that this is the rod that's part of the altar that's beside the grand stairway that's in the front hallway that's in the house where Ludwig lives. It's the same for the carpet: this is the carpet that's part of the altar that's beside the grand stairway...

Situation 2: Taken out of context, something may be anything, or nothing.

A rod has been stolen — separated — from that setting. Wittgenstein is unable to say anything about it, and the police officer questions whether it ever existed. The rod could be anything, or nothing.

Situation 3: Seen in context, something has integrity and significance.

Wittgenstein examines the carpet in its place in the whole. He sees its significance — it is a prayer rug — and then focuses on its border, which is faded. He affirms that it is "still strong and firm."

The Human Context

The contrast between the second and third paragraphs of the dream is obvious. If something is taken out of context, like the rod, we cannot say what it is. If something is seen in place, like the carpet, we can appreciate its significance. That is also true of the dream itself. To fully understand it, we need to know the relevant facts of Wittgenstein's life situation. Where was the contrast salient in his life?

An understanding of the structure and treatment of his work, the *Tractatus*, provides an answer. Conant (1991) explains the structure of the book:

> The Preface and the concluding sections of the *Tractatus* form the *frame* of the text. It is there that Wittgenstein provides us with instructions for how to read what we find in the *body* of the text. In the Preface, Wittgenstein tells us that the idea that we can form thoughts about the limits of thought is *simply nonsense*… In the body of the text, we are offered (what appears to be) a doctrine about "the limits of thought"… At the conclusion of the book, we are told that the author's elucidations have succeeded only if we recognize what we find in the body of the text to be (simply) nonsense. (p. 159).

The book's treatment is well-known: Wittgenstein's instructions were simply ignored. They were treated as puzzling, but irrelevant, and the body was confiscated for purposes very different from those Wittgenstein had in mind.

Thus, the *Tractatus* is what had been taken out of context in his life. For Wittgenstein, only in conjunction with his methodology — of using the statements as a stairway to get beyond nonsense — was it a valuable book. Separated from that strategy, it could be anything, or nothing.

If we understand the dream in this way, then the body of the *Tractatus* corresponds to the beautiful centre of the prayer rug, and the preface and concluding sections are the border. They seem to be faded because they have been ignored.

The dream ends with an affirmation of the integrity of the *Tractatus*. The frame may be faded, but, "nonetheless, [it is] still strong and firm." This is also an affirmation of Wittgenstein's way of knowing the world. In contrast to the context-free, person-free model of scientific knowing, his way of knowing involves appreciating the human — and religious — context in which everything has a place.

The hope implicit in the dream — that his book would eventually be seen and treated as what it was — was fulfilled almost 70 years later, when Diamond (1988/1991) published her influential paper, "Throwing away the Ladder: How to Read the *Tractatus*".

Conclusion

How do we know the world? Paradigmatic answers to that question include knowing what God reveals to us through divine illumination, knowing what we discover through scientific observation and evidence, and knowing what it calls for by way of behavior. Those paradigms apply not only to the world as a whole, but also to parts or aspects of it.

Therefore, we can ask, "What is the most fundamental way of knowing baseball?" Ask any baseball player. It's knowing how to play the game.

"What's the most fundamental way of knowing another person?" It's knowing what is called for behaviorally in relation to that person.

"What's the most fundamental way of knowing a revelation?" It's knowing what God has called upon us to do.

"What's the most fundamental way of knowing a dream?" It's appreciating its

behavioral significance for our lives.

Author Note

Debra Biasca, Instructor at the University of Colorado, provided an initial translation of Descartes's dream for me. James F. Gaines, Professor of Modern Foreign Languages at the University of Mary Washington, and an expert in 17th century French literature, helped with specific translation questions.

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Society for Descriptive Psychology annual conference, Golden, Colorado, 2010.

Correspondence concerning the paper should be addressed to Mary K. Roberts, Society for Descriptive Psychology, PO Box 17761, Boulder, CO 80308.

References

Bacon, F. (2001). *The advancement of learning*. New York: The Modern Library. (Original work published 1605).

Bartley, W. (1985). *Wittgenstein* (2nd ed.). LaSalle, IL: Open Court.

Cole, J. (1992). *The Olympian dreams and youthful rebellion of René Descartes*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Conant, J. (1991). The search for logically alien thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege, and the *Tractatus*. *Philosophical Topics*, *20*, 1, 115-180.

Curley, E. M. (2006). René Descartes. In D. Borchert (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2nd ed., Vol. 2, pp. 720-756). Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA.

Descartes, R. (1965). Olympica. In C. Adam & P. Tannery (Eds.), *Œuvres de Descartes* (Vol. 6, pp. 179-188). Paris: Vrin. (Original work published 1691).

Descartes, R. (1985). Discourse on method. In J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, & D. Murdoch (Eds.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (Vol. I). Cam-bridge: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1637). Diamond, C. (1991). Throwing away the ladder: How to read the *Tractatus*. In *The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, philosophy, and the mind*. Cambridge: MIT Press. (Original work published 1988).

Diethelm, O. (1970). The medical teaching of demonology in the 17th and 18th centuries. *Journal of the history of the behavioral sciences*, *6*, 1, 3-15.

Franz, M. von . (1998). The dream of Descartes. In *Dreams*. Boston: Shambhala. (Original work published 1970).

Freud, S. (1961). *The interpretation of dreams* (J. Strachey, Trans.). New York: John Wiley & Sons. (Original work published 1900).

Gaukroger, S. (1995). *Descartes: an intellectual biography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Jung, C. (1965). *Memories, dreams, reflections*. New York:Vintage Books.

Kierkegaard, S. (1955). *On authority and revelation: The book on Adler, or a cycle of ethico-religious essays* (W. Lowrie, Trans.). Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. (Original work published in part in 1849).

Knox, R. (1994). *Enthusiasm: A chapter in the history of religion*. Notre Dame, IN:

University of Notre Dame Press. (Original work published 1950).
Kuhn, T. S. (1996). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (3rd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Maritain, J. (1946). *The dream of Descartes*. London: Editions Poetry.
Medlicott, R. W. (1958). An inquiry into the significance of hallucinations with special reference to their occurrence in the sane. *International Record of Medicine* (*171*, 664-677)
Monk, R. (1990). *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The duty of genius*. New York: Penguin Books.
Nabokov, V. (1981). *Lectures on Russian literature*. New York: Harcourt Inc.
Ossorio, P. G. (1998). *Place. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. III.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press. (Original work published 1982).
Ossorio, P. G. (1998). What there is, how things are. In H. J. Jeffrey and R. M. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 7, pp. 7-32). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.
Ossorio, P. G. (2006a). Out of nowhere. In K. E. Davis & R. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 8, pp. 107-143). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.
Ossorio, P. G. (2006b). *The behavior of persons. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. V.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.
Ossorio, P. G. (2010). Out of nowhere. In K. E. Davis, F. Lubuguin & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 9, pp. 203-230). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.
Ossorio, P. G. (2013). *Clinical topics. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. VII*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press. (Original work published 1976).
Roberts, M. (1985). Worlds and world reconstruction. In K. E. Davis & T. O. Mitchell (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 4, pp. 17-53). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
Roberts, M. (1991). Companions of uncertain status. In M. K. Roberts & R. M. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 6, pp. 37-77). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.
Roberts, M. (1998). Kurosawa's relativity. In H. J. Jeffrey & R. M. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 7, pp. 107-125). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.
Roberts, M. (2006). Ancient companions. In K. E. Davis & R. M. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 8, pp. 247-265). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.
Rodis-Lewis, G. (1998). *Descartes: His life and thought* (J. M. Todd, Trans.). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Ryle, G. (1949). *The concept of mind*. New York: Barnes & Noble.
Spade, P. (2001). Medieval philosophy. In A. Kenny (Ed.), *The Oxford illustrated*

history of western philosophy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *Philosophical investigations: The English text of the third edition* (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Wittgenstein, L. (1999). *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (C. K. Ogden, Trans.). Mineola, NY: Dover Publications. (Original work published 1922).

Footnotes

[1]Behaviors are not only evoked by circumstances; they are also generated by me. See the discussion in Ossorio (2010).

[2]The dream analyzed here is the first of three "dreams" that Descartes recorded from the same night. The second "dream" is recognized today as an ocular migraine, and the third is a long, repetitious dream. In the third, Descartes affirms that he can hold his own with the Devil, without weakness or wobbliness. Originally recorded by Descartes in a notebook, the dreams were preserved by Adrien Bailet, Descartes's first biographer, who reproduced them in his *La vie de monsieur Des-Cartes* (1691). Bailet's account was in turn included by Adam & Tannery (1965) in their definitive *Œuvres de Descartes*. This reference is given as Descartes (1691/1965).

[3]For those who find the melon irresistible, the most sensible comment that I read was from a historian. He noted that a well-known proverb of the time stated, "Friends are like melons. You've got to try fifty before you get a good one." (Cole, 1992, p. 143) If that proverb is relevant, Descartes is saying to himself,"The odds aren't good on this deal," which fits with the overall pattern of diminishing the Devil's status.

[4]Carl Jung had a guiding spirit Philemon, who first appeared to him after his break from Freud in 1913. Jung (1965) states that Philemon "seemed to me quite real, as if he were a living personality. I went walking up and down the garden with him, and .... he conveyed to me many an illuminating idea" (pp. 183-184).

[5]Wittgenstein's dream is quoted by Bartley (1985, p. 29) and reproduced in a footnote by Monk (1990, p. 199).

Suicide and Impossible Worlds

Raymond M. Bergner
Nora Bunford
Department of Psychology
Illinois State University

Abstract

This chapter has two purposes. The first is to provide an updated, expanded, and clarified discussion of the Descriptive Psychological concept of a person's "world." The second is to illustrate worlds thinking by using it to analyze five clinical cases involving suicidal individuals.

Keywords: worlds, suicide, impossible worlds, the unthinkable

> "Don't they know it's the end of the world,
> It ended when you said goodbye."
> --Song lyric, Skeeter Davis, 1962.

The world of the suicidal individual is one that borders on being an impossible one. In this world, the individual is typically experiencing frustrated psychological needs, is in excruciating psychological pain, feels hopeless, and cannot see any solution other than to end his or her life (Shneidman, 1984, 1998). In this chapter, we present further ways of understanding this most painful and potentially lethal state by discussing its intimate connections with the suicidal person's current *world*. In doing so, we show how exploring the suicidal state from this perspective enhances our options as psychotherapists attempting to understand and to deal effectively with our suicidal clients.

In the chapter, we (a) present an updated discussion of the Descriptive Psychological conception of a person's "world"; (b) clarify the differences between the worlds point of view and contemporary cognitive ones; and (c) present five cases of suicidal individuals, each accompanied by an analysis of their situation from a worlds point of view. The formulations of "world" and "impossible world" are taken from the original work of Peter Ossorio (1997, 2006; see also Roberts, 1985; Jeffrey, 1998; Bergner, 2006).

Worlds and How They Work

A person's "world", as the term is intended here, is a totality. It is, with respect to what this individual takes to be the case, everything that is actually, or could possibly, be the case (Ossorio, 2006; Roberts, 1985; Jeffrey, 1998; Bergner, 2006). It is the state of affairs that includes all other states of affairs--that includes all actual and possible objects, processes, events, and states of affairs. This world, considered from the present (actor's) perspective, is not merely a collection of detachedly observed facts, but is the total behavioral field within which each person conducts his or her life.

In relating the notion of worlds and how they work, a simple heuristic may be helpful in clarifying what is in the end a complicated matter. Consider a competent chess player, Jack, who at the invitation of his boss, George, is playing a game of chess with him. Jack's world (strictly speaking, a part of his total world which for purposes of clarity and manageability we shall let stand proxy for his total world)--what he takes to be the case (knows or believes) in his field of action--consists in such things as the following: that there is…a chess board in front of him…a set of chess pieces arrayed in a certain configuration…an opponent sitting in the opposite chair…and the set of rules and objectives according to which the game is played. In Jack's particular circumstances, he knows further…that his opponent, George, is also his boss...that George cannot stand to lose and in the past has become excessively angry and vindictive towards opponents who have defeated him…that if he (Jack) were to lose his job, he would have an extremely difficult time in the current economic environment finding another of the same quality… that his personal savings are too meager to support his family for very long if he lost his job…that, should he choose to lose deliberately, he must disguise this fact from George…and that his wife would be extremely upset with him if he defeated the boss and lost his job. We could go on but the point is made. Jack's world, his field of action, is an interrelated set of facts and beliefs that includes but extends well beyond the confines both of his current physical ("stimulus") situation and of his enduring "schemas" or "cognitive structures." In his current situation, most relevantly, this field includes what he takes to be the case about the game of chess, the personal characteristics of his opponent, the power relationship that exists between them, the possibility of losing his job, the consequences of such a loss for himself and his family, the current economic scene and job market, the option of losing on purpose, and more. This field, it may be noted, contains both actualities (e.g., chess pieces, the boss, the ongoing game) and possibilities (e.g., of losing his job, of creating a family crisis, of deliberately losing the game). Finally, consider the changes in Jack's field of action--his movement to different relevant parts of his highly complex total world--when later in the day he considers the purchase of a large number of shares in an Asian company for his firm, writes a letter to his congressman about health care, and coaches his daughter's soccer team.

Worlds are Unities

A person's world is not a random accumulation of facts but is a unity

(Ossorio, 1998). Thus, for example, Jack knows that a "rook" is a chess piece with a certain characteristic shape and a certain set of move and capture eligibilities. Related to this, he knows (a) its place within the much larger context of the game of chess, (b) that chess is but one of many games, (c) that games are but one of many human social practices along with conversing, negotiating differences, making love, teaching lessons, creating art, and countless others, and (d) that these social practices are largely played out within social institutions such as marriage, family, church, workplace, friendship network, and so forth. From these top-down levels of social practice and institution, he could, if need be, draw connections downward to countless other discrete states of affairs. (NB: To say that this world is a unity is not to say that it is totally self-consistent and non-contradictory, but only that everything within it is related to everything else).

As this characterization suggests, it would be extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, to give a complete description of any person's total world. Fortunately, as clinicians (and as persons living our lives in general), we do not need to do so, and our purposes on any given occasion are well served by capturing the relevant critical parts of a person's world. Thus, a client comes to us and we see that many of her problems center around an implicit understanding of human relations as contests, of herself as one of the contestants, and a consequent need always to best others and to be number one; we see further that acting in this world causes her many problems in her relationships. Yet another comes to us and informs us in so many words that "it's a jungle out there; it's eat or be eaten; you have to get them before they get you, and I intend to be the predator, not the prey"; again, we see how acting within this world creates significant problems for this individual.

Discrete facts are always seen within a world context (Jeffrey, 1998; Ossorio, 1998). The election outcome is seen, depending on the perceiver's world, as marking a "great triumph for my party and the ushering in of a better period for the country," "a devastating defeat for my party," "an insignificant event that makes no real difference in my life," and in many other ways. A young man's attentions, within one of our client's world of self-attributed ugliness, badness, and overall ineligibility for another's love, are seen as nothing more than the congenial behavior of "a nice guy"; for her, they are not conceivably indicative of his having any romantic interest in her.

Worlds are Constructed

Every world is somebody's world. While we can raise the notion of some prelinguistic world that exists independently of any person and any person's concepts, knowledge, or consciousness – call it a Kantian "noumenal world" – this can never be more than a content-free, placeholder notion. There is simply nothing that we could know or say about such a world. It's an empty category, an empty set. That being the case, every real world is of necessity somebody's world. Further, for many obvious reasons, the worlds of any two persons can never be the same (Roberts, 1985). First of all, no one person could acquire all the facts there are, and so different persons must of necessity acquire different sets of such facts. Second, people

are sometimes mistaken in what they take to be the case, thus creating a disjunction between their beliefs and those of other persons who are not similarly mistaken. Third, some people are capable of observing certain facts that other persons cannot (e.g., that the piano is out of tune or that there is tension between the two friends). Fourth and finally here (though much more could be said), it is a commonplace that people interpret phenomena differently and as a consequence treat the world differently. One treats the remark as a joke, another as an insult. One treats golf as a vital and meaningful human activity, another as a sterile one where supposedly mature adults become obsessed with putting little white balls into holes in the ground. One treats life itself as a competition for survival of the fittest, another as the realization of a divine plan for humankind, and yet another as a "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." In each case, the world *is* a different place for the persons in question, and it is in this sense that there is a point to saying that each of us "constructs" our worlds.

"You Can't Construct Just Any Old World"

There are limitations on our world constructions. I might, for example, believe and claim that "I can fly unaided," or "I know that that famous movie star is in love with me," or "I can use this rock as a calculator." However, I will prove unable to act on these claims successfully. I cannot fly unaided, presume successfully to the privileges of the movie star's beloved, or perform arithmetic operations on my rock. Thus, in the words of Ossorio, "you can't construct just any old world and get away with it." While the real world is open to numerous apt or correct descriptions, and there is no uniquely correct description of any of its elements, there are *reality constraints*. Those who are unable to heed these constraints are traditionally said to have "lost contact with reality."

Self-concept

Persons take it that they have a certain *status* in the world; i.e., a certain place or position in the total scheme of things. This self-in-world conception, their *self-concept*, codifies their understanding of how they can and cannot behave in the world (Ossorio, 1978, 1998; Bergner & Holmes, 2000). It codifies, in Roberts' (1985) terms, their unquestioned behavioral "givens" (e.g., "it's just a given that a person like me could never be accepted by a person like her") and "options" (e.g., "my options or possibilities in this world all lie within the domain of relating to other losers like me"). Writ large, it codifies their behavioral possibilities and nonpossibilities in their worlds as they conceive them.

In this connection, one can think of certain clinically relevant worlds and their behavioral upshots. For example (again focussing only on key elements of these persons' worlds), a typical narcissistic world might be characterized as follows: "I am a unique and special person; I am superior to, unlike, and set apart from the common run of ordinary people; therefore I am entitled to, and insist upon, special treatment from them" (Kernberg, 1975; Millon & Davis, 2000). One version of a psychopathic world may be expressed as: "The world is composed of two kinds of people, cons and suckers; either you are a gullible, weak, exploitable

sucker and get used and taken in this world, or you are a knowing, superior con who understands the situation and how to exploit it; either you are the con or you are the sucker; I'm the con" (Wishnie, 1977; Millon & Davis, 2000). The Horneyan world of the person beset with "basic anxiety" can be expressed in Horney's own apt phraseology: "I am 'isolated and helpless in a potentially hostile world' and the option I have chosen in life is to 'move towards others' by seeking the protection of stronger and more adequate individuals" (1945, p. 41).

Change in World = Personality Change

Summing up what has been said to this point, every person has a world, appraises his or her status (position) in that world, and behaves accordingly. Since worlds tend to persist--one does not as a rule see the world as a dangerous one today and a safe one tomorrow, or see oneself as alone and helpless today but loved and powerful tomorrow--a person will tend to behave accordingly *on an enduring basis*. He or she, for example, seeing the world as a dangerous place, withdraws, takes few chances, and engages in all manner of security operations. Observing these behavioral consistencies, others (as well as the individual himself or herself) generate trait and style descriptions of this person. He or she is said to be "anxious," "cautious," and/or "timid." Further, this individual exhibits, not just these traits and styles, but a broader set. He or she is also, for example, generous, reserved, sensitive, and considerate. It is this broader set of traits and styles that constitutes what we refer to as his or her "personality" (cf. Cattell, 1990).

Personality thus is largely (though not completely) a matter of persons seeing the world in a certain way on an enduring basis, and behaving accordingly. Personality *change*, then, occurs in connection with significant changes in the way the person sees the world. Persons living and acting in an eat-or-be-eaten world, or a dangerous world, or a contest world, may have experiences that cause radical revisions in their world, and as a result come to act in radically different ways. Others, observing these changes, remark that they have "changed personalities" or that they are "changed persons."

Change in World = Change in Consciousness

A person's consciousness is always "consciousness *as*" (Jeffrey, 1998; Putman, 1998). That is to say, the world is always experienced from some status or position in the world, and this position importantly determines the nature of the experience. The visitor to a foreign country has a very different experience--a very different consciousness--depending on whether he or she is there as a tourist, a missionary, or a spy; he or she experiences *as* a tourist, *as* a missionary, or *as* a spy. Two observers of the winning goal in an athletic competition, one an ardent fan of the victorious team and the other of the losing team, have very different experiences of that single event, even if they are seated next to each other such that the physical stimuli impinging upon them are virtually identical; the one experiences the proverbial "thrill of victory," the other the "agony of defeat." Thus, the clinician who can bring about important changes in a person's world will correspondingly bring about changes in that person's very consciousness.

Accommodative and Non-Accommodative Worlds

An important dimension of persons' worlds is the degree to which they can accommodate new facts and experiences. For example, strongly religious individuals will differ in the degree to which they can accommodate evolutionary theory into their worlds. Some have religious outlooks that can easily accommodate the belief that human beings evolved from infrahuman species. Others, however, do not. For them, the acceptance of evolution as historical fact would destroy a critical linchpin in the entire structure of their beliefs and shake their worlds to their foundations. For such persons, evolutionary theory constitutes the dangerously unaccommodatable and unthinkable.

Clinically, an especially important place where this feature of worlds comes into play is in cases where persons undergo traumatic experiences such as hurricanes, combat situations, assaults, accidents, or the sudden deaths of loved ones. For whom in general would such events prove most unaccommodatable? On the present account, it would be anyone for whom the particulars of the traumatic event, like those in the religious example above, would conflict with the particulars of their worlds in such a way as to render the latter highly unlivable--in effect, a world in which they cannot see how they can go on (Roberts, 1985; Bergner, 2006, 2009). For example, since it is so often at issue in cases of trauma, consider the matter of death itself. For some persons, death represents the unthinkable and unfaceable. For others, it does not. The ways in which different persons might have evolved these different worlds can be quite various. For example, one individual as a child might have been shielded in a radical way from death. When there was a death in the family, she was not allowed to go to the funeral for fear it would be too much for her; her family never talked openly about this or any other death; and she never had the experience of witnessing her parents facing death, going through their periods of mourning, and moving on with life. Death, treated as an unspeakable state of affairs, and one that certainly she as an individual could not handle, became in this way an unthinkable in her world. For another child, the treatment of this matter may have been just the opposite, and she was able to emerge from childhood with a conception of death as a part of life--a sad one to be sure, but one that can be faced squarely, mourned, and ultimately resolved, enabling her to move on and have a full life. On the present view, then, a primary key to understanding why some persons are far more vulnerable than others to certain life events lies in whether or not that individual's world can or cannot accommodate these events.

Problematic Worlds and Impossible Worlds

Above, the connection was drawn between a person's world, including his or her conception of the place of self within that world, and that person's behavior potential. A person's world may be said to be "problematic" when it unnecessarily limits that person's ability to behave. Our Horneyan individual, alone and helpless in a potentially hostile world, is unable to go out into that world and participate fully, but feels compelled to withdraw to a position of safety from emotional and physical dangers. A paranoid individual, perceiving self-directed conspiracies

and machinations all about, is unable to enter into trusting relationships and feels compelled to live life as a kind of isolated, secretive "fugitive" (Cummings, 1970).

The extreme case of a problematic world may be termed an "impossible world." Such a world is one that renders behavior impossible, that reduces the person's behavior potential to zero or virtually zero. While no one is able to see the world as completely impossible, persons approaching this limitation are immobilized by their current formulation of self's position in the world. Returning again to Jack, our chess player, we can think by way of analogy of him coming to a place in a regular game where he sees that his board position has become impossible; i.e., there is no way to go on.

A Cognitive Approach?

Is this "just another cognitive theory?" Just "old wine in new bottles?" When many people hear about the worlds point of view, their first reaction is that it represents yet another cognitive theory--yet another expression of the cognitive aspect of cognitive-behavioral theory--though perhaps one that is addressing matters on a far broader scale than others. Such a conclusion is unfounded, however, for a number of reasons.

First, in contrast with many traditional cognitive approaches (e.g., Beck, 1976; Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979; Beck & Weishaar, 2008; Ellis, 1962, 2008), the concept of world as used here includes both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects. With respect to the non-cognitive, a person's world includes actual objects, processes, events, and states of affairs--actual people (including oneself), chess games, houses, marital relationships, jobs, debts, presidential elections, storms, and so forth. Our use of the term in this respect is consistent with ordinary usage wherein people say such things as "having my baby changed my whole world," "music is an important part of my world," or "when my wife died, it felt like the end of my world." In such assertions, they are referring to actual persons and states of affairs, and not to their cognitive representations of these.

Second, with respect to the more cognitive aspects of worlds, every person has a *formulation,* or *conception,* of his or her world. This includes a formulation of those people, those relationships, those finances, those events, that president, etc., and of the literally countless relationships between all of these. Further, it includes formulations both of what is the case now and what could or might be the case in the future. Most importantly in connection with suicide, it contains *a formulation of one's possibilities and non-possibilities*. In the psychological literature, this cognitive aspect of the concept of world is most reminiscent of, though not the same as, Lewin's (1936) notion of "the self within the life space." With respect to contemporary cognitive approaches such as those of Beck (Beck & Weishaar, 2008) and Ellis (2008), virtually all of these focus on discrete, limited "cognitive structures" such as beliefs that "I am unlovable" or that "To be okay, I must be approved by all people at all times." None to our knowledge contain concepts pertaining to cognitive structures with the kind of scope or comprehensiveness that worlds possess.

A third difference between the present view and prominent cognitive views lies in the interconnectedness of all of the elements in a person's world. A world is a system wherein, as noted previously, every element is related to every other element, and one in which a change in one element can therefore bring about change in others--and even in one's whole world (cf. Quine, 1951). This is most obvious in cases where some event occurs that radically alters (and sometimes "shatters") a person's world: an individual learns that her child has been killed in an automobile crash, that his trusted spouse has been carrying on a long term affair and wants a divorce, or that her country has for the first time been successfully and devastatingly attacked by terrorists. Such events may not only force all other previously salient elements to the periphery of a person's world, but may cause him or her to consider new views of the whole world such as those pertaining to its fundamental benignness, safety, predictability, and controllability.

A fourth difference, and the last that will be noted here, is that the worlds perspective provides formal access to cases where there is nothing wrong or "maladaptive," in a person's thinking. Cases in which a mother loses a child, a couple suffers a divorce, or a breadwinner loses a job typically entail severe changes to a person's world. While persons suffering such shocks may think irrationally or otherwise maladaptively about them, they also might not. In the latter case, cognitive restructuring is irrelevant, but interventions to reconstruct and restore a viable world are not. In the former case, cognitive restructuring will be apropos, but often insufficient to the full business of restoring a viable world. In both cases, the damage extends beyond maladaptive thinking: the child, the spouse, the job are really gone!

Further differences will be noted as we go forward. Many of these pertain to what it buys us to think in terms of worlds; i.e., to its ability to expand our understandings and our range of effective interventions.

World Reconstruction Therapy with Suicidal Individuals

"Worlds are not once and forever things" (Roberts, 1985, p. 21). Constructed in the first place by the individual, they may be reconstructed. In world reconstruction-focused psychotherapy, the task of the therapist is threefold. It is, first of all, to assess the client's world, conceived here as coming to an understanding, both empathic and objective, of this world and of the client's perceived position in it. Secondly, it is to figure out why and in what respects this world is problematic or virtually impossible for the client. Third, and most critically, it is to help the client to *reconstruct* his or her world in such a way that it is no longer problematic or impossible (Roberts, 1985; Bergner, 2006). With respect to suicidal clients, therapy is fundamentally about having a conversation for change, and creating or advocating other relevant experiences, that enable clients to open up their closed worlds and to reconstruct new and more viable ones in which their previously frustrated needs can be met, their level of psychological pain greatly reduced, their hopelessness diminished, and their temptation to commit suicide eliminated.

In this section, we (a) describe the implications of the therapist's entry

into the client's world; and (b) present five cases of suicidal individuals, each accompanied by an analysis of their situation from a worlds point of view.

New Element in Client's World: the Therapist

From the first moment of therapy with a competent, dedicated therapist, the suicidal client's world is importantly changed. There is a new person in it, the therapist, and this person is there as an ally in their struggles. In a worlds-based therapy, this person will conduct him- or herself in the following manner. He or she will assign certain statuses to the client a priori, and treat the client accordingly (Bergner & Staggs, 1987, 1991; Bergner, 2007). These statuses are: one who is (a) acceptable (cf. Rogers, 1951), (b) sense-making, (c) possessed of personal agency, (d) entitled to have his or her interests come first in this relationship, (e) significant, (f) entitled to the benefit of the doubt (given at least equally realistic but differentially degrading readings of reality), and (g) possessor of strengths and resources (cf. O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 2003). In effect, the therapist's stance toward the client is: "This is who you are and I will treat you accordingly; otherwise expressed, you are ineligible to make no sense, to be a non-agent, to be insignificant, to be unacceptable, etc." Further, the worlds therapist, concerned to be a credible and effective status assigner and co-problem solver in the client's world, conducts him- or herself in such a way as to be, and to be seen by the client as being, honest, competent, and his or her own person. When all goes well, and suicidal clients accept the statuses they have been assigned, they find themselves in a new two-person community where they are regarded in this status-enhancing manner by a respected and credible other. The immediate effect of this change is to expand the client's behavior potential and thereby to render his or her world more viable. A detailed description of this approach to the therapeutic relationship may be found in Bergner & Staggs (1987, 1991) and in Bergner (2007).

Case Illustration #1: Suicide and PTSD

In recent years, a substantial body of research has revealed a high incidence of suicide among those with severe cases of post-traumatic stress disorder (Mazza, 2000; Violanti, 2004). The currently dominant theory is that such disorders are due to stored but insufficiently processed memory structures in the brain pertaining to the traumatic event(s) (Foa & Kozac, 1986; Foa & Jaycox, 1999; Shapiro & Maxfield, 2002). However, this theory has difficulties accounting for a number of well-established facts, perhaps most notably the fact that in many cases of PTSD there are no such memories (e.g., cases of rape where the victim was rendered unconscious with date rape drugs, or of events that the person did not personally witness such as the murder or suicide of a loved one) (Bergner, 2009). The worlds view provides an alternative account of PTSD that does not encounter these problems.

"Jen," a 45 year old, single female, suffered long term excruciating post-traumatic symptoms dating back to her adolescence. At that time, she had had an extremely hateful, violence-ridden relationship with her older brother, including harrowing episodes in which he had attempted to cripple and possibly even to kill her. Fearing for her life, her parents in astonishing oblivion to what was going on under

their own roof, she left home at the age of 16 and lived alternately on the streets and in the homes of friends. Seen decades later, she reported numerous dreams and occasional flashbacks in which she again experienced her brother's terrifying attacks. So chronically tormented was her existence that she had frequently over the years strongly considered suicide as the only possible way to achieve surcease from her pain.

Case analysis. From a worlds point of view, what occurs at the outset of PTSD, whether this occurs early (as in Jen's case) or later in life, is that a traumatic event, or series of events, ushers the person into a new world (Bergner, 2006, 2009). Typically (but not always), the individual has to that point in his or her life inhabited a world marked for the most part by characteristics of safety, predictability, and controllability. In this world, the possibility of such things as being subjected to brutal sexual or physical assault, seeing a close friend gruesomely shot to death, or having flood waters rush in upon one seemed remote. The traumatic event(s), however, radically transforms this world. Like the announcement of imminent atomic holocaust, it takes over the person's whole world and thrusts other parts of that world to the periphery. This transformed world, in contrast with the old one, is precisely unsafe, unpredictable, and uncontrollable. The individual has drawn the "lesson" from the traumatic events that catastrophic things *can* happen to him or her, and that when they do, there may be no way to see them coming in time, and no way to master or prevail over their overwhelming power. Further, the lesson is that this is the way the world *is*, not was for a now past, brief, anomalous moment in time. The sense is not of something past, but of something present – a repetition of the cataclysmic event represents an ever present danger.

In this new and transformed world, the classical symptoms and intense suffering of PTSD make eminent sense. The individual, living in a state of constant expectation of and vigilance for a return of the dreaded event(s), suffers chronic and severe *anxiety*. Given the desperate need to avoid further confrontation with such an event, he or she is trying strenuously to *avoid situations reminiscent* of it, and even to *suppress all thoughts or images* of the event. However, this attempted suppression, coupled with the need to somehow come to terms with such a threatening presence in one's world, is resulting in extremely painful experiences in which the person *relives* the event in nightmares, intrusive memories, and often flashbacks. In order to quell their raging anxiety, as well as to be able to sleep free from nightmares, many turn to alcohol or other substances, thereby creating *substance abuse disorders.* Often, the individual is so consumed by the ever present life and death danger that nothing else matters, leaving him or her *emotionally numb* to life's other joys and sorrows. Finally, the collective impact of all of these states of affair frequently results in severe marital, family and work problems. The post-traumatic world is an extraordinarily painful one in which to live, one that others typically do not understand ("It happened years ago; why can't you get over it!"), and one from which many are tempted to escape via suicide.

For PTSD victims such as Jen, then, the primary obstacle to recovery is the

ongoing presence in their worlds of something that, like atomic holocaust, has the status of the unthinkable and unfaceable. There is something lurking out there that they cannot bear even to look at, much less to face. Accordingly, the preferred therapeutic goal is that of assisting these persons to reconstruct their worlds in such a way that they can accommodate these unthinkables. The goal is to help them to "make the unthinkable thinkable" within their worlds.

The centerpiece of psychotherapy with Jen was the version of exposure therapy known as "eye movement desensitization and reprocessing" ("EMDR") originated by Shapiro (1995). (Research [e.g., Foa & Jaycox, 1999] suggests that other versions are equally effective.) Employing this procedure, Jen was asked to bring to mind all at once her total sensory experience of particular harrowing events from her past, as well as her emotions and thoughts while undergoing these. While she was doing so, the therapist waved his hand back and forth before her eyes for a brief period, then ceased, asked her to relate her experience, discussed this briefly, then repeated this and related sequences a substantial number of times. This intervention brought about significant improvement in Jen's condition. At termination, she had a significant but not complete diminution in her post-traumatic symptoms and was able to experience without incident certain stimuli in her environment that had previously triggered flashback episodes.

The rationale for Jen's therapy in this case was not the traditional ones in terms of either extinction or the reprocessing of maladaptive memory structures, both of which fail to account well either for the conditions that frequently engender PTSD or for certain of its symptoms (Bergner, 2006, 2009). Instead, it was in terms of worlds and of the presence in her world of something that she experienced as an ever-present, unthinkable, and unfaceable threat. The constant message to Jen throughout the therapy, conveyed in different ways, was one highly consistent with the *practice* (though not the traditional theories) of exposure therapy. It was that she needed to look squarely at--to "face down" as it were--what had happened to her. She needed to realize that, while it was horrible, she could look at it in the therapy sessions in a safe, controlled, scientifically tested way, and that by doing so she would become desensitized to it in the sense of being more and more able to see it as a terrible *but not unthinkable, unfaceable* reality. Further, by doing so she could relocate what happened in the past (vs. experiencing it as a present danger), and could go out and live more freely in a world where it once happened and where there was a remote chance that, although her brother was now deceased, something like it could happen again.

The thrust of this substantially but not completely successful therapy was that of getting Jen to reconstruct her world by taking a part of it that had been given the status of the unthinkable and unfaceable, and give it the new status of something that was horrific, but that she could face, could relocate in the past, and whose remote possibility of repetition she could go out and face in her life. At termination, her level of perturbation was reduced to levels such that she did not experience further suicidal temptation.

Case Illustration #2: Suicide and Disruption in Core Relationships

In general, suicidal individuals present worlds that have been constructed by them as virtually impossible. However, upon careful therapeutic inquiry, alternative and highly realistic reconstructions of these worlds often emerge in which they are seen to be far more viable. An excellent example of this comes from the work of Aaron Beck in a commercially distributed audiotape therapy session some years ago (Beck et al., 1979). In this section, after first describing the case involved, we will relate the traditional cognitive therapeutic approach employed by Beck. Subsequently, we will present some alternative, worlds based approaches to this case, ones that could be implemented within the cognitive restructuring format employed by Beck.

"Phyllis," a 32 year old, divorced social worker, entered therapy in a state of crisis following an experience in which her current boyfriend had rebuffed an invitation from her to get together, and in general conveyed an attitude that he did not care to see her at all. Phyllis reported that this event had thrown her into an "emotional tailspin," that she was experiencing strong suicidal temptation, but that she was held back primarily by the thought of what her suicide would do to her 12 year old son. Were it not for him, she stated, she probably would have committed suicide a long time ago.

Further assessment by Beck revealed that the situation with "Bill," her boyfriend, was consistent with a longstanding pattern in Phyllis' life. Treated by others--most importantly her mother, her ex-husband, and previous boyfriends--in a way that she described as "cold, critical, and unsustaining," she had repeatedly addressed this situation by attempting to win these persons over by being "good enough and kind enough and trying to meet all their needs." However, this life strategy had consistently failed to change the pattern of treatment she received. In the present case with Bill, she reported, she viewed him as an emotionally damaged person who had difficulty trusting others, and stated that she believed her efforts to be endlessly good and kind would overcome his mistrust and enable him to return her affections. Although admitting to Beck that this strategy had so far failed, she reported that she still "emotionally believed" in its soundness.

For Phyllis, all of this added up to what for her was a near impossible world, one in which she was "emotionally alone," felt utterly rejected, and could see no solution to her painful situation. She was, in her own words, "in a box, trapped, no way out."

Case analysis. The traditional cognitive approach to treatment is to identify the maladaptive beliefs ("schemas") that are causing clients' emotional distress, and then to collaborate with them to modify these beliefs (Beck, 1976; Beck et al., 1979; Beck & Weishaar, 2008). Employing this approach, Beck implemented the following primary interventions in his first session with Phyllis. Based on some exploration of her personal history, he and Phyllis identified as critical her belief that, if only she was good enough and kind enough and met all of a man's needs,

that man would surely respond in a favorable way and a satisfying love relationship would ensue. Having identified this core schema, they proceeded to examine the evidence in Phyllis' life for its validity, and concluded that it was woefully unsupported by the evidence. However, after attempting to discredit this idea in several different ways, Phyllis remained unmoved, stating that she "still emotionally believed it." Moving on briefly to other more secondary maladaptive ideas, it became clear that Phyllis believed that Bill constituted "her sole repository of satisfaction." Questioning this, Beck queried her about whether or not she derived satisfaction from other spheres of her life. His line of questioning revealed that in fact she derived significant satisfaction from her work and from time spent both with her 12 year old son and with several good friends. Along the same line, her belief that she was "emotionally alone" without Bill was examined, revealing that, on thinking about it, she did not feel emotionally alone, but rather "emotionally tuned in" when with her son, her friends, and her therapy clients. Finally, Beck held up for her a vision wherein, if she could escape the grips of her faulty theory about how to win the love of Bill and other men, her life would be much better.

It may be noted that, although initiated from a different framework, Beck's interventions served as an excellent start to opening up Phyllis' world and making it more viable. It may further be noted that, since many factual elements (child, friends, job) were present in Phyllis' world that could serve to render it quite viable, a heavy emphasis of a worlds based therapy, like a Beckian one, would be the more cognitively oriented one of getting her to reformulate her current world. So what would be different?

As noted, Phyllis, after reviewing the evidence for her core belief about how to approach love relationships and admitting such evidence was lacking, and after further significant efforts by Beck to get her to modify this belief, remained unmoved. Why? From a standard cognitive point of view, schemas or beliefs are of such a nature that, when their holders see and admit that the available evidence shows them to be wrong, the belief should be relinquished. However, from a worlds point of view, Phyllis' belief is something more. It is the linchpin of a critically important part of her world, her desire for a deep, lasting, and satisfying romantic relationship. As matters stood at the outset of therapy, her belief about how to win love in the world represented her only perceived ticket to personal happiness. She had no other. Asking her to give it up would be like asking a survivor of the Titanic, clutching desperately to a piece of driftwood in the water and admitting that it was not a great life preserver, to relinquish it. Phyllis had no place else to go in her world. Thus, a recommended alternative would be to undertake the following groundwork designed to provide her first with a better "life preserver" and only then, with this in hand, to relinquish her inadequate "driftwood."

A first intervention would be to clarify and to question a critical element in Phyllis' world construction. This was her strong, if implicit, belief that one is "nobody 'til somebody (of the opposite sex) loves you." Phyllis had in effect constructed a world in which men possessed an extraordinary validating power. If one

of them loved you, this made you worthwhile; if they did not, you were not worthwhile. Indeed, when one looks at the facts of Phyllis' world, a world that included meaningful work, friendships, and relationship with her child, one can see that she already possessed a world potentially rich in meaning and satisfaction, and that this belief about men served to radically undermine the viability of this world. One can see further that its reconstruction, one in which she ceased to assign men such a validating power, would have enhanced considerably the viability of her world and in the bargain reduced her lethality. She would in effect have moved from a position of near impossible world to one of a quite viable, less psychologically frustrating, and far less painful world.

A second intervention also bears on the male-female relationships so critical to Phyllis' suicidal state. Pervading her statements about how she might achieve such a relationship was a very faulty conception of romance. Herself a psychotherapist by profession, she viewed Bill as a damaged person, and one in particular who was unable to trust others. In speaking of her attempts to win his love, an unmistakable note of her love *curing* or *healing* him--i.e., enabling him to become a more psychologically whole and trusting person--emerged. Her model of a romantic relationship was clearly more that of a therapeutic, curative one where one's personal goodness, self-sacrifice, and fidelity would heal the partner, and less that of a truly romantic one. Thus, an additional approach to opening up Phyllis' world and making it more viable would have been to discuss with her the important differences between therapeutic and romantic relationships (Hegi & Bergner, 2010), to educate or remind her of the characteristics of the latter, and to note that a far better approach to achieving her goal of a good romantic relationship would lie in approaching men in this way--in effect, to "try being more of a Juliet and less of a Florence Nightingale."

Case Illustration #3: Suicide and Loss

A frequent and well-known precipitator of suicidal states is serious loss (Spirito & Esposito-Smythers, 2006). Such losses include those of other persons (e.g., through death or divorce), of employment (e.g., through dismissal or demotion), of a perceived future due to failures (e.g., at school or work), and of bodily capability (e.g., through disabling illness). In the following case, not only were such obvious losses incurred, but something further that, though profound in its implications, is little discussed in the literature.

"Mr. Brown," an elementary school principal, had for many years been a much-admired figure in his community. In addition to being well liked and respected, he enjoyed a secure job position, a nice home, an apparently secure marriage, and more than adequate financial resources. However, late in his career, it was revealed that for many years he had been molesting children in his care. Subsequent to initial denials and much public support, more and more of his former students came forward and testified that they had been molested by him over a period of more than 25 years. The evidence became both overwhelming and widely known, rendering it obvious to virtually everyone in his community that he was

guilty. Mr. Brown was suspended from his job and his pension made subject to denial pending his court case. His wife left him, resulting in the loss not only of his marriage but of his home, which she retained. He became a social pariah who could no longer present himself in public, and faced an almost certain lengthy jail term. While awaiting trial, he committed suicide.

Case analysis. All but one of the losses suffered by Mr. Brown are obvious and require little comment. Viewed from a worlds perspective, all may be seen as *status changes* that greatly diminish his opportunities, eligibilities, and motivations to act. One day, Mr. Brown is a husband, a school principal, and a respected citizen, and is able to act on the countless opportunities, roles, entitlements, and motives afforded by these statuses. The next day, all of these have vanished from his world, his meaningful behavioral possibilities are almost entirely eliminated, and his world has become a virtually impossible one.

At times, among their other losses, persons lose something of profound importance: the *status to make status claims on their own behalf* (Torres & Bergner, 2010). In Mr. Brown's case, once he was viewed by virtually everyone in his community as a child molester, liar, and moral sham, he lost completely his status as one who could effectively make any claims on his own behalf to bring about recovery of his lost status. Thus, he lost not only his whole world, but with it any credible voice to make a case for himself that could result in recovery of this lost world. Individuals who experience such a loss of effective voice will frequently and understandably experience hopelessness and helplessness. Lacking the ability to make effective status claims on their own behalf, there is no discernible way back--no avenue to recovery and a better future. Thus, the grave danger arises in many such cases that the individual may, like Mr. Brown, commit suicide.

Case Illustration #4: Suicide and Identity

The following case is taken from the work of Ossorio (1976) and represents his analysis of a very detailed case described in the excellent case book of Goldstein and Palmer (1963). "James," a young musician of some local repute, had a strong identity as a free spirit: someone who "did his own thing in his own time" and, as a matter of principle, refused to be controlled or restricted by anyone. After a performance one night, he met a young audience member, "Shirley," and the two began a relationship. They moved in together, enjoyed very satisfying sexual relations, but in every other respect had a highly tempestuous relationship. Conflicts centered around Shirley's insistence that James help out financially (she was the only one with a steady job), that he help around the house, and in general that he hold up his end with respect to their mutual responsibilities. In addition to this, James refused to be restricted to an exclusive sexual relationship with Shirley, had numerous affairs, and made little effort to conceal these from her. In countless ways, his general stance in the relationship stated: "If you want to be with me, don't try to tie me down."

One day, James suggested that he and Shirley have a child. She became pregnant. In the ensuing months, Shirley began to use her pregnancy as a lever to

make claims on James to take on more responsibility and to cease his philandering. Given that he had initiated the idea of having a child, and that he was genuinely involved in this, her pregnancy created in him a sense that he had indeed incurred legitimate obligations. One morning, prior to Shirley leaving for work, she and James had a particularly violent argument about the need for him to clean their attic. When Shirley got into the car to leave for work, James kissed her goodbye and said, "Don't be angry with me." When she returned home from work that evening, she found James dead, hanging from a rafter in an immaculately clean attic.

Case analysis. Unfortunately, James never came to therapy, and this case was reported in treatment by Shirley. Reconstructing James' world, it seemed that his identity as a free spirit was extraordinarily important to him. Being autonomous, being his own person, was a matter of the strongest principle for him, and the idea of letting any other person control or restrict his freedom was intolerable to him. However, he had unwittingly created an impossible world for himself. On the one hand, he had elected to have a child, was involved in this, and as a person of some integrity could not simply walk away from this. On the other hand, the prospect of going on in a world where he knew he had incurred legitimate obligations, and thus of being restricted and subject to another's will, represented a completely intolerable one: an impossible world. This case illustrates the general proposition that issues of identity and of self-concept with some frequency play a role in suicide. The operative world stance in such cases might be expressed in the following way: "I can't live this way and still be me."

Case Illustration #5: Suicide and Meaninglessness

Victor Frankl once asserted that "Some worlds are worth living in; some are not" (1969, p. 8). Some persons' worlds are such that action within them is stripped of much of the meaning that it might otherwise have. The link between suicide and such a world is well captured in the following, unusually literate suicide note reported by Yalom (1980). All we know of the case is contained in the note itself: "Imagine a happy group of morons who are engaged in work. They are carrying bricks in an open field. As soon as they have stacked all the bricks at one end of the field, they proceed to transport them to the opposite end. This continues without stop and every day of every year they are busy doing the same thing. One day, one of the morons stops long enough to ask himself what he is doing. He wonders what purpose there is in carrying the bricks. And from that point on, he is not quite as content with his occupation as he had been before. I am the moron who wonders why he is carrying the bricks" (from Yalom, 1980, p. 419).

Case analysis. What renders this man's world an impossible one for him? If one analyzes his suicide note, his precise lament seems to be that, in the world as he finds it, he can find none of the three kinds of value that, upon analysis, are available to human beings: *instrumental, intrinsic,* and *spiritual* value (Bergner, 1998). His actions, analogized as a pointless carrying of bricks back and forth, accomplish no valued utilitarian end that he can see. They possess no intrinsic value for him. And he can find no spiritual value in them that might enable him to

endure or even to affirm them. The "absurd," the quintessence of meaninglessness, is precisely what is generated when instrumental, intrinsic, and spiritual value are stripped from a person's behavior and world (Bergner, 1998). Life becomes "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

What generates such a world? We may distinguish two general answers, the first of which we have touched upon in connection with loss and will mention only briefly here. Loss of status--i.e., loss of the relational positions one has in the world--characteristically entails loss of meaning. Recalling the example of our school principal, Mr. Brown, when he lost his job, his wife, his home, and his community standing, as well as the status in the eyes of others to ever regain them, he simultaneously lost virtually all of the meaning in his life. This meaning had been derived overwhelmingly in the form of instrumental and intrinsic meanings connected with his life as a principal, a husband, and an admired citizen. Since he was not a spiritual man and derived virtually no spiritual meaning in his life, virtually all personal meaning was lost from his world once he had lost these other statuses.

Beyond this, some persons live in worlds that are characterized by what might be characterized as a more philosophically based meaninglessness. For example, increasingly, many educated persons, particularly those with a scientific orientation, find themselves in the grips of a certain reductionist outlook in which persons are essentially organic machines that operate according to deterministic physical laws. In this outlook, all of their actions, accomplishments, and personal characteristics are at bottom nothing but the determined outward manifestations of brain and other physiological events, and viewing them as "praiseworthy" or "virtuous" or "motivated by spirituality" represents a kind of naivete. By way of a second example, there are a number of personal outlooks, traditionally referred to as "cynical," that impair individuals' ability to find their worlds meaningful. Perhaps the most common version of these maintains that people, in everything they do, no matter how altruistic they may appear, or how lovingly they may portray their actions, are essentially acting out of self-interest--are "looking out for number one." On this view, human love, understood as being invested in the well-being of another for his or her own sake (Clark & Monin, 2006; Hegi & Bergner, 2010), is a sham; we are all completely and ineluctably selfish beings.

For the most part, the world views at issue here are not irrational in the customary sense that they embody distorted logic or fail to square with empirical evidence. Because of this, the suggested therapeutic approach is not the traditional cognitive therapeutic one of trying to disconfirm empirically or otherwise rebut the client's current world view (Beck & Weishaar, 2008). It is, rather, to listen carefully to it, to convey an understanding of it, and to affirm its inherent logicality and sensibleness. Having done so, the subsequent tack is to point out to the client that his or her position is not that of a helpless victim doomed to see the world in the only possible way that it can be seen. It is instead the far more powerful one of *constructor* of a world. Unfortunately, in a situation where, within bounds of realism, alternative real worlds are possible, and where there is no privileged,

uniquely correct one, the client has constructed a world that permits little in the way of meaning. From this position of leverage--of constructor and not victim--the client may be shown that he or she can make a choice to reconstruct this world in a way that is equally or more realistic, but that permits the derivation of far greater meaning. Should the client elect to do so, we as therapists may assist them in this process.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have (a) provided an updated, expanded, and clarified discussion of the Descriptive Psychological concept of a person's "world"; and (b) illustrated worlds thinking by applying it to five cases of suicidal persons. The inter-ested reader may find more extensive discussions of world reconstruction thinking, as well as its applications to other clinical problems, in Ossorio (1997), Roberts (1985), and Bergner (2006, 2007, 2009).

References

Beck, A. (1976). *Cognitive therapy and the emotional disorders*. New York: New American Library.

Beck, A., Rush, A., Shaw, B. & Emery, G. (1979). *Cognitive theory of depression.* New York: Guilford.

Beck, A., & Weishaar, M. (2008). Cognitive therapy. In R. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Current psychotherapies* (8th ed., pp. 263-294). Belmont, CA: Thompson.

Bergner, R. (1998). Therapeutic approaches to problems of meaninglessness. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 52*, pp. 1-16.

Bergner, R. (2006). World reconstruction in psychotherapy. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 59, 1-17.

Bergner, R. (2007). *Status dynamics: Creating new paths to therapeutic change.* Ann Arbor, MI: Burns Park Publishers.

Bergner, R. (2009). Trauma, exposure, and world reconstruction. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 63,* 267-282.

Bergner, R. & Holmes, J. (2000). Self-concepts and self-concept change: A status dynamic formulation. *Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 37*, 36-44.

Bergner, R. & Staggs, J. (1987) The positive therapeutic relationship as accreditation. *Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 24*, 315-320.

Bergner, R. & Staggs J (1991). The positive therapeutic relationship: An accreditation perspective. In M. Roberts and R. Bergner (Eds.), *Clinical topics: Adolescent-family problems, bulimia, chronic mental illness, and mania*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Cattell, R. (1990). Advances in Cattellian personality theory. In L. Pervin (Ed.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 101-110). New York: Guilford.

Clark, M., & Monin, J. (2006). Giving and receiving communal responsiveness as love. In R. J. Sternberg & K. Weis (Eds.), *The new psychology of love* (pp. 200-224). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Cummings, S.J. (1970). *The fugitive: Toward a theory of the paranoid style.* Unpublished Masters Thesis. Boulder, CO: University of Colorado.

Ellis, A. (1962). *Reason and emotion in psychotherapy*. New York: Lyle Stuart.

Ellis, A. (2008). Rational emotive behavior therapy. In R. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Current psychotherapies* (8th ed., pp. 187-223). Belmont, CA: Thompson.

Foa, E. & Kozak, M. (1986). Emotional processing of fear: Exposure to corrective information. *Psychological Bulletin, 99*, 20-35.

Foa, E. & Jaycox, L. (1999). Cognitive-behavioral theory and treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder. In D. Spiegel (Ed.), *Efficacy and cost-effectiveness of psychotherapy* (pp. 23-61). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

Frankl, V. (1969). *The will to meaning.* New York: World.

Goldstein, M. & Palmer, J. (1963). *The experience of anxiety.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Hegi, K. & Bergner, R. (2010). What is love? An empirically-based essentialist account. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *27,* 1-17.

Horney, K. (1945). *Our inner conflicts*. New York: Norton.

Jeffrey, J. (1998). Cognition without processes. In J. Jeffrey & R. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 7, pp. 33-66). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Kernberg, O. (1975). *Borderline conditions and pathological narcissism*. New York: Aronson.

Lewin, K. (1936). *Principles of topological psychology*. New York: McGraw.

Mazza, J. (2000). The relationship between posttraumatic stress symptomatology and suicidal behavior in school-based adolescents. *Suicide and Life-threatening Behavior, 30,* 91-103.

Millon, T. & Davis, R. (2000). *Personality disorders in modern life*. New York: Wiley.

O'Hanlon, W. & Weiner-Davis, M. (2003). *In search of solutions* (2d Ed.). New York: Norton.

Ossorio, P.G. (2013). *Seminar on clinical topics*: *The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. VII.* Ann Arbor, MI. Descriptive Psychology Press. (original work published 1976.)

Ossorio, P.G. (1997). *Essays on clinical topics.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P.G. (1998). "*What actually happens": The representation of real world phenomena: The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. IV.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press. (Original publication, 1978).

Ossorio, P.G. (2006). *The behavior of persons*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A. (1998). Being, becoming, and belonging. In J. Jeffrey & R. Bergner(Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 7, pp. 127-162). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Roberts, M. (1985). Worlds and world reconstruction. In K. Davis and T. Mitchell (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 4, pp. 17-53). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Rogers, C. (1951). *Client-centered therapy.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Quine, W.V.O. (1951). Two dogmas of empiricism. *The Philosophical Review, 60,* 20-43.

Shapiro, F. (1995). *Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing: Basic principles, protocols, and procedures*. New York: Guilford Press.

Shapiro, F. & Maxfield, L. (2003). EMDR and information processing in psychotherapy treatment: Personal development and global implications. In M. Solomon and D. Siegel [Eds.] *Healing Trauma.* New York: Norton.

Shneidman, E. (1984). Aphorisms of suicide and some implications for psychotherapy. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 38*, 319-328.

Shneidman, E. (1998). *The suicidal mind*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Spirito, A., & Esposito-Smythers, C. (2006). Attempted and completed suicide in adolescence. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 2*, 237-66.

Violanti, J. (2004). Predictors of police suicide ideation. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 34,* 277-283.

Wishnie, H. (1977). *The impulsive personality.* New York: James Evans Publishing.

Yalom, I. (1980). *Existential psychotherapy*. New York: Basic Books.

Introduction to Part Two: Leadership, Conflict, and Community Change

Keith E. Davis and Wynn Schwartz

The three papers in this section all revolve around crucial issues in the stability and change of communities, placing the role of leadership as a central aspect of how such changes evolve and what the ultimate outcomes are for community members. A brief historical note is important here. The concept of community has been a central resource since the founding of the Descriptive Psychological articulation of the Person concept (Putman, 1981; Ossorio, 1982/1983). It was initially given a parametric analysis in which the seven parameters were: members, practices, statuses, concepts, locutions, choice principles, and worlds. The relationship of community as a concept to culture was specified by the same parameters except that the notion of choice principles was given additional prominence and the parameters of concepts and locutions were folded into a larger concept of languages.

Anthony Putman, in "When Worlds Collide," takes on the central issue of intractable value problems, which he sees as inevitable in pluralistic societies. Such disputes of values are "inherent and pervasive. Participants in such disputes literally live in significantly different worlds." (p. 81) His is not the first treatment of these issues by Descriptive Psychologists. Singer and Zeiger (2010) addressed one subset of these by contrasting the views of citizens from different religious and philosophical perspectives on the legitimate role of government regulation. These authors examined how to structure discussions among different groups who held diverse and conflicting values so that some agreements were possible on the pragmatics of everyday life. They did not propose to resolve all such disagreements in values, only to show the way that some might be resolved by agreement on courses of action that did not violate any groups' values. Putman takes a more pessimistic view of the chances of resolving fundamental conflict in world views.

These value problems are at core intractable problems of significance. Such problems are not the rare exception; they are inherent and pervasive. Participants in such disputes literally live in significantly different worlds. What ultimately keeps these worlds apart is what ultimately holds each one together. Every community has a shared world that makes sense to its members. The sense it makes is particular to each community's world. Every community has a set of ultimate

practices, participation in which affirms their world and is accompanied by ultimate satisfaction. Ultimate satisfaction is a strong basic human need. Persons are powerfully, inherently motivated to seek it. The specific experience of ultimate satisfaction differs from community to community. Its importance to maintaining the community and its world does not. In short: ultimate satisfaction holds the world together. It is also what keeps worlds apart. (p. 92)

Putman uses these conceptual resources to analyze several worlds in collision. Let's review how it is applied to the instance of understanding the jihadist world vis-à-vis the Western world. When a suicide bomber goes to a public place and detonates a bomb killing himself and several others, Putman states we need to understand the meaning of that act within the bomber's world. If he is Muslim acting on the jihadist view of the world, then his action is not that of "a senseless killing of himself and others" as it might be described in Western media. A Descriptive Psychologist's job is to get inside the jihadist world. In that world, Allah is the ultimate object, and a person has meaning only in relationship to Allah. The ultimate human mandate is service to Allah; the details of one's personal life are just details, not fundamentally important. Participating in ultimate practices of this community, affirming its world, is a matter of acting in service to Allah; the ultimate satisfaction that accompanies this participation can be described as "righteousness". The suggestion by a Westerner that the jihadist do not value human life would be rejected, and they would find such statements deeply offensive and wrong-headed. Of course, they would assert, they value individual life, greatly, but life isn't worth living when it is bereft of righteousness; Allah, not the individual person, is ultimate. Thus, what seems initially as an intractable values conflict is seen as something even more fundamental: a collision between two different worlds. In principle, if one has enough information, one can understand the other's (alien) world, but nothing guarantees that, as an outsider, one truly gets the other's world right.

Putman goes on to show the relevance of this general analysis to the conflict between religion and science, to the difficulties in understanding a truly spiritual way of life, the conflict among members of a school board, the teachers and the parents, and inter-family conflict between parents and adolescents. Each of these analyses contains important distinctions and special features, but the same general points hold—the ultimates that bind specific communities together are also what divide the two communities. Putman does not try to impose a set of guidelines for the resolution of such conflicts in worldviews, but rather identifies the two procedures that sometimes, but not always help persons to resolve these conflicting world views. Two conceptual resources are essential: a reminder that each of us has multiple status with their distinctive perspectives and that each of us are members of a broader community that provides the context within which our choices and perspectives make sense. He illustrates these general points with two examples. A father and son in which the father is torn between being a good cop and a bad father. If he deals with his son from the good cop perspectives that cut him off from alternatives that follow from the father's positive role. Putman illustrates how

paying attention to the alternative roles available and negotiating in good faith will allow resolutions in many cases.

In "Leading: Perspectives for leaders and leadership coaches," Putman sets out to reject conceptualizations of leadership that focus primarily either on the leader or the followers. Both are relevant, but in his view, the starting place needs to be on leading—on the activities taken on behalf of the organization that succeed and thus add value to the organization by their accomplishment of the it 's mission. By looking at leading rather than leadership, Putman comes to different conceptualization than the ones that have dominated the professional literature on management and leadership. His multi-perspective analysis identifies fundamental and difficult challenges to those who strive to lead in modern organizations. Leading requires that the leader to make sure that: (a) the efforts of the organization result in the creation of value; (b) the value created is seen *as such* from all relevant perspectives and by all involved parties; (c) all necessary participants are able to make their contribution to the mutual endeavor of creating value. (p. 119) Leading requires the leader to see things accurately from multiple perspectives or to get a team of members to create a common view of value that can be accepted by all perspectives.

This approach involves neither compromise (in which all groups have to give up something of value) nor the least common denominator approach. Rather it requires a creative synthesis of alternatives so that each conflicting group has something of value retained in the solution. Putman illustrates one successful conflict-resolution among a School Board, the teachers, and the parents of currently enrolled students.

If Putman's conceptualization of leading rather than previous conceptualizations of leadership-followership has merit, then it should have implication for the activity of leadership coaching. And indeed it does. In actual cases of coaching a leader, one must deal with the facts about the organization, the specific role played by the person, and what it means to lead in that organization. In order to translate these general points into a framework for developing leaders and assessing their effectiveness, he has come up with seven areas of assessment that should cover most, if not all, opportunities for the development and growth of leading. These seven are:

(a). Leading requires paying specific attention to the mutual endeavor. [Putman provides multiple examples for each of these.]

(b) Leading requires paying attention to the relationship between the mutual endeavor and individual participants.

(c) Leading requires ensuring the right people are called upon to make the right contributions

(d) Leading requires ensuring the individual efforts are aligned and/or coordinated

(e) Leading requires ensuring participants are capable of contributing at the level required

(f) Leading requires focusing on the motivation of the participants
(g) Leading may require focusing on capacity building when the tasks are long-term. (Putman, pp. 124-127)

This rich set of suggestions for assessment and coaching should reorient much of the activity currently engaged in by leadership coaches. That would benefit both those aspiring to leadership and to the organizations that they participate in.

In the next chapter, "We are off to see the Wizard: Politics, Charisma, and Community Change," both the concepts of world and community remain central to the analysis, but Charles Kantor brings in the issues of status assignment and change in a community's world. Historically, facing the onslaught of massively better armed civilizations determined to transform or exterminate whatever it encountered—under the guise of making them "civilized" Americans were required to engage in significant world reconstruction. Kantor analyses two of the world constructions--the "Ghost Dance Religions" of the Plains Indians (Logan, 1980; Overholt, 1974) and the Zomian (Scott, 2009) patterns of charismatic leaders who led retreats to the Highlands among mountain dwelling peoples of South East Asia. In one case, the world reconstruction failed to stem the decimation of the Indian culture (in the Plains) and the other –(Zomian) the pattern has been partially effective in holding off the destruction of native culture.

Going systematically through the parameters of culture (Ossorio, 2006), Kantor shows how in both cases, every parameter had aspects of the native culture that were being destroyed. The primary difference between the two cases is that the Zomians had hundreds of years in which to refine their methods of escape. They may also have had charismatic leaders who dealt more successfully with the pragmatic side of leadership. As he notes, charismatic leaders will offer a new vision for the world of the people, which has a place for the native practices and statuses. The result is that it provides hope for the peoples in times of distress. But whether the leader can put together enough of the resources to successfully flee and rebuild is a central question. His analysis of charismatic leadership differs from many of those in the literature (e.g., Dow, 1978; Hobsbawm, 1965) because he has built directly upon his analysis of Baum's (1900) *The Wizard of Oz* and Scott's (2009) observations of the Zomian leaders, who were without exception "cosmopolitan locals, with local roots who had travelled extensively" and had mastery of several languages in the region (Scott, 2009, p. 309). In addition to their vision of a new world for the people, such leaders typically accredited the people by word and deed, helped to solve problems of everyday life, and acted with courage in the face of adversity. Their actions are seen as in the service of the community—not egomaniacal self-interest.

Kantor ends by connecting the issues raised to the current state of deficient leadership in the Western World. Unless things turn around, he regretfully suggests, we may all need to be off to see a wizard.

References

Baum, L. F. (1900). *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Chicago: George M. Hill Company.

Dow, T. E. (1978). An Analysis of Weber's Work on Charisma. The *British Journal of Sociology*, 29, 83-93). Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/589221

Hobsbawm, E.J. (1965) *Primitive rebels: Studies in archaic forms of social movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries.* New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Co.

Logan, B. (1980). The Ghost Dance among the Paiute: An Ethnohistorical view of the documentary evidence 1889-1893. *Ethnohistory*, *27*, 267-288). Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/481271.

Ossorio, P.G. (1982/1983). A multicultural psychology. In K. E. Davis & R. M. Bergner (Eds.*), Advances in Descriptive Psychology*, (Vol. 3, pp. 13-44). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press Inc. . (Original work published 1982 as LRI Report No. 29. Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.)

Ossorio, P.G. (2006). *The Behavior of Persons. Volume 5 of the Collected Works of Peter G. Ossorio.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Overholt, T. W. (1974). The Ghost Dance of 1890 and the Nature of the Prophetic Process. *Ethnohistory, 21*, 37-63. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/481129.

Putman, A. O. (1980). Communities. In K. E. Davis (Ed.) *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 195-210). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Putman, A.O. (1990). Organizations. In A. O. Putman & K. E. Davis (Eds.) *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 5, pp. 11-46). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A.O. (2009). Ordinary magic: what Descriptive Psychology is, and why it matters. In K. E. Davis, F. L. Lubuguin & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 9, pp. 203-230). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A. O. (2013a). "At a glance and out of nowhere: how ordinary people create the real world". In R. M. Bergner, K. E. Davis, F. L. Lubuguin & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 19-36). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A. O. (2013b). "Leading". In R. M. Bergner, K. E. Davis, F. L. Lubuguin & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 113-128). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Roberts, M. K. (2010).Worlds of Uncertain Status. In Davis, K.E., Lugubin, F., and Schwartz, W. (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology*, (Vol. 9., pp.287-319). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press

Singer, F. & Zeiger, H. P. (2010). Contributions of Descriptive Psychology to strategies of negotiation: The case of religion and government. In K. E. Davis, F. Lubuguin, & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology*, (Vol. 10, pp. 431-452). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Scott, J. C. (2009). *The Art of Not Being Governed: an Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia.* New haven and London: Yale University Press.

When Worlds Collide: The Source of Intractable Value Problems

Anthony O. Putman
Descriptive Psychology Institute

Abstract

People differ, much of the time, on matters ranging from the trivial to the profound. Some differences appear intractable, in that none of our known ways of resolving them work, no matter how long or hard we try. This paper uses the conceptual resources of Descriptive Psychology, including "community", "worlds" and "ultimate satisfaction" to shed light on intractable value problems. These value problems are at core intractable problems of significance. Such problems are not the rare exception; they are inherent and pervasive. Participants in such disputes literally live in significantly different worlds. What ultimately keeps these worlds apart is what ultimately holds each one together.

Keywords: Community, world, person, ultimate satisfaction, intractable value problems

It's a simple fact: people differ, much of the time, on matters ranging from the trivial to the profound.

Vanilla or chocolate? Coffee or tea? Issues of personal taste are not actually issues at all since one can't be right or wrong in such choices; as the ancient maxim reminds us, "De gustibus non disputandum est." Upping the stakes a bit, we encounter myriad everyday disputes: Shall we invest the IRA in stocks or in bonds? Is midnight too late for a 16 year-old's curfew? Was the receiver out of bounds when he caught the touchdown pass? People of good faith, looking at the same situation, come to different conclusions, and we have a reliable stock of practices to resolve the differences, e.g. consulting advisors, negotiation, instant replay. No guarantee of success is offered for most of these practices other than the practical one: we often succeed in resolving such conflicts, and so it's at least worth a try.

Some disputes are not so easily resolved, such as bargaining between labor and management, passing budget legislation, and carving up the assets in a hotly contested divorce. Appeals to shared standards and interests may not be enough to

overcome the simple fact that resolution requires someone – perhaps everyone – to lose something they hold dear. Such negotiations can be bitter, drawn out and in the end unsatisfying to all parties – but typically negotiations *do* end, and everyone makes the best of the world they now find themselves in.

But not all disputes can be resolved. Some differences appear intractable, in that none of our known ways of resolving them work, no matter how long or hard we try.

Consider:

- Islamic fighters in Pakistan routinely strap on vests filled with high explosives and detonate them in crowded places, killing themselves and as many others as possible. Sometimes these are strategic targets, resulting in military, police or American casualties; other times the target seems to be random. Western journalists call them "suicide bombers" or "terrorists"; their cohort calls them "jihadists" or "martyrs". Like the terms used to describe the events, the gulf of mutual incomprehension between the two groups could hardly be wider. They literally, essentially, make no sense to each other. There are no apparent first moves to begin to bridge the gap.
- "Evolutionary psychologists" like Richard Dawkins insist that science allows no place for a "creator" or "designer" of nature. Instead they offer an elegant view of evolutionary algorithms which provide for "design without a designer". This view has become so prevalent in Western intellectual circles that questioning it invites being dismissed as naïve or ignorant, but few spiritual leaders or people of faith take it seriously. It is literally nonsense to people for whom God or "the Creator" is real, just as the idea of "creation" is nonsense to evolutionary psychologists. Unlike the jihadist/terrorist dispute, both sides here typically believe that they understand the other's point of view. They simply, often disdainfully, reject it.
- Teachers, principals and School Board members were terminally deadlocked over an extremely thorny curriculum issue, with three absolutely incompatible views on what to do. Each group was asked one last question: "What makes your solution the right solution?" All three groups responded without hesitation: "It best serves our customers" (this district used a briskly business-like way of talking where all agreed that the school's "mission" was to "serve the customers"). All three groups were right, because all three had *different* "customers" in mind. For the teachers, the ultimate customers were the students; the ultimate customer for the principals were the state and district administrators who set policy and guidelines; and the School Board members took as their ultimate customers the parents and local taxpayers who ultimately paid everyone's salaries. With such diverse "customers", the best curriculum looked very different to the three groups. As one observer remarked, they might as well have been living in three different worlds.

- Kyle is a 15-year-old student whose parents have just discovered he is selling marijuana to his friends. His father, a policeman from a family of policemen, knows exactly what to do – the boy needs a wake-up call from the criminal justice system. He has seen too many boys escalate from dealer to career criminal. Kyle's mother, a social worker from a family of teachers and therapists, is horrified at the thought of turning her own son in, even if he does get off with juvenile detention – she has seen too many young men who have been permanently scarred by "juvie". She insists on taking Kyle to family counseling and working out a behavioral contract to keep him out of further trouble. Both parents are adamant in opposing the other's plan; each sees the other as being rigid and out of touch with the real world.

One could cite myriad other examples, but let these four stand for the whole. This paper intends to offer an extended exploration of intractable value problems. We will suggest that:

- These value problems are at core intractable problems of significance.
- Such problems are not the rare exception; they are inherent and pervasive.
- Participants in such disputes literally live in significantly different worlds.
- What ultimately keeps these worlds apart is what ultimately holds each one together.

We begin by elaborating the concept of "worlds".

Worlds

We customarily think of "the real world" as singular and existing independently of any view of it. This is one reason why intractable value problems are so baffling: We take it that, in the real world, when we carefully determine the facts of a matter and assess them correctly we can see what is so and what to do about it. Disputes in this view are a matter of someone missing a relevant fact or two, or giving too much or too little weight to the facts at hand. It can be tricky to negotiate differences like this, but we generally know how to do it because we've seen it done.

But one of the great and useful insights of Descriptive Psychology is that this common "one-and-only-one real world" idea is a very partial view. You can't do justice to the reality of persons and behavior within it, any more than you could do justice to the motions of planets within a view that puts the earth at the center of the universe. To understand intractable value problems we must abandon the comforting view that "we all live in the same world" in favor of the more complex recognition that, in reality, people can and often do live in different worlds – *literally*, in different worlds. Within their worlds, their circumstances and behavior make sense; across worlds, they may make no sense at all.

This is a breath-taking assertion which, without extensive elaboration, might reasonably be dismissed out-of-hand. Fortunately, such elaboration has been accomplished (Ossorio, 2006, Roberts, 2009a), most recently in my paper in this volume "At a Glance and Out of Nowhere: How Ordinary People Create the Real

World" (Putman, 2013a). Rather than repeat that material here, we will instead take it as given and build upon it. (See also "Person and Worlds", below.)

To reiterate: People live and act within their real world, where their actions make sense. Some of these actions may not make sense to other people who are acting in their own, different, world, and this can lead to intractable disputes.

"OK. So you're saying everyone has his or her own 'real world' which differs from everyone else's. The classic term for that is solipsism. And since it's my private world there's just my word for what it's about, right?"

No, but the point is well taken. This would be just solipsism rebottled but for one thing: worlds are not essentially individual matters. A world requires a community, a community is made up of members (note the plural) and to act in that world in a way that makes sense requires a person to be a member of that community.

The remainder of this paper articulates the conceptual connections required to flesh out this bald assertion, and then uses them to shed new light on intractable value problems.

World and Descriptive Psychology

Descriptive Psychology is essentially one big concept – the Person concept, as it is most frequently named – in which all the component concepts are connected in highly complex ways. (Some prefer to call this a conceptual network; it doesn't matter how we refer to it so long as we keep in mind the complex connections and the fact that it is all of one piece.) To articulate individually the concepts of person, behavior, world and community requires the use of all these concepts (and others as well); much of the canonical literature of Descriptive Psychology consists of such articulation. A complete and canonical articulation of the Person concept and its constituent concepts can be found in Ossorio's final magnum opus, *The Behavior of Persons* (Ossorio, 2006).

For example: "A Person is an individual whose history is, paradigmatically, a history of Deliberate Action …" (Ossorio, 2006, p. 69). The concept of behavior (Deliberate Action) here has a central place in articulating the concept of Person. In the Intentional Action paradigm – Descriptive Psychology's canonical articulation of the concept of behavior – one of the constituent parameters is "PC" – the Personal Characteristics of the person engaging in the action. Here the concept of Person has a central place in articulating the concept of behavior. Without the concepts of behavior, community and world, the concept of person is hopelessly incomplete – and so it goes, with each of these concepts. They are not merely connected; they are radically, inextricably, *reflexively* connected in a singular whole. Keeping this in mind is one of the keys to working with Descriptive Psychology.

World and Community

Community is an inherent part of Descriptive Psychology's conceptual network and has been from its beginning, as witness Peter G. Ossorio's use of "social practices" in his landmark first book, *Persons* (Ossorio, 1966/1995). The paradigm of Community was first articulated in "Communities" (Putman, 1981), expanded

and built upon in "A Multi-Cultural Psychology" (Ossorio, 1982/1983) and refined in many subsequent applications, e.g. Orvik, 1985; Orvik, 1990; Putman, 1990; Putman, 1998; Peek & Heinrich, 2006.

Again from the beginning, Peter Ossorio acted on a firm commitment to use ordinary language in his formulations – he was a mortal foe of made-up technical language when it came to talking about persons – while not being slavishly limited to all the connotations of these terms. Conceptual articulation usually reveals the need for ignoring some common usages of a term while highlighting others, in order to make the conceptual essence clear and readily available. Thus, like many of our core concepts, "Community" has a specific meaning and usage in Descriptive Psychology, which largely parallels common language usage but differs in some important details.

For instance, "community" in common usage refers to a specific geographical location in which its members live and tend to their affairs. This geographical specificity is explicitly *not* part of the paradigm of Community. In articulating the paradigm case of Community, Descriptive Psychologists stand mute on geography – the Community may or may not be associated with a specifiable location – and that is the concept used throughout this paper. (See Note 1.)

Fortunately, we don't have to review all of Descriptive Psychology in order to proceed with our task. The important essence of this prior work on Community can be readily seen. In his book of behavioral maxims, *Place,* Peter Ossorio pithily summarized some key connections regarding Community and World:

> A1: A person requires a world in order to have the possibility of engaging in any behavior at all.
> A9: A person takes the world to be as he has found it to be.
> D11: The world is subject to reformulation by persons.
> E1: A person requires a community in order for it to be possible for him to engage in human behavior at all.
> E3: A community is characterized by a common world, a language, a structure of social practices, statuses, way of living, choice principles and individual members.
> E4: A person's place in the community provides reasons and opportunities to engage in one behavior rather than another.
> E5: To engage in a deliberate action is to participate in a social practice of the community.
> F1: The behavior of one person with respect to another is a participation in [at least one of] the social practices of his community.
> H3: A person's world is made up of possibilities and non-possibilities for acting.
> H5a. Status takes precedence over fact.
> I9: If a person engages in an intrinsic social practice, that calls for no further explanation. (Ossorio, 1982/1998/2012, pp. 11-19)

One is tempted to say: QED.

But rich as the above is, our inquiry into intractable value problems requires additional pieces of the Descriptive Psychology canon, along with some new custom-built conceptual articulations. I do not intend to elaborate here on Ossorio's maxims (he does that himself in *Place*) but rather I will use the concepts as articulated, referencing them as seems useful. My intent in this paper is not mainly scholarly, but creative.

Person and Communities

The conceptual and pragmatic links between person and community are articulated within Descriptive Psychology in distinctive and powerful ways – distinctive, in that they are found only partially if at all in other approaches to behavioral science, and powerful in that they enable us to make clear sense of observable facts that are otherwise obscure or puzzling. Here is something close to a mere recital of those links, which we will use in the present endeavor.

1. E1: A person requires a community in order for it to be possible for him to engage in human behavior at all.
2. E5: To engage in a deliberate action is to participate in a social practice of the community.
3. Members of a community participate in its social practices.
4. Participation means the person knows and shares the intrinsic value of the social practice, by contrast with merely going through the motions.
5. A member – and only a member – participates as "one of us".
6. The core practices of a community are participated in by every member; indeed, that is the main way by which persons demonstrate they are "one of us".
7. The significance of a person's behavior is "what he is doing by doing that." In every case this includes participating in a community's social practices (E5); thus the significance of a person's behavior always includes "acting as one of us." In some cases this is a relatively unimportant fact regarding the behavior; in the case of core practices, it is an essential fact.
8. Satisfaction accompanies participation. Without the one you do not have the other.
9. Thus, satisfaction accompanies significance.
10. A person participates in a social practice *as* a member of a community. Paradigmatically he also participates *as* one of the statuses available to him in that community.
11. A person is conscious *as* whatever status he acts as. What he sees in the world around him, in particular what he sees as possibilities and non-possibilities for acting, differs according to his status. ("When a thief looks at a saint, he sees pockets.")
12. What a person is conscious *of* depends largely on what he is conscious

as. To expand a bit: Being a banker, I am conscious *as* a banker. I look for opportunities to do what a banker does; I pay particular attention to those states of affairs of interest to a banker; I appraise and respond to a situation in one of the ways a banker does. As the third baseman on our softball team, I am conscious of a very different set of things because I am conscious *as* a third baseman – not as a banker. This is an ordinary, everyday fact about persons: what we are conscious *of* depends largely on who we are conscious *as*, and this changes routinely and dramatically as we change who we are in which community.

World and Ultimates

A community has a shared, specific view of the world. Our world is a world in which … (fill in the blank) – the spontaneous creation of art is the only worthwhile occupation; the spirit of God manifests in every particular; we make automobiles which are accessible to the masses instead of just to the rich; we recreate as closely as possible the life and times of medieval Europe without the nasty bits; etc. *ad infinitum*. It is easy to talk about the world as being a particular way; what makes a group of people a community is that these people actually *see* the world this way and succeed in treating it that way. Thus, they share this view of the world; they have ways of talking about their world in which they can make the relevant distinctions; they have shared practices, ways of treating the world and each other, that are cases of acting upon their view of the world; and they choose to participate in these practices with no further end in mind. (An elaboration of these points can be found in Putman, 1980 and Putman, 1998).

Note that it is not necessary for members to be capable of *articulating* the community's view of the world; it is only necessary that they be competent in seeing the world as we see it, and acting accordingly. Comparably, while a baseball player must act in accord with the rules of the game, he does not need to articulate how he swings the bat (in fact, trying to do so is a known way to lower your batting average); he just needs to be competent in hitting the ball. Or as Ossorio pointed out, a native speaker knows how to speak grammatically without also being able to articulate the rules of grammar. (Ossorio, 2006).

What distinguishes one world from another fundamentally are the ultimates of that world. Formally, each world is comprised of ultimate objects, processes, events, states-of-affairs and relationships (Ossorio, 1971/1975/1978/2005), although we frequently allow the ultimate object to stand in for them all in discourse. Thus, the ultimate objects in the chess community are pawns, rooks, etc; in behavioral science, persons; in physics, muons, bosons and other "zilch particles" as Ossorio once jokingly termed them; in accounting, numbers; in traditional economics, "utility-maximizing agents." These are ultimates in their communities not because they posses some transcendent quality, but simply because in that community no further breakdown into more basic objects can occur. A pawn arguably is made up of zilch particles, but that's physics, not chess. For chess players, the pieces are ultimate objects.

Ultimate objects are used in ultimate processes and stand in ultimate relationship to other objects in ultimate states-of-affairs. All of this fits together in a particular and distinctive way – a kind of logic – which is known to members and is part of their competence in participating in the community's practices. (These conceptual connections are extensively elaborated in canonical Descriptive Psychology papers, including Putman, 1990 and Peek & Heinrich, 2006)

As we shall see, some additional ultimates are required to understand what holds worlds together.

Person and Worlds

A person as Observer/Critic has knowledge of a publicly shared, describable, negotiable world within which his actions take place. As Actor, a person knows a very different world, described at length by Ossorio as follows:

> As an Actor I see the real world as a field of action, as the domain within which I live my life. In it are givens and possibilities, opportunities and non-opportunities, hindrances and facilitations for behavior. In it are reasons for acting one way or another. I am sensitized to behaviors that are available and ways of being that are available. There is no question of who or what I am – I am *me*. There is no question of my inclinations and proclivities; I do not need to *know* what they are, although I often do – what is primary is that I *have* them, and my having them is not something different from being me. In particular, they are not peculiar entities or forces that *cause* me to do what I do. Ideas come – I do not send for them nor do I receive them as information. Theories come. Visions and inklings of the future come, and their coming is not something different from *being* me. All of this is embedded in my actions and in the short term and long term structures of action and being that I compose, sometimes ad lib, sometimes without realizing it until later, and sometimes upon casual or serious reflection. (Ossorio, 2006a, p. 254)

Actor's world and Actor's knowing are at the heart of understanding world collision and the intractable problems that arise from them.

Descriptive Psychology's complex articulation of the conceptual connections among "person" and world can be summed up in two statements:

1. A person exists within the real world.
2. The real world exists within a person.

The first, to just about anyone, is inarguably true, an almost trivial statement of the fundamental reality of the real world. The second, to very many, may seem to be mystical nonsense or actual psychosis.

Both statements are equally true. Both are required to understand persons and the world. But they differ in one important respect: "within" does not mean the same thing in both statements.

The first "within" is a space-time-location relationship – person and world as

physical objects. The second "within" is a conceptual-formal-behavioral relationship: the world as stage or Dramaturgical pattern, constructed from the elements at hand by the person as Actor. [See Note 3.]

These two statements will be useful to bear in mind as we examine how persons, in communities, create and inhabit their worlds.

Making Sense

The world makes sense, and so do people.

This is the first of four slogans [See Note 2] offered by Peter Ossorio in 1985 "to portray the spirit in which the initial work of Descriptive Psychology was undertaken …". He reminded readers that "slogans are apt for saying what you live by, and .. that is quite different from saying what you happen to believe or what happens to be true." (Ossorio, 2006 p. 2) As slogans go, these four have stood the test of time; Descriptive Psychologists have productively lived by them for the past fifty years.

But over those fifty years Descriptive Psychology has grown, expanding its work and conceptual scope, such that a variation of this slogan is both appropriate and useful to orient us to the present work:

Worlds make sense, and each world makes sense in its own particular way.

I want to be clear that this in no way conflicts with Ossorio's original slogan. Ossorio referred to "the world", which in a different context he called "the state-of-affairs that includes all states-of-affairs". (Ossorio, 1971/1975/1978/2005). Ossorio's "the world" is a formal, totality concept; it includes all other worlds, explicitly all worlds within which persons participate in social practices, that is, the worlds of communities.

Putting together some of the conceptual background referenced above, a key insight emerges: to the person as Actor the world in which she is acting is the world of the community within which her participation takes place. This is true of every action by every person. Explicitly, there are no actual privileged persons who can act within "the totality world" by contrast with merely acting within the world of a community. With this in mind, we can see that Ossorio's original slogan covers the present case as well, so long as we remember that "the world" being referred to is now understood to be the world of a specific community. [See also Note 3].

In short, the world makes sense and so do people, both formally and behaviorally.

So what does it mean to say, "the world makes sense?" Initially we can simply point to the observable "clustering" of social practices; as Ossorio pointed out, it's not like a cafeteria line of behaviors, where you go through and pick out whatever you like. Behaviors – social practices – clearly go together in a manner that is hard to specify. It's not as simple as all practices share certain characteristics, or each derives from a small set of organizing principles; while we can often find some regularities of that sort, they are notoriously incomplete "stereotypical" outsider's view.

Worlds make sense, not analytically as known by the Observer/Critic, but rather behaviorally, as experienced by the Actor. It's an inside job, so to speak. You

have to be, and participate as, one of us to actually know how our world makes sense. It is Actor knowing rather than Observer knowledge. As Actor knowing, it is direct, first-hand and produced by the Actor as author.

In other words, the sense the world makes is not inferred or believed by the Actor. It is created and maintained on the fly by someone who knows what it means for something to be part of our world. And again, that "knows what it means" is not Observer's knowledge; it is Actor's competence.

So the world makes sense because it is created to make sense by a competent member of the community whose world it is.

Since "a person requires a world in order to have the possibility of engaging in any behavior at all" [A1] and the person creates that world on-the-fly, we will not be surprised to find that direct, first-hand knowing is required to bring it off. An important type of direct, first-hand knowing is feeling (Actor's knowledge of relationship), and in the core feeling of ultimate satisfaction we will find a clear path to understanding (and perhaps resolving) intractable value problems.

Let's take an extended look at ultimate satisfaction.

Beyond Beauty and Elegance

A confession: I am a recovering mathaholic, in recovery from addiction to elegance.

It began when I was 16, at a summer National Science Foundation program for high-school students. One day I was working through the proof that the infinite set of real numbers is larger than the infinite set of integers. The proof builds and builds through logical steps until – all at once, in a single move – it all comes together into a single irrefutable whole. The conclusion was not only true, it was profoundly, *necessarily* true. Words fail in describing the almost ecstatic *rush* of joy that accompanied that insight. It was just so beautiful, so … *elegant*!

That was my first taste, but it soon became a requirement – more insight! More elegance! I plowed through every university math course I could find; I began to mainline pure math, starting with rings and fields and moving on to the most abstract algebras. This went on until I got a wake-up call: I had two years to go in University and I had already taken all the math courses I could count toward graduation. I could feed my habit a little, but most of my time had to be spent studying … things that aren't so elegant. Slowly I began to taper off: I still loved elegance, but I no longer *needed* it. That began a long journey that continues to this day; as any addict knows, one is always recover*ing*, never recovered. The deeply satisfying rush attendant on *getting* a beautiful proof never goes away.

What I am referring to is a profoundly real aspect of the world of mathematicians which in fact is at the core of being "one of us": a real mathematician gets profound aesthetic satisfaction from insights that accompany the best mathematical work. The word used to describe this is "elegance"; the famous 20th century mathematician Paul Erdos referred to it as "reading from the book of God" and it is not clear that he meant that purely as metaphor (Shechter, 2000). It is how mathematicians recognize real math. Mathematics without elegance is just computation;

useful, sure, but not what it's all about.

If you are not a mathematician, most of what I have written here will likely be incomprehensible to you – unless you've experienced it yourself, it's virtually impossible to credit the power of the direct experience of elegance. I hope the mathematicians reading this got at least a chuckle of recognition in the tongue-in-cheek dramatic presentation.

Now, let's put aside the metaphor and use Descriptive Psychology's conceptual network to say directly what all this means.

Again recall [A1]: "A person requires a world in order to have the possibility of engaging in any behavior at all." This is a strong statement. Couple it with "a person is an individual whose life is, paradigmatically, a history of Deliberate Action in a Dramaturgical pattern" (Ossorio, 2013, p. 69) and we see that a person requires a world in order to have the possibility of *being a person*. If we were to make a list of the basic human needs, the need for a world would have to be very near the top.

Accordingly, a person must recognize a world that makes sense and how it makes sense. This is an essential human competence. But that "sense" is not somehow inherent in the objective make-up of the world; it is created by members of communities and embodied in their practices. It has to do with how the ultimate objects, processes and states-of-affairs of that world fit together into a coherent whole.

That the world makes sense, in just the way it does, is inherent in participation in a community's core practices. *How* the world makes sense is recognized directly as first-hand, Actor's knowing. And since it is so essential to the person, the recognition takes the form of a strong feeling with a built-in appraisal, much like fear, the recognition of immediate danger that comes as a strong feeling with a built-in appraisal. We can refer to this feeling – the direct recognition that the world makes sense in just the way it does make sense – as "ultimate satisfaction".

Why "ultimate satisfaction"? Two reasons: (1) As illustrated in the elegance and mathematics example above, the experience is in fact deeply satisfying, and is the sort of thing one seeks opportunities to experience. (2) More technically, ultimate satisfaction arises from participating in a community practice which *requires* acting on the way the world makes sense. Not all community practices are of this sort; indeed, practices that directly involve how the world makes sense are a special set, which we could call "ultimate practices". These are practices that affirm the community's world. Satisfaction accompanies participation; ultimate satisfaction accompanies participation in ultimate practices.

By way of illustration, let's take a closer look at my initiation into the world of mathematics at age 16. What was I doing?

- A mere description is: I was reading a proof in a math book.
- The proof had been recommended to me by a professor in the program, so one thing I was doing by reading the proof was being an apprentice mathematician, one of the known ways to become "one of us".

- By reading the proof I was not just grasping the meaning of the words; I was *checking* the proof of the theorem. One could read each step of the proof and believe it, but that's just "going through the motions"; actually *participating* in the practice requires more. Specifically, I mentally tested each assertion to determine that is was true and that each conclusion in fact followed from what had already been established. These judgments were not "built-into" the proof; I had to see them myself. This – checking theorems – is a core practice of mathematicians, and it depends on the person's competence with how math makes sense.
- The proof of the theorem came with the final statement, when I recognized the irrefutability of the entire proof. That recognition – experienced as a flash of insight when it all came together – was deeply, almost ecstatically satisfying. It was the ultimate satisfaction of a mathematician participating in an ultimate practice.

To summarize: The term "elegance" is commonly used to refer to the ultimate satisfaction of mathematics – the direct experience of the sense mathematics makes. To experience elegance requires participating in a math practice that involves acting on the way the math world makes sense (for example, proving theorems). Participation in math practices does not always evoke ultimate satisfaction (otherwise mathematicians would go around in a perpetual swoon of elegance), but that does not change the fact that the math world always makes sense in just the way it does make sense, to those who are competent to recognize it, i.e. mathematicians.

Now: What is true of the community of mathematicians is true of every community. Drop the specific experience of "elegance" and what remains is this:

- Every community has a shared world that makes sense to its members. The sense it makes is particular to each community's world. This "making sense" is inherent in participation in the community's core practices.
- Every community has a set of ultimate practices, participation in which affirms their world and is accompanied by ultimate satisfaction.
- Ultimate satisfaction is a strong basic human need. Persons are powerfully, inherently motivated to seek it. (See Note 4).
- The specific experience of ultimate satisfaction differs from community to community. Its importance to maintaining the community and its world does not.

In short: ultimate satisfaction holds the world together.

It is also what keeps worlds apart. Let us return to our original examples of intractable value problems to see how this works.

Making Sense of "Senseless" Acts

A young Pakistani man straps high explosives to his body, goes into a public place and detonates the bomb, killing himself and many others. In the American English-language media in the 21st century, the act is reported as "a senseless terrorist act by a suicide bomber." As readers of that media report, we can make up a story about his desperate situation and real motives, but we're just making it up and, if

honest, we admit it's not convincing – to us his act *is* senseless. What is he, nuts? We do not see the ultimate significance of his act let alone appreciate his ultimate satisfaction in performing it.

But as Descriptive Psychologists we take it as given that, in fact, the act makes sense in the world of the bomber and to the bomber himself. And the fact it seems senseless to us is a strong clue that we are dealing with a person in a community whose world is ultimately different from ours. Let's use what we know to unpack that difference and see where it leads us.

We start from a mere description of the act: he detonated a bomb in a public place, killing himself and many others. We have no reason to believe he didn't know what he was doing, so we take it that he intended to detonate the bomb and to kill himself and others. What we need to understand is what was the significance of the act: What was he doing by doing that?

(Let me be clear that I can answer that question with some confidence as a member of a community served by the media; I can speak as an insider, as "one of us" as can all readers of this paper. I can attempt to answer it from the point-of-view of the bomber's community, but this is at best informed speculation: I am not a member of the jihadist community and do not claim to speak with the authority of an insider. This is not an uncommon situation when dealing with intractable value problems. In the following whenever I say "In his world …" assume that to be short for "In his world, as best I understand it …"; "our world" refers to the world shared by consumers of English-language media in the 21st century.)

The media answer is: he was committing suicide and murdering innocent people. To most of us this just seems to be a straightforward elaboration of the initial description – of course that's what he was doing, what's your point? In the bomber's world, characterizing what he did as suicide would seem both insulting and demeaning of the central point of his act. In his world, what he was doing by detonating the bomb was sacrificing himself, and that's not just a semantic difference – it is a profound difference.

In our world, the individual person is an ultimate object, and living one's life an ultimate process. Our world does not require or readily allow for something more fundamental. A person living his life in his own way is not typically remarkable to us – that's what people do, after all. To kill yourself is an ultimate violation in our world; only under very special circumstances, like insanity or a painful fatal disease, can we understand it at all. It's senseless.

In the bomber's world, Allah is the ultimate object, and a person has meaning only in relationship to Allah. The ultimate process is service to Allah; the details of one's personal life are just details, not fundamentally important. Participating in ultimate practices of this community, affirming its world, is a matter of acting in service to Allah; the ultimate satisfaction that accompanies this participation can be described as "righteousness". This is not the much-maligned "self-righteousness" of our world; it is the powerful experience that accompanies faithfully serving Allah, and it is as strong and compelling to the faithful as elegance is to mathematicians.

Here we see two different worlds, looking at each other in mutual incomprehension. This is often framed as a values conflict; our commentators say "They just don't value individual life the way we do". The jihadists find such statements deeply offensive and wrong-headed. Of course they value individual life, greatly, but life isn't worth living when it is bereft of righteousness; Allah, not the individual person, is ultimate. Thus, what seems initially as an intractable values conflict is seen as something even more fundamental: a collision between two different worlds.

And what of those innocent murdered bystanders? In our world, where the ultimate process is individual action, anything that happens to a person is either the result of someone's intentional act, or a matter of random chance. Those bystanders had done nothing to "deserve" their death in the bomb blast; thus they are innocent, the victims of both the bomber and sheer bad luck.

To the jihadist, everything happens through the will of Allah. Everyone dies, and the time and manner of death is determined by Allah, not by a person or chance. The bomber was merely a servant, carrying out Allah's will; everyone died in their appropriate place and manner. Especially if they were among the faithful, their deaths call, not for mourning, but for rejoicing, and the bomber goes out in a state of ultimate, righteous satisfaction.

One final issue: Where did the bomber get the idea that the way to serve Allah was to strap on a bomb and detonate it in a public place? Answering this requires a great deal more insight into the jihadist's world than I have. It is certainly possible, as members of other Islamic communities have suggested, that these bombers are wrong about their act being service to Allah. It is well known that mathematicians sometimes experience the ultimate satisfaction of an elegant proof, only to find later that they missed a step and the theorem was not proved after all. This does not mean ultimate satisfaction is an illusion or the world does not in fact make sense; it just means that, sometimes, we are wrong. That's also an inherent part of being a person.

When Science Meets Enlightenment

Some communities have a shared world that includes an ultimate creator; others do not. This significant difference shows up in many important ways when such worlds collide, as we noticed in the jihadist discussion above. The difference is especially problematic in the collision between the scientific world and spiritual world. (I use the term 'spiritual' as a content-neutral reference to communities whose world includes an ultimate creator.)

The World of Science

That the scientific collides with the spiritual world is not surprising, of course. Science as a community began centuries ago as an explicit rejection of explanations that make sense of the world by saying, essentially: "It's this way because that's how God made it." The scientific enterprise set out to make sense of the world by making careful observations of what there is in the world and giving formulations of how things work. These formulations were *required* to fit together without the need for external support. From the beginning and by intent, science has had no need

or place for a supreme being; indeed, any explanation that invoked a supreme being was properly rejected out-of-hand as "unscientific" (i.e. not an explanation that counts as such in the world of science.)

In science things fit together, not just on the surface or in any old way, but in a rigorous way that reveals a deeper structure if you have the eyes to see it, that is, if you are a scientist. Seeing how the world makes sense in this way is deeply aesthetically satisfying to scientists; indeed, it is the ultimate satisfaction that affirms the world of science to scientists. In these ways the community of science is exactly like every other community: Its members share a world in which the ultimates fit together in a way that is discernible to anyone who actually participates in its practices, and which is deeply, ultimately satisfying.

Science is like other communities in another important way: Scientists see their world as *the* world. Scientists acknowledge that others may not share their view, but they take this as evidence that those others are *wrong* (misguided, misinformed, primitive, uneducated, stupid, delusional, too weak to face reality without the crutch of faith – as it turns out, "wrong" comes in a remarkable variety of flavors.) To be clear, again, this is not specific to the scientific community; *every* community sees their world as *the* world. For example, spiritual communities take the scientist's view as wrong (misinformed, egocentric, arrogant, faithless, impoverished, ignorant, naïve, childish, pitiful for their obvious lack of spiritual experience.) I wish I could say I was exaggerating the matter here for effect; in fact, a brief glance at internet sites regarding science and religion will reveal that I am, if anything, understating it. We are talking about people's *world* here, and people will do whatever it takes to defend and preserve their world.

For centuries science and spiritual communities lived together in a more or less uneasy accord but that has shifted in recent decades. The world of scientists has arguably become the *de facto* official world of English-language media in the 21st century, as witness the daily reports of how scientific experiments explain what's really going on with (fill in the blank). And this is not some quirk of the media; we consumers of these reports do, in a certain sense, share in the view. We feel that we have a better insight into some matter because we have an account that makes sense of it in scientific terms.

This remarkable success in promulgating the scientific worldview has lead some scientists to rather imperious behavior. Their claim is not just that science does a great job of making sense of the world; they assert that the scientific view is the *only* valid view. Any view that conflicts with or contradicts the scientific is at best outdated, at worst pernicious. The evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins is among the more blatant examples of this. His books, including the archly-titled *The God Delusion* (Dawkins, 2006) assert that complex structure emerges from the natural operation of specifiable rules ("algorithms") such as evolution; science has no place for an "intelligent designer." (Of course it doesn't; that was built into science at its core from the beginning.)

At this point a sort of "science-lite" is well-established as a *de facto* worldview – all the scientific results and the reassuring awareness that the world makes sense, without all the hard bits like actual math or experimental design. In that sense scientists today ironically serve essentially the same function as the priests they set out to displace centuries ago: speaking to us the truth that is known to them but to which we do not have access directly. (That's OK; they are trusted sources and we take their world for it. More on this crucial point later.) As a result science has the "home-field" advantage in any contest with other communities; we may not all participate in the scientific world (only actual scientists do that) but we are knowledgeable observers of that world and it makes reassuring sense to us. If we are to get traction in understanding the science vs. spiritual conflict we need a good insider's account of their world from people who participate as members of spiritual communities. For most of us, this is unfamiliar territory.

But where shall we find these spiritual insiders? We might be inclined to look in a lamasery in Tibet, or among monks on Mt. Athos for spirituality in a "pure" form, but that is neither necessary nor useful. Most of us find such "exotic" testimony fascinating, but very difficult to relate to our own world. If we are to come to a useful understanding of the spiritual world and what holds it together, we need to look closer to home, for people like us who are also insiders in a spiritual community. Fortunately, in 21st century America such people are relatively easy to find if you know where to look – and some of them are, perhaps astonishingly, also full-fledged scientists! (How they bring this off is addressed in "Good Cop Bad Dad" later in this paper; for now let it suffice to note that they thrive and are adept within both worlds.)

What follows is my report and reconstruction of the world of an actual spiritual community, as shared with me by some of its members. I checked the report with members of another, different spiritual community; although there were, as expected, differences in terminology and practice, the second community confirmed that the ultimates, as reported here, are the same. To protect their privacy the identity of these communities and individuals is concealed.

The World of Satchitananda

Eastern spiritual traditions talk about – and their practitioners report experiencing – an ultimate experience that accompanies the direct recognition of the Truth. A commonly used word that refers to that experience is "bliss" ("ananda" in ancient Sanskrit) and it is said to be incomparably ecstatic. This bliss is held to be inherent in all things, times and places. The spiritual practitioner experiences it in a flash of insight in which the Truth of the universe – how the world and everything in it holds together – is revealed. This is the ultimate satisfaction that accompanies participation in spiritual practices of an actual spiritual community.

As a mathematician I am struck by the similarity between the description of the experience of "bliss" and my own experience of elegance. Both initially accompany a flash of insight, in which important truth is revealed. Both are powerful, even ecstatic experiences, that seem somehow inherent and a matter of recognition

– the truth was there all along, but I just now saw it and it's beautiful! Once experienced, both can be intentionally sought and experienced again, and one is strongly motivated to do so. I am not suggesting that elegance and bliss are the same (neither am I asserting they are not); just that, given the ultimates of their respective worlds, both mathematicians and spiritual practitioners experience ultimate satisfaction. (As Mary Roberts points out in her canonical paper "Worlds of Uncertain Status", so do Descriptive Psychologists. Her delightful term is "pattern bliss – the thrill of recognizing a pattern and its real world applicability." (Roberts, 2009b, p. 301.))

What are the ultimates of this spiritual world? They are encoded in an ancient Sanskrit word: *satchitananda*, which among other usages commonly refers to the ultimate creator. This is actually three words together: sat, which means being; chit, which means consciousness; and ananda, which means bliss. Roughly (always bearing in mind the slippage inherent in translating fundamental concepts between languages) these can be seen as the ultimate object (sat), ultimate process (chit) and ultimate satisfaction (ananda) of the world of the spiritual community. (In a prior paper I offered some speculations about how these concepts might connect to some core Descriptive Psychology concepts (Putman, 1998); in this paper I intend as best I can to take them at face value as used in the spiritual communities.)

All the above is Observer talk about the community – what is said by them or about them. This only gets us so far and it's not nearly far enough. An engineer friend of mine commonly dismisses such talk out-of-hand as "that Zen bullshit" and his response, while perhaps extreme, is not uncommon. None of this talk refers to anything at all that we ourselves have experienced; it might as well be from a fantasy novel for all the connection it has to our world. We need to experience it for ourselves; failing that, we need to hear accounts of the actual experience from credible sources, people like us who have had these experiences and can tell us about it.

I have heard from a large number of spiritual practitioners about their experience. I know some of these people personally and I have no reason to believe what they say is anything other than the truth of their lives as best they can tell it. Here, from some such accounts:

- Is "bliss"' just a metaphor, or an aspiration – something promised and strived for but never attained? Literally hundreds of people have told me that they have personally had direct experiences of bliss, and many say it has become a reliable part of their day-to-day life.
- But is "bliss" all it's cracked up to be? Overwhelmingly they report their experience of bliss to be ecstatic – "it far exceeds even my wildest fantasy of what it would be like" is a common remark – and say it is incomparable. A few made a point of remarking that they were experienced with LSD and other psychedelics. Some said that "bliss" is like the best LSD high they ever had; others say there is simply no comparison, bliss being incomparably greater.
- Is "bliss" a one-time thing that leaves you "enlightened"? No, and no. The large majority report that, like elegance, once you experience bliss you are

motivated to experience it again and to make it a part of your on-going life. Many say this is an on-going process, even a struggle, and evolves over time; they mostly just laugh at the idea that they are enlightened – often accompanied by "Whatever *that* means!"

- What's it like to experience bliss on a regular basis? Accounts of this are as varied as the lives and people reporting on them. Let's close this section with a verbatim report from one person I know well who has been participating in the spiritual practices of her community for over 40 years:

  "Years ago I heard a great teacher say: 'You can see the light anytime you like.' I decided to take that, not as an aspiration or mere teaching, but as a personal gift from someone capable of bestowing it. I contemplated this, and as I did the world around me began to change very subtly but powerfully. As I looked around me I literally saw light shining through everything; the table and chairs and my tea cup and the trees – *everything* appeared to be covered with the thinnest of skins, barely containing this light, this luminous energy of which they were made. As I saw the light, my heart was filled with pulsing, ecstatic joy and I was aware that I was directly experiencing the truth of the world; it is Satchitananda – being, consciousness and bliss.

  "The best part is that the teacher did not just say 'you can see the light'; she said 'you can see the light *anytime you like*'! To this day all I have to do is remember "The light!" and I once again am immersed in that experience of light and bliss. I do this frequently. I have learned to dial the experience back, so to speak, so that it's not always so overwhelming, but that's my choice; I can also experience satchitananda in its fullness any time I like."

The intent of this account is *not* to persuade or convince anyone that the spiritual world is real, but rather to give readers good reason to conclude that communities exist in which the spiritual world *is* real to its participants, as real to them as the world of science is to scientists. Our purpose here is not to declare a winner; it is to make clear how and why the notion of "winner" in these cases simply does not apply. Worlds coexist (literally) and sometimes collide. If we are to gain any traction in understanding and resolving these collisions, we are well served to see how the world makes sense in *both* communities rather than declaring one right and the other wrong.

Let's dig a little deeper into the science-spiritual collision as it plays out in our public discourse. Even though it's not fundamentally a matter of determining which world is right, it often looks that way, and that appearance leads to conflict and dead-ends. Science advocates commonly play what they consider to be a trump card in this discourse: Unlike science, spiritual communities are based on faith, which is "belief that is not based on evidence." This statement, as it turns out, relies on unreliable usages of the concepts of belief, faith and evidence. Descriptive

Psychologists follow a careful discipline in using such concepts, which we will find helpful in sorting out these claims.

Beyond Belief and Faith

In developing Descriptive Psychology in the 1960's Peter G. Ossorio found it necessary to deal with a number of "ways of talking" that could not bear the weight of being taken seriously as meaning what it said. Prominent among these was the very popular: "It's all just belief. What you think you know is just *your* belief. I have my own beliefs; we all have our own beliefs, and nobody has any claim to have their beliefs taken more seriously than anyone else's." In other words of the '60's: "Don't lay your trip on me, man!"

This conceptual confounding of knowledge and belief hardly bears a second look; Ossorio just cleaned it up and built from there. But its sibling is still common: "The essential difference between cultures is their beliefs." I take this to be a good-faith effort to articulate something important without the conceptual framework required to do it justice. What differs between cultures is worlds, as we have seen. Let's see more clearly where belief enters into it.

First, let's revisit the conceptual clean-up Ossorio achieved. To do justice to persons and their actions we need *both* concepts, knowledge and belief. (For simplicity I will use the term "knowing" interchangeably here with knowledge; please be advised that they are distinct but related concepts in the Descriptive Psychology lexicon.) For instance, I know that my coffee mug is sitting on my desk just to the right of my keyboard. I see it there; I recognize my own mug; I know I can reach out, pick it up and take a sip. None of this is a matter of belief because I have no actual doubt about it. That doesn't mean I can't be wrong: someone may have slipped in a mug that looks just like mine as a prank; I may suffer a bicep cramp that prevents me from picking it up; I might even be having a brief hallucination of a mug that's not actually there. Unlikely as these might be, they are possible things that happen in the world I live in, but that does not mean I only *believed* my coffee mug was there. I knew it was, and in the case of the prank I was wrong. This is perspicaciously expressed in the first maxim Ossorio articulated: "A person takes it that things are as they seem unless he has reason to believe otherwise."

Back to that coffee: on the other hand, I *believe* that the sip I take will be hot, tasty coffee. I don't know that with practical certainty because I haven't tasted it yet. It might be cold, or yesterday's leftovers or those cut-rate beans a friend gave me. I don't know, and this sort of thing happens often enough that, were you to ask me if I know the coffee is good, I would have to say "Hold on a minute ... (sip) … yeah, good coffee though not quite as hot as I like it." I'm willing to act on my belief, just as I'm willing to act on my knowledge.

Notice that what I believe – that the cup is filled with hot tasty coffee – is in fact something my wife *knows*. As it turns out, on this occasion she has brewed the coffee with good beans, poured herself a small cup, filled my mug and kindly brought it to my office before she left for a meeting. For her there is no actual doubt

about it. She *knows*; I *believe*; and the difference is not in the situation, it is in the person's relationship to the situation.

And that difference matters. Perhaps I look at my coffee mug and see it is filled with an odd-smelling green liquid. My wife knows what it is; she brewed it, tasted it, filled my mug and brought it to me, knowing that in the past I have said I liked yerba mate. But I'm not sure what this stuff is, only that my wife brought it to me. I may believe I will like it, but I don't know, and in this case I'm not willing to act on that belief. I take it back to the kitchen, pour it out and make myself a cup of coffee.

In short, the difference between knowledge and belief is: A person is willing to act on what they know (unless they have stronger reason not to – another maxim.) They may or may not be willing to act on what they believe. Since it is the paradigm case of intentional action, we have no special term for acting on what a person knows; acting on what a person believes is referred to as acting on *faith*. To put it succinctly: a person's action is an act of faith when they *believe*, but do not *know*, how their behavior will turn out. (Again, "know" implies a pragmatic guarantee of success rather than some impossible absolute certainty.)

One more clarification: While it is tempting to distinguish "know" from "believe" on the basis of evidence or direct experience, this is not in fact where the difference lies. What a person knows about the world is largely determined by what trusted sources have told them about it. As Ossorio once pointed out, if a child at age 5 is told by her father that polar bears are dangerous, that becomes part of what she knows about the world, so much so that, with no intervening history of encountering polar bears, should she write down at age 30 everything she knows about polar bears, we can be sure that "dangerous" will be high on the list. To say she knows it rather than believes it is to say it requires no faith on her part to act on it.

With these distinctions in hand, we revisit the worlds of science and spirituality.

Belief and Faith in Science

Belief and faith are obviously important in spiritual communities. Indeed, that fact is often used by science advocates as a degradation: "Our scientific world is based strictly on knowledge and evidence, with no room for faith and belief; their spiritual world is based in faith and belief for which there is no evidence." At this point we can see that such statements are simply wrong on both counts, reflecting the fact that, while physics does a great job of understanding the physical universe, it is woefully ill-equipped to make sense of what people – including scientist people – do.

Let's sort this out.

Belief and faith are central to a spiritual community. Perhaps less obviously, knowledge is also central. For example, knowing what meditation is, how it's done, where and when is a requirement for participating in many spiritual communities. There is no doubt about any of these; they are known by members, not believed. That meditation leads to a state of bliss is, for most members, a belief; they meditate as an act of faith. But for adepts in the community, meditation leading to bliss is a

known fact; they've seen it, they routinely experience it and there is no actual doubt that it works that way. For them meditation requires no beliefs nor faith; it's just the done thing among us.

In sum: participation in a spiritual community requires knowledge, belief and faith. But as we shall see, participation in a scientific community requires exactly the same: knowledge, belief and faith. The content of the beliefs and the acts that require faith differ between the two; the central requirements are the same.

Two examples of belief and faith in science readily come to mind: the Higgs boson, and string theory.

As this paper was being written, the media reported big news in the world of science: at long last, data from the CERN labs had confirmed the existence of the Higgs boson! This was reported as the final, crucial piece in confirming the "standard model" of elementary particles, which is a very big deal indeed in physics. Physicists can now say confidently that they *know* the Higgs boson is real, and the standard model works as intended. (Or so we are told. I wager that nobody reading this paper is in fact competent to participate in the practices required to conclude for themselves that the data in fact confirms the Higgs, nor for that matter knowledgeable enough to say what the Higgs actually is and does. But that's OK; reliable sources tell us this is real, and important, and we have no reason *not* to take their word for it.)

A small question: before the data was in, did physicists *know* the Higgs was real? Of course they didn't. They *believed* it was real. Their belief was strong enough, and the issue important enough, that they were willing to invest literally billions of dollars and thousands of years of professional effort to find out if what they believed is true. Did they know with pragmatic certainty how the research would turn out? Of course not; that's why they call it research. Clearly, then, the CERN research program was an act of faith, and as it turned out, the faith seems to have been fully justified.

Please note that this is not meant as a jibe at scientists, nor is it intended to embarrass or degrade scientists in any way. Pointing out that the practices of the scientific community require belief and faith is nothing more than stating the obvious: Science is a community of persons, who share a world and a set of practices. *All* communities of persons require knowledge, belief and faith whether they are comfortable admitting it or not.

But what of the scientists who say: "What we do is rooted in solid evidence; what they do is based on blind faith." I would first suggest that a scientist interact for a while with someone who lives constantly in the world of satchitananda before concluding that the spiritual world's faith is "blind" and based on no evidence. But more cogently, I would point to the remarkable and embarrassing history of string theory in physics and ask the scientist to tell me what evidence it is rooted in.

As explained at length by the eminent physicist Lee Smolin in his book *The Trouble With Physics* (Smolin, 2006), string theory has captivated an enormous amount of attention and effort in theoretical physics over the past 25 years, but

it has yielded *no* new predictions that can be tested in research. None. Not one. Perhaps worse, string theory has not converged into a single coherent model; in fact over time it has diverged into a number (perhaps even an infinite number) of different versions. By ordinary standards of science this is a colossal failure, and would lead to abandoning the whole enterprise as a dead end. But in fact, practitioners of string theory charge on, saying that the theory is too beautiful to not be true, it's so … *elegant!* Some of its defenders have actually said that string theory is a true theory of the universe(s), but humans are not yet intelligent enough to comprehend it; we can only catch glimpses of its majesty.

If that's not blind faith, I'm not sure what is.

In a World of Science and Enlightenment

To conclude this section, let's review what we have accomplished:

- We have seen that both the science world and the spiritual world make coherent sense to their members. The way they make sense is different; *that* they make sense is the same.
- We have seen that both worlds require knowledge, belief and faith from their participants – indeed, this is true of every world of every community.
- We have seen that neither science nor spirit "win"; worlds coexist and sometimes collide, but it is not in any meaningful (by contrast with rhetorical) sense a contest.

The purpose of this section is not to persuade or convince scientists or spiritual practitioners of anything, although I hope some might find it at least thought-provoking. Nor is the purpose to resolve the intractable significance problems between worlds; resolution requires appeals to shared practices and standards, and those are exactly what the worlds of science and spirit do *not* share.

The purpose of this section is to support the *rest* of us – the many readers who are not hard-core scientists nor full-fledged spiritual practitioners – in understanding how these conflicts come about and what we can do about them. Perhaps what emerges as the best advice is the old physician's adage: "First, do no harm." Don't take sides or encourage rhetorical conflicts between worlds. Embrace scientists talking about science and spiritual communities talking about spiritual matters; turn a deaf ear to outsiders commenting on insider matters. Most of all, perhaps we should see the importance of maintaining (some would say restoring) civil discourse in our media, allowing for and appreciating differences rather than criticizing them with inflammatory rhetoric.

Of course, not all worlds are as distinct from one another as are science and spirit. Some exist side-by-side, within the same institutions, but the collision of their worlds is no less problematic. We will explore such collisions in the next section.

Worlds Within Worlds

The membership of the jihadist community overlaps barely at all with the membership of the 21st century English-language media. Some scientists are also

spiritual practitioners and vice versa, but by and large there is little common interaction. Accordingly, we can see how they might inhabit different, colliding worlds.

But what about someone in the office next to you, in the same organization or academic institution? Is it really possible for your world to collide with someone you see daily, perhaps even someone you meet for a drink after work? It is not only possible; it is common. It happens with most of us many times a day, and how we deal with it determines in large part our success in navigating our complex world of persons and their ways.

Let's revisit our school curriculum example for illustration. Recall that three groups – teachers, principals and School Board members – held three incompatible views on thorny curriculum issues. What looked like the best curriculum to one group was a weak compromise to another, and some proposed solutions were plainly anathema to everyone except the group proposing them. Each group saw their solution as best serving the needs of the school's "customers" – but each group had a different set of customers in mind! Teachers saw students as their customers; to principals it was the state and district administrators who set policy and guidelines; and the School Board members took as their ultimate customers the parents and local taxpayers who ultimately paid everyone's salaries. By now we should recognize all the earmarks of worlds in collision: the other side's argument just doesn't make sense!

Here's where this gets really interesting: These are all members of the same school district, disputing among themselves! They work in the same schools and administrative buildings, attend many of the same meetings, take responsibility for the education of the same children; their paychecks are all drawn on the same bank accounts. Surely the fact that they share an organization means they share a common world, doesn't it?

Well, yes, it does but no, that's not all there is to it. They all participate as members of the school district (which is an institution, a type of community) and as such share that world. But their participation is fundamentally *as* a member of a specific community of practice (teachers, principals, etc.) each of which has its own specific world. In short, they all participate in the practices of one community by participating in the practices of another community.

Hold on here – communities within communities? Yes, that's exactly what we have here. Not only that: communities within communities turn out to be the rule rather than the exception. Let's pause for a moment to flesh out some important implications of this assertion.

Begin by recalling that "community" in Descriptive Psychology does not refer to any particular place-in-time, nor does it refer to a group of specific individuals. In that sense, community is almost endlessly and instantly portable. At any given time or place, all it takes to create an actual chess community is a few people who are genuine chess players along with a board and some chess pieces (although in a pinch you can just draw an 8x8 grid on the floor and use pennies for pawns, nickels for knights, etc. – you need the players, you can usually improvise the props.)

Obviously, people recognize and participate in communities all the time. This is a core part of a person's competence. A perhaps less obvious but equally central part of being a person is the competence to create new communities and the world that goes with them, and then inhabit that world as a native. Briefly, what it takes is someone seeing the world in the light of some ultimates (objects, processes, and/or states-of-affairs), getting a few people to share that view, finding ways to talk about and act on these ultimates and recognizing that this world makes sense in a specific, different way from the world we started from. (For an extended discussion of community and world creation, see Putman, 1998.)

It's Different In Organizations

Sometimes communities are created "from scratch", as it were, like the "Children of God" community referenced in Putman, 1998. Before its members created it, there was no such community nor world. But this is the exception, albeit an important one. In most cases, we see people creating an actual community with ultimates, practices, statuses and so forth known to them from their prior participation in just such communities. Chess players already have all they need to form a chess community anywhere; all they require is an opportunity – a few other players and some time to play. Likewise, software engineers, marketers, accountants and so forth move from organization to organization, taking their world with them; they either join the existing actual community, or start a new one based on their prior participation. Again, this is so common that we scarcely notice it; it's just part of being a person in a community.

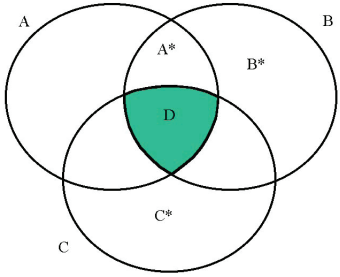
An organization is a community with a shared mission, and as such is a particularly interesting example of communities within communities (see Putman 1990 for an extended articulation of this). Members of an organization view their world from the point of view of their place in the organization, which includes their place within a community of practice (software engineering, marketing, etc.) These communities of practice have worlds with very different ultimates; as a result, collision among organization members about what is important and how to make sense of the current situation is built-in.

But unlike the colliding worlds of our prior examples, organization members cannot just act on what they see and how things makes sense to them; they must also *simultaneously* act in service of the shared mission. (Generically, that mission is to create value in the lives of a specific group of individuals; each organization has its own specific version.) That is, what they do will be a case of acting on how the world makes sense to them right now, while also being a case of contributing to the organization's mission. This dual requirement is, again, the rule rather than the exception in organizational life; as we shall see in the next section, it is common in day-to-day life as well. In each case it can be problematic because it seems to require a person to simultaneously see two different worlds from two different places (e.g. engineer and Ford employee). People are amazingly competent at many things (Putman, 2009); being in two places at once is not among them.

Accordingly, organizations have developed managerial and leadership

practices to support members in this seemingly impossible feat. This gives us leverage on resolving some of these intractable value problems: So long as the collisions occur within the shared context of a larger community, it may be possible to find resolution of sorts. Let us return to that warring school district for an example of how this can work. (This "war" and its resolution are real instances drawn from the consulting work of the author.)

We were dealing with three distinct *views* of the world, and therefore of the value the organization exists to create. This situation is depicted in Figure 1.



Each circle represents the set of good answers to the question, "What should our curriculum be?" from the viewpoint of (A) teachers, (B) principals and (C) School Board members. The best answer from each group's viewpoint is represented as A*, B* and C*, respectively.

Note the obvious:

- The best answers are not the same from group to group.
- The best answer from the School Board's point of view, C*, is not even among the good answers for the other two groups.
- No "best answer" is a good answer for all three groups.
- Any answer that does not fall into the "good answer" category for one group will not receive commitment and participation from that group.

Notice also that there is a small area, D, which falls within the "good answer" category for all three groups. Resolution in this situation can be found by directing the group's attention to D and helping them choose a path from among the D answers – because all three groups can commit to and participate in D. And note that not just any answer will do – it must be one that looks good to all three.

This strategy – looking at the issue from all viewpoints and searching only for answers that look good from all viewpoints – can give all the participants what they require. With hard work and good will, it enabled the curriculum trouble-shooting session to come to an unexpectedly productive conclusion. (Further elaboration is found in Putman, 2013b).

In sum, resolution of colliding worlds is not only possible in organizations, it is necessary and common.

This may give us hope as we examine our final example of intractable value problems, in which we leave behind the structure provided by differing cultures, communities, professions and organizations and look directly at how worlds collide in the day-to-day lives of ordinary people like you and me.

Personal Worlds

Recall our final example of intractable value problems:

> Kyle is a 15-year-old student whose parents have just discovered he is selling marijuana to his friends. His father Bill, a policeman from a family of policemen, knows exactly what to do – the boy needs a wake-up call from the criminal justice system. He has seen too many boys escalate from dealer to career criminal. Kyle's mother Linda, a social worker from a family of teachers and therapists, is horrified at the thought of turning her own son in, even if he does get off with juvenile detention – she has seen too many young men who have been permanently scarred by "juvie". She insists on taking Kyle to family counseling and working out a behavioral contract to keep him out of further trouble. Both parents are adamant in opposing the other's plan; each sees the other as being rigid and out of touch with the real world.

(Let' start by acknowledging that this is not a gender issue: Mom could be the cop, and Dad the social-worker and the dilemma would be the same.)

We have now removed the comforting distance provided by differing cultures or professions or organizations and brought world collision down to our most personal context: the family. By now it should be evident that this is not just a matter of differing values (e.g. discipline vs. compassion). What we have here are two distinct worlds in collision. Bill is a core member of a law-enforcement community whose ultimates include criminal acts, perpetrators, victims, evidence, arresting officers, trial, justice and sentencing. Linda is a full-fledged member of a social-work community whose ultimates include clients, family background, advocates for the disadvantaged, protecting clients from institutional abuse, counseling and rehabilitation. What Bill suggests for dealing with Kyle simply does not make sense in Linda's world, and vice versa.

Ah, but they are both parents! They share a family and that's a type of community, isn't it? After all, we routinely resolve world collisions in organizations; why not here? Isn't that the avenue to resolving the problem?

It might be, but let's not get our hopes up too fast. It is true that the family is a community of sorts, and therefore shares a world of sorts, but a family is not *just* a community and the difference matters. Unlike an organization, a family does not have an external mission that takes precedence over other considerations. And unlike a paradigm case community, one neither becomes a member nor leaves. A person is born into their family and while much about families can change, the bare fact of being family does not. Your brother is your brother no matter how you feel about him or refuse to talk to him. You can disinherit or even disown a child but

that's just a legal formality; it doesn't change the fact that she is and always will be your daughter (or was once your daughter and is now your son). The root of family is status that is neither earned nor lost; in technical Descriptive Psychology terms, neither open to accreditation nor degradation. This difference in a sense defines "family" and may make other considerations less relevant. (Further articulating the conceptual connections among family, community and culture is left to a future paper.)

Family is in effect a person's first community, where a person originally learns about the world and how to be a person in it. In particular, it's where a person learns how to be a Dad or Mom, by seeing how one's own parents did it. Again, this is Actor's knowledge, and it manifests as a direct, sure knowing of what to do in a situation calling for Dad or Mom to act. As adults we may have a very different standard for what being a good parent entails; our Critic may even abhor what we saw as children. Nonetheless, as any therapist can testify, it's a lot easier to say "I'll never be like my Dad with my kids" than it is to actually deliver on that when the chips are down. The world as you came to know it as a child remains with you throughout your life, as one of the available worlds in which you can be. It certainly may be supplemented or even essentially replaced by other worlds as we become members of different communities, but it's always there as a possible world, and it can readily become our actual world when a status we learned early on is called for.

Bill and Linda's views are over-determined in a sense: For both of them, the world they learned as children and the world they inhabit as professionals lead to the same, colliding views. This is not to say it's an impossible dilemma. People face and resolve this sort of intractable value problem all the time, but they also often fail to resolve it, despite strong marriages and good will all around. This is a matter of two different worlds that make conflicting sense, in a context – family – in which we ordinarily expect a deep sharing of everything of personal importance. It takes substantial work and insight to resolve this sort of problem, and it doesn't always work.

But before we look at possible avenues of resolution, let's turn the screw one final time. Family is not the most personal or even common context in which we find intractable problems from worlds colliding. For that, we must turn to a person's own life.

Good Cop, Bad Dad

Let's drop Mom from the picture for a while and focus on Dad. Bill indeed is a cop from a family of law-enforcement officers; as such, he sees clearly what must be done with Kyle. He is also a loving and supportive Dad, who has spent considerable time, with the active support of Linda, ridding himself of what he calls the "toxic residue" of how his own Dad treated Bill. As a police officer, he is proud when someone says "You remind me of your Dad"; as a father, Bill would take that as a devastating criticism and a reminder to watch himself more carefully.

So Bill doesn't even need Linda in the picture to be caught in an intractable world collision. The collision is between worlds in which Bill himself lives important

parts of his life. At the outset he faces an intolerable choice: he can be a good cop, or a good dad, but he can't be both.

This kind of intolerable collision is fortunately not a day-to-day event for most of us, but moving among incompatible worlds is. Obviously, people recognize and participate in communities all the time. This is a core part of a person's competence. They do so in a way that makes sense to them and to other participants because that's part of the world making sense (recall: "The world makes sense and so do people.")

Moreover, the communities a person moves among can differ radically in the ultimates that comprise and bound their worlds. Accordingly, what the person is conscious *of* and conscious *as* can differ radically. And it takes essentially no time at all to make the transition.

Consider, for example, a traditional economist who loves playing chess over her lunch break. As an economist she is conscious of a world of numbers expressing supply, demand, monetary velocity and other measures of economic activity, and she relates these in processes defined by quite precise equations. As a chess player she is conscious of a world of pieces, players and moves that are bounded by the rules of chess and the board. She does not make sense of her moves using precise equations or measures of any kind; instead she looks at the pattern of pieces for potential lines of attack or defense. Crucially, she does not see the chess board or think about it *as* an economist; she does not look for or even notice economic facts, and she thinks as a chess player. If economic talk spills over to the chess board, she recognizes it as purely metaphor and may find it amusing: "I have to question the marginal utility of that rook move."

Our economist is also a wife, mother, member of her church, director on two corporate boards, enthusiastic Zumba dancer and big-sister to three underprivileged girls. She moves among these communities smoothly, recognizing who she is at any given time and being conscious *of* and *as* what is appropriate. She navigates these various worlds effortlessly (doing justice to them all may strain her time and energy resources, but that's another matter) because that's simply what is involved in being a person. This is a powerful, necessary core competence. Further she has no problem keeping track of who she *really* is in all this navigation (although as we see with Bill and Linda, the demands of different communities may be very difficult to reconcile); she is always "*me*". And "me" is not yet another place in some ultimate, superordinate community: What holds everything together for "me" is *my life*. Persons live their lives in communities: The worlds of their communities make sense to them, they experience ultimate satisfaction from participating in their communities, and the ultimate significance to the person of all this participation is, "It's how I live *my* life."

"My life" provides the context Bill needs to find a resolution to his intractable value problem. It requires him to acknowledge that Cop and Dad are places in his communities; they are crucial to his identity, but they are not the whole story. As "me" he can choose actions that fit him while not violating his identity as Cop or

Dad. Here are two tried-and-true ways of doing that:

He can look to a larger community in which he is a member, and in which Cop and Dad have a place. For example, he can turn to the larger community of the Justice System, in which both law enforcement and families ***per se*** have places. Here he may find known ways of dealing with Kyle's situation that he can approve both as Cop and as Dad.

Alternatively, he can use a method for dealing with World Collision in organizations depicted above. As Cop, Bill decides what is the best solution to Kyle's situation. As Dad he does the same thing (but see below for a caution.) If either of these solutions looks good to both Dad and Cop, the issue is resolved. Usually, however, it's not that easy. Bill then lists every solution he can think of that, while not the best, is still a good Cop solution; he does the same thing as Dad. Typically, Bill will only get a little way into his Dad list before recognizing that he has found something that looks good to both Dad and Cop. This method can also be used to help Bill and Linda find a resolution that they can both support.

Looking for good Dad solutions may be more difficult than one might hope. Recognizing a good solution is Actor knowing, and as we noted above as Dad Bill's actor knowing may stem more from his cop upbringing that his current standards. Bill may find a second party like a counselor or therapist helpful to sort this out.

In conclusion: intractable value problems are actually intractable significance problems, which arise from the collision of the different worlds of distinctive communities. These worlds each makes sense to their participants, and are held together by the ultimate satisfaction members experience through their participation in its practices. Ultimate satisfaction also keeps world apart, in that how the world makes sense differs from community to community. These problems are difficult to resolve, but not always impossible. This is fortunate, because worlds colliding is an inherent and pervasive aspect of everyday life.

In other words, with apologies to John Dunne: When it comes to worlds colliding, send not to find for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for us.

Note 1: In this paper the author has used the community paradigm, along with some variations on it: culture, organization, profession, institution, family. These and several more are forms of community description; only a few have been formally articulated as such. With a nod to Ossorio's early and seminal paper "Notes on behavior description" (Ossorio, 1981) I am preparing "Notes on community description" for publication in 2014.

Note 2: Ossorio's four slogans are:

The world makes sense and so do people. They make sense *now*.

It's one world. Everything fits together. Everything is related to everything else. Things are what they are and not something else instead.

Don't count on the world to be simpler than it has to be. (Ossorio, 2006, p. 2)

Note 3: Ossorio's slogan, "The world makes sense and so do people" was explicitly that of a Descriptive Psychologist. As such, he was describing the world of the community of Descriptive Psychology, which is ultimately "a world of persons and their ways." This community is unique, in that its world includes the *concept* of world and *practices* requiring the use of that concept – articulating the concepts of community and culture, world reconstruction, Actor's world vs. Observer/Critic world, formal articulation of world as state-of-affairs, etc. Most distinctively, since the world of Descriptive Psychology includes persons and their behavior *per se*, it also formally includes all other worlds by articulating what the persons in those communities do. This is articulated in great and specific depth in Ossorio's writings, most notably in "What Actually Happens" (Ossorio, 1971/1975/1978/2005) and by Mary Roberts in her paper "An Indeterminate and Expansive World" (Roberts, 2009a) and in her 2012 Presidential Address to the Society for Descriptive Psychology, "Invisible to the Naked Eye".

Note 4: Some early readers of this paper have suggested that people are "addicted to" ultimate satisfaction, making ultimate satisfaction derivative from addiction. I think that is exactly backwards. Experiencing ultimate satisfaction is a fundamental competence, required for a person to have a world, which is required for a person to be a person at all. As such, the capacity for experiencing ultimate satisfaction must be inherently provided for by a person's neurological and biochemical embodiment. Compare: the hedonic pleasure of sex exists to ensure that procreation occurs, but since it's around, it can underlie a large range of behaviors that have nothing to with procreation but everything to do with hedonic pleasure. Accordingly, the powerful experience of ultimate satisfaction exists to ensure a person's world makes sense, but it can also underlie a range of behaviors that have nothing to do with worlds, and everything to do with an experience that feels great and which one wants to repeat. Hence, we may find that addiction is in fact looking for ultimate satisfaction in all the wrong places.

Acknowledgements

The core insight of this paper, "ultimate significance" was catalyzed by a presentation on Addiction by Eben Lasker at the 2010 Annual Conference of The Society for Descriptive Psychology. Thanks to Eben for his courage in presenting his work during his first time attending the Conference, and to his teacher and mentor, Wynn Schwartz, for encouraging him to do and present his work within the framework of Descriptive Psychology.

Joe Jeffrey, Paul Zeiger and Carolyn Zeiger provided detailed and very useful feedback to a number of draft sections of this paper; Joe and Paul were both final readers of the last draft. Keith Davis and Ray Bergner read an early few pages and strongly encouraged the author to complete it for Advances in Descriptive Psychology, Volume 10. Exchanges with members of the private Descriptive Psychology listserv were instrumental in highlighting the need for this paper and some of its direction; thanks in particular to Greg Colvin, Cliff Johnson, Mary Roberts and C.J.

Stone. Lisa Putman as always provided enthusiastic support and helpful feedback along the way.

Finally, I want to repeat something I first wrote 15 years ago:

And then there is Peter Ossorio. How can one properly assess and acknowledge what he has contributed to my thought, my work and my life? Leave it at this: I am a Descriptive Psychologist. I see the world as a Descriptive Psychologist; I participate in the world as a Descriptive Psychologist. Peter Ossorio was the first to see the world this way, and he shared that view of the world with all of us. My world would not be the world it is, and I would not be who I am, without Peter Ossorio. With all my heart – thank you.

He is now the late Peter Ossorio, but his influence lives on among all of us who knew him. Thanks, Pete.

References

Dawkins, R. (2006). *The god delusion*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Jeffrey, H. J. (2010). "Homo Communitatis": A Rigorous Foundation for Behavioral Finance, *Handbook of Behavioral Finance*, Brian Bruce ed., Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, UK.

Jeffrey, H.J. and Putman, A. O. (2013). The irrationality illusion: A new paradigm for economics and behavioral economics. *Journal of Behavioral Finance*, 14, 3.

Jeffrey, H.J. & Putman. A.O. (2014). Subjective probabilty in behavioral economics and finance: A radical reformulation. Paper submitted for publication.

Orvik, J. M. (1985). A conceptual model for migration in Alaska. In K. E. Davis & T. O. Mitchell (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 4, pp. 103-118).

Orvik, J. M. (1990). Technology transfer and culture change. In A. O. Putman & K. E. Davis (Eds.) *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 5, pp. 61-80). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P. G. (1966/1995). *Persons. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. I.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press. (Original work published 1966 as LRI Report No. 3. Los Angeles, CA & Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.)

Ossorio, P. G. (1971/1975/1978/2005). "*What actually happens*": *The representation of real world phenomena. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. IV*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press. Also published Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1975, 1978. (Original work published 1971 as LRI Report No. 10a. Whittier, CA & Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute. Later listed as LRI Report No. 20.)

Ossorio, P. G. (1981). Notes on behavior description. In K. E. Davis (Ed.) *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 13-36). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Ossorio, P. G. (1982/1983). A multicultural psychology. In K. E. Davis & R. M. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 13-44). Greenwich, CN: JAI Press. (Original work published 1982 as LRI Report No. 29. Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.)

Ossorio, P. G. (1982/1998/2012). *Place.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press. (Original work published 1982 as LRI Report No. 30a. Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute. Also published 1998 as *Place. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. III*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.)

Ossorio, P. G. (2006). *The behavior of persons. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. V*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Peek, C.J. & Heinrich, R. (2006). Playing the person game in health care. In K. E. Davis & R. M. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 8, pp. 267-324). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A. O. (1981). Communities. In K. E. Davis (Ed.) *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 195-210). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Putman, A.O. (1990). Organizations. In A. O. Putman & K. E. Davis (Eds.) *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 5, pp. 11-46). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A.O. (1998). Being, becoming and belonging. In H. J. Jeffrey & R. M. Bergner (Eds.) *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 7, pp. 127-160). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A.O. (2009). Ordinary magic: what Descriptive Psychology is, and why it matters. In K. E. Davis, F.L. Lubuguin & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 9, pp. 203-230). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A. O. (2013a). "At a glance and out of nowhere: how ordinary people create the real world". In R. M. Bergner, K. E. Davis, F. L. Lubuguin & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 19-36). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A. O. (2013b). "Leading". In R. M. Bergner, K. E. Davis, F. L. Lubuguin & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 113-128). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Robert, M.K. (2009a). "An indeterminate and expansive world". In K. E. Davis, F.L. Lubuguin & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 9, pp. 231-256). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Robert, M.K. (2009b). "Worlds of uncertain status". In K. E. Davis, F.L. Lubuguin & W. Schwartz (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 9, pp. 287-320). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Schechter, B. (2000). *My brain is open: the mathematical journeys of Paul Erdos*. New York: Simon and Shuster.

Smolin, L. (2006). *The trouble with physics*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Leading: Perspectives for Leaders and Leadership Coaches

Anthony O. Putman
Descriptive Psychology Institute

Abstract

"Leadership" is among the most widely discussed topics in business and organizational literature, but little consensus exists regarding what leadership is, let alone what is required to lead successfully. This is partly due to the lack of a thorough-going conceptualization of leadership and the domains within which it is exercised. This paper offers just such a conceptualization of "leading", "leader" and "leadership", rooted in the powerful conceptual framework known as Descriptive Psychology. Based on this conceptualization, the need and requirements for the role of Leadership Coach is discussed.

Keywords: leading, leadership, organizations, coaching

The Keys to Leading

Contemplating the current literature on leadership, a well-known story from the Sufi teachings comes to mind:

> A man was walking down a dark street when he saw Nasrudin standing under a streetlamp, staring at the ground. The man called out: "What are you doing?" Nasrudin replied: "Looking for my keys."
>
> The man joined in the search. After five minutes of fruitless effort, he asked Nasrudin: "Where did you last have your keys in your hands?" Nasrudin pointed to a dark alley. The man asked: "If you lost your keys in the alley, why are you looking for them here?"
>
> Nasrudin replied: "The light's better here."

Efforts to understand effective leadership are too often act like Nasrudin: they look where things can be most easily seen and therefore (forgive the pun) don't find the keys.

A clear illustration is Robert Quinn's Harvard Business Review article, "Moments of Greatness: Entering the Fundamental State of Leadership" Quinn, 2005).

His article offers some good reminders and operating principles for leaders. Quinn suggests that leaders "venture beyond familiar territory to pursue ambitious new outcomes" rather than continuing to "stick with what I know." He suggests that leaders "behave according to my values" instead of "complying with other's wishes in an effort to keep the peace." He tells leaders that if they "place my interests above those of the group" they will be less successful than if they "put the collective good first." Finally, he admonishes leaders to "learn from my environment and recognize when there's a need for change" instead of "blocking out external stimuli in order to stay on task and avoid risk." This is all sound advice, and if heard at the right time, useful.

But Quinn takes these points much, much further. Specifically, Quinn suggests that his four favored bits of advice together actually comprise a specific state – the "fundamental state of leadership" – which, if you can just enter it, will make you capable of "moments of greatness" as a leader. He makes a spot-on point at the beginning of his article, that "Nearly all corporate training programs and books on leadership are grounded in the assumption that we should study the behaviors of those who have been successful and teach people to emulate them" and then goes on to assert that it's not these specific *traits* of the leader that make them effective, but rather a specific *state* of the leader – the "fundamental state." In doing so, Quinn falls into the major trap facing authors who would be helpful to leaders: he looks in the wrong place for the keys to leading. It's not that Quinn has identified the wrong "fundamental" state; it's that *no* state, fundamental, or not, is the key to leading.

When consulting to executives who want to improve their success at leading, my single most important message is this: Essentially, fundamentally, *leading is NOT about **you***.

Leading is not fundamentally about *you* – your vision, your voice, your skills, behaviors, experience, strengths, weaknesses or states. These are all important factors to consider; they all have an impact on how you lead and the effectiveness of your leading; but focusing on *you* will not show you what you need to see in order to lead effectively. You won't find the keys to leadership in that light.

So if leading is not about *you*, do we assume that leading must be about *them* – the followers? Is it about their efforts, their commitment, their needs and wants and motivations? Again, these are important factors, but again, they are not where you will find the keys to leading, because essentially, fundamentally, *leading is NOT about **them**, either*.

*Leading is about **us***.

Leading is about a community of interests, a group of people who share a view of the world and who act individually and together to create specific value in that world, who are engaged in a mutual endeavor that creates value over and above what each can create independently, and who are committed to making their contribution to that endeavor. To lead is to pay attention fundamentally to that community of interests, to the mutual endeavor and each person's contribution to it. To lead is to make the contributions of everyone involved, and therefore the

value creation, possible. That is the leader's contribution to the mutual endeavor.

A classic TV commercial shows people caught in some nasty complex reality of business: a paper jam in the copier, gnarly shipping challenges, etc. Someone reminds them that they have an "Easy" button; they push the button and everything works out. The absurdity of the solution is part of the commercial's charm – sure, we recognize our desire for an "Easy" button, but we know they are none in real life. Communities of interest, mutual endeavors, committed participation and contribution to creating value – this is complex stuff, and no amount of wishing for simple answers will change that.

To support leaders in leading successfully, we have a choice to make. We can either respond to their genuine desire for easily understood solutions – "How do I need to be and what do I need to do in order to be an effective leader?" – and thereby join them in looking under the streetlamp. Or else we can help them see the true complexity of their actual situation, in ways that lead to specific, tailored ways of leading.

I propose we commit to keeping the full complexity in the picture. It's not as easy to see as under the streetlamp – but, after all, that *is* where the keys are.

Leading and Leadership

First we need to introduce some distinctions around these terms, "leader", "leadership" and "leading."

"Leader" is a tricky little word. It's wise to pay careful attention to just where and how you are using it, or else you may find yourself trying to be and do the *literally* impossible. For example, "leader" has come to be modern business shorthand for 'someone who holds a position of visible authority and responsibility in the organization.' But in an older and more basic sense, one is a leader only if one actually *leads* (and *succeeds* in leading – success is built into that assessment.)

Digging a little deeper, we notice that the term "leader" has a number of connotations in common English usage, some of which mislead us badly when we apply them to organizational leading. We often take facts from one realm of leadership, applying them as metaphor to the realm of leading organizations – and then we forget that they were just metaphors and treat them as literal facts. This is seldom a productive approach. Some examples:

- When you are traveling as a group from one place to the next, the leader is the one in front and everybody appropriately follows the leader – literally. We take these literal facts and apply them metaphorically to organization leading, telling people to "get in front" on some issue which will establish "direction" for people to "follow." Seriously now – where exactly is the "front" of an issue? And how exactly does one "follow"? In which actual "direction"? These directional leadership metaphors can be useful, but they can also be very misleading.
- In an athletic contest, the leader is the one who is currently winning. The great thing about sports is, you have actual measures that can tell you at any time how well any competitor is doing, and therefore who is

winning. For most important organizational endeavors, there are few if any measures of success that tell you how well you are currently doing compared to anyone else, certainly not before the endeavor is finished. But we exhort organization leaders to "win" and to establish a "winning attitude" on the "team" – all metaphors, all of which can lead right into swamps if taken literally.

- In governance and politics, the leader is the person who holds ultimate authority – the king, president, duke, general, party secretary, etc. What the leader says, goes. Actual leaders in organizations – say, the leader of a multi-functional team in a matrix organization – might *dream* about having such power but in reality they don't, and would probably do a very poor job of leading if they did. Commander, top-dog, chief, general – all are great traditional images of a governing leader, but a notoriously poor fit for leading in modern organizations.
- One last misfit image: in science, literature, music, the arts, "leader" has traditionally been used to refer to someone whose work and standing in their professional community is highly esteemed. If you do great work, you become a leading scientist, scholar or whatever. But notice this kind of greatness refers to *your work*, not to you personally and certainly not to any actual leading you may have done.

"Leader" *is* a tricky little word, isn't it?

I propose we look into the more basic term: "leading." It has fewer misleading connotations; further, it helps us keep the focus on "us" and the mutual endeavor, rather than falling into the trap of focusing on the individual leader – characteristics, behaviors, skills, states, etc. With this is mind, "leader" is someone who successfully leads; "leadership" is simply what a leader does in the course of leading.

What do we *mean* when we say someone "leads?" (The following articulation is rooted in the conceptual framework of Descriptive Psychology, specifically the Intentional Action and Community/Organization paradigms; see Putman, 1980; Putman, 1990; Ossorio, 2006). Our calling something "leading" is based fundamentally on our recognizing an *outcome.* It is the outcome – the successful accomplishment – that we recognize as leading, not, for example, some particular kind or style of activity. To belabor this fundamental point just a bit: no matter how "leaderly" the behavior may seem, we do not call it *leading* unless it *succeeds*; if it succeeds, we call it leading even if the behavior seems quite ordinary. We only call it leading when the individual's leading succeeds.

"Succeeds" – at what? Here we get to our core understanding of leading and leadership. What exactly are we committing ourselves to when we say, "That was effective leading"? As it turns out, we are committing ourselves to quite a lot. We are saying that:

1. We have observed an action by the leader – or at least have knowledge of the outcome of the action – and the leader's action was successful**.**
2. We have observed a subsequent action by someone else – or at least have

knowledge of the outcome of that action – and this other person's action was also successful. (Let's call this second person the participant. For reasons that will soon become apparent, I am deliberately avoiding the common command-and-control practice of labeling this person the "follower".)

3. The success of the participant's action was significantly dependent on the leader's action – without the leader's action, the participant's action might not have occurred or might not have been successful.
4. The leader knew that the participant's action depended on the leader's action and, in fact, knowing this provided one of the leader's primary reasons for acting.
5. Both the leader and participant are engaged in a mutual endeavor and their actions reflect that. In other words, they are participating in a social practice – an intentional pattern of interaction – as members of a particular community.

Note that these statements may appear to be inferences or theoretical statements, but they're actually nothing so grand. They are simply writing down – articulating – a part of what we commit ourselves to in using the common, everyday term "leading". As a mental exercise, try assuming the contrary. For example, "We call it leading, but we know nothing about what the leader did nor about the effects of what the leader did" or "We call it leading, but nobody did anything in response", etc. It seems apparent that we would be inclined to respond: "That's not really what we mean when we call something leading."

To put the matter succinctly:

- Leading is *taking active responsibility for making it possible for others to make their contribution to the mutual endeavor.*
- A leader is someone who leads successfully.
- And "leadership" is simply what a leader does in the course of leading.

(This view of leading was originally articulated in "Herding Tigers: Leading the 'On-Behalf-Of' Organization.") (Putman, 2012.)

We should also note some things we are *not* committing ourselves to in calling something "leading":

- We are *not* saying that the leader occupies some special place in the organizational community that makes what they did leadership. What makes an action leadership is its intent and its outcome, not the place from which it was performed. Many roles explicitly or implicitly require the person in that role to lead – CEO, Principal, Manager, Superintendent, Coach, etc. all come immediately to mind. But Jan being in one of these roles does not automatically make whatever Jan does an act of leadership, nor does the fact that Kim occupies no "official" role mean that Kim cannot lead. Again, to belabor the point a bit, it's the intent and outcome that makes it leadership, not the role.

- We are *not* saying that any particular type or style of action was performed. Familiar mass-media images of leadership often involve passionate exhortation or crisp commands, followed by an immediate scramble to follow. These clearly are examples of leadership, but leadership in actual organizations is rarely so dramatic (and media seldom show crisp commands that are roundly ignored, which is not infrequently the case in real life.) Decades of research have shown what common sense tells us: leadership is not a matter of any particular style.
- We are *not* saying that leading requires that others *follow*. The misguided coupling of leadership with followership has been a principal stumbling block in efforts to more deeply understand leadership. The emphasis on following – following the leader's direction, following orders, etc. – stems from the long history of military leadership. In some circumstances – specifically, those circumstances that combat soldiers find themselves in – followership is necessary for success and even survival. The "commander" image of the leader comes from the battlefield – the *literal* battlefield, not the metaphorical battlefield of modern commerce or organizational life. The plain fact is, the classic military model is an increasingly poor fit as a model for our current and future organizations. To the extent that we emphasize followership, to that extent we also minimize the independent knowledge, insight, decision-making and judgment of the individual participants in the mutual endeavor – and no organization today can afford to do that. Our view of leadership is centered on effective *participation*, not followership, and the distinction is a great deal more than "mere semantics."

Note carefully that a leader's actions take place in the context of a specific social unit – an organization, team, community, institution, family, etc. Some of the members of that social unit are engaged in a mutual endeavor, that, is, a complex course of action in which the efforts of each individual are coordinated or aligned to accomplish a joint outcome. *There must be a mutual endeavor for any sort of leadership to take place.* That "mutual endeavor," as it turns out, is where the actual keys to leading are found. Let's look there next.

Leading to Create Value

The purpose of an organization – *any* organization – is to create value. (Putman, 1990)

People form themselves into an organization for many reasons, but the central and fundamental reason is this: an organization can create value in a way and to a degree that individuals on their own cannot. In order to create that value, organization members engage in mutual endeavors.

Leading concerns itself fundamentally with making it possible for an organization to create value. This is the "flip-side" of our previously established view of leading as "taking active responsibility for making it possible for others to make their contribution to the mutual endeavor." They are two ways of saying exactly the

same thing.

"Value" is another tricky word. The value created by an organization is seen differently – sometimes *drastically* differently – from different perspectives. For example, from the numeric perspective of the CFO and financial analysts, "value" is seen as various forms of financial return. From the professional/ technical perspective of technicians and service providers, value takes the form of high-quality services or products that satisfy customers. From the perspective of people who make up the organization, value comes from the satisfaction they get from their work (personal, social, *and* financial.) And from outside the organization, value may seem radically different. For example, Hitler's leadership resulted in the destruction of millions of Jews and other "undesirables". The Nazis counted this as creating value; few people today would agree. Value is a universal, shared concept but what *counts* as value is specific to the organization creating it.

People will participate with or in an organization only if they see that their participation creates value *as they see it*. "Creating above-average returns for stockholders", for example, is *not* the kind of value that motivates customers, nor does it motivate many organization members (unless their roles and rewards are tied directly to it.)

This multi-perspective value reality creates fundamental and difficult challenges to those who lead in modern organizations. Leading requires the leader to make sure that:

- the efforts of the organization result in the creation of value;
- the value created is seen *as such* from all relevant perspectives and by all involved parties;
- all necessary participants are able to make their contribution to the mutual endeavor of creating value.

Leading, then, *fundamentally* requires the leader to see things accurately from multiple perspectives. Either the leader is capable herself of seeing things accurately from all relevant perspectives (this is rare) or, more commonly, the leader gets a team of people to create a *common view of value* that is seen as value from all perspectives. Here's an example of how that can work:

Some years ago I facilitated a trouble-shooting meeting in a school district. Teachers, principals and School Board members were terminally deadlocked over an extremely thorny curriculum issue, with three absolutely incompatible views on what to do. Each group had presented its viewpoint and rationale, and opened themselves to questioning from the others (keeping *that* from turning into bloody warfare had been challenging). To conclude this round of information sharing, I asked each group to answer one question: "At bedrock, what do you believe makes your solution the right solution?"

All three groups responded without hesitation: "It best serves our customers."

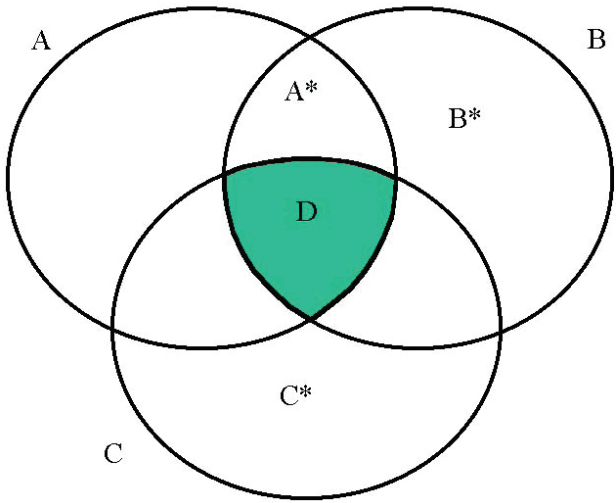
All three groups were right.

All three had *different* "customers" in mind.

For a moment I wondered if we had stepped into the Twilight Zone. Then the thought flashed through my mind: "Welcome to the wonderful world of the complex modern organization!"

For the teachers, the ultimate customers were the students; the ultimate customer for the principals were the state and district administrators who set policy and guidelines; and the School Board members took as their ultimate customers the parents and other local taxpayers who ultimately paid everyone's salaries. With such diverse "customers", it is not surprising that the best curriculum looked very different to the three groups. As one observer remarked, they might as well have been living in three different worlds.

While "living in three different worlds" may be a bit extreme, we can straightforwardly take it that we are dealing with three distinct *views* of the world, and therefore of the value the organization exists to create. This situation is depicted in Figure 1.



Each circle represents the set of good answers to the question, "What should our curriculum be?" from the viewpoint of (A) teachers, (B) principals and (C) School Board members. The best answer from each group's viewpoint is represented as A*, B* and C*, respectively.

Note the obvious:

- The best answers are not the same from group to group.
- The best answer from the School Board's point of view, C*, is not even among the good answers for the other two groups.
- No "best answer" is a good answer for all three groups.
- Any answer that does not fall into the "good answer" category for one group will not receive commitment and participation from that group.

Notice also that there is a small area, D, which falls within the "good answer" category for all three groups. Based on our above understanding of leadership, one

who would lead in this situation will direct the group's attention to D and help them choose a path from among the D answers – because all three groups can commit to and participate in D. And note that not just any answer will do – it must be one that looks good to all three.

This strategy – looking at the issue from all viewpoints and searching only for answers that look good from all viewpoints – can give all the participants what they require. With hard work and good will, it enabled the curriculum trouble-shooting session to come to an unexpectedly productive conclusion.

We should be careful here to avoid confusing this strategy with two seemingly similar but actually very different strategies: compromise and "least common denominator." Compromise – if it works at all – requires each group to give up something they believe is important in order to get something else they believe is more important. Notoriously, compromise often results in "solutions" which nobody sees as a good answer, but which each group sees as the best they can get. For example, if you wanted pizza and salad for lunch while I wanted egg-drop soup and General Tso's chicken, our compromise lunch might be either an artery-clogging combination of pizza and General Tso's chicken, or perhaps a mind-boggling General Tso's chicken pizza. "Least common denominator" takes all the elements in common in each group's position and proposes a "solution" that includes them all. Based on our lunch preferences above, our "least common denominator" lunch would be something like a few ounces of oil with a generous pinch of salt and a glass of water.

Both compromise and least common denominator solutions fail to recognize the true complexity of people's views of the world. They take A*, B* and C* as given and try to give each group something, not recognizing that the task is to find a solution that *every* group sees as a good solution (so everyone can commit to it), and that getting only *part* of our *best* solution is probably not a *good* solution. If you and I just keep talking about lunch, we may discover that we would both be pleased with taco salads.

Getting the view of value right – from all relevant perspectives – is the one of the true keys to organizational leading. Leaders frequently do not do this. They "take charge", requiring (or allowing) one view of value to preempt the conversation ("Our job is to make plan – period.") and then wonder why they have trouble getting top-quality participation from people who do not share this view of value.

Leaders do this because they think it's the right thing to do. They either haven't seen the necessity of creating a multi-perspective shared view of value, or they don't know how to do it because they have never seen it done. In either case, it's the job of Leadership Coaches to help leaders develop their capability and capacity in using this, and all the other, keys to leading *that are relevant to their actual situations.*

Leadership Coaching

Arnold Palmer did not use a swing coach; Tiger Woods did – in fact, he's now on his third. Palmer never used a personal trainer; Rory McIlroy does.

The difference is not in the men; the difference is in the times. The game today requires performance at an unprecedented level. No world-class athlete attempts to

win without a coach or trainer, usually both.

The times have also changed for organizational leaders – perhaps even more drastically.

Leadership today is a great deal more complex than it was 40 years ago because the organization of today is a great deal more complex and diverse than it was 40 years ago.

The organization 40 years ago consisted overwhelmingly of

- men
- from a single culture
- who had substantial indoctrination in the competitive culture of games, sports and the military
- who had little indoctrination in the cooperative culture of informal groups and relationships
- whose job was well-defined and stable over time
- for whom technological change was a predictable, orderly process
- whose business was focused almost exclusively on one local geography
- whose personal lives were lived in an intact nuclear family
- who were largely motivated by the extrinsic factors of money, power and security, and intrinsically by achievement and problem solving
- whose leaders and leadership role models were exclusively male

The organization today consists of

- men and women in increasingly equal numbers
- from a number of cultures,
- some of whom have substantial indoctrination in the competitive culture of games, sports and the military, some of whom do not (and this does not neatly sort into men and women)
- some of whom have substantial indoctrination in the cooperative culture of informal groups and relationships, some of whom do not (ditto)
- who fill roles, not jobs, that are constantly evolving and rapidly changing
- for whom technological change has always been a rapid, accelerating paradigm-changing series of events
- whose business addresses multiple shifting geographies within a global marketplace
- whose personal lives are characterized by almost unbelievable diversity and choice, and constant multiple demands
- who are motivated extrinsically by specific combinations of money, power, status, independence and security, and intrinsically by achievement, problem solving, teamwork and, increasingly, service
- whose leaders and leadership role models are still largely male but increasingly female

A leader who aspires to be world-class today needs the support of a coach or trainer, probably both in a single package. The game for leaders has elevated drastically. The game for the leader's coach must elevate accordingly.

A wise old saying reminds us that: "Unless you know where you are going, any path will do." To that, I would add: "Unless you know where you are starting from, no path will get you where you are going." Put these two together, and we have the initial prescription for a Leadership Coach: find out where the leader is now, find out where the leader needs to be, and then help the leader get there.

In other words, start with an assessment. This is not exactly earth-shattering news; *all* good coaches already do that.

But the next question begins to really stir the pot: What exactly do we assess, and how? I suggest that the most common answer to that question, and the coaching practice that goes with it, are cases of looking under the lamppost instead of looking where the keys can be actually found.

Common practice is to assess the leader on some set of dimensions – traits, values, behaviors – either through testing, or some sort of 360 process, or both. Strengths and weaknesses are identified; this forms the basis for a developmental plan to develop the weaknesses, utilize the strengths, or both. (Current best practice, influenced heavily by thought leaders like Peter Drucker and Marcus Buckingham, is to focus on the strengths.)

This approach can give us a lot of information, sometimes with solid numbers attached, but it's fundamentally flawed when it comes to helping leaders succeed. Leading is *not* about you; leading is about us. What we need to assess is significantly more complex, and more specific, than the "leader-focused" assessment can ever be.

Developing and implementing an assessment that supports actual leading, and codifying the practice of Leadership Coaches using this approach, is the challenge we face. Much work and discovery remains to be done – but we're not starting from scratch here. In fact we already know, and know how to do, quite a lot once we start looking in the right place.

In coaching specific Leaders, we need data/observation in four large categories:

- **Organization Specific**: What value does this organization exist to create, and how is that value seen by the various groups involved with its creation? What actual requirements does this organization have for an individual in a Leadership role? What values (in the sense of *actual operating principles*, not just aspirations) must this individual embody through word and deed? What results and practices are core to this organization's culture? In short, what must *all* Leaders in this organization exemplify? These are all organization-specific questions – and I'm sure there are others as well – that need specific answers as context for coaching any leader.
- **Role Specific**: Different Leadership roles call for very different ways of leading. The CEO faces significantly different challenges than does the Leader of a multi-disciplinary design "swat" team. What are the specific leadership results and challenges of this specific role, and therefore what are the specific leadership skills and practices required? Input on these

questions is required at least from the leader, the leader's superior(s), relevant peers, customers or down-stream consumers, and subordinates through some form of interview – preferably in person and open-ended rather than rate-on-a-checklist. In my experience, this information typically yields the best and most specifically focused material for deciding how to lead effectively, and how to coach a leader.

- **Person Specific**: All leader roles are filled by specific persons with their own specific characteristics: experience, preferences, talents, knowledge, skills, interests, energy, etc. Think of these characteristics as roughly equivalent to the ingredients in the kitchen and pantry: that's what you have available to create your meal from. Good leadership development will always include some amount of stretch – getting the leader to function effectively in areas initially outside of his/her comfort zone. But the ingredients for the stretch are almost all already "in the kitchen" – in other words, the person has that skill, knowledge, etc. but has not applied it effectively. Actually *changing* the person in some significant sense is rarely the preferred approach because it rarely works. Here is where common practice – 360's and tests – can be useful when used carefully and in context.
- **Leadership Specific**: At the end of the day, does this person *lead*, that is, get results that qualify as leadership? Does s/he do the core things that you must do in order to lead? And most important for our purposes: what are those results and "core things you must do?" Recall: Leaders do *whatever is needed* to make it possible for *us* to create the value we are committed to creating. Perhaps they need to resolve our differing views of what that value looks like. Perhaps they need to get us on the same page regarding what our customers need, or how we intend to compete in a crowded marketplace. Perhaps they need to build our belief that we can in fact achieve this goal, or overcome these obstacles. Perhaps they need to reassure us about the course we are following, or shake us up to see that the course we are following won't get us there, or … There are no simple answers because the answer fundamentally depends on who *we* actually are, and what our mutual endeavor actually is.

Put these together: In any actual case of coaching or developing a leader, a coach must take into consideration the facts about: the organization, the specific role, the person in that role and the facts about what it means to lead.

Let's look next at an expansion of these four types of facts, and the questions one might ask to assess them. This might be the basis for a somewhat different type of survey.

Examples of Leadership Specific Facts

Leading requires paying specific attention to the mutual endeavor itself, for example:

- Creating the mutual endeavor ("We will send a man to the moon by 1970")
- Deciding which mutual endeavor to pursue ("Seven card stud, no ante")
- Naming or articulating the mutual endeavor ("Looks like what we're doing is moving upmarket with this product.")
- Getting consent and commitment to the mutual endeavor ("Let's call the question: do we build this or not?")
- Authorizing the mutual endeavor ("Alright people, let's do this!")
- Establishing a strategy for the mutual endeavor ("We will put most of our effort into our 25 most valuable clients, while trimming the bottom 10% of the client list.")
- Establishing a timetable or pace for the mutual endeavor.
- Choosing – or ensuring choice is made – among possible allocations of resources (time, energy, money, people) to tasks in the mutual endeavor.

Leading requires paying attention to the relationship between the mutual endeavor and individual participants, for example:

- Does each individual know what the mutual endeavor is?
- Do they know what outcome we are aiming for, and what we will count as success?
- Do they know which parts of the mutual enterprise they can contribute to?
- Do they know what specific contribution is expected from them?
- Can they initiate their contribution and decide independently what and when to do, or must they wait for signals or hand-offs before they act? Who gives them what signals to trigger their contribution?
- Do they have the authority and/or permission to do what is needed to make their contribution? If not, who authorizes their action, and how does this take place?
- Do they know whose contribution is "downstream" from this participant – that is, dependent on this participant's action or communication? How do they communicate/negotiate/ decide regarding their requirements of each other?
- Can they see the results of their actions in a way that enables them to continue or accurately correct what they are doing?

Leading requires ensuring the right people are called upon to make the right contributions, for example:

- Who are the "key players", if any? Key players are participants whose contribution is crucial to the success of the mutual endeavor; if they do not succeed at making their contribution, the mutual endeavor will be significantly compromised or will fail altogether.
- What is needed from the key players? What do the key players need – resources, tools, information, permissions, etc. – in order to succeed? Do they have what they need? If not, how will what they need be provided?

- Who are the contributors? Contributors are participants whose contribution is not individually make-or-break, but which cumulate into success or failure. Do they have what they need to make their contribution successfully?

Leading requires ensuring the individual efforts are aligned and coordinated:

- Are actual, meet-together-to-get-work-done teams required for this mutual endeavor? If so, who must be on them? What specific tasks is the team expected to accomplish? How will each team be led? (Note that each team should be thought of as engaging in its own mutual endeavor, which contributes to the larger – thus, all these leadership considerations apply to each team as well.)
- How must the contributions of each team or individual align to accomplish the mutual endeavor? How will this alignment be ensured? Will each team or individual monitor their own alignment and self-correct? If so, how do they get the performance feedback required for this? If not, who will monitor the alignment and how will they ensure correction occurs as needed?

Leading requires ensuring participants are capable of contributing at the level required:

- Do they have the knowledge and skills to make their contribution? If not, how will they be supported in succeeding – coaching, mentoring, training, teaming with more capable participants?
- Do any key players lack the knowledge or skill to succeed? If so, do you replace them, support them or develop their capacities?
- Do many contributors lack the knowledge or skill to succeed? If so, do you change the mutual enterprise in some way to reflect their actual abilities, or do you develop or support their performance in some way?

Leading requires focusing on the motivation of the participants:

- Do they see the mutual endeavor as inherently worthwhile, so their contribution is to something they value?
- Do they see their contribution as directly contributing to the worthwhile mutual endeavor?
- Does their participation give them a direct opportunity to satisfy some of their intrinsic motivations, e.g. for achievement, problem-solving, teamwork or service?
- Does their contribution enable them to meet some of their basic needs, e.g. for money, recognition, standing in their social unit, authority? Does it enable them to avoid an undesirable outcome, e.g. loss of "face", loss of eligibility, letting the team down, demotion, missing out on a reward?

Leading may require focusing on capacity in addition to current competence if the mutual endeavor is not a one-time or short term matter, but rather extends or is repeated over substantial time:

- Are there perspectives or skills needed for the mutual endeavor that are

generally underdeveloped or in short supply? If so, how will you develop or acquire these capacities?
- Does each individual have someone who takes an active interest in their success and development over time?
- Does each individual have a development path which will enable them to expand their capacity to contribute? Are resources available and adequate to follow this developmental path successfully?

The above list is meant to be expansive; it is not meant to be final or complete. Note that all the above is "generic" in the sense that it applies to leading any organization in any mutual endeavor. But it is not an arbitrary list of considerations: it is directly derived from our definition of leading and leadership. Accordingly, it may well serve as a launching pad from which to develop a very detailed and specific assessment of the leadership challenge and/or the leadership effectiveness of actual leaders one may be called upon to coach.

Aspects of Leadership Coaching

What exactly qualifies someone to be a Leadership Coach? Looking at what we have said about leading in the modern organization, one might expect that coaching leaders would not be simple, and that is very much the case. Specifically, a Leadership Coach must have masterful grasp of:

- The creation and implementation of organization strategy (including vision, mission, values, goals, etc.)
- Making aspirations real
- Goal setting and prioritizing
- Team creation and team leading
- Group and team dynamics
- Business relationships – individual and group, internal and external
- Financial and technical realities of business
- Communication, in particular authentic self-presentation, hearing, and dialogue
- Sustainable living (beyond "balance")
- Articulating principles and acting on them
- Intrinsic motivations and how to work with them
- Himself or herself in relation to working with others
- Leadership

Obviously, this is a formidable set of requirements and it probably is not complete. But consider: would you trust the development of your organization's most important leaders – or your own leadership – to someone who did *not* have mastery of one of these?

This may seem overwhelmingly complex – and it is, if you think you need to know all this at once in every case, feed it back to the person you are coaching, and try to work on all of it. But of course, that's not how coaching – or leading – works. The reason Leadership Coaches need to have all this complexity available is the same reason a physician needs expertise and available tests covering the full

range of the body: So that in any particular instance, one can zero in accurately and exactly on what this specific person needs. Leadership Coaches need to know what all the keys to leading are, so they can help actual leaders find and use the keys to their actual situation.

Acknowledgements

A version of some of the material in this paper was originally prepared in 2003 for publication in a journal for education leaders, *Contemporary Research in Education,* as "Herding Tigers: Leading the 'On-Behalf-Of' Organization". Thanks to the journal's editor Joe Blackbourne for commissioning that paper and thereby launching a decade of writing about leading for leaders, culminating in the present paper.

Joe Jeffrey provided editorial feedback that was both encouraging and very useful in making this paper better, as did the Volume editor, Keith Davis.

In my career it has been my privilege to coach and consult with over a thousand leaders in virtually every form and variety of organization. Each contributed to the understanding articulated in this paper. Without them and their specific experiences, this paper would have been mere speculation.

The author is a Descriptive Psychologist, and as such owes an unaccountably large debt to the late Peter G. Ossorio, the founder of Descriptive Psychology. Without his foundational work and personal mentoring, this articulation would never have occurred. Thanks again, Pete.

References

Quinn, R. (2005). "Moments of greatness: entering the fundamental state of leadership". *Harvard Business Review*, July.

Ossorio, P. G. (2006). *The behavior of persons. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. V*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A. O. (1980). Communities. In K. E. Davis (Ed.) *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 195-210). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Putman, A.O. (1990). Organizations. In A. O. Putman & K. E. Davis (Eds.) *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 5, pp. 11-46). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A. O. (2012) Herding tigers: Leading the 'on-behalf-of' organization. *Contemporary Research in Education*. 1, 1, pp.1-8.

We're Off to See the Wizard: Politics, Charisma, and Community Change

Charles Kantor

Abstract

The phenomenon of the charismatic leader is explored from the perspectives of the circumstances that give rise to such a status and the significance of these statuses relative to the leader and the leader's followers. The Ghost Dancers of the Native American West and the Zomians of Southeast Asia are historical particulars that demonstrate the phenomena of societies under threat and the rise of charismatic leaders. The Descriptive concepts of World, World Reconstruction, Culture, Status and Status Assigner are the conceptual anchoring points for this discussion. This paper builds on earlier papers that elaborated the concepts of community, organization, institution, and culture as well as ones elaborating world reformulation. It concludes that a community, indeed a culture, seeks persons who reformulate the community's world to survive grave threats to its existence.

As Dorothy's house is set down "gently for a cyclone", she emerges to find herself in a totally new world of silver shoed witches and adults no taller then she. The Good Witch of the North describes to her an uncivilized land still brimming with sorceresses, magicians, witches and wizards. And all Dorothy wants is to get back home. The great American fairy tale written early in the 20th century has been analyzed many times for its political metaphors and allegories (Littlefield, 1964; Barlow, 2003). This paper will utilize the fable of Oz as a starting point in understanding the phenomena of charismatic leaders and millenarian movements.

The Wizard of Oz

Oz, the great and terrible, is Dorothy's hope to get back to the world she misses. He is rumored to be a good wizard and to grant wishes. He builds a modern city and has the people wear green tinted glasses in order that they see their world in a particular way. He arrived miraculously from the sky and was at once declared Wizard. Why wouldn't a lonely and lost girl put her hopes in such a great and powerful person?

Yet, he disappoints in one way and succeeds in another. As Oz famously states

after being revealed as merely a man behind the curtain," Oh… I'm really a very good man, but I'm a very bad wizard…" (Baum, 1900, p. 201). Dorothy and her pals are not merely disappointed but angered by his failure to be the all powerful savior they once envisioned and believed they experienced. Yet he does confer on the Scarecrow intelligence, the Tin Man sensitivity, and the Lion courage. Descriptive Psychologists recognize his wizardry as effective status assigning and the results as world changing (Putman, 2010).

There is no dearth of literature on charismatic leaders. The word "charisma" originally designated religious leaders, those "touched by god" or given a special gift to usher in a new world (Rapoport, 1979). Later Max Weber, the German political philosopher, discussed charismatic leadership as one particular form of three major categories of political leaders (charismatic, traditional, and legal-rational) and described it as marked by "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or exceptional powers or qualities"(Schweitzer, 1974, p. 151).

Historically, charismatic leaders have been associated with political or cultural movements known as millenarian (Hobsbawm, 1965; Huggins, 1987; Scott, 2009). These movements usually consist of dispossessed, powerless people and generally involve an anarchist approach to the problematic conditions of the population. The leader(s) and followers call for a radical reconstruction of the political community if not the whole culture. These movements may end badly, as charismatic leaders tend to be long on rhetoric and short on effective political or military power. But images of a new world are invoked in which the peasants seek salvation and equality, and may even reverse their fortunes and become the leaders and rulers of those who have oppressed the masses. Scott (2009) commented that as irrational as these movements may sound to outsiders, the very belief in this new world could spur action, protest, and revolt.

This paper will present some paradigm case millenarian movements and the charismatic figures arising within these movements. The connection between the conditions accompanying these movements and the rise of this type of leader will be discussed by utilizing the concepts of culture, world, status, status assigner, and the particular statuses of actor, observer, and critic.

Charisma and Millenarian Movements

In Western culture, the religious themes of salvation, of the coming of a messiah or a messianic age, are familiar. Secular thinkers may dismiss much of this as a convenient mythology for some and outright deception for others. Indeed, many historians have wrestled with the "emotional or irrational appeal" of charisma and how to make sense of the phenomenon. Huggins (1987) observed that rationalist scholars struggle with explaining a phenomenon dependent on the emotional and spiritual state of the person. Significantly, these charismatic leaders and millenarian movements have arisen throughout history and have not been dependent on Judeo-Christian theology or imagery to envision saviors (Pereira de Queiroz, 1965; McCann, 1966; Scott, 2009).

Although American political culture debates the separation of the political from the religious, Scott (2009) pointed out that "…. virtually all popular struggles for power that today would qualify as 'revolutionary' were before the last quarter of the eighteenth century, generally understood in a religious idiom. Popular mass politics was religion, and religion was political" (p. 294). Galbraith (1982) demonstrated the striking similarity in communities of the Xhosa and Zulu of Africa, and the Maori of New Zealand, to the Native American ghost dancers. Each one of these communities developed millenarian movements that "emerged from the trauma of defeat in war, loss of land, and the accelerating disintegration of traditional society" (p. 122). Wallace (1956) expanded on the idea of millenarian movements and postulated several types of revitalization movements, millenarian being one type. He described these movements as various versions of practices that sought to transform a significant part of a culture if not the whole of the culture. Wallace has made the case that communism had all the ear marks of a millenarian movement without the religious imagery. Hobsbawm (1965) argued similarly that the various political Isms of the 20th century, capitalism, socialism, communism (to name a few), have become routinized versions of millenarian movements. Their followers saw the world through those glasses just as the prophets did through a version of the world that included God, Allah, Buddha and others.

When communities/cultures are threatened with instability, deprivation, possible extermination, history, time after time, demonstrates human resilience in the form of millenarian movements. Characteristic of these movements is a point of view, a philosophy, a world view, of renewal, of the advent of a new world. This new world generally restores what is for this community an ideal situation in which the dead come back, all are fed, no one is in danger from human threat, disease, or natural disaster. Frequently certain individuals seek and are assigned by the threatened community members a place from which to espouse such a world view and to serve as a leader of the movement.

Two examples or paradigm cases of millenarian movements and charismatic leaders will be presented. The Native American Ghost Dancers and the hills people of Southeast Asia, dubbed Zomia by Scott (2009), will be described and then evaluated with respect to concepts of Descriptive Psychology.

Wovoka and the Ghost Dancers

During the late 1880's, the prophet of peace, Jack Wilson, also known as Wovoka, was a member of the Paiute tribe and prophesied an end to American expansion into the west. He urged his followers to dance the Ghost Dance, a ritual which would hasten days of peace and a return of dead ancestors to the earth. This traditional circle dance was often accompanied by trances and prophesying. Jack Wilson claimed to have left the presence of God convinced that if every Indian in the West danced the new dance to "hasten the event", all evil in the world would be swept away, leaving a renewed Earth filled with food, love, and faith (Overholt, 1974).

According to one account:

> Wovoka taught that the time was coming soon when all the dead Indians would return to this earth. The youth of these returning dead would be restored, and their advent would be accompanied by a restoration of the important game animals and a supernatural destruction of all Whites (by a flood). …life would henceforth be free of disease and suffering. The restoration of the game animals … would follow the millennium of the reestablishment of the old ways of life (Overholt, 1974, p. 42).

Mooney (1896) commented:

> By performing this dance at intervals, for five consecutive days each time, they would secure this happiness to themselves and hasten the event. Finally God gave him control over the elements so that he could make it rain or snow or be dry at will, and appointed him his deputy to be in charge of affairs in the west while "Governor Harrison" would attend to matters in the east, and … God would look after the world above (p. 772).

The original prophesy of the Ghost Dance had developed in the wake of a devastating typhoid epidemic some 20-30 years earlier. This epidemic and other diseases disrupted the nomadic way of life of the Plains Indians and restricted many families economically. Such devastation was a blow to autonomy as well as to the culturally accepted practices of the tribes.

In 1890, the US government broke up the Sioux reservation (which before had covered much of what is now South Dakota) into 5 smaller reservations and attempted to assimilate the tribes into American culture by introducing farming. But a devastating drought made this impossible. The plan was problematic from the beginning because the climate was semi-arid. The government was supplementing the food supply but political pressure led to a cut in rations to the Sioux by half and starvation became a possibility as few buffalo remained. The Sioux had been victorious over Custer some 20 years earlier and many of those fighters including Sitting Bull himself were still alive. The humiliation was compounded relative to these past triumphs (Overholt, 1974).

> For … the tribes to which the dance spread, this was a time of acute cultural stress characterized by White domination and the breakup of the old way of life. … It is enough to recall that the cultural, economic, and political situation of these tribes was drastic, and the message preached by Wovoka correlated perfectly with it: The Whites had ruined the world by subjugating the Indian peoples and destroying the bases of their traditional life, and now it was time for a supernatural power to do what the Indians themselves could not, by eliminating these invaders and renewing the world which they had so fatally scarred (Overholt, 1974, p. 46).

The Zomians

There is another culture that is a good working example of the conditions under which charismatic leaders tend to be cast. This is an example of a set of communities in Southeast Asia which over 2000 years evolved approaches to handle such potentially devastating occurrences and has survived. To the extent that the story of Native Americans is one of the destabilization of community and the tragic destruction of culture, the story of Zomia is a story of the resilience of communities, communities that adjusted in order to deal with imminent threat and potential domination.

In the "The Art of Not Being Governed", Scott (2009) described the hills people of Southeast Asia. An area that is contiguous with about 8 major political states, the region dubbed "Zomia" today is populated by 80-100 million people. For two thousand years, prophets and millenarian movements emerged primarily in response to threats from the "Valley" states, China, Burma, Thailand, Viet Nam and others (Scott, 2009). Scott quipped that prophets were a cottage industry in these communities. The Valley states threatened the people of the hills by attempting to annex areas for their food, for their taxes, and for their labor, generally in the form of slavery. But over time these communities developed a variety of social practices that allowed the people to escape.

Known as barbarians by people in the valley states, the people of Zomia were commonly seen by them as primitive and uncivilized. They lived in the hills, rarely had a written tradition, fed themselves via slash and burn agriculture (swiddening) or foraging, and produced prophets who were frequently harbingers of protest and revolt. Their social structure tended to be egalitarian. Many of the legends were about killing headmen who had become too authoritarian.

The people of Zomia in any one area could be characterized by several ethnic identities. It was not unusual according to Scott (2009) for individuals to speak up to three languages.

> Such mobile, egalitarian, marginal peoples have long histories of defeat and flight and have faced a world of powerful states whose policies they had little chance of shaping…Faced with slave raids, demands for tribute, invading armies, epidemics and occasional crop failures, they appear to have developed not just the subsistence routines to keep the state at arm's length but a shape shifting social and religious organization admirably adopted to cope with a turbulent environment (p. 314) .

Comparable to the conditions of Native Americans in the latter part of the 19th century, Zomians for at least two millennia have faced conditions ripe for the rise of charismatic leaders. The Valley states characterized Zomians as barbarians in a way parallel to the American's view of Native Americans as savages. The invasions threatened their lives, their culture, their world view of themselves, their families, their communities. Scott said of the Karen, one particular group of hills people:

> No matter what their religious convictions, the Karen have shown again and again, a devotion to wonder working, charismatic, heterodox healers, prophets, and would-be kings…..They are millenarians, forever generating warrior leaders, sects, "white monks" and prophets, all persuading themselves that the Karen kingdom is, once again, at hand (Scott, p. 286).

Zomia illustrates a variation in a community in which what was normal was to be prepared for change. The culture was under threat from the large valley states and developed social practices to escape such capture.

How can one evaluate the function or purpose of charismatic figures? To what extent do such persons figure in the survival of a community or culture? What explains a community member's motivation to follow such a leader? What tools are available to understand the relative resilience of the Zomian communities in contrast to the near total destruction of Native American communities within a short period of time in the 19th century? The following section presents concepts of Descriptive Psychology that can be utilized to do the job.

Descriptive Psychology Concepts, Millenarian Movements, and Charismatic Leaders

Two issues this paper will address are illustrated by the above descriptions. One is the destruction or survival of a culture and the factors that undercut a culture's viability or serve to preserve that viability. Secondly, the rise of Jack Wilson and the prophets of Zomia from the point of view of modern day rationalists appears to be a flight of fancy for a community if not merely a con man's game fomented by these would be prophets. But as noted above, the rise of prophets, messiahs, cultural saviors, charismatic politicians, is chronicled by many historians to be a phenomenon not specific to any one culture. I propose to use a set of concepts developed by the discipline of Descriptive Psychology to evaluate the stability/instability of a culture and to make sense of the phenomenon of millenarian movements and the rise of charismatic leaders in the context of such instability.

Descriptive Psychologists have developed concepts that address the competence of persons' to handle trauma, to reconstruct worlds, to make sense of the world, and increase behavior potential (Bergner, 2007; Ossorio, 2006; Putman, 2010; Roberts, 2010). The concepts of person, community, and culture will be utilized to make sense of persons' seeking charismatic leaders and forming millenarian movements. More specifically, the parameters of worlds, statuses (in particular the statuses of status assigner; and of actor, observer, and critic), and social practices will clarify situations that set up the circumstances for persons to seek a charismatic leader and/or millenarian type social changes.

The Concept of Culture

In order to understand common factors in cultures as diverse as Native Americans and the Southeast Asian Zomians, conceptual tools are needed to allow a comparison. Systematic concepts of Descriptive Psychology are such a set of tools. Ossorio (1983) delineated the parameters of culture in the following way:

<Cu> = <WOL> = <M, W, S, L, SP, CP>, where

Cu = Culture
WOL = Way of Living
M = Members (Participants)
W = World
S = Statuses
L = Language
SP = Social Practices
CP = Choice Principles (Ossorio, 1983, p. 27)

The following are brief summaries of each of these parameters:

Members. Every community is composed of some set of members and this consists not only of those currently alive, but also those who are not now but were alive and still are members of the culture and its way of life.

World. "Every culture involves a set of beliefs, methodologies, ideologies, assumptions, presuppositions, and so on, concerning 'the whole world.' This also includes the place or status of the community in relation to the rest of the world and thus includes its past and future" (Ossorio, 1983, p. 28).

Statuses. These are the various places a member occupies and delineates what sort of relationships that member is eligible to act on within the social practices of the culture. Having a status and sets of statuses gives a person a particular significance within the culture. If a person is a friend to someone, his actions have significance different from that of being an enemy. The CEO of an organization has a different place or status compared to the janitor on the fifth floor and her actions are treated accordingly. A shortstop, a chess opponent, and a person lost in the woods are statuses that carry with them expectations of actions relative to others.

Language. Every society has a language that is spoken by its members. Common language facilitates interpersonal relationships and thus connects members to one another in a culture. Having at one's disposal multi-lingual ability allows a person more easily to participate as a member of more then one culture.

Social Practices. This is what there is for members to do in the culture. Organized sets of social practices are known as institutions. Educating its children, protecting its citizens, making the traffic flow, acquiring resources, choosing its leaders, are just some of the sets of social practices a culture will have.

Choice Principles. Ossorio (1983) stated:

> Both an individual social practice and a set of social practices which make up a way of living have a hierarchical structure involving a multiplicity of options. Since participating in either one on a given occasion must be done in one of the ways it can be done, choices are unavoidable and many different individual life histories are possible, reflecting the variety of choices among options within social practices and among social practices. The range of options results in part from the range of different statuses for

> which different practices or different options are appropriate (p. 28).

Ossorio (1983) identified several approaches to delineating the choice principles of a culture. These included policy statements, values, slogans and mottos, maxims, problem solving strategies, and finally scenarios. He went on to say:

> In a cultural context, the most relevant scenarios correspond to myths or to the lives of historical or literary figures. These latter are often called 'culture heroes'. A historical person can pattern his life on the life of such a cultural figure. Indeed, there is some speculation to the effect that a primary cultural function of myths is to provide just such patterns… (Ossorio, 1983 p. 30).

These parameters allow an analysis of a particular culture. Each parameter is a reminder to look at a culture relative to that particular parameter and to note to what degree which instances of the parameter, for example, are going right and which are going wrong, what the nature of parameter is in culture A versus that parameter in culture B, etc. Utilizing this parametric analysis provides an approach to evaluating the relative stability or instability of a culture.

Basic Human Needs and Community Breakdown

What goes wrong when a community/culture breaks down? How can we characterize the difference between a culture that is failing and one that is resilient? When we compare cultures by utilizing each parameter as a kind of window through which we can see how a culture is working, what is it that tells us whether that culture is succeeding or failing? The concept of Basic Human Needs (BHN) is proposed as a way to explicate the relative breakdown and/or resilience of cultures. Ossorio (1983) formulates the idea of Basic Human Needs as a "a condition or requirement such that if it is not satisfied at all, Deliberate Action (and the participation in social practices) is impossible" (p. 23). The following are needs that find general agreement in the literature as basic human needs: Adequacy, Competence, Order and Meaning, Self-esteem, and Safety and Security (Ossorio, 1983). A person in a situation in which deliberate action is impossible is in a pathological state. If the social practices of the community have broken down or if the members of the community experience more limited behavior potential as their standing in the community is reduced, then conditions of profoundly restricted deliberate action prevail.

Persons who encounter natural disasters, find themselves homeless, or lose their community standing as they go from economic security to poverty face such losses of behavior potential. Significant political changes that alter the place of whole communities and /or subcultures do the job as well. Jews herded into ghettos and Hutu's massacred by Tutsis faced the trauma of a collapsed or nearly collapsed culture.

Having a range of options available at any point in a social practice is an enhancement of a person's behavior potential within that practice. That condition allows a person to seek solutions as new options are available. A limitation of those

choices reduces the possibilities and creates a situation of greater uncertainty, one in which a person may regard himself as helpless, hopeless, and so forth. In addition, a failure of social practices to achieve certain BHN such as, for example, safety and security, limits and reduces the behavior potential of the members. A community under threat is one in which its members may lose their places of prominence, of significance within the culture. What was possible under a set of circumstances ruled by Us is no longer possible in situations ruled by Them. Members' statuses have been diminished to the point of humiliation and lost autonomy; social practices and institutions fail to bring order and meaning to their lives.

A person's world that needs reformulation is a world in which she has lost her place, a world in which she has lost her way, a world in which she has lost her future. Her ways of living are disrupted, blocked, made impossible. The acquisition of basic needs is severely limited. If by virtue of others' actions, a person is not allowed to or rendered unable to participate in the social practices that are an expression of her status in the community, then that person is in need of reassignment. A person unable to satisfy BHN is in a pathological state. Ossorio (1998) states, "The world is subject to reformulation by persons" (p. 14). This competence of a person to reformulate his position in the culture on his own or to seek another to reformulate that position is a key component of millenarian movements.

Worlds, Statuses, and Social Practices

Ossorio (1983) described the world not as some set of facts that we spend our life trying to discover. A community of persons creates, maintains, and sustains a concept of world. As noted above, he emphasized that what is the case for a particular member of a particular community includes formulations of "(1) the place of the community in the world, (2) the history of the community, including its relations and interactions with other communities, and (3) the history of the world" (p. 28). The social practices that persons engage in, the values and choice principles that inform choices, the kinds of relationships and sets of relationships engaged in by persons, both formal and informal ones (an employee with her boss or a person with his friend), are part of the fabric of this world. And note above, Ossorio emphasized that knowledge of the past, one's history, and the history of others, the whole world, is part of a particular conception of the world as well.

A person has a place in this scheme of things and that is her scheme of things. That place is a place in a particular context. Her actions take on a particular significance relative to that place. Another person with a different life history, a different set of present relationships, and a different set of choice principles and expectations about how the world is and will be, finds himself in a different place in the scheme of things and his behavior has significance in a different way from the first person.

Roberts (2010) describes how new versions of the world get introduced into communities. The status of that world then is uncertain until that new version is rejected or absorbed. New versions are introduced in all walks of life, by scientists, theologians, artists, writers, businessmen, and politicians. "When a new way of treating something is introduced, it does not necessarily change the structure of

the real world. New patterns of behavior have to be accepted by the community to become part of the real world. Until a new pattern is accepted, the status of the corresponding world is uncertain" (pp. 291-292).

Once that world view is accepted by the community, the place of a particular citizen in that political community carries with it significance relative to that new world view. A person criticizing the government in a totalitarian culture is threatening the state; a person doing the same in a democratic culture is exercising free speech. How behavior is treated is indeed a political act and has profound implications. A person in a position to shape such world views, and thus, to place other persons in particular positions such that the behavior of those persons has a particular significance is in a position of great power within a particular culture. A person with that sort of position would be recognized as a kind of evaluator of that particular culture, as a type of critic, as he assigns others positions within the culture.

The Statuses of Actor, Observer, and Critic

Ossorio (2006) discussed the particular status of Critic. The status of Critic is connected to those of Actor and Observer. These three statuses, Actor, Observer, and Critic (A-O-C), give access to the self regulatory competence of persons. A way to think of each of these statuses is in terms of jobs or perspectives. Ossorio (2006) pointed out that the job of the Actor is to behave spontaneously to "act on one's impulses, desires, and inclinations" (p. 242). The status Observer involves " (1) what is the case now, (2) what is happening now, (3) what has happened in the past and what happens generally, (4) what is the case generally, and (5) how things work" (Ossorio, 2006, p.243). in response to such observations,the job of the Critic is to evaluate whether my actions are satisfactory, efficient, good, and so forth. If things are going right, I then continue to act as I am. But if things are going wrong, my Critic perspective provides a "diagnosis and prescription" in a sense for correcting and improving my behavior, a "specification of what to do differently to help matters" (Ossorio, 2006, p.243). The statuses of Actor, Observer, and Critic are connected in a type of feedback loop and serve as a basis for describing how persons self regulate.

Ossorio also discussed the developmental schema relative to how persons acquire this competence to self regulate. This schema included another person acting as observer-critic who teaches the first person how to choose more successfully under particular circumstances. This then is a general schema for the development of judgment. The statuses of A-O-C are involved in choosing how to act under varying circumstances. Part of choosing competently will involve being aware of the relevant circumstances, knowing the relevant reasons, and weighing these reasons effectively (Ossorio, 2006, p. 228). Choosing can only be done by a person within the context of some community whether that is at the time a bowling team, a job situation, or a culture. Evaluating one's choices then is done relative to the community. As Ossorio (2006) stated, the critic speaks "for Us" (p.258).

A person's self regulatory and judgment competence will also be relative to

the various statuses a person enacts as a member of the culture and/or various communities within the culture. A person occupying the status of bank teller will behave differently from the waiter at the restaurant; even though both may greet their patrons with, 'How can I help you?" If that teller serves you a hamburger on a hard roll and that waiter gives you a bill for your safe deposit box, each would be acting inappropriately relative to their statuses in their communities. That behavior is then subject to regulation by the person himself. But their behavior is also subject to regulation by their respective bosses. The bosses enacting the status of critic (in this instance, this would be equivalent to the status of status assigner) may correct the behaviors of the workers or change the workers' statuses as a result of the improper choices. The failure of the workers to enact the position of waiter or bank teller successfully, to self regulate, requires the boss to correct the behavior or reassign each a different status within those respective communities. In these cases, the bosses serve as status assigners, a particular status in a community or a culture.

Thus, acquiring statuses in a community and culture is not merely a result of how persons choose. A person gains or loses eligibility for statuses based on many factors, not the least of which is the kind of person a particular status assigner treats her as. The status assigner can act as a representative of a community and /or culture and assign members to particular statuses. In political communities, the status assignment of community status assigner historically has been determined by such things as family membership, force, money, votes, and so forth.

Although a person is the author of her own behavior (Ossorio,2006), part of being successful at that is casting other persons who can help her see her way clear in the day to day problems of usual living. Political leaders occupy one particular status that consists of relationships and social practices involving such problem solving.

Cultural Status Assigners

Parents, clergy, politicians, therapists, judges, shamans, medicine men, prophets and messiahs can be characterized as statuses within a culture. These statuses involve relationships between one person or persons assigning and reassigning others to statuses within communities of the particular culture (Ossorio, 2006). These status assigners are of a particular type. They assign and reassign positions not merely relative to a particular community within a set of communities in a culture, but largely relative to the culture as a whole. The assignment is not a status relative to one's place in the neighborhood, or at the job, or on the local softball team. The assignment is about what kind of cultural member you are and is made by a person representative of the community and with the standing to make that culturally significant assignment.

The charismatic politician is such a person and assigns statuses not just one person at a time, but assigns to the entire community an enhanced status. By virtue of having membership in that community, any one person has had her behavior potential increased by such an assignment. The sports fan of a championship team, a devoted follower of his favorite rock band, and the voter whose candidate triumphs

in an election experience this wholesale increase in behavior potential.

Uncertainty and Status Reassignment

Persons operate in conditions of uncertainty. Yet a person's self regulatory competence (A-O-C) allows one to act and evaluate one's actions and adjust one's actions as a result under those circumstances. But a range of conditions can undercut severely the effectiveness of day to day self regulation. These conditions involve circumstances in which the social practices a person is enacting fail to achieve the needed results. A person who needs food may not have the money to buy it, the competence to grow it, or the social relationships to ask for help. A person may need direction to apply for a job, to make amends with a friend, to find his way back home. This is a situation in which a person enacting the status of status assigner may intervene to reassign the person a status of greater behavior potential despite the oppressive conditions. Regardless of a person's usual situation, she is eventually blown into circumstances in which a little wizardry can go a long way.

Political leaders, in positions to make decisions based on their own or others knowledge, affect the whole community. A member of this community will look to this leader to make choices for the common good of the community or organization. He is speaking for the community and is held to that standard. Any problematic situation by its nature calls for a solution. Therefore, formulations of the problem and approaches (social practices) that can resolve the problem are also called for. A person does not readily try to rediscover what is already known by others and it makes little sense to do so unless one has doubts about what is known. The experts, the leaders carry that promise by virtue of their standing in the community and other community members, non leaders, look to them for these solutions.

Persons seeking counsel from these experts cast persons in those positions, positions to make sense of a particular portion of their worlds. The position of someone who will show you the way, the solution, the answer, that yellow brick road, is a fundamental status in any community (cf. Putman, 1990).

Millenarian movements and charismatic persons emerge in communities which are gravely threatened, communities that face a level of uncertainty multiplied many times by the failure of the usual community practices to take care of basic needs. It's not individual persons in one particular community of the larger group of communities that has some problematic situation but it is the whole community which is in a position of uncertainty and limited behavior potential.

A person treated by the dominant political culture as a peasant, a savage, a barbarian, a person of restricted and limited value, experiences his worth, his standing and therefore his behavior potential as limited. He is restricted from changing communities and self reassigning his position by limited resources, limited access to people of influence, or his community position as an inferior, limited being (recall that the original U.S. Constitution codified African and Native Americans as 3/5's persons). And if this person has a conspicuous appearance associating him with that status, he has few means to deceive others of his standing. He is severely limited in claiming increased potential.

The millenarian leader constructs a picture of a new world that reassigns the positions of his followers to places, statuses, that increase significantly their behavior potential, the range and value of the relationships a person in this community is eligible to act on. For these folks, the world must change, not just one community or organization, but the whole world. Their overall status, then, not one associated only with a particular group, has changed and changed for the better. Inspiration, hope, a vision--these among others the charismatic leader's new or renewed world view brings to the members of millenarian movements.

As Roberts (2010) points out,"Another practical constraint on world creation is whether or not there are particular historical individuals available and willing to be cast for the parts required to bring off a dramaturgical pattern. You may have what it takes to be a first baseman, but you can't be a first baseman all by yourself" (p. 295). The Paradigm Case of world creation involves "casting" particular individuals to play the parts called for in the drama, and then treating those individuals accordingly. Members living in what has become an oppressive bordering on an impossible world are ready for such a movement. The charismatic leader gathers the community together, rallies the troops, inspires the followers, and pursues the new world.

Descriptive Psychology accounts for the concepts of relationships and position, and the assignment of such positions being a function of the communities in which a person has membership. A closer examination of the Ghost Dancers and the Zomians utilizing the concepts of culture will explicate the kinds of cultural collapse (Ghost Dancers) and resilience (Zomians) that accompanies the casting by a community for a charismatic figure and the positions of the community members readying them to be cast as the followers in the millenarian movement.

Millenarian Movements and the Parameters of Culture

Prophets come on the scene during community crises. These crises threaten, upset, alter, and limit the community. Examining this disruption under each parameter of a culture will give us access to the kind of cultural/community destruction faced by Native Americans and the adjustments Zomia made to survive.

Members

In 1867, typhoid along with European diseases wiped out nearly 10% of the Paiute population. In addition the Indian wars of the late 19th century also depleted the populations. Communities require persons and the loss of these community members can traumatize and devastate its stability. Eliminate a community's members and no other parameters of the culture matter.

Scott (2009) noted that various communities of Zomians had a plethora of ethnic groups represented. He specifically cited the Karen as a group difficult to characterize because of the variety of ethnicities represented. This community diversity also represented by the ability to speak several dialects by the members gave these communities flexibility in preserving membership. More outside groups could be absorbed because their languages were represented. As discussed above, the geography allowed escape as well to higher ground making pursuit by valley

state armies quite difficult and the survival of members more likely.

World

Jack Wilson preached peace and a return to the old days as a counter to the view that Native American tribes were under continuous threat from the hegemonic Americans. Their world was being limited, cut up, and placed on reservations. Their world was not one in which autonomous tribes could move where food was available and practice their rituals in peace, but one in which, as hunted "savages", they were subject to limitation and murder by the whites.

The groups of Zomia had their prophets to present a world view in which not only was the community portrayed as autonomous relative to the valley states but at times was portrayed as potentially triumphant over them. These prophets of change became community status assigners increasing the behavior potential of their members and sparking protest, revolt, and revolution.

In addition, Zomian traditions tended to be oral and therefore more easily portable. Scott (2009) argued that oral traditions characterizing a world view of a culture are more easily altered to explain a changing world than a written tradition. He pointed out as well that in many peasant revolts one of the first places attacked was the office of tax records. Those records were burned. Writing for peasants in much of history represented a restriction not a source of freedom. Oral traditions tended to give a community flexibility not only in retelling history to fit the present times, but also in promoting a more egalitarian, less hierarchical organization.

Statuses

As the reservations of the Sioux were reduced in size and broken up, the members went from proud warriors to imprisoned individuals. To be a member of a particular community is to have a certain status relative to other communities with whom your community has relationships. Twenty years earlier, Sitting Bull had led the Sioux to a great victory. The actions of the US government altered profoundly that position of the Sioux.

Zomian communities tended to be politically egalitarian and rarely hierarchical. Scott (2009) argued that the existence of a clear hierarchy facilitated another state controlling that community. A hierarchical political structure reduced the number of persons a state had to deal with in order to control the community. By virtue of spreading the status of leader to many members, a community protected itself from another state controlling that community. Administering an occupied territory was particularly problematic when knowing who to go to for what was unclear.

In addition, under this egalitarian system of management, no clear leader was available under crisis conditions. A crisis called for united action and a leader to coalesce the members loosely associated under such an egalitarian arrangement. A person would emerge rallying the people toward the cause of survival. Since no standard set of social practices was available to choose the leader, charismatic leaders, these prophets of change, had a path to claim that status based on championing a uniting world view of that particular community. Community crises

created strong and immediate needs for clear leadership The prophet, the messiah, the charismatic figure filled this power vacuum. These individuals were usually "cosmopolitans" in Scott's view (2009). That is, they tended to have traveled widely and were not associated with any one family or kinship structure. This gave them a quality of authenticity in that they were not beholding to any one family or group and could be more readily regarded as working for the good of the community. This presentation helped any one would-be prophet qualify as a community status assigner.

Social Practices

The Sioux were reduced from proud hunters to failed farmers. The whites attempted to "civilize" the tribes by introducing social practices that would from the whites' perspectives reduce their savagery. But this only undercut members' behavior potential and increased humiliation.

Zomia enacted practices that enhanced their ability to escape and preserve the community and developed social practices that allowed survival in terrain that discouraged valley states from invading. Their housing was minimalist, frequently open to the environment on two sides. This architecture allowed for quicker escape. Their agriculture was not dependent on wet rice cultivation and therefore allowed for geographic change when that was called for. Large states could not easily predict the time of harvest for peoples practicing swiddening in contrast to predicting the ripening of rice. Therefore, it was much more difficult for these states to extract tribute from the hills peoples.

Language

The government was determined to rid Native Americans of their savagery and one of the approaches was to send the children to white boarding schools, some as far away as Pennsylvania. This was no less than an attempt and a largely successful one to destroy a culture.

Ironically, many of the Zomian communities were multilingual. According to his thesis, Scott showed that such flexibility was not only a result of a culture that had shifted alliances over many years based on its self interest but also allowed that community to deal with other communities for trade and the like when these communities were not under threat from the large valley states. This increased the resilience of these Southeast Asian hills peoples.

Choice Principles

As discussed above, the position of "culture hero" offers community members a pattern of choices with which to model their own lives. Sitting Bull occupied such a position in Sioux culture. The Americans attempted to reduce Sitting Bull's status as a beacon for the Sioux. They were finally able to contain him on a reservation. But until his death, Sitting Bull refused to engage in "white' social practices such as farming. He was finally killed by reservation police (DeMallie, 1982). Sitting Bull refused to give up his status as Sioux, and he died attempting to retain that status. A gap occurred in the community between the need for that culture hero and the fulfillment of that status.

The Zomians developed choice principles and leaders able to rally the people in order to move the community not only from one psychological place to another but from one physical place to another. Scott (2009) noted that the "major league" prophets of Zomia inspired people to sell their livestock, leave their houses, follow the prophet and completely restart their lives.

The rise of the prophet Wovoka occurred during the destruction of the way of life of Native Americans. Their autonomy had been minimized. The basic human needs of peace, security, and significance were unfulfilled.

Wovoka's prophesy and the Ghost Dance ritual served both as a promise of better days to come and a means to inspire the community toward action. Performing the dance gave the community a social practice to enact in the face of overwhelming odds and reaffirmed the culture that they saw being destroyed before their eyes (Overholt, 1974). What is real for a person is what that person is prepared to act on. Participation in the Ghost Dance was a way to treat the world as one that included once again Native Americans in a place of prominence.

This brief description of the struggles of the Sioux illustrates the cultural devastation that US government actions created. All the parameters of culture were affected. In such circumstances, a prophet is cast to right these wrongs, to restore the world to the ways of life as it should be, to bring back the buffalo, to bring back the warrior. The prophet has a place not unlike that of the culture hero, one who represents and can deliver the old ways, the better way of life. But these cultures barely survived (some would say they have not) and the poverty, alcoholism, and other indicators of ongoing distress have been present for generations.

How quickly these cultures were destroyed. Lewis and Clark's expedition was at the beginning of the century. By the end of the 1800's, Native Americans had had their way of life, one that had existed for centuries, virtually wiped out. The Ghost Dance can be described as a desperate attempt to change the world, but it was too late. There was little opportunity to turn the new vision into sets of working social practices that would include statuses of worth for the members of these tribes, the satisfaction of basic human needs, and ultimately the survival of the culture.

In contrast, the hills peoples of Zomia, over time, were able to evolve an escape culture that included millenarian leaders much of the time to provide a triumphant world view and unite community members against a common foe. The members of these societies developed these world views into social practices that provided for the resilience of these communities under threat.

Zomia evolved its multiple cultures over 2000 years. Geographical conditions allowed the Zomians to flee to the hills and helped create circumstances for survival. Social practices developed over time that could sustain the community and culture in the face of attacks from outside forces. This gave many of the Zomians opportunity to stay out of range of the valley states. These groups then adapted their social practices in order to achieve basic needs. Scott (2009) noted that as large valley states around the world have increased their reach, fewer "stateless" groups have been able to resist state inclusion. As a result, fewer millenarian movements

and charismatic leaders have emerged in these areas of the world recently.

The stories of the Ghost Dancers and the Zomians are reminders that leadership is critical under times of duress, when hope and vision and direction are paramount. But the lesson is as well that a leader does not make a community. The core and fundamental social practices have to develop to achieve basic human needs, including the potential to adjust to traumatic change. Other members participating in these practices make the new world work.

A set of communities, a tribe, an ethnic group, a state may be under threat from forces that have undercut the very fabric of what constitutes the accepted culture. Change is called for and persons under these conditions are in positions to alter relationships, engage in different or new social practices to help satisfy their basic needs not being achieved by the old practices. But if this set of communities as a whole is experiencing this disruption, then fewer options exist to reformulate ones position, to engage in new practices. Institutions that once worked in the culture may be seen as no longer viable. Persons then seek the expert, the guru, the elder, and the charismatic leader to reinvent the world. They have strong reasons to cast for such a person.

Conclusion

> And the people bowed and prayed
> To the neon god they made
> And the sign flashed out its warning
> In the words that it was forming
> And the sign said, "The words of the prophets are written on the
> Subway walls and tenement halls"
> And whispered in the sounds of silence (Simon, 1966).

A common saying goes something like this: "Not all men believe in God; but all men have their gods." Most of the time a person's life goes as expected. But persons, living in places like Somalia or Rwanda or residents of northeast Japan when the Tsunami hit in 2011, have experienced devastating world changes. Perhaps living in the richest country in the history of the world concretizes a point of view that the world will remain stable and that instability is a third world phenomenon. But Diamond (2005) made the case that there existed many great civilizations that could not sustain themselves under particular circumstances and vanished into history. The "Great Recession" of 2008 is a recent reminder that the world can change suddenly and profoundly.

Particular conditions, some man made and others a result of nature, can upset, render valueless a person's organized set of social practices and a world view that gives life a sense of coherence and significance. But if the core practices of the community no longer work, if a person's judgment and choices cannot bring intrinsic satisfaction associated with certain needs like safety, peace, competence, and significance, then that person will seek others to make sense of this world, to reassign a place of value, a place from which the world will work again.

Persons assign places, develop social practices, and create worlds. It's a behavioral world. Charismatic leaders and politicians, prophets and messiahs, strong men, dictators, kings and presidents are cultural status assigners in a political community. Under circumstances of uncommon uncertainty and potential devastation, the members of the community seek leaders to make their lives better by being in a position to help solve problems beyond the capabilities of ordinary members. This leader or leaders, these movements for change, give members a vision and a voice when they face the unthinkable.

References

Barlow, J. J. (2003) The man behind the curtain. *The Review of Politics, 65*, 475-478. DOI: 10.1017/S0034670500039279.

Baum, L. F. (1900). *The wonderful wizard of Oz*. Chicago: George M. Hill Company.

Bergner, R. (2007). *Status dynamics: Creating new paths to therapeutic change*. Ann Arbor, MI: Burns Park Publishers.

DeMallie, R.J. (1982). The Sioux ghost dance: An ethnohistorical account. *Pacific Historical Review*, *51* (4), 385-405. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3639782.

Diamond, J. (2005). *Collapse: How societies choose to fail or succeed.* New York: Penguin Books.

Dow, T.E (1978). An analysis of Weber's work on charisma. *The British Journal of Sociology, 29*, 83-93. London: Blackwell Publishing on behalf of The London School of Economics and Political Science. (Source: http://www.jstor.org/stable/589221)

Galbraith, J.H. (1982). Appeals to the supernatural: African and New Zealand comparisons with the Ghost Dance. *Pacific Historical Review*, *51*, 115-133. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3638526.

Hobsbawm, E.J. (1965). *Primitive rebels: Studies in archaic forms of social movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co.

Huggins, N.I. (1987). Martin Luther King, Jr.: Charisma and leadership. *The Journal of American History, 74*, 477-481. Retrieved from url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1900035 .

Littlefield, H. M. (1964). The Wizard of Oz: Parable of populism. *American Quarterly 16*, 47-58. Retrieved from http://www.amphigory.com/oz.htm.

Logan, B. (1980). The Ghost Dance among the Paiute: An ethnohistorical view of the documentary evidence 1889-1893. *Ethnohistory, 27*, 267-288). Duke University Press. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/481271.

McCann, Jr., F. D. (1966). The Ghost Dance, last hope of western tribes, unleashed the final tragedy. *Montana: The Magazine of Western History, 16, 25-34.* Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4517018 .

Mooney, J. (1896). The Ghost dance religion and the Sioux outbreak of 1890. In J. W. Powell, *Fourteenth annual report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1892-1893, part two*. Washington government printing office.

Ossorio, P.G. (1983). A multicultural psychology. In Davis, K.E., & Bergner, R. (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology*, (Vol. 3, pp. 13-44). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Ossorio, P.G. (2006). *The behavior of persons*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Overholt,T. W.(1974). The Ghost Dance of 1890 and the nature of the prophetic process. In *Ethnohistory*, *21*, 37-63. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/481129.

Pappas, T. S. (2006). Political charisma and liberal democracy. Retrieved from http://www.afsp.msh-paris.fr/activite/2006/colllinz06/txtlinz/pappas2.pdf

Pereira de Queiroz, M.I. (1965). Messiahs in Brazil. *Past & Present, 31,* 62-86. Retrieved by http://www.jstor.org/stable/650102.

Putman, A. O. (1990). Organizations. In A. O. Putman & K. E. Davis (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 5, pp. 11-46). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A.O. (2010). Ordinary magic. In Davis, K.E., Lugubin, F., and Schwartz, W. (Eds.*), Advances in Descriptive Psychology*, (Vol.9., pp. 9-39). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Rapoport, D.C. (1979). Moses, charisma, and covenant. In *The Western Political Quarterly,* 32, 123-143. Retrieved from URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/448172.

Roberts, M.K. (2010).Worlds of uncertain status. In Davis, K.E., Lugubin,F., and Schwartz, W. (Eds.*), Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol.9., pp.287-319). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Schweitzer, A. (1974). Theory and political charisma. In *Comparative Studies in Society and History 16*,150-181. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/178310.

Scott, J. C. (2009). *The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Simon, P. (1966). The sounds of silence [Recorded by Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel] . On *Sounds of silence* [CD]. Retrieved from http://www.lyricsdepot.com/simon-garfunkel/sounds-of-silence.html

Taylor, Q. P. (2005). Money and politics in the land of Oz. *The Independent Review*, *9* 413-426. Retrieved from http://www.independent.org/publications/tir/article.asp?a=504.

Wallace, A. F. C. (1956). Revitalization movements. *American Anthropologist,* New Series, *58*, 264-281.Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/665488 .

Author Note

Charles Kantor, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Rochester, NY.

This paper was first presented at the annual conference of the Society for Descriptive Psychology, September 23, 2011. I want to thank Joe Jeffrey, Tony Putman, Tee Roberts, Ned Kirsch, Charlie Cote', Ray Bergner, Keith Davis, and Nancy Kantor. They gave advice, held my hand, and reminded me to have fun. They were great Descriptive Wizards.

Address: Charles Kantor, Ph.D., 1595 Elmwood Avenue, Rochester, NY, 14620.

Introduction to Part Three: Selected Topics

Fernand Lubuguin

The final section of this volume addresses a miscellany of topics. Most are related and applicable to the practice of clinical psychology. Although the comprehensive intellectual discipline of Descriptive Psychology (DP) can be applied to a wide range of interests, real-world human problems and disciplines (as reflected by the content of previous volumes), the clinical applications are perhaps the most broadly practical in nature. Specifically, this section examines trauma concepts, therapeutic policies, empathy, romantic love, and the relationship between masculinity and intimate partner violence. The sixth chapter addresses some conceptual and logical matters relevant to acquiring greater clarity in the understanding of DP's core Person Concept. The following provides overviews of the six chapters in this section.

"Trauma Concepts: A Descriptive Formulation of the Nature of Trauma and its Consequences"

Ralph Wechsler extends and elaborates on the existing psychological literature concerning trauma in two particular ways. First, he addresses the shortcoming of the existing literature that has examined trauma primarily from an empirical perspective, by providing a conceptual perspective and formulation of trauma. Second, he elaborates and integrates some of the earlier Descriptive Psychology literature regarding trauma (Ossorio, 1997, 2006a; Roberts, 1985, 1991).

Wechsler's analysis of trauma is guided by four key questions: (a) what is psychological trauma?, (b) why do some people get traumatized and others do not, even when exposed to highly similar circumstances?, (c) why do symptoms of the condition take the particular forms that they do?, and (d) what is the role of physiology in creating and perpetuating the condition? He provides answers to these questions by applying the Descriptive Psychology conceptual device of a Paradigm Case Formulation (PCF) (Ossorio, 2006a).

A PCF is a means of formulating the essential characteristics of a phenomenon in a manner that is both clear and flexible. In contrast, definitions generally specify the commonalities across a wide range of examples of a particular phenomenon. As such, they tend to be quite broad and imprecise, and/or excessively narrow. Procedurally, a PCF involves two steps – generating a paradigm case and introducing transformations to the paradigm case. In the former, a clear-cut and

archetypal example is selected. In the latter, transformations to the paradigm case are introduced by altering, adding or deleting particular aspects of the paradigm case to suit the purpose at hand.

In this particular chapter, Wechsler's aim is to clarify what is actually transformed about a person and his or her world as a result of trauma. Specifically, one personal characteristic of an individual that is transformed is one's knowledge of his/her world, which is the set of facts that a person has the ability to act on. Regarding changes to a person's world, the occurrence of psychological trauma precipitates a range of responses. At the very least, the occurrence of what was once unthinkable renders the world as mysterious and full of uncertainty. At the very worst, the loss of one's fundamental understanding of the world effectively destroys and tears apart that person's world. Such profound changes in one's world necessarily alter a person's self-identity, and accordingly, one's relationships with other persons and the entire world. As his ultimate goal, Wechsler applies his refined conceptualization by offering new and potentially more effective treatments for the recovery from trauma.

"A Policy-based Approach to Psychotherapy"

Raymond Bergner introduces a compelling novel perspective to conducting psychotherapy. Bergner's new view is not a theoretical orientation, diagnostic system, assessment procedure or treatment strategy. Rather, he offers particular therapeutic policies that fundamentally restructure the entire intellectual framework of psychotherapy. Therapeutic policies are recommended procedural guidelines for conducting psychotherapy. As such, they are not restrictive, but rather they are expansive and integrative. Policies do not prescribe specific behaviors, techniques or interventions. Instead, therapeutic policies promote creativity and flexibility in conducting psychotherapy. Further, therapeutic policies provide a significant number of practices and perspectives that are common to all approaches to psychotherapy. Finally, as a set of superordinate principles, therapeutic policies integrate seemingly divergent schools of thought regarding psychotherapy.

After elaborating on the nature and beneficial characteristics of therapeutic policies, Bergner provides a large number of intuitively clear policies and their rationales. Although his list is not exhaustive, they are certainly comprehensive and lend themselves to the generation of further policies. The broad categories of the policies he describes include those that are integrative and unifying, that refer to the therapeutic relationship, and that refer to conducting psychotherapy per se.

The nature of therapeutic policies and the manner in which Bergner presented his innovative perspective can be quite helpful to both novice and experienced therapists. For the novices, these particular policies can be regarded as a primer to conducting psychotherapy. For the experienced practitioners, these policies can sharpen their understanding of what they already know, as well as introduce new perspectives and principles that may have been obscured by one's long-standing and familiar theoretical orientation.

"The Parameters of Empathy: Core Considerations for Psychotherapy and Supervision"

Wynn Schwartz applies the DP conceptual devices of Paradigm Case Formulation and Parametric Analysis to clarify the seemingly straightforward notion of empathy. Additionally, Schwartz employs the parametric analysis of Intentional Action to elucidate the concept and dynamics concerning empathy. By applying these concepts and approach to the analysis of empathy, he accomplishes his aim of systematically articulating the aspects of empathy and developing a set of questions and reminders for enhancing psychotherapy and clinical supervision.

Among the parameters of Intentional Action, Schwartz focuses on the following for making appraisals about the empathic nature of an interpersonal interaction and relationship: Want, Knowledge, Know-How, and Significance. A brief description of these parameters is as follows: (a) Want – refers to the state of affairs the person wants to realize, (b) Knowledge – refers to the distinctions being made and acted on by the person, (c) Know-How – refers to the particular competence and skill being applied, and (d) Significance – refers to the meaning of the behavior as derived by understanding what the person is also doing by doing the particular behavior (Ossorio, 2006a).

Through these concepts, empathy can then be more clearly understood to be the successful communication of one person's recognition and appreciation of the other person's behavior in terms of the specific Want, Knowledge, Know-How, and most importantly Significance of the particular behavior. Furthermore, the manner in which this recognition is conveyed to the other person is one that the person finds tolerable. Schwartz provides an engaging illustration of this formulation of empathy by describing a psychotherapeutic interaction he had with an adolescent male patient.

"Characteristics of Romantic Love: An Empirically-Based Essentialist Account"

Raymond Bergner, Keith Davis, Lauren Saternus, Samantha Walley, and Tiffany Tyson describe their four-part study that reconsiders particular commonly held notions of romantic love. Specifically, they challenge the conventional notion of romantic love as prototypical. That is, romantic love is regarded as a phenomenon that has certain characteristics that bear a family resemblance to each other. In contrast, an essentialist view of romantic love posits that there are certain necessary and essential characteristics present. Without these, the phenomenon would not be romantic love per se, albeit another similar or related relationship.

Specifically, the authors posit an empirically-based essentialist conceptualization of romantic love, wherein the critical relationship characteristic is the "care for the partner's well-being for his or her own sake" (CWB). They conducted four studies to test the following three hypotheses: (a) participants will employ the concept of romantic love as an essentialist concept, (b) participants will perceive CWB

to be an essential feature of romantic love, and (c) participants will have two distinct conceptions pertaining to romantic love, an essentialist one for romantic love itself, and a prototypical one for a good romantic relationship. The authors tested these hypotheses by employing two different methods of assessment.

Although related to each other, the authors emphasized the distinction between romantic love per se as an essentialist concept, and the concept of a good romantic relationship as a prototypical concept. Conceptually, one can think of the prototypical notion of a good romantic love relationship in terms of a Paradigm Case Formulation, with certain characteristics as ones that can be regarded as potential transformations to a paradigm case. Specifically, these characteristics include the following: acceptance, affectionate feeling, commitment, enjoyment, emotional intimacy, exclusiveness, freedom to be ourselves, knowledge/understanding, preoccupation, respect, sexual desire, trust, and similarity.

The results from all four studies provide strong and consistent support of the essentialist view of romantic love. Of particular significance, the most widely and consistently endorsed essential aspect of romantic love was CWB. The data also indicated that prototypes of good romantic love relationships are different from and broader than their conceptions of what is essential to a romantic love relationship per se. This final notion is consistent with the perspective described above concerning the transformations of the paradigm case of a good enough romantic love relationship. That is, variations in the presence and importance of the certain aspects of a good romantic love relationship can be regarded as transformations to a paradigm case.

"Gender as One's Eligibility to Engage Social Practices: Unpacking the Relationship Between Masculinity and Intimate Partner Violence"

Christopher Allen explores the relationship between masculinity and male gender (as a *status*), and intimate partner violence (as a *social practice*). Status refers to a person's place and position in relation to other people and everything else in a domain. Statuses correspond to eligibilities to engage in particular behaviors. For example, the status of being a psychotherapist renders one formally eligible to provide psychotherapy. A social practice is a social pattern of behavior that constitutes what is done in any given culture, or way of life. As a social pattern, social practices generally involve more than one behavior, thereby reflecting a range of ways in which social practices can be enacted (Ossorio, 2006a). Examples that reflect the broad range of social practices include something as mundane as preparing a meal, to something more meaningful as caring for a child, to something as formal as participating in the institution of raising children.

Allen applies a PCF to understand intimate partner violence (IPV) by selecting a particular type as the paradigm case. Specifically, the paradigm case of *intimate terrorism* is characterized by a pattern of violent coercive control

that involves a range of behaviors including physical and/or sexual violence, as well as non-violent strategies to control the partner. For example, these non-violent tactics include economic abuse, emotional abuse, the use of children, threats and intimidation, constant monitoring, and blaming the victim.

Given the relationship between status and social practices, the author proposes that gender is a status that mediates engagement in the social practice of IPV. Specifically, intimate terrorism (as a paradigm case of intimate partner violence) is a gendered social practice that occurs in the context of a gendered society. In turn, the relationship between masculinity and IPV can be more clearly understood from such a perspective.

In the final section of his chapter, Allen compares his proposed formulation with the major theoretical paradigms used to examine the relationship between masculinity and IPV. These paradigms are as follows: (a) the Essentialist framework, (b) Social Learning frameworks, (c) Social Constructionist frameworks, and (d) Feminist framework.

"The Nefarious 'Is'"

When President Clinton, in a famous 1998 incident, responded to a question about his alleged sexual indiscretions, he notoriously responded that the answer "depends on what the meaning of the word 'is' is." He was roundly chided for this on news programs and editorial pages, the implication being that the simple word "is" could have only a single possible meaning.

However, as Mary Roberts illustrates in her chapter in this section, "is" has not only two, but actually three different uses. Not only does it have these three, but upon reflection we see that they are all rather familiar, commonplace ones. There is the "is" of genus-species relationship (as in "the whale is a mammal"); the "is" of identity (as in "the morning star is Venus"), and the "is" of predication (as in "the cat is on the mat"). "So what," you might say, "we all knew this (at least, all of us except the political pundits)." In this chapter, Mary Roberts addresses this question as it relates to understanding the logic of Descriptive Psychology's Person Concept.

Wittgenstein once famously stated that his philosophy was "the struggle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by language", and accordingly created a philosophical approach centered on correcting misuses of language to solve longstanding problems in philosophy. In the interest of helping readers to comprehend the DP approach, one of Roberts' aims in this chapter relates to this sort of linguistically corrective or "therapeutic" goal. For example, pertaining to the genus-species use of "is", she presents a list of destructively consequential "category errors" (i.e., assignments of phenomena to the wrong category) that persist in psychology, but which are avoided and positively corrected within Descriptive Psychology. In this connection, she cites Ossorio's statement when addressing psychology's longstanding and notorious equation of behavior with physical movement, that "Behavior is no more a species of movement than the queen of hearts is a species of cardboard"

(1967, p. 21). While Roberts' agenda here is not to develop Descriptive Psychology's positive articulation of this concept, removal of this category error paves the way for the "fresh start" that DP provides.

Much of Roberts' chapter is offered in a more constructive, noncorrective vein. For example, she discusses the central and critical use of the "is" of identity —the "is" that can be read as "is the same thing as"—in Ossorio's State of Affairs System. "Rather than talking about a small set of a priori concepts in the mind (reference to Kant) Ossorio treats four basic reality concepts—'object' 'process', 'event', and 'state of affairs'—as elements in a calculational system, and presents rules for calculating with them... The rules codify the systematic relationships among the reality concepts, and govern the transitions that people make in generating and connecting forms of representation of the real world...The single operation in the system is identity coordination, represented by the categorical 'is'."

Roberts concludes her chapter by stating that, "My hope is that the paper evokes curiosity about the Person Concept, and makes it a little easier to understand its logic." For those willing to grapple with the often intrinsically difficult and unfamiliar matters under discussion in this chapter, this hope will be admirably reaiized.

References

Ossorio, P. G. (1967). *Rule-following in grammar and behavior* (LRI Report No. 7). Whittier, CA & Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.

Ossorio, P.G. (1997). *Essays on clinical topics. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. II.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P.G. (2006a). *The behavior of persons. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. V*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Roberts, M. K. (1985). Worlds and world reconstruction. In K.Davis and T. Mitchell (Eds.). *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 4, pp. 17-54). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Roberts, M.K. (1991). Companions of uncertain status. In M.K. Roberts and R.M. Bergner (Eds.). *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 6, pp. 37-77) Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Trauma Concepts: A Descriptive Psychological Formulation of the Nature of Trauma and its Consequences

Ralph C. Wechsler, Ph. D.
Denver Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Eastern Colorado Healthcare System

Abstract

In this chapter, I seek to answer four questions about psychological trauma that have not been properly conceptualized. They are: (a) What is psychological trauma? (b) Why do some people get traumatized and others do not? (c) Why do the symptoms of PTSD take the specific forms that they do? And finally, (d) What is the role of physiology in creating or perpetuating the condition? In addressing these questions, I shall be drawing upon the conceptual resources of Descriptive Psychology, among which are the conceptual device of Paradigm Case Formulations, the formulation of pathology as disability, and the concept of a person's World and how it is related to his/her self-concept. The resulting clarifications will lay the foundation for a later elucidation and integration of approaches to therapy with PTSD victims.

Key words: Paradigm Case Formulation, trauma, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, personal worlds, Face in the Wall

We are all vulnerable to life's evils and misfortunes; how we adapt to them determines what our world will subsequently be and whom we will experience ourselves as. Thus, the study of psychological trauma deals with some of the most fundamental questions about the nature of one's world and its relationship to oneself. Despite its salience in many of our clients' lives and often in our own, making the concept of psychological trauma accessible proves to be challenging. In reviewing the literature on psychological trauma, four central questions emerge: (1) *What*

is psychological trauma? (2) *Why do some people get traumatized and others do not, even when exposed to essentially identical circumstances? (3) Why do the symptoms take the particular forms that they do? (4) What is the role of physiology in creating or perpetuating the condition?* As I have become more and more involved with survivors of trauma, I have become less and less satisfied with the answers usually given to these four questions. In fact, existing accounts of trauma are problematic in a number of respects. What has been apparent is that the bulk of the writing on trauma has been from an empirical perspective. These writings have chiefly described the clinical syndrome of psychological trauma (i.e., signs and symptoms) or its epidemiology (i.e., its course, prevalence, and outcome). The conceptual perspective has been relatively neglected. With this in mind, the intention of this paper is to elaborate a formulation of psychological trauma using the conceptual resources of Descriptive Psychology (Ossorio, 2013b). I initially presented some of these ideas on psychological trauma in a presidential address to the Society for Descriptive Psychology (Wechsler, 1995).

Trauma and related concepts have been addressed previously in the Descriptive Psychology literature. Ossorio first mentioned psychological trauma in *Clinical Topics* (2013a) in his elaboration of the concept of "unthinkability" and his subsequent presentation of the "Face in the Wall" heuristic. Later, Mary Roberts discussed trauma in her papers, "Worlds and world reconstruction" (1985), and "Companions of uncertain status" (1991). Subsequently, in a 1993 presentation to the Society for Descriptive Psychology entitled: "The Self and Self-Concept," Ossorio discussed the concept of psychological trauma and its potential to change the self-concept. His most elaborated discussion of psychological trauma may be found in *The Behavior of Persons* (2013b). More recently, Bergner (2005; 2009) has presented a reconceptualization of trauma in terms of the damage it does to persons' conceptions of their worlds, a discussion of how this view integrates findings on who is most vulnerable to PTSD, and a reanalysis of how exposure therapies achieve their well-documented salutary results.

The aim of the current paper is to integrate these ideas and to clarify what actually is transformed about a person and his or her world as a consequence of trauma. I will be elaborating a hypothetical example of psychological trauma introduced by Ossorio entitled "Face in the Wall" (Wechsler and Magerkorth, 2008). This example provides a useful means of formulating the essential or *paradigmatic* features of the phenomenon. The reader is encouraged to consider what follows as a *thought experiment*, which is a traditional philosophical device involving the use of imaginary situations to help understand how things actually are.

My ultimate goal, however, is to provide a model of psychological trauma that will be accessible to individuals who have been traumatized. Having an adequate conceptual model of psychological trauma will allow them to begin answering the five fundamental questions that all people with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) struggle with: (1) What has happened to me? (2) Why can't I do what I used to be able to do? (3) Why can't I do what other people do, and seem to

do so easily? (4) Why do I have to do the things that I do in the ways that I do them, which are so different from the ways in which other people do them? (5) What can I do to recover and to bring back into my life those things that have been missing, such as safety, happiness, self-respect, and intimacy?

Adding to the confusion about the concept of psychological trauma, the elements of one particular type of trauma are often universalized to all traumas. This tendency to universalize typically reflects the clinical facts of the specific population that was observed by the writer. For example, the research and clinical writings are heavily weighted towards conceptualizations of trauma derived from the Vietnam veteran experience. The focus on this population has heightened the relevance of physiological arousal and community estrangement as essential elements of trauma. Other writers, however, whose clinical population has been primarily victimized women, have emphasized terror and helplessness as essential elements of trauma (Herman, 1992b). Yet, it is just these elements that may be absent when a soldier is committing atrocities. Thus, it is difficult to distill what all instances of trauma have in common.

Problems in Defining Trauma

Weathers and Keane (2007) articulately capture the difficulty in distilling the commonalities of trauma: "Achieving a consensus definition of trauma is essential for progress in the field of traumatic stress. However, creating an all-purpose general definition has proven remarkably difficult. Stressors vary along a number of dimensions, including magnitude (which itself varies on a number of dimensions, e.g., life threat, threat of harm, interpersonal loss; cf. Green, 1993), complexity, frequency, duration, predictability, and controllability. At the extremes, i.e., catastrophes versus minor hassles, different stressors may seem discrete and qualitatively distinct, but there is a continuum of stressor severity and there are no crisp boundaries demarcating ordinary stressors from traumatic stressors. Further, perception of an event as stressful depends on subjective appraisal, making it difficult to define stressors objectively, and independent of personal meaning making" (p. 108).

That said, definitions of psychological trauma have become more sophisticated over the years. A lackluster definition of "psychological trauma" can be found in the 1974 edition of Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary, which defines "psychic trauma" as: "an emotional shock that makes a lasting impression on the mind, especially the subconscious mind" (p. 1633). More recently, Stedman's Medical Dictionary (1989) defined "psychic trauma" as: "an upsetting experience precipitating or aggravating an emotional or mental disorder" (p. 1626). A 2012 definition of (psychological) trauma from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's website (http://www.samhsa.gov/traumajustice/traumadefinition/definition.aspx) illustrates the increased sophistication about trauma definitions. The authors define trauma succinctly: "Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual

well-being." They go on to posit the centrality of the individual's experience in determining whether the event or circumstances prove to be traumatic.

What should be clear by now, however, is that you cannot establish a unique set of defining features (as required by a definitional approach) by remaining at the level of the observable clinical phenomenon of trauma. You must go beyond this observational level to the conceptual level. The conceptual level describes the significance of the symptoms themselves.

What makes something traumatic per se, rather than merely painful, unpleasant, or scary is not immediately evident, yet this distinction is crucial. This point was brought home to me during discussions with Peter Ossorio (personal communication, March 1, 1994) when I shared with him what I thought was a personally traumatic experience.

I described an incident in 1988 when my (very) pregnant wife and I went into a submarine sandwich shop in a deserted strip mall for a late dinner. It was about 8:45 pm and we had been working long hours to prepare my daughter's room for her imminent arrival. As we placed our order, we chatted amicably with the young woman behind the counter, who was a few months pregnant. Suddenly, as we were eating, two men entered the store and one immediately vaulted the counter with a revolver in his hand as the other took up a position as a look-out near the front door.

I sat there dumbfounded and stared at what was taking place. I had seen similar scenes many times in movies or on television shows, but never unfolding in real life before me. Fortunately, my wife had the presence of mind to get me to stop staring and to look away. We were sitting in a booth to the side and we continued to eat, acting as if we were unaware that an armed robbery was taking place. As we sat there, we listened to the clerk's voice from the back room as she pleaded with the gunman, "I can't open the safe. Please don't hurt me or hurt my baby!" At that moment, I grasped the real possibility that I might be seriously injured or dead very shortly. After a few minutes, however, the robbers left without ever interacting with us. We went to the back of the store to help the clerk, who was scared but unharmed, and called the police.

After I described the incident, Dr. Ossorio kept asking me, "But what made it traumatic?" I would try to give an answer, such as, "I thought I might be killed." But after each answer I gave, he simply repeated the question, "Yes, but what made it traumatic?" Finally, he said to me, "That experience doesn't sound traumatic. That just sounds scary." With that comment, I began to understand a very important aspect of the concept of psychological trauma. It was not the incident itself that was crucial; it was how it had affected my world and my ability to behave as myself in it. I realized at that moment that the experience had not significantly reduced my *behavior potential* (i.e., the type and range of behaviors that I took to be possible for me) to the point that I was left in a pathological state.

I showed none of the signs that actual traumatic events engender, such as avoidance, hyperarousal when memories of the experience were triggered, or finding that the experience intruded into my thoughts unbidden. I still could go to sub

shops (although if I did so in the evening, the thought of the robbery always came to mind and I was conscious of where I sat). I realized that my world had not changed significantly, and that I had not experienced a net loss, but actually a net gain, in my behavior potential. For example, street crime became more "real" to me (rather than merely true), which allowed me to be more consciously aware of personal safety and my environment. The experience also taught me to "trust your gut" because, as we drove up to the deserted strip mall, a thought had fleetingly passed through my mind that I had chosen to ignore: "This would be a good place for an armed robbery."

Physical Trauma as Prototype for Psychological Trauma

Physical trauma is the prototype for the notion of psychological trauma so I will elaborate on their conceptual similarities and differences. The term "trauma" comes from the Greek word meaning to wound or hurt. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (1969) defines "trauma" as "a wound, especially one produced by a sudden physical injury" (p. 1366). Essential to this notion of trauma is that it entails some sort of damage to the normal functioning of the individual.

The injury that occurs in physiological trauma can often be easily seen. With a gunshot wound, for example, the damage is evident. What is "wounded" or "injured" in psychological trauma, however, is much less clear. To put the question slightly differently, exactly what is damaged in the case of, for example, a Vietnam veteran who commits atrocities, a girl who has sexual relations with her grandfather from age six to age twelve, or a person who is a passenger on a plane that is hijacked for seventy-two hours? What is damaged in psychological trauma is the essential question to be addressed in the formulation to follow.

The term "trauma" in medicine refers to injuries that result in *significant* physical damage to a person's body. Not just anything qualifies as trauma. The paper cut on the back of our hand we receive from the edge of a magazine may cause us to wince and to curse, but we do not count it as significant. What makes an injury "significant"? The answer lies in the injury's likelihood of being disabling in some way—in it constituting a *disability*. In the broadest sense, a disability is *something that restricts our behavior potential*, either in our own eyes or in the eyes of others. If the restriction or deficit in our behavior potential is significant enough, we (or others) might consider our self to be in a *pathological state*; i.e., a state of affairs in which "there is a significant restriction on (a person's) ability (a) to engage in deliberate action and, equivalently, (b) to participate in the social practices of the community" (Ossorio, 1985, p. 158). As will be seen, what is central here is the notion of a pathological state; i.e., a state characterized by significant deficits in a person's ability to behave (either as an individual or within the social context within which the individual must participate with other members of his community).

Let's alter the situation somewhat and see where we end up. Instead of a paper cut across the back of your hand, imagine a mistake with a power tool that results in a large laceration across the back of your right hand. The cut is deep enough to

have severed tendons and is bleeding profusely. In this case, you or any bystander would have no trouble recognizing the injury as a significant one and treating it accordingly, such as by applying direct pressure to stop the bleeding and finding some way of getting immediate medical attention. You would also readily agree with the decision to transport you by ambulance to the trauma center at your local hospital.

In this case, the causal connection between the injury and any subsequent disability (i.e., its ability to restrict our behavior potential) is patently obvious. Unless you repair the tendons that have been cut, you will very likely be much less able (and perhaps even unable) to use your right hand to do the things that your life requires you to do with your right hand. You might, henceforth, do them awkwardly, slowly, or clumsily. You might also be able to accommodate to the situation and become accustomed to using your left hand, albeit with a net loss in your dexterity that will manifest itself in how quickly you can do some tasks. Perhaps some behaviors you simply cannot do anymore. In other words, the disability may manifest not just in how well you do certain things, but also in whether you can do others at all.

Furthermore, who you are as a person becomes a relevant consideration in judging how disabling the injury will be. For example, as a right-handed person who has become accustomed to relating to the world with your right hand, an injury such as this would result in more impairment than the same injury would if you were left-handed. The extent of impairment would also depend on a variety of other factors related to your personal characteristics (e.g., fine motor abilities, cognitive flexibility, and personal discipline) and life circumstances (e.g., available social support in the relearning process and your economic status).

I will also highlight an additional aspect of our laceration example to make clear why there is a point in calling this a case of traumatic physical injury. Not only can your cut tendons leave you with a significant restriction in your behavior potential, but other factors are relevant as well. When you are cut, you bleed. If you do not stop the bleeding, you bleed out. If you bleed out, you die. If you die, in effect, you have encountered the limiting case by having had your behavior potential reduced to zero.

Applying these perspectives to psychological trauma is not so straightforward, however. In this case, an easily seen injury with its readily recognizable implications cannot be found. If you ask people with PTSD the question, "What is it that gets damaged or injured in psychological trauma?" you get a variety of answers, such as "my relationships with people," "my brain," "my mind," "my emotions," "my feelings," or "my soul." What these answers have in common is that none of them are the sort of entity that you can look at or point to; none of these are visually present in the world in the same way as that laceration. Yet, ask anyone with PTSD if their psychological injury is just as real and perhaps significantly more disabling, most would emphatically say, "Yes!"

The Unthinkable

So the question then becomes: "What *is* it that gets damaged or injured in psychological trauma?" In coming to an answer, we start with an observation.

What all persons with psychological trauma have in common is that they have had an encounter with the *unthinkable*—an encounter with something that the person heretofore had not considered a real possibility in his or her world—something that he or she is unable to conceive as actually occurring in the first person; i.e., as actually happening to them. How traumatic this something is depends on how much of the individual's world is affected. If only a small portion of his or her world is changed, we do not call it trauma. Take, for example, the case of grief over the death of an elderly parent after a long illness. Although the loss may change your world and give you a new status in it (i.e., "orphan"), there is usually a place for such a loss in a person's world. The unthinkable(s) involved in trauma must change a substantial portion of the person's behavior potential, if not all of it. In the Face in the Wall heuristic I will describe shortly, *everything* is affected.

In other words, the traumatized person has had something become real that dramatically altered their concept of their *world* and/or their place within it (i.e., their self-concept). A person's world concept codifies the version of the world that he or she simply takes to be real, based on experience, acquired knowledge, and fundamental expectations about how the world is. It embodies the possibilities and impossibilities for how the world is—what is a given and what is an option *for me* in this world. To quote Ossorio, "What is given, in the present sense, is what is taken for granted and not subject to question, doubt, or uncertainty. And what is taken for granted does not come up for consideration one way or another… That is a virtue. It provides a limit within which the possibilities for action are conceived and saves our decision making from being swamped by an endless succession of fruitless 'possibilities'.… How does one develop Givens? Mostly through simple experience…. Where it is a Given that something is not so, we speak of the Unthinkable" (2013b, p. 264).

When something psychologically traumatic occurs, a person suddenly takes it that he or she is living in a fundamentally different world than he or she had always taken it to be. Further, since whatever world a person takes to be real always includes them as a part of that world, a psychologically traumatic experience must affect their self-concept—their place, or *status*, in this world and their corresponding behavioral eligibilities. Moreover, the new, post-trauma world is an impossible world; i.e., one within which the person finds it impossible to behave. Having your world torn apart, and thus you within it, is what qualifies as psychological trauma. It is this discontinuity in your world that is traumatic. You have lost your basic understanding of what the world is like. Your world, after this occurrence, does not function adaptively. Your world fails you, not just on this one occasion but also in its totality. This damage to your world results in a massive reduction in behavior potential. It results in an "injury" that leaves the person with a disability or an inability to function. It is this notion of damage to one's personal world that explicates the phenomenon of psychological trauma. Without it, you are merely left with vague notions such as references to the person's "inability to integrate successfully a traumatic event into his or her cognitive schema" (Jones & Barlow, 1990, p. 303). Such a description still leaves unanswered the question: "Yes, but

what is a "cognitive schema?"

Perhaps what comes closest to the model proposed in this paper is the notion of an *assumptive world* (Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Kaufman, 2002). Janoff-Bulman identifies what she considers to be the three basic assumptions that are challenged by traumatic events: (1) The world is benevolent, (2) The world is meaningful, and (3) The self is worthy. However, the present exposition, using the formal conceptual resources of Descriptive Psychology, allows us to connect explicitly the concepts of person, behavior, and reality to psychological trauma, by using Ossorio's vital distinction between an individual's *Real World* (the world that the individual takes to be real and is prepared to act on) and *Reality* (a set of constraints on how we can construe and act successfully on our real world).

The Face in the Wall Image as a Paradigm Case of Psychological Trauma

An image is a heuristic device used in Descriptive Psychology-based psychotherapy. It is a short story or analogy presented to clients as "a way of formulating what somebody does wrong, or a way of formulating what's wrong with how somebody is, or a way of drawing the contrast between those two for somebody who is confusing one with the other" (Ossorio, 2013a, p. 228). It serves as a diagnosis of sorts, although not in the traditional taxonomic sense. The following presentation of the Face in the Wall image (Ossorio, 1993) consists of two parts: a formal presentation of the image and then an additional elaboration applying it to the individual's circumstances.

Presentation:

"Imagine that you and I are alone in an office just talking and you catch a movement out of the corner of your eye and you look at the wall behind me. The wall is behind me so that only you can see what's there. What you've caught out of the corner of your eye and what you now see fully and directly is a huge Easter Island type of face. The face emerges from the wall for a few seconds, looks around, glares at you, and then fades back."

Elaboration:

"You have two options here. You can say: 'Hey, I just had the most interesting hallucination,' or you can walk out of there knowing that the world you are in is a vastly different place from what you thought it was. Because a world in which that could happen has no relation to what you thought you were living in." Which option you take, A or B, depends on a number of factors.

Option A: Retention of your world. The option of dismissing the Face as a hallucination is a twofold move to (a) retain one's view of reality, and (b) preserve the world, as it heretofore had been known. You are assimilating the experience to your existing concepts and frames of reference. You are saying, in effect: "The world is not a place where this happens, i.e., where humanlike faces come out of walls." Instead, you are saying: "The world is a place where people can imagine things and have hallucinations." This view of your world, and necessarily yourself, has some consequences, however. You may, for instance, begin to view yourself as

erratic or unpredictable in your reality contact. Seeing yourself in this way is the "lesser of the two evils," for it still preserves intact the overall integrity of your world. In doing so, you retain your world as a functional whole and can act on the behavior potential it provides.

Dismissing the experience as a hallucination, however, comes at a cost, because then you have to make further adjustments in your model of the world to accommodate your understanding of the significance of having that hallucination then and there. You might, for instance, need to conclude that you have suddenly entered a psychotic state and are mentally ill. Other explanations are possible as well. You might attribute the hallucination to delirium resulting from changes your physician made in your medications. You might even be disposed to take a psychedelic route: "Maybe I should have cut that mold off of the slice of bread I had for lunch yesterday!" If you were to call the face a hologram, you are then left to explain how it got there and might then attribute its origin to the smoke detector in the ceiling of the room. Every move to explain calls for other accommodations; everything is connected to everything else because it's one world. Ultimately, what explanation you accept for your hallucination requires its placement into the larger scheme of what you consider in your world to be real.

Option B: Encounter with the unthinkable. In the paradigm case presented, dismissing the Face as a hallucination is an option. Change the situation only slightly, however, and exercising this option would be increasingly difficult. The more reality the Face offers, the harder it is to dismiss as merely a hallucination, a hologram, a hypnotic suggestion, or anything else other than what it presents itself as. In our thought experiment, let's add some additional dimensions of reality.

What if, for example, the Face came out a little longer? What if the Face came out of the wall and stayed there? When the Face is visible for only a few seconds, you do not have much of a chance to do any reality testing on it. It becomes easier to dismiss the Face as something transitory, illusory, or merely a figment of the imagination. What if you had time to walk over to the wall and touch the Face? Instead of moving through thin air as you reach out, your hand thumps in to a definite solid *something*. In doing so, you are thereby creating multisensory inputs: sight and touch. Touch is not only the proximal sense of what we encounter in the world with our hands, however. We are also touched distally by the world. For example, perhaps as the Face came out of the wall it created a vibration that traveled across the floor that you felt up through the legs of your chair into the seat?

The real world does not just consist of sights and tactile sensations, however; reality comes in "3-D" and "Technicolor." What if the Face was accompanied by other sensory inputs as well? It seemed to have an odor, a taste, or to make a sound. Could you still dismiss your experience as a "mere" hallucination? What if both of us saw the Face at the same time? Hallucinations are personal, private experiences rather than experiences we share with others. Both of us "hallucinating" the Face at the same time would contradict your fundamental concept of a hallucination. That is not how hallucinations work—that is how real things work!

A foundation for what we take to be real in our world is what others can see or consensually affirm. Thus, both of us seeing the Face would further emphasize its reality and prompt even greater need for you to alter your existing frame of reference to accommodate these new facts about your world—the fact that there are these Faces and that they can appear out of nowhere in walls.

Option C: Other. In closing, it may be noted that there are other, more benign but unfortunately quite rare options for how one might regard the Face in the Wall. They involve having recourse to other alternative frameworks in order to retain your world. For example, if you have a technical predilection, perhaps you could just as easily have concluded, "There is an amazing hologram [of a Face] that you have projected on your office wall!" or "Your powers of hypnosis are just incredible, because you just got me to see a face coming out of the wall behind you!"

What Changes When the Face Becomes *Real*?

What follows will be an elaboration of the changes that unfold as a consequence of this fundamental revision in a person's world, using the paradigm case example of the Face.

Changes in World Concept

By drawing the most devastating conclusion about the Face (Option B), your world has been fundamentally altered. Your world is nothing like you thought it was—everything is up for grabs. Your world is now pervaded with uncertainty and has become "mysterious." The effect is like an inconsistency in a logical system. None of the rules that previously applied or organized your world remain.

To get a sense of the magnitude of the changes wrought on your world, consider the following. In your world after seeing the Face, even the laws of physics are challenged; objects do not materialize out of nowhere and then disappear. Additionally, the laws of psychology are challenged; humans do not have this form nor behave in this manner. Literally, you do not know what will happen in the next instance. Will pigs start to fly? All bets are off.

Furthermore, your place in this world is totally unknown. Not only is it unknown, but you also do not know what places you could have in this world. You do not know, at that point, what is the same and what is different in your world. Your world does not hold its usual possibilities or bases for behaving. In fact, it has all sorts of possibilities that you most likely do not know anything about. You may eventually find out what is the same and what is different—if you do not end up dead in the meantime.

The logical relation between your Self and your World is important to keep in mind. The relation is essentially one of identity. Self and World are different perspectives on the same thing. Your Self is your possibilities demarcated in terms of who you are (i.e., your eligibilities). Your World is your possibilities demarcated in terms of what the world allows you to do. Your Self is correspondingly changed by the occurrence of trauma. In this paper we will be emphasizing the notion of World. For a detailed exposition of how trauma changes the Self, see Ossorio (1993, 2013b).

The first change is fundamentally psychological and that is the change in a person's concept of the world and its possibilities and impossibilities (its "givens" and "options"). People acquire the particular version of the world they take to be real based on what they know from experience and what they believe to be the case. A person is not born with a particular world concept, but with the capacity to acquire one. The nature of a person's world concept is determined by personal experiences, including one's physical environment, social environment, and what one learns from observing the world, including people.

Changes in Physiology

Once the Face has become real to you, biological factors also come into play. The moment that Face becomes real to you (and not merely a hallucination), you are very likely to appraise yourself as being in imminently lethal danger and you will become overwhelming motivated to escape that danger. In such circumstances, your physiology will react accordingly, with a burst of adrenalin to prepare you for fight or flight. Keep in mind, however, that in this newly reconfigured world, it is impossible to know with any degree of certainty what the best recourse is for escaping the danger represented by the Face or for doing battle with it. For example, you don't know whether or not you will run into something even worse if you go charging out of the door.

What will happen, as a result of the motivational priorities engendered by your circumstances and your human physiology, is that you will become hypervigilant and scan your environment for any additional information that will help you determine the nature of the threat and how best to escape the danger you now perceive yourself to be in. Your brain will change how it processes information, with a shunting away from the higher cortical centers to facilitate a more focused "tunnel vision." This tunnel vision, which may serve you well in the short-run, may not serve you well in the long run, however. The "flashbulb" memory of the event can lock you into one particular version of the traumatic event, perhaps with a significance that later proves to be problematic.

For example, what if you conclude that you are a coward because you fled from my office? You may then disparagingly treat yourself as a coward for the rest of your life, with a consequent restriction in your eligibility to relate as an equal to others? The challenge for the therapist you eventually see for your PTSD will be to help you ascribe a different significance to your actions under the traumatic circumstances, a significance with less malignant implications. You might be dramatically helped to see that your reaction was normal, rather than abnormal, and simply what most people would have done under identical circumstances. However, you were left so suffused with shame after the event that you could not breath a word about what happened to another person. You had judged your actions to be "unspeakable," and therefore could not relieve your shame with the ameliorating social judgments of others (e.g., "I would have done exactly the same thing!")

Physiologically, your brain adapts on the spot so that you can focus on assessing the perceived threat. You no longer pay attention to the wallpaper in my office

or the flowers in the vase in the corner of the room. You do not think about how much time is left on your parking meter. You operate on a basic principle: in the face of a potentially imminent lethal threat, doing something is better than doing nothing. You have no guarantee that what you are going to do will be the right thing to do under the circumstances, but there is a higher probability that doing nothing at all is the wrong thing to do.

Psychological trauma is importantly considered a case of learning. In particular, it is a case of learning that your world comes in two versions: the one you assumed was reality before and the one that now confronts you. This new version is fundamentally different and highly problematic. In fact, traumatic circumstances provide the perfect conditions for learning, because they are: (a) important enough to pay attention to, and (b) arousing enough to stay awake. With that learning comes changes in the brain and other physiological systems, including the stress arousal response, that persist and subsequently alter brain and other functions, sometimes permanently. A number of authors (e.g., Bessel van der Kolk, 2006) have articulated in detail the changes in brain and other physiological functions that result from acute and prolonged exposure to stress and *psychological* trauma. (For an extremely accessible account, see Robert Sapolsky's 2004 book entitled, *Why Don't Zebras Get Ulcers?)*

Changes in Meanings and the Persistence of the Effects of Trauma Over Time

With the change in your world concept come other changes beyond the physiological changes briefly touched on above. Before seeing the Face come out of the wall, perhaps you had not give much thought to walls. Walls were merely structures in your environment that you had to decide what color to paint or where to hang the picture on. Whatever your previous relationship was to walls and whatever status they had in your world, after you see the Face come out of one, you are never going to think about walls the same way for the rest of your life. Their meaning will have fundamentally changed forever. You could go your whole life without ever seeing another Face come out of a wall and still not be convinced that it could not happen today. Other people might challenge your views (and often do so with people after a traumatic event). However, such efforts to convince you of the unreality of your thinking about walls are almost always unsuccessful…as well as highly unwelcome. In a related vein, others may urge you to "get over it". For example, the Vietnam veteran is told by a well-meaning person, "Why don't you just forget about the war? It was over 45 years ago?" These comments typically provoke anger from the veteran, as they only serve to make him feel even more alienated and misunderstood. The veteran may also become angry with himself, chastising himself for not being able to just "forget" about the event and not have it bother him so much. This sort of dialogue with the self leaves the veteran feeling inadequate and defective, and contributes to the low self-esteem that often accompanies posttraumatic adjustment difficulties. It may also add to his desire to stay away from "civilians" and to relate exclusively to other combat veterans, who he knows will not make comments like

this to him.

It is difficult for the ordinary person who has never experienced the consequences of trauma and world transformation to imagine how pervasive its effects are. A further example may serve to illustrate this point: imagine that five years have elapsed since you saw the Face in my office and you have not seen the Face since then. Nonetheless, emergent Faces remain real and thus real possibilities in your world, so you act accordingly. You are applying for a job you really need, so you want to make the best impression on the various department heads that will be interviewing you. Basic interviewing protocol dictates that you try to learn the name of each interviewer as they are introduced to you, as well as the department in which each of them works and its particular issues and concerns. That is all good in theory. In reality, however, what is uppermost on your mind is how close your back is to the wall behind you and where the exits are, just in case today is the day another Face comes out of the wall. Whether you want them to be or not, these concerns about your personal safety and survival remain uppermost in your mind and intrude to distract you from your intention to attend and remember. The bottom line is that no matter how much you want or need the job, your personal survival will always trump any other needs and your behavior will reflect this priority.

Changes in Relations with Others

Seeing the Face also has a profound effect on where you stand with other people. Consider your circumstances after you see the Face in the wall of my office. Are you going to rush out and implore my receptionist to assist you in dealing with the Face? Maybe, but not likely.… Why not? Because up until a few minutes ago (when you saw the Face and it became real to you), you shared the receptionist's world. In both of your Real Worlds, a face such as this coming out of a wall was not a real possibility (and probably not even an imagined one). In the world that you had before, where the Face was not a real possibility, there were only two ways to account for someone saying he or she saw such a Face. The person was either lying (deliberately distorting reality) or crazy (mistakenly distorting reality). And you know that you are not doing either of these, so you do not approach the receptionist. You know full well what he or she will think of you and how they will begin to treat you. They will eye you suspiciously or with fright, while considering pushing the panic button under the desk to summon security to help deal with this agitated, irrational person jabbering about faces and walls.

Being treated as someone you are not (i.e., as a liar or a crazy person) is degrading and is likely to provoke anger. So, over time, you begin to isolate yourself and stay away from people who are going to challenge your view of the world, as a means of both avoiding such degradation and managing your anger. You, like many traumatized individuals, find yourself easily angered and highly sensitive to what you take to be degradations. Seemingly minor snubs or annoyances can provoke angry outbursts that leave others mystified and lead them to avoid you.

Yet your isolation adds to your loss of behavior potential and, as your world contracts, you begin to experience the changes in mood that are characteristic of

lost or constricted behavior potential, i.e., depression. It is not only your anger that reinforces your isolation, however. You quickly come to find that interacting with people who have not seen the Face is also depressing. As you interact with people whose world you once shared, you are painfully reminded of how different your world is from everyone else's. You are acutely aware of what you have lost (that you once just took for granted). Each interaction makes you feel again that you are outside a glass bubble, looking in on everyone else's happy, secure, and blissfully naive lives. So you start staying away from other people on this basis, and because of your fears of the consequences of getting angry with other people. You do not want to lose control of your anger and go to jail for assault and battery (or worse).

Thus, your social world changes. You do not share a world in the same way with people anymore. You are no longer "one of us;" you are no longer a member of the community at large. (Aylesworth and Ossorio, 1983 describe how pathology can result from cultural displacement.) Other changes occur in your social world as you live your life with your version of the world and other people with their versions.

A few more examples may serve to illustrate these changes. Imagine it is now the winter after you have seen the Face and you are living in cold climate where it snows. Your family cannot find you anywhere but they finally track you down via your cell phone signal and locate you in a sleeping bag out in the woods in the middle of a blizzard. They rush up to you and ask if you are okay. You look up at them and say that you are perfectly fine and ask what the problem is. They look at you and say, "Have you lost your mind? You are lying here in a sleeping bag in the middle of a blizzard! Why aren't you even in a tent?" To this inquiry, you reply, "Have you lost your mind? A tent has walls!" What makes perfect sense for you to do is nonsensical or mystifying for someone else (who does not share your world).

The interpersonal effect of having seen the Face on your social world can be much more subtle yet far-reaching. Imagine that you are back in my office and the Face is indubitably real to you. You now have two additional facts about the world and must take them in to account in your behavior henceforth; there are these Faces and they come out of walls. You will use this information to help you act (and survive) in the strange new world that has been thrust upon you. As you walk out of my office, you will apply these new facts. As you go down the hallway, you will do what you consider to be the smart thing to do and walk as far away from either wall as possible. You walk down the exact middle of the hall.

Unfortunately, a lady is ambling along from the other direction in the center of the hall. Will you step aside and allow her to pass? Most likely not, because getting any closer to the wall than you have to could cost you your life. So you do whatever you can to get by safely. If a polite, "excuse me" does the trick, so be it. If you have to jostle her to get by, so be it. If you have to knock her over, so be it. In each case, the significance of your behavior is fear rather than aggression. No harm is intended. You are simply trying to stay safe in the face of what you take to be overwhelming danger. Perhaps if the person coming down the hall was frail and elderly or a family

member, you might behave differently under those circumstances. You might, for example, squeeze a little closer to the wall so that your child does not have to. (Recall how soldiers in combat routinely expose themselves to danger so that their fellow soldiers can be safer.) But, in the example above, you encounter a stranger with whom you have no prior relationship. In this case, you simply act on your priorities among your various motivations and knock her over so that you can stay in the center of the hallway.

Recall that I am unaware of any of these goings-on and I have not seen the Face. I might have been more than a little puzzled at why the color drained from your face before you suddenly and inexplicably ran from my office. I go to the door of my office, look down the hallway, and observe your interaction with this woman. I see you suddenly knocking her on her behind as you charged down the hallway. Because I am unaware of the circumstances (i.e., danger) prompting your behavior (i.e., escaping danger), I am liable to cast them in a different light to give them a different significance. I might, for instance, mistakenly judge your behavior to be hostile behavior. I will be totally wrong, because there is no aggression in what you are doing. You are simply trying to escape danger; it is simply a case of fear behavior. Nonetheless, after I describe your behavior as aggression, I am very likely to take the additional step of characterizing you as an aggressive person. Once I take that additional step, this characterization becomes the lens through which I appraise your subsequent behaviors. In a later interaction with you, when you raise your voice to make a point in a discussion we are having, I startle and back away, fearing that you might lose control and become violent (again).

When I see the interaction with you and the lady in the hall, I may attribute other significance as well. I might, for example, conclude (mistakenly) that you think you "own" the entire hallway and that others should move out of your way. The significance I attribute leads me to characterize you as an egocentric or narcissistic person and to treat you accordingly in our subsequent interactions. When you come to me for a favor, it is not just *anyone* making a request; it is a person who feels entitled to have each and all such favors granted without question. That "fact" alone may give me reason to deny, delay, or otherwise act to thwart what you are hoping to achieve.

In both of these instances of mistaken significance (hostility and egocentricity), the effect can be myriad and even become a self-fulfilling prophecy. In the case where I have characterized you as an aggressive person and have begun to treat you as one, my doing so can *make* you into one. You might, for example, react angrily to my (degrading) mischaracterizations of you and, over time, become the kind of angry person that I cast you as originally. Similarly, my characterization of you as feeling entitled alters how I interact with you and, in turn, affects your attitudes and behavior. My undermining interactions with you may force you to be more assertive and to stand up vociferously for your rights. Over time, I will have created a level of self-focus in you that would not otherwise have been there.

Changes in Motivational Priorities

Although I cannot tell with any great certainty what you will do after you see the Face in my office, I can tell you with great certainty what you will not do. What you will not do is whatever you would have done before you saw the Face and it became real to you. Will you go to the lunch meeting you had planned to attend after you met with me? Not very likely! Will you drop off your car for the oil change? Not very likely! What you will do instead is whatever you deem as the priority in your new version of the world.

Such priorities are very person-specific and will reflect who you are at the point when your world concept changed. You might be the kind of person whose priority is to protect your loved ones (against this new and barely known threat). So, as you run down the hallway in my office building (knocking down the lady), you reach for your cell phone to call home and warn your loved ones. You know this will be a strange and alarming phone call to them, as you order them to step away from whatever wall they are near or ask them to scan their environment for "Faces." Nonetheless, you could not live with yourself if something happened and you did not at least make an attempt to warn them.

You might also be the kind of person who feels better with some sort of weapon. At this point, you have no idea about what kind of weapon would be effective against the Face (or whatever else is about to happen in your new and mysterious world). That does not matter to you, because you are the kind of person that having *some* kind of weapon is better than not having any weapon at all. So you reach in to your pocket and grab a pen to use as a stabbing device, or you break up a chair in the hallway and grab a leg to use as a club.

You might also be the kind of person who feels better with some sort of perimeter around you, so you duck into the restroom. You are aware that the restroom also has walls, but these walls are smaller and more manageable. You can more easily scan them for Faces or anything out of the usual. Or you might be kind of person who flees into the outdoors where there are no walls; there you are left to ponder if the sides of your car are *really* like walls….

What should be evident from all of these examples is how diverse people's reactions to traumatic events can be. The reactions will depend on what kind of world the individual had before and what kind of personal characteristics the individual had at the time of the trauma.

Changes in Cognitive Processing

People with PTSD frequently report significant problems with their attention, concentration, and memory, even when they have not been exposed to events that cause traumatic head injuries. After you have seen the Face, you are very likely to have similar complaints about how your cognitive processing has been negatively affected. Traumatic events alone are sufficient to cause these effects and do so in the following ways.

Up until you saw the Face and it became real to you, you had everything everyone else had to think about in the normal course of the day and in life generally. You

had the usual concerns on your mind, such as going to the bathroom, eating lunch, remembering to pick up dog food at the store, doing laundry, or paying taxes. After you have seen the Face, however, dealing with implications of how your world has changed will be an immediate and overwhelming priority. These other life concerns do not go away, however, so not only do you have everything you had before to deal with but you also have to deal with everything created by this profound change in your world. In short, you are faced with a serious case of "multi-tasking." The problem is that all of us have a limited "bandwidth" that we will devote to whatever matters most to us at the moment.

Imagine for a moment that you are a highly experienced juggler and are quite comfortable juggling six eggs. If I toss you a seventh egg, you can probably manage to juggle seven eggs but it will take considerably more effort to do so successfully. What if I tossed you an eighth egg or perhaps a ninth? At some point, you simply cannot manage the task and you must face the consequences. The egg goes *splat* as it falls to the ground and similar "splats" are very familiar to people with PTSD when life demands exceed their bandwidth.

Returning to our familiar example of the Face, imagine that it is several years after the Face became real to you and that you have been living as best as you can in this new and very strange world. Imagine further that your spouse or significant other has asked you to go to the grocery store to pick up a half gallon of milk. He or she has learned that you are not as reliable as you once were ever since you "saw" that Face, so you are given a shopping list with the milk on it. (Depending on the person's attitude, the list can be appreciated and feel supportive, or it can be presented in a disparaging, degrading way. Let's assume that the list is given to you helpfully in this example, however.) So off you go to the grocery store with the list safely in your pocket.

You drive up to the grocery store and you see an available parking space right next to the store. Are you going to take that space and park next to a wall? No way! Not on your life! You may not have seen another Face since that one day, but it has continued to be a real possibility to you that you take in to account. So you pass on that parking space and drive through the lot looking for the perfect parking space... one that is not next to a wall and that allows you to pull in one end and directly out the other. You never know and you cannot be too careful, because today *might* be the day it happens.

Just as you are about to pull in to the perfect parking space, some "yahoo" comes along and slips in to the space before you can. How do you feel? Enraged! How does he feel? Probably very little because, to him, it is merely a parking space. To you, on the other hand, that parking space signifies so much more. It represents safety, retreat, and possibly your life, and your emotional reactions reflect this significance. The other driver, by taking your parking space, has potentially put you in grave danger and you react accordingly. You glare at the other driver, you curse, and angrily confront him as the store's security guard comes over to separate the two of you.

We have already mentioned one of the reasons that people are often angry after a traumatic event. They frequently experience others as degrading them. This degradation takes many forms and I have already mentioned a few. Recall that being seen as a liar or as crazy are implicitly degrading status assignments by others. Another source of anger derives from fear; it is a provocation to be put in danger.

A more mundane example of the same principle might be the following. Imagine you are standing on the curb waiting for a bus that is bearing down on you. Just as the bus reaches you, a person standing behind you jostles you directly in to the path of the bus. The first thing you do is to leap back on to the curb and out of the way of the bus. The next thing you do is to turn around and give the miscreant a piece of your mind (or worse). Provocation elicits hostility and being put in danger is a special case of a provocation.

Returning to the example of the trip to the grocery store, after you have had your angry confrontation with the other driver, you enter the store. However, you do not enter the store in a cool, calm collected state of mind. You are distinctly agitated, physically aroused and mentally distracted. Feeling the way you do, your greatest concern is how you are going to drive yourself home in your present state of mind. How are you going to keep your mind on the road as you review the angry exchange you just had with the other driver? Or perhaps you are now worried about how to drive home without experiencing a road rage incident. In either case, your priority becomes to calm yourself down to the point where you can safely drive home. An obvious solution comes to mind; so you walk over to the beer section where you grab a six-pack of beer, pay for it, and head out to your car. You sit in your car and down a couple of beers so that you are calmed down enough to drive home safely. You walk through the door and say, "Honey, I'm home. Want a beer?" (I will have more to say later about the role that substances play in traumatized persons' attempts to manage their emotional states and avoid thinking about the traumatic event.)

Unfortunately, the shopping list and the original purpose of the shopping trip has vaporized from your mind. You must deal with the interpersonal consequences of your omission. Your spouse or significant other may publically or privately assigns to you the status of "Unreliable Person," and begin to treat you in accordance with your now diminished status. You may become less eligible to be trusted in other more central ways that have important implications for the eventual success of that relationship. You may even assign yourself such a degraded status and henceforth restrict your own eligibility to participate in the world.

The Idiosyncrasies of Trauma

Vulnerability to Trauma

Much attention has been paid to who becomes traumatized and who does not. The question is particularly evident in studies of individuals exposed to similar traumatic circumstances. Those who become traumatized are seen as more "vulnerable" whereas those who are not traumatized seen as less "vulnerable." When the concept of vulnerability to trauma is examined more closely, the following points can be made. Vulnerability depends on the background notion of quantity. It views

trauma as a matter of degree. Some people can "stand" more; some people can "stand" less; some people can "stand" less of certain kinds of things. Eventually you get to the point where what you can and cannot stand is unique to you. At this point, the explanatory power of the notion of "vulnerability" disappears. Thus, the notion of vulnerability *per se* is not truly explanatory, resting as it does on after the fact labeling. It is reconstruction, rather than actual explanation.

One way to view what is being gotten at in a notion like "vulnerability" is a probabilistic continuum of sorts. It is probabilistic in the sense that there can be no absolute certainty about who gets traumatized and who does not. According to the research, two factors seem to make a difference, however. They are: (a) the degree of control the person experienced over the event, and (b) the amount of social support available to the person at the time of the event and subsequently.

In examining the question of who gets traumatized and who does not, you get much more mileage from looking at how bad the trauma was than at what were individuals' pre-morbid personality characteristics. In particular, notions of psychological "robustness" have been evoked to deal with this question of who gets traumatized. Much of the variance is simply how bad it was, rather than how normal you are. Clearly there are some traumatic situations with which virtually nobody is prepared to cope. For example, despite the lengths gone to in military training, nothing truly can prepare an individual for the realities of combat and war. What you face exceeds what you have available.

The Uniqueness of Unthinkability

Each individual's experience is unique. This unique experience reflects an interaction between the individual's real world and reality. No two people's worlds are exactly alike. Therefore, for no two people is what is unthinkable exactly alike. The most appropriate question is the following: "What is and is not unthinkable for this particular person at this place and time?" This is an empirical question. In examining this issue, a distinction between what is True and what is Real can be made (Ossorio, 2013b). Something is *true* if one simply believes it to be the case. Something is *real* if it has a place in one's world such that one is prepared to act on it. What is traumatic is what has become real and can, to use Piaget's terms, neither be assimilated nor accommodated.

Trauma and the Individual

As suggested in the previous discussion, you need to operate at the individual level when dealing with notions of trauma. You can point to certain personal characteristics, however, which might make a certain state of affairs more unthinkable or less unthinkable. For example, take the issue of "U.F.O. abduction." A place exists for this occurrence in popular culture and, for some groups of people, close encounters of the third kind are a very real possibility. Some U.F.O. believers participate in formal organizations and activities centered on these beliefs. If U.F.O. abduction actually happened to one of these individuals, it is less likely to be traumatizing to him or her. There is already a place in that person's world to accommodate such an experience. If it happened to someone who did not hold such beliefs, then it is more

likely to be traumatizing to that person. For this person (i.e., the non-believer), there will not be a place in his or her world for such an occurrence to *really* happen. It is conceivable, however, that there might not be a *Real* place in the U.F.O. believer's world, in the True versus Real sense. Thus, if U.F.O. abduction was actually more True than Real, then the person might, in fact, become traumatized if it were to occur.

Commonalities and Trauma

You would not expect to see similarities between what causes trauma concretely and how trauma is expressed symptomatically. Their commonalities will emerge at the conceptual level, however, when their significance is examined. At the conceptual level, two individuals will be alike in terms of drastic changes in their worlds resulting in disabilities. The disabilities will be related to the specifics of what trauma it is. These disabilities will be evident as various disabilities in thinking, remembering, interacting with the world, relating to others, et cetera.

Emotions and trauma: fear. Some accounts of trauma emphasize emotions as fundamental to trauma. People will often try to reduce all situations that are considered traumatic to fundamentally instances of fear of death or annihilation. Empirically, fear very often accompanies situations which are experienced as traumatic. Fear is not an essential part of trauma, however. With the Face in the Wall, you might be scared but fear is not an essential part of what makes the Face traumatic. The experience of seeing the Face is confusion or mystery. It is not fear *per se* which makes the Face traumatic. It is what seeing the Face does to your world that is traumatic. (See Ossorio, 1997.)

Arousal and Trauma

Physiological arousal has been considered an essential element of trauma. It is based largely on the "classical conditioning" frequently evident in posttraumatic conditions. For example, Vietnam veterans often react to the distinctive sound of an approaching or departing helicopter with elevated heart rate and respiration. From their experiences, a helicopter has been a powerful symbol for safety and support. As a result, they are extremely attuned to this sound even almost a half-century later.

It is not the arousal, in and of itself, which creates the trauma. Two different examples may help illustrate this point. First, imagine taking a ride on the Twister roller coaster at the local amusement park. This experience entails high levels of physiological arousal while the person has a psychological sense of control. Second, consider a soldier who commits an atrocity. The person may have low arousal but it may be traumatic, nonetheless. It may be traumatic only at a later point in time. The person may be cool, calm, and collected while perpetrating the acts. It is only after the fact that the person says: "My God! *I* did that?"

Physiology of Trauma: Risks of Reification

Physiological descriptions of trauma are helpful in explaining the perpetuation of trauma over time and its increased effects. Learning, even learning that the world is vastly different from what you thought it was, will have physiological consequences. Clearly there are also conditioned responses to certain trauma-related

stimuli and evidence is also accruing that the limbic system and particularly the amygdala play important roles in mediating posttraumatic syndromes. The amygdala is crucial in regulating emotional responsiveness and can itself can process emotionally relevant information without input from higher cortical centers. This processing may make the emotional responsiveness more automatic and less inhibited. Physiology may potentiate reactions and lead to hyperarousal, particularly in situations of "type II trauma" (Terr, 1991) or "complex PTSD" (Herman, 1992a), which involve traumatic situations that are experienced repeatedly over time. The trend in the trauma field is to say that PTSD is primarily a physiological condition. This view, in turn, strongly affects what sorts of treatments are considered.

Perpetuation of Trauma over Time

Physiological descriptions of trauma are helpful in explaining the perpetuation of trauma over time or its increased effects. Physiology offers a good mechanism for this inertial element. You do not need such a mechanism, however, as the nature of personal worlds and related status dynamic principles (Ossorio, 2012) also embody inertial notions: "A person takes the world to be as he has found it to be" (p. 30), and "If a person has a given person characteristic he continues to have it until and unless it changes" (p. 70). You do not need explanations for the persistence of knowledge beyond these. You continue to have it until something changes. Worlds are not here today and gone tomorrow. There is a temporal stability and continuity to worlds. If the Face comes out of the wall now, that it did so will make a difference ten years or even twenty years later. Changes in your world that result from trauma can be permanent and unshakeable. They remain extant unless and until something happens in the meantime to lessen the implications of the Face for your world. (Descriptions of posttraumatic stress disorders as chronic conditions make some sense viewed in this light.) If everything remains the same for the next ten years, other than that I once saw a Face come out of the wall and go back in, then evidence is accumulating over time. If nothing happens in that period of time, I am much more likely to dismiss the experience as a hallucination. But I still might not….

Symptoms of Trauma.

Much could be said about the clinical phenomenon of trauma from the vantage point offered by the formulation. One current perspective on the symptoms of trauma is that offered by the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV-TR) (2000). The DSM-IV-TR represents a variety of symptom clusters, which may or may not be present in any individual. The emphasis on the empirical specification rather than the conceptualization is evident in how they describe the traumatic events precipitating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Criterion A states: "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 "the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness or horror" (A.P.A., 2000, p. 467). What ties these diverse elements together is not clear, however.

"Persistent re-experiencing of the traumatic event": intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, and nightmares. This cluster of symptoms results from the person's continuing attempts at world reconstruction. The person is trying to accommodate a place for the event in his or her world. He or she is faced with a problem of immense proportions, so that it occupies the person's thoughts (or "preoccupies" them, as the case may be). It also occupies the person's thoughts while asleep in the form of trauma related dreams, a very common feature of the clinical phenomenon. The attempts at world reconstruction continue in the form of trauma related dreams (Roberts, 1985).

Returning to our Face example, consider the following points. Are you going to be able to get the Face out of your mind and not think about it? Even while you are asleep, you will be thinking about what concerns you and dreaming can be considered as thinking while you are asleep. If what you are "thinking" about is highly problematic, preoccupying, or traumatic, that thinking is likely to manifest as nightmares. That first night after you see the Face, are you going to be able to sleep? Perhaps, but it is more likely that you will fearfully lie in bed watching the walls and be reviewing the utterly strange events of the day. You will go over again and again in your mind those exact moments in my office. You will recall glancing up, the first moment you saw the Face, your vain attempts at trying to dismiss it as a mere hallucination, and so forth. You will review your entire past and everything that has occurred in it up to this point, to see if there was anything that foreshadowed today's occurrence. You will review the details of the day since that point, noting everything that seemed the same and anything that seemed aberrant. But will you fall asleep in your highly mentally and physically aroused state? Not likely. How about the next night? Perhaps, but despite your increasing physical exhaustion, your mind is still racing and you are unable to fall asleep.

Finally, on the third night, your exhaustion overtakes you and you fall asleep. Yet, while asleep, you are still considering the problems in your life. And one problem looms above all others—making sense of the world as you have now found it to be. Dreams are attempts at world reconstruction and seek to find solutions to the problems we find in our lives. In this case, your problem is immediate and overwhelming. Traumatic nightmares are often literal recreations of the traumatic event, as the person struggles mightily to assimilate and/or accommodate what he or she has experienced about how the world seems to be. So your nightmare involves being back in my office and sitting back in the chair that you were sitting in when you first saw the Face. It is a literal recreation, except for a few subtle twists. In your nightmare, after you realize that the Face is real and you are about to rise out of the chair to escape the danger you now recognize yourself to be in, you look down and realize that you have been duct-taped to the chair and are immobilized. The dream is a literal recreation of the traumatic event, except for this one element of elaboration in the dream, which serves to unnervingly highlight the overwhelming sense of helplessness and vulnerability that you only experienced emotionally in real life. Thus, nightmares often can bring a focus on just those elements of a

trauma that are most emotionally intense and that the individual least wishes to re-experience again in his or her life. In fact, traumatic nightmares are frequently one of the reasons that individuals with PTSD drink alcohol. By drinking to excess, they can "pass out" without dreaming while they sleep. (Alcohol, in fact, suppresses the REM stage of sleep when dreaming occurs).

"Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with trauma and numbing of general responsiveness." The person, while preoccupied with the trauma, does not want to think about the trauma or its implications. For to think about the trauma is to make it more real; avoiding thinking about the trauma is an effort to maintain the world as it was. In this manner, some of the concomitants of the trauma are avoided, such as an experience of oneself as helpless or confusion about the nature of the world. Avoidance is also an effort to avoid the dysphoric emotional states that are triggered by trauma-associated stimuli, since remembrance of them can reactivate intense states of fear, rage, or sadness. People with PTSD are diverse in their strategies for avoidance, ranging from the aforementioned use of substances to becoming a workaholic.

"Persistent symptoms of increased arousal." One frequent aspect of trauma is the lingering of arousal and/or a lowered threshold for its reappearance. This arousal can result from the person acting on the behavior potential they have retained, such as anger as a means of dispelling helplessness. The arousal may also reflect the person's ongoing appraisal of the dangerousness and unpredictability of his or her world. In this sense, the arousal is primarily initiated by a cognitive process, rather than merely perpetuated by a physiological one.

Summary

I proposed to answer four questions about psychological trauma that I believe have not heretofore been properly conceptualized. These were: (1) What is psychological trauma? My proposal has been that psychological trauma is a change in one's world that renders some aspects of the new world as unthinkable which, in turn, reduces one's behavior potential in ways that qualify as pathological. (2) Why do some people get traumatized while others in very similar situations do not? For any individual, the answer to this will ultimately come back to: "How unthinkable was what has happened *for this person*?" The answer will hinge in turn on the nature of the person's world in the first place, and in particular on (a) how much of a place was there in this world for this particular unthinkable, and (b) how much was their world damaged by its occurrence? (3) Why do the symptoms take the specific forms that they do? The formulation presented above suggests that the variety of symptoms may be seen as efforts to control one's damaged world and to reconstruct a more viable one that can accommodate what has happened. Avoidance of reminders as a way to hold onto one's former world; flashbacks and dreams as attempts to reconstruct one's damaged world; and hyper-arousal as normal vigilance to prevent further damage to one's world all fall under these rubrics. Finally, (4) what is the role of physiology in creating and perpetuating the

condition? I have argued, briefly, that arousal may also reflect the person's ongoing appraisal of the dangerousness and unpredictability of his or her world. In this sense, the arousal is primarily initiated by a cognitive process, rather than perpetuated by a physiological one. This does not dismiss the importance of physiological arousal but casts it in a different light than traditional formulations.

The reformulations presented in this chapter draw upon the conceptual re-sources of Descriptive Psychology, among which are the conceptual device of Par-adigm Case Formulations (a device for articulating concepts that do not permit formal definitions), the classical formulation of pathology as deficit or disability (Ossorio, 1985), and the concept of a person's world and how that is related to his/her self-concept. The resulting clarifications will lay the foundation for a forthcom-ing elucidation and integration of approaches to psychotherapy with PTSD victims and others who are faced with an impossible world after having encountered the unthinkable (Wechsler and Breshears, 2012). For now, I have found the Face in the Wall formulation to be a very accessible means of presenting the complex concept of psychological trauma to people with PTSD and their families. A combat veteran with PTSD recently illustrated how powerful sharing these ideas can be. He had heard my presentation about the Face in the Wall and told me that he had pur-chased several "Tiki" masks and put them around his house and in his back yard to remind him of the formulation and thus aid in his recovery from the impact of his trauma on his world and self-concepts.

Author's Note

Please direct all correspondence to:
Ralph C. Wechsler, Ph.D.
Mental Health Service (116)
Denver Veterans Affairs Medical Center
1055 Clermont Street
Denver, CO 80220

References

American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic & statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed., text rev.). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

Bergner, R. (2009). Trauma, exposure, and world reconstruction. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 63*, 267-282.

Bergner, R. (2009). World reconstruction in psychotherapy. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 59*, 1-17.

Eshleman, J. R., & Woodie, P. G. (1983). Refugees: Cultural displacement and its *edits*. In K. E. Davis & R. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 45-93). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary (25th ed.) (1974). Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company.

Green, B. L. (1993). Identifying survivors at risk: Trauma and stressors across events. In J. P. Wilson & B. Raphael (Eds.), *International handbook of traumatic stress syndromes*. (pp. 115-134). New York: Plenum.

Herman, J. L. (1992a). Complex PTSD: A syndrome in survivors of prolonged and repeated trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, *5*, 377-391.

Herman, J. L. (1992b). *Trauma and recovery*. New York: Basic Books.

Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). *Shattered assumptions.* New York: The Free Press.

Jones, J. C. & Barlow, D. H. (1990). The etiology of posttraumatic stress disorder. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *10*, 299-328.

Kaufman, J. (Ed.) (2002). *Loss of the assumptive world: A theory of traumatic loss.* New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Ossorio, P. G. (1985). Pathology. In K. E. Davis & T. O. Mitchell (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 4, pp. 151-202). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Ossorio, P. G. (October, 1993). The self and self-concept. Presentation at the meeting of the Society for Descriptive Psychology, Breckenridge, CO.

Ossorio, P. G. (1997). Three minute lectures on emotions. In *Essays on clinical topics: The Collected Works of Peter G. Ossorio,* Vol. II (pp. 99-128). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P.G. (2012). *Place*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P. G. (2013a). *Clinical topics: The collected Works of Peter G. Ossorio*, Vol. VII. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P. G. (2013b). *The behavior of persons.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ringel, S., & Brandell, J. R. (2012). *Trauma: Contemporary directions in theory, practice, and research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Roberts, M. K. (1985). Worlds and world reconstruction. In K. E. Davis & T. O. Mitchell (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 4, pp. 17-54). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Roberts, M. K. (1991). Companions of uncertain status. In M. K. Roberts & R. M. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 6, pp. 37-77). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Sapolsky, R. L. (2004). *Why don't zebras get ulcers?* New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Stedman's Medical Dictionary (22nd ed.) (1989). Baltimore: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins.

SAMHSA (2012). *Trauma definition*. http://www.samhsa.gov/traumajustice/traumadefinition/index.aspx.

Terr, L. C. (1991). Childhood traumas: An outline and overview. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *148*, 10-20.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. (1969). Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

van der Kolk, B. A. (2006). *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Weathers, F. W., & Keane, T. M. (2007). The Criterion A problem revisited: Controversies and challenges in defining and measuring psychological trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 20*, 107-121.

Wechsler, R. C. (September, 1995). "Trauma and its transformations." Presidential address at the meeting of the Society for Descriptive Psychology, Estes Park, CO.

Wechsler, R. C. & Magerkorth, R. (September, 2008) "Trauma Concepts: Making Them Real To Clients and Families – Treatment From A Descriptive Perspective." Symposium at the meeting of the Society for Descriptive Psychology, Golden, CO.

Wechsler, R. C. & Breshears, R. E. (September, 2012). "Impossible world." Preconference workshop at the meeting of the Society for Descriptive Psychology, Golden, CO.

A Policy-based Approach to Psychotherapy

Raymond M. Bergner
Department of Psychology
Illinois State University

Abstract

This paper explores the use of therapeutic policies in the conduct of psychotherapy, and in doing so introduces an alternative way to structure the entire intellectual framework of psychotherapy. Part 1 of the paper explicates the nature of therapeutic policies. Parts 2, 3, and 4 present a large number of representative policies and their rationales. Part 5 discusses the value of policies (a) as common factors in psychotherapy, (b) as embodying an integrative framework, and (c) as lending themselves to enhanced levels of creativity and flexibility in the conduct of psychotherapy.

Keywords: psychotherapy, policy, therapy integration, common factors

The purpose of this article is to introduce an alternative way to think about the enterprise of psychotherapy. The article is a strange beast in that it is at once a radical reconsideration of how to restructure the entire intellectual framework of psychotherapy, and at the same time it might be used as a primer of psychotherapy. The approach is built upon a structure of discrete modules rather than discrete theories or schools of therapy. These modules are therapeutic policies; i.e., recommended procedural guidelines for the conduct of psychotherapy. This approach embodies the virtues that it (a) places much greater emphasis on factors that are pre-empirical--indeed self-evident and not subject to reasonable doubt or empirical disconfirmation in most cases--and recasts the place of what is genuinely empirical; (b) provides a substantial number of *common factors* that are applicable to all of psychotherapy; (c) embodies an *integration* of what are now considered divergent and competing schools of therapy; (d) lends itself to enhanced flexibility and creativity in the practice of psychotherapy; and (e) has a modular structure that permits easy expansion via the addition of new policies.

"Assembling Reminders"

Ludwig Wittgenstein, on many accounts the most influential philosopher of the twentieth century (Biletzki & Matar, 2011), once famously stated that his method was that of "assembling reminders for a particular purpose" (1953, p.127). That is, he asserted, his method was not to offer any new theory or to proffer any new facts. Instead, it was to assemble reminders of things that people had known all along, and to place these into new contexts and arguments that led to solutions of longstanding problems. Similarly, much of the content of this article will be ideas, even definitional and otherwise truistic ones, that many therapists already possess, but these will be placed in a new, simpler, and rather different vehicle than our customary one of therapeutic theories and their associated forms of intervention.

Structure of Article

This article will proceed in the following order. Part 1 will be devoted to a fuller explication of the nature of therapeutic policies, including a discussion of what is empirical and what is not in their formulation and use. Parts 2, 3, and 4 will present a large sample of representative policies, of relevance respectively to the topics of therapeutic integration, the therapeutic relationship, and other general matters. Part 5 will discuss the value of policies (a) as common factors in psychotherapy, (b) as embodying an integrative framework, and (c) as lending themselves to enhanced levels of creativity and flexibility in the conduct of psychotherapy. The employment of policies as described in this article originated with the work of Peter Ossorio within a discipline known as Descriptive Psychology (Ossorio, 2006), and in particular with a psychotherapy developed within that general framework known as "Status Dynamic Psychotherapy" (Bergner, 1999, 2007; Ossorio, 1976/2013, 1997; Schwartz, 1979, 2008).

The Nature of Therapeutic Policies

Therapeutic policies are procedural guidelines for the conduct of psychotherapy. Each guideline has the following general form: "In the large majority of relevant therapeutic situations, it is beneficial to our clients that we follow this policy guideline" (Ossorio, 1976/2013, 1997; Bergner, 2007). As a representative example, let us consider a restatement in policy form of what is generally considered a theory-based, empirically supported approach to psychotherapy, namely cognitive therapy (Beck, 1976; Beck and Weishaar, 2008; Ellis, 1962, 2008). Stated as a therapeutic policy, the central idea of this approach is the following: "Assist clients to (a) eliminate or modify maladaptive beliefs and (b) adopt more adaptive alternative ones." Thus, if the client enters therapy with a belief such as "My value as a person depends on what others think of me," the therapist's task, per conventional cognitive thinking as well as this policy, is to help the client to abandon this debilitating belief and to substitute an alternative belief to the effect that his or her value as a person is not so dependent.

When one examines this policy, one can readily observe that, while it may sound like an ordinary directive to engage in some behavioral process (comparable, for example, to a tennis coach's instruction to "bring your racquet forward in just

this way"), it is not such a directive. Instead, its form is that of an injunction to engage in some (unspecified) action to bring about the achievement of a certain desirable state of affairs. In our present example, the policy does not tell one what specific actions to engage in, but to "do something to bring about a state of affairs wherein the client has abandoned his or her maladaptive beliefs in favor of more adaptive ones." Like instructing a novice chess pupil that he or she is to "try to place your opponent's king in checkmate," it provides enormous direction to behavior, while leaving the details regarding how to achieve this goal an unspecified and potentially quite flexible matter.

Policies Rest on Truisms

Consider further our representative policy to help clients to eliminate or modify maladaptive beliefs and substitute more adaptive ones. Conventionally, cognitive therapy is thought to rest on an empirically supported cognitive theory. However, it is easy to see that it rests on a truism that adaptive beliefs--beliefs that work, that are functional, that when acted upon lend themselves to better outcomes for this person--are to be preferred to maladaptive ones (i.e., ones that bring about the opposite outcomes). Such a proposition is self-evident. It is true by definition: adaptive is by definition better than maladaptive; what works is by definition better than what does not work; what brings about better outcomes is by definition better than what brings about worse outcomes. Such a proposition neither requires empirical support nor could we seriously entertain the validity of any empirical outcome that supported its opposite. In general, all of the policies described in this paper rest on truisms. In particular, like "adaptive ideas are to be preferred to maladaptive ones," they all rest on the obvious or even definitional desirability of the states of affairs at issue in the policy.

So What Is Empirical?

What is empirical in the present picture--what is a matter to be decided by observation--is the effectiveness of specific therapeutic interventions that might be employed to bring about the states of affairs articulated in the policies. Empirically, various methods for bringing these about are either effective or not, and to varying degrees, with different populations, in specific circumstances, and probabilistically so (e.g., "Beck's technique of having clients review the empirical evidence for their maladaptive beliefs has been found effective with X-type clients in N% of cases."). Clearly, any proposition of the form, "Implementing intervention procedure X will result in salutary effect Y with probability Z" states a matter to be decided through empirical observation.

The psychological literature is replete with studies reporting the outcomes obtained with various kinds of therapeutic interventions. It may be noted, however, that many of these report findings that are not on the level of actual behavioral processes. Instead, they report findings such as ones that "In this study, cognitive therapy was found to be effective in the treatment of disorder X" (e.g., Merrill, Tolbert, & Wade, 2003). Specific procedures are never concretely described, leaving these findings at the level of policy, stating in effect that "a therapy devoted to

getting clients to modify their maladaptive beliefs was effective in N% of cases." Other outcome studies, however, do evaluate the effectiveness of concretely described intervention procedures such as systematic desensitization, EMDR, and other exposure therapies, and are on this account more informative regarding what procedures are actually effective (e.g., Foa et al., 1999).

With the foregoing in mind, let us turn our attention to a selection of representative therapy policies and their rationales. These policies will be discussed in three categories: broad integrative policies, policies for the conduct of the therapeutic relationship, and other general policies. Within these categories, no attempt will be made to provide an exhaustive list of every single policy that might be relevant to that category. Rather, the attempt here is to provide a small number of what could be considered highly central or core policies, and thereby to provide a glimpse into how a complete framework for the domain of psychotherapy is possible employing this approach.

Integrative Policies

Four policies are presented in this section. The central idea behind each will be familiar to most readers, and so will not be discussed at any length. The focus here, as in our discussion of cognitive therapy above, is to cast what is familiar and conceived as empirical in a new, more logic-based, and only partly empirical frame. It is also, in the case of these four policies, to exhibit the sense in which the present approach to psychotherapy is integrative in nature.

A brief preamble is in order before we proceed to the policies themselves. In answer to the question, "what *is* mental disorder?", an increasingly popular group of definitions holds that it is best conceived as behavioral disability (aka "functional impairment," "dysfunction"). Wakefield (1992, 2007), for example, in a widely cited and influential account, contends that mental disorder is best considered as a "harmful dysfunction," while Ossorio (1997) and Bergner (1997, 2004) maintain that it is definable as a "significant restriction in the ability of an individual to engage in deliberate action" (cf. Spitzer, 1999; Widiger & Trull, 1991). When one employs this conception of mental disorder, the explanatory question becomes one of *why* persons with these disorders are significantly restricted in their ability to behave in critically important ways--of why they are restricted in their ability to assert themselves, to make love, to mourn losses, to work, to read, to resolve differences with others, or to function in life in other critical ways.

Straightforwardly, the most general explanation of behavioral disability is one that is both simple and *logically* true: If the enactment of a given behavior (or set of behaviors) requires something that a person does not have, that person will be restricted in his or her ability to engage in that behavior (Bergner, 1997, 2004; Ossorio, 1997). Thus, we may explain the behavioral disabilities at issue in psychopathological states by reference to what the client is lacking. For example, to cite the four types of factors that have been the subject historically of the vast majority of theoretical and therapeutic attention, a given person might lack (a) the cognitive wherewithal (knowledge, beliefs, concepts), (b) the skills or competencies, (c) the

biological states (structures, chemical balances, etc.), and/or (d) the relational situations requisite for any given behavior. With this in mind, we turn to the following four policies.

Policy #1: Assist Clients to Eliminate or Modify Maladaptive Beliefs, and to Adopt More Adaptive Alternative Ones.

Truisms*: (1) Adaptive beliefs are preferable to maladaptive ones. (2) If the enactment of a given behavior (or set of behaviors) requires that a person possess certain cognitive wherewithal (e.g., certain beliefs, knowledge, or concepts), and P does not possess this wherewithal, P will be restricted in his or her ability to engage in that behavior. Logically, a person can only do (reliably and successfully) what he or she has the requisite cognitive wherewithal to do.*

Discussion. This policy, discussed above, is essentially a paraphrase of the well-established work of cognitive theorists and therapists, and covers a wide variety of approaches. Included here would be Beck's Cognitive Therapy (Beck, 1976; Beck & Weishaar, 2008), Ellis's Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (Ellis, 1962, 2008), and White's Narrative Therapy (White, 1993). Aside from these explicitly cognitive approaches, this policy is adhered to by psychoanalysts seeking to modify transference distortions (Freud, 1905/1953), Rogerians seeking to promote clients' knowledge or awareness of their true feelings regarding critical life issues (Raskin, Rogers, & Witty, 2008), and therapists of various schools seeking to modify clients' self-concepts (Baumeister, 1995; Raskin, Rogers, & Witty, 2008).

Policy #2: Assist Clients to Eliminate or Modify their Maladaptive Behaviors, and to Acquire and Enact More Adaptive Alternative Ones.

Truisms: *(1) The enactment of adaptive behaviors is preferable to the enactment of maladaptive ones. (2) If the enactment of a given behavior (or set of behaviors) requires that a person possess certain behavioral capabilities (skills, competencies), and P does not possess these capabilities, P will be restricted in his or her ability to engage in that behavior. Logically, a person can only do (reliably and successfully) what he or she has the requisite skills and competencies to do.*

Discussion. Aside from its focus on behaviors as opposed to beliefs, the rationale for this policy is formally identical to the previous one: behaviors that work, that are functional, that lend themselves to better outcomes for this person, are to be preferred to their opposite numbers. This is essentially a paraphrase of a seminal idea of behaviorally oriented theorists and practitioners such as Bandura (1986), Gottman (2011), and Wilson (2008). Like the previous policy, it covers a wide variety of approaches, perhaps most notably those with a social skills focus such as Gottman's approach to marital therapy (2011), Alberti & Emmon's assertiveness training (2001), and Kazdin's parenting skills training (Kazdin, Siegel, & Bass, 1992).

Policy #3: Assist Clients Involved in Families, Couples, and other Important Relationships to (a) Eliminate or Modify Ongoing Maladaptive Relationship Patterns, and (b) Adopt More Adaptive Alternative Ones.

Truisms: (1) *Adaptive patterns of relating between persons are preferable to maladaptive ones. (2) Logically, a person can only do (reliably and successfully) what he or she has the requisite environmental opportunities (here, especially, interpersonal ones) to do.*

Discussion. This policy is a special case of the previous one, but one in which the focus is on ongoing, recurrent patterns of relational behavior between multiple individuals. Thus, its rationale is the same. The policy is essentially a paraphrase of the seminal idea of all contemporary family systems approaches such as Structural Family Therapy (Minuchin, 1974; Colapinto, 2000), Bowenian Family Therapy (Bowen, 1978; Papero, 2000), MRI Brief Therapy (Fisch, Weakland, & Segal, 1982), and Solution Focussed Therapy (DeShazer, 2007; O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 2003), as well as those devoted to that subset of the family system which is the marital dyad (e.g., Gottman, 2011).

Policy #4: Assist Clients to Eliminate or Modify Biological State Deficits Relevant to their Functional Impairment.

Truism: *If the enactment of a given behavior (or set of behaviors) requires that certain biological states obtain (e.g., biochemical or structural ones), and these states do not obtain in P, then P will be restricted in his or her ability to engage in that behavior. Logically, a person can only do (reliably and successfully) what he or she has the requisite biological wherewithal to do.*

Discussion. This policy is the central rationale for a wide variety of psychopharmacological and other biologically-based interventions. Thus, for example, addressing deficits in serotonin levels via the use of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) is the basis for many contemporary pharmacological treatments for depression (Julien, 2008). The matter of which biological deficits (structural abnormalities, neurotransmitter imbalances, etc.) are relevant to which behavioral disabilities is of course a matter to be determined empirically.

Integrative Character of Above Set of Policies

As the above illustrates, our historically most influential forms of explanation--those in terms of cognitive, skill, biological, and systemic-relational deficits--may all be united by their reference to a common state of affairs: the inability of persons to behave or to function in life in critical ways. Each of these forms of explanation may be seen as specifying one or another of the kinds of deficits that persons might have, which deficits would impose significant limitations on their ability to behave, and which deficits, if eliminated or reduced in therapy, would remove these impediments to more optimum functioning. Further, it should be clear that therapeutic efforts to address these different types of deficits are neither mutually exclusive nor competitive one with another. If, for example, at the root of John's depression lie both cognitive and biological deficits, there is no contradiction

inherent in addressing John's maladaptive beliefs and also providing him with medication. This is of course common practice; however, the way in which these two intervention types are both logically coherent and compatible in practice is not always rationalized. (For a formal integration of contemporary schools of psychotherapy, see Bergner, 2004.)

Policies Pertaining to the Therapeutic Relationship

The policies presented in this section all pertain to the conduct of the therapeutic relationship. In order to orient to the approach taken here, a familiar example from the highly influential work of Carl Rogers (1957) may be helpful. Rogers famously enjoined us (one could say, "as a matter of the strictest policy") to regard and treat every client as an unconditionally acceptable person, and to do so, not on the basis of empirical assessment, but a priori. Expressed in the theoretical terms upon which the present article is based, those of Status Dynamics (Bergner, 1999, 2007; Ossorio, 1976/2013, 1998), he enjoined us to make a commitment, prior to and independently of observation, to assign to every client a certain highly accrediting *status* (i.e., relational position in the world), that of *acceptable person*, and to treat him or her accordingly to the best of our ability. Where Rogers recommended a single policy having to do with the assignment of a single status, the present recommendation is that the therapeutic relationship be built far more comprehensively around six policies, five of which involve the making of a different a priori status assignment (Bergner, 1995, 2007; Bergner & Staggs, 1987).

Policy #5. Regard and Treat the Client as Acceptable

Truism: *To believe oneself acceptable to other people is in general a better state of affairs than believing oneself unworthy of such acceptance.*

Discussion. Many clients believe themselves to be unacceptable to other persons. By dint of assigning themselves degraded statuses (e.g., "inadequate," "nobody," "selfish"), they have come to believe themselves unworthy of such acceptance. A therapeutic relationship in which the client is assigned the status "acceptable person"--i.e., one in which he or she is in fact accepted by the therapist--can therefore be highly beneficial for such persons (Rogers, 1957; Raskin, Rogers, & Witty, 2008). Although their rationales are somewhat different, the majority of authors on the therapeutic relationship have stressed the importance of the therapist's acceptance of the client (e.g., Beck & Weishaar, 2008; Kohut, 1977; Wilson, 2008).

Policy #6. Regard and Treat the Client as a Person Who Makes Sense

Truism: *To broadly regard one's perceptions, emotional reactions, and judgments as making no sense is, ipso facto, to call into question the basis of all of one's decisions, actions, and beliefs, and is therefore enormously self-undermining.*

Discussion. It is extremely self-undermining to see oneself as making no sense. A significant number of clients have come to believe that their perceptions, emotions, and judgments are inadequately grounded in reality and/or that they are without logical foundation, and on these grounds have come in some measure to question their very sanity (Raimy, 1975). When individuals continually

doubt themselves in such ways, they increasingly regard themselves as unqualified for competent judgment and action. The self-doubting, even paralyzing effects of such beliefs can be staggering in some cases.

In the therapeutic relationship, it is therefore recommended that the client be regarded, a priori, as *one who makes sense* (Ossorio, 1976; Bergner & Staggs, 1987). In practice, this means that the therapist's basic assumption is that the client's every emotion, judgment, and action has a logic that is in principle reconstructable, and that his or her every perception is an understandable way of looking at things. The client can be mistaken in his or her perceptions, reasons, and judgments, but he or she cannot make no sense (Ossorio, 1976/2013; Bergner & Staggs, 1987). In general, the most powerful means of conveying this to clients is simply to assist them in seeing the sense that their various actions, emotions, and attitudes make as these arise over the course of therapy.

Before leaving this policy, a few brief comments seem in order regarding its application to psychotic individuals. First, the policy is not applicable to those cases where there are strong grounds for concluding that the etiology of symptoms is primarily biological. Second, aside from such cases, there is a substantial literature attesting to the social intelligibility of much psychotic behavior that is quite helpful in elucidating its sense (e.g., Bergner, 1985; Haley, 1980; Ossorio, 1997; Wechsler, 1991). Where the therapist is sensitive to the meanings and strategic implications of much so-called "crazy" behavior, he or she will be able to respond to such behavior in a more understanding, and thus more competent fashion. For example, some years ago, a psychotic young man, upon being exhorted by his therapist to "have a nice Christmas," responded to her by saying "Francis Gary Powers." The therapist, who recognized this riddle-like response as a veiled positive wish (Francis Gary Powers was the American pilot implicated in the famous 1960 "U-2 incident," thus "you too!") was in a better position to respond sensitively and appropriately than another therapist who might have dismissed the young man's rejoinder as nonsensical "word salad."

Policy #7: Regard and Treat the Client as an Agent

Truism: *It is better (specifically, more empowering) to see oneself as an agent, i.e., as an individual possessed of the power to consider behavioral options and to select from among them the one to be enacted, than to see oneself as without this fundamental power to determine one's own actions.*

Discussion. Many clients hold implicit or explicit views of themselves in which they are helpless pawns of internal or external forces (Bergner, 1993). They convey this in expressions like "something came over me," "I found myself doing such and such," "so-and-so made me do it," and the like; and these expressions permeate their descriptions of themselves and their actions. They convey this further when they portray themselves as helpless in the face of their "impulses," their longstanding habitual patterns, their personal histories, or their "natures." A "pawn of forces" (e.g., a puppet or a robot) is incapable of engaging in deliberate

action; i.e., of entertaining behavioral options and choosing from among them. "It" is powerless.

In contrast, to be an agent is to be able to entertain behavioral options and to select from among them the one that is to be enacted. It is to have control, albeit imperfect, of one's behavior. It is to have power. Thus, personal agency is included among the a priori status assignments that it is important to include in the therapeutic relationship (Bergner & Staggs, 1987; Bergner, 2007).

Policy #8: Regard and Treat the Client as a Person Who Is To Be Given the Benefit of the Doubt

Truism: *Within bounds of realism, it is better to see oneself in more empowering, status-enhancing ways than in more disempowering, degrading ways.*

Discussion. As therapists, we have options regarding how to view our clients and to portray them to themselves. These options often differ in the degree of empowerment and status enhancement that they embody. For example, a mother who is overly concerned about her child's safety might be viewed by her therapist as either (a) someone who harbors an unconscious hatred of her child, or (b) someone who is utterly convinced that, for her, nothing so good as her child and their relationship can possibly be lasting. The recommended policy here is to treat the client as one who is to be given the benefit of the doubt; i.e., given a choice between different but at least equally realistic ways of viewing a client, to choose as a matter of policy the most empowering and status enhancing of these views (Ossorio, 1976/2013).

Policy #9: Engage the Client as an Ally and Collaborator

Truism: *When attempting to solve problems, it is generally better to have a collaborative alliance with one's fellow problem solver than a non-allied, non-collaborative relationship.*

Discussion. As the old aphorism "two heads are better than one" implies, working in collaborative alliance with another, and particularly another who has more expertise relevant to the task at hand, is usually more enabling than working alone, and certainly more enabling than being involved in a non-allied, non-collaborative relationship with this other. Thus, involving the client as an ally and a collaborator is recommended (cf. Beck & Weishaar, 2008, on "collaborative empiricism"; Orlinski, Ronnestad, & Willutski, 2004).

"A priori status assignment" has a somewhat different meaning here than it does elsewhere. Where alliance is concerned, one does not assume at the outset that the client is an ally, in the same sense that one assumes he or she is acceptable or sense-making. Rather, it means that the therapist enters therapy from the outset with a commitment to treat the client as an ally. This would ordinarily take the form of initiating the kinds of behaviors toward the client that one would initiate with an ally, thus inviting and encouraging the client to enact reciprocal role behaviors. The client may respond by immediately enacting the complementary role, thus establishing an alliance. Or the client may not do so, necessitating additional efforts to establish the alliance (see Bergner & Staggs, 1987; Schwartz, 1979).

Policy #10: Acquire and Convey an Understanding of the Client

Truisms: *(1) A person who possesses a strong understanding of a problem is more likely to solve it than one who lacks such an understanding. (2) Other things being equal, a person is more likely to cooperate with another person who seems to empathically understand him or her than with another person who seems neither empathic nor understanding.*

Discussion. The policy here, again one consistent with widespread practice (Kohut, 1977; Ossorio, 1976/2103; Rogers, 1957), is to listen carefully to the feelings and concerns being communicated by the client, and then to share our understanding of the important elements. Such an intervention may be used to accomplish a large number of things such as conveying acceptance, demonstrating to clients that we understand what they are saying, clarifying issues for both client and therapist, focusing clients' attention on what is important in their communications, and building rapport and alliance. Further, therapist affirmations can be dismissed by clients if they believe that their therapist does not really know or understand them. It is easy and commonplace for clients to dismiss such affirmations with the following logic: "If my therapist really knew me, he (she) wouldn't find me so acceptable (sense-making, etc.)." Thus, it is imperative that clients be understood and *know that they are understood* if they are to accept the status assignments and other validations of their therapists.

A Final Point

In recommending that all of the above policies be implemented, there is no implication that all of our clients feel deficient in all of these ways. Clearly, they do not. However, in those cases where they do not feel deficient, to eliminate any one of these status assignments from the therapeutic relationship would be a serious mistake. For example, even if a client already believed herself acceptable (or sense-making, possessed of personal agency, etc.), we would obviously be remiss if we regarded and treated her as unacceptable (irrational, helpless to control her own behavior, etc.). The elimination of any of the relational elements listed above presents the danger of a countertherapeutic, degrading relationship between therapist and client in which constructive self-assigned statuses that the client possessed initially might be undermined by the therapist's treatment. Such a relationship would create a risk of serious iatrogenic harm.

Further Key Therapeutic Policies

The following policy recommendations, unlike the foregoing, do not cohere around a single principle of unification. Rather, they represent a miscellany of ideas that the author and his therapeutic colleagues have found especially valuable in their experience.

Policy # 11: Deal With the Basis of Emotions

Truism: *A person is more likely to achieve relief from a problematic emotion when the basis of that emotion is eliminated than when it is not eliminated.*

Discussion. The contemporary mental health establishment, in its explicit or implicit policies, frequently embodies a denial of the truth contained in this truism. Some practitioners, in their exclusive reliance on drugs to eliminate states such as depression and anxiety, in effect follow a policy that it is sufficient to chemically eliminate the painful feelings of clients and not to bother with their source in the client's life and/or thinking. Other practitioners at times rely too exclusively on interventions such as relaxation training and meditation to reduce painful feelings, while failing to attend to the factors triggering these feelings. Finally, the practitioners of cathartic interventions, increasingly rare, encourage clients to deal with their dysphoric emotions by expressing or "ventilating" them. The rationale here is that these emotions are like so much pressure that has built up in the pressure cooker and must be released lest the cooker explode – all the while ignoring the fire that continues to burn beneath the cooker.

The point here is not to assert that the above forms of intervention are without merit. The point, rather, is to say that a fuller and more adequate fundamental policy is needed here. "Deal with the basis of emotions" (Ossorio, 1976/2013) is such a policy. The position upon which it rests is that, first of all, emotions do not exist in a vacuum. They rest on appraisals of events and situations. Fear rests on the appraisal that one is threatened or endangered, anger on the appraisal that one stands provoked, sadness on the appraisal that one has suffered a loss or other misfortune, and so forth (Beck, 1976; Bergner, 2003; Ossorio, 1997). Such appraisals of reality may be well- or ill-founded. The tiger before us may be real or a "paper tiger." The policy to deal with the basis of emotions urges us as clinicians to carefully investigate the perceptions or appraisals upon which the client's problematic emotions rest. Should we discover that the emotion rests on a misperception or otherwise maladaptive interpretation, our therapeutic task becomes the traditional cognitive therapeutic one of assisting the client to modify such problematic appraisals. If the emotion rests on a veridical perception or interpretation--the client's marital situation is indeed abusive, the personal loss has indeed drastically diminished the client's world, etc.--our task becomes that of assisting our client, in whatever way appropriate, to act in such a manner as to deal effectively with their problematic situation.

A final word about medications is perhaps in order before leaving this topic. *Merely* following a policy of narcotizing away one's pain with drugs, on the present view, is akin to disconnecting the flashing oil light in one's car and doing nothing about the failing engine. However, medications may serve a far more valid and valuable purpose. At times, emotional states such as anxiety, depression, and grief are of such proportions that they are immobilizing. They prevent persons from doing what they need to do to deal with the sources of their emotions. In such circumstances, medications are often very helpful in reducing the emotional state and its paralyzing effects. However, in this instance, as the policy and its associated truism suggest, they would ideally be part of a two-pronged strategy: get mobilized *and* deal with the source of the emotion.

Policy #12: Appeal to What Matters

Truism: *A person is more likely to act on the basis of what matters to him or her than on the basis of what does not.*

Discussion. The therapeutic policy to appeal to what matters suggests that therapeutic efforts in general be aligned with the client's existing motivations (Bergner, 1993; Fisch, Weakland, & Segal, 1982; Miller & Rollnick, 2002). Expressed negatively, it recommends that we avoid such actions as promoting therapeutic agendas that are antithetical to the client's motivations, appealing to motives that, however commendable, the client does not possess, or declaring clients "unmotivated" (cf. deShazer, 1984). Expressed positively, the recommendation is that therapists assess the client's existing motivations, and subsequently frame all suggestions, reframes, and other messages in such a way that they tap into what already counts for this person as reasons for or against behaving in certain ways. Thus, for example, if moral considerations are paramount for certain clients, this policy would suggest that we are relatively unlikely to succeed by urging such persons to "give up their irrational shoulds." We are more likely to be successful by portraying problematic behavior as in some way contrary to the person's existing moral values, and new, potentially beneficial behavior as consistent with those values (e.g., as "tough love" or "giving" or "just"). Similarly, clients who value highly such things as personal control, independence, integrity, uniqueness, or rationality may best be approached in ways that are consistent with and that utilize these existing values.

Policy #13: Utilize the Client's Strengths and Resources

Truism: *A person who possesses strengths and resources relevant to solving a problem, and who recognizes how these may be used to do so, is in a better position to solve that problem than someone who fails to recognize these things.*

Discussion. This policy, known famously as Milton Erickson's "principle of utilization" (O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 2003), advocates first of all that we as therapists recognize that every client possesses strengths and resources--that they possess enabling abilities, knowledge, traits, ideas, motives, roles, and/or positions of leverage--that may be brought to bear on the problems at hand. It advocates further that we assist clients in first of all recognizing these strengths and resources, and secondly, in utilizing them to solve their problems.

Policy #14: Establish and Utilize the Client's Control

Truism: *A person who is in a position of control in relation to some problem, and who recognizes this, is in a better position to solve this problem than a person who is not in a position of control or who does not recognize being in such a position.*

Discussion. Many psychotherapy clients hold *victim formulations* of their problems (Bergner, 1993). That is, they conceive their problems in such a way that their source, and thus their resolution, is seen as lying outside their personal control. This problem source may be seen as something *personal* such as their own emotions, limitations, irresistible impulses, personal history, nature, or possession of a mental disorder. Or it may be seen as something *environmental* such as their current circumstances or the actions, limitations, or character of another. In either

case, this source is seen as something that is not subject to the client's personal control. The upshot of such problem formulations is that their holders cannot envision any actions that they might take to bring about change and, in fact, have often come to therapy at a point where they have exhausted the behavioral options afforded by these formulations (Ossorio 1976/2013, Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974).

The therapeutic policy "establish and utilize the client's control" advocates that we carefully investigate the client's portrayal of the problem to determine if he or she in fact occupies a position of control in relation to this problem. Subsequently, should we discover that they do occupy such a position, this policy recommends that we work to enable the client to recognize this position of control and power, to fully occupy (or "own") this position, and to exploit it to bring about change.

Many client complaints, upon inspection, may be found to have both a "perpetrator end" and a "victim end" (Bergner, 1993). Victim formulations result when clients are aware only of the victim end with its attendant emotional pain, low self-esteem, and other liabilities, but remain unaware of the perpetrator end of the problem, the end where they are actively *producing* some sort of unfortunate behavior which creates or maintains the problem. Being unaware of this perpetrator end results in clients believing that this pain, low esteem, or other consequences are visited upon them and are outside their control. Essentially they have left a critical part of the problem out of their formulation, and this has resulted in a failure to solve it. For example, many clients beset with painfully low self-esteem may be found upon assessment to be the active perpetrators of destructive forms of self-criticism (Bergner, 1995). Many individuals who experience behavioral paralysis and an inability to derive satisfactions in life may be found to be persons who, on the perpetrator end of things, coerce themselves excessively, and subsequently rebel against their own oppressive regime of self-governance (Bergner, 1993). By way of final example, many clients experience themselves as victims of mistreatment from others, but fail to realize that the actions of these others represent reactions to their own behavior, often in the context of the sort of interactive "dance" much discussed by family systems therapists. In such cases, the present policy advocates that, while taking pains to avoid doing so in a needlessly blaming way, we help clients to recognize their positions of control and power, and to utilize these positions to bring about change.

Policy #15: Respect Both Sides of the Client's Ambivalence

Truism: *A person whose decision rests on a consideration of all of their significant reasons pro and con is likely to make a better decision than one who attempts to disregard one of these sets of reasons.*

Discussion. To be ambivalent about doing something is to have reasons for and against doing that something. In general, when ambivalent individuals fail to resolve their ambivalence and simply act on one side of it, their reasons for acting on the other side do not cease to exist but, left unsatisfied, become more salient (Bergner, 1993). Consider the commonplace phenomenon, well known to

automobile salespeople, of individuals who are ambivalent about buying a specific car. Frequently, those who buy the car, thereby satisfying the reasons on one side of their ambivalence, find themselves experiencing "buyer's remorse," i.e., a strong preoccupation with all of the reasons why they should not have bought the car. In contrast, those who, before they can make up their mind, learn that the desired car has been sold and thus that they can no longer act on their reasons to buy it, frequently find themselves preoccupied with all of the reasons why they should have acted sooner and bought the car. When one acts on one side of an ambivalence, one satisfies one's reasons for acting on this side, but leaves unsatisfied a whole set of still existing reasons for acting on the other side, thus rendering them highly salient relative to the satisfied reasons.

As psychotherapists, we are confronted frequently with deeply conflicted, ambivalent clients. Should they leave their spouse or not?...quit drinking or not?... give up the affair or not?...cease their punitively self-critical approach to themselves or not? The policy, "Respect both sides of the client's ambivalence," recommends that as therapists we (a) assess the client's reasons for and against important courses of action, (b) respect the fact that both sets represent existing operative reasons for this individual, and (c) assist the client in arriving at a personal decision that is made with full consideration of their reasons on both sides of the conflict. Stated negatively, the policy states that we should not, in the face of a conflicted client, simply ignore or minimize the significance of certain of the client's reasons, and encourage them to act on the other side of their ambivalence (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). Doing so in essence leaves something ignored or insufficiently considered that will undermine the client's ability to make a firm, personally integrated decision, and to act on that decision with comfort and conviction. For example, a therapist, hearing that a client is ambivalent about leaving a spouse who is mistreating her, simply urges her to leave. What this therapist can expect is that the woman will express the other side of her ambivalence (her reasons not to leave her spouse) in such forms as remaining on the fence with respect to her decision, resisting the therapist (who may in these circumstances be perceived as coercive), or, if she leaves her husband, continuing to have doubts and reservations about what she has done. Her ability to make an integrated personal decision, and to pursue a subsequent course of action with comfort and conviction, will have been undermined by the therapist.

Policy #16: Avoid Generating Resistance

Truism: *A person who recognizes that he or she has stronger reason to cooperate with therapeutic agendas than to resist them is more likely to cooperate with such agendas.*

Discussion. Given the relevant ability and opportunity, "if a person has a reason to do something, he will do it, unless he has a stronger reason to do something else..." (Ossorio, 1998, pp. 37-38). For any given behavior, a person has reasons for and against engaging in that behavior. Eating the ice cream would be enjoyable, but it is fattening. Mowing the lawn would make the yard look better, but it is hot, tedious work. And so forth. From the vantage point of Ossorio's maxim,

when therapy clients refuse or decline to engage in some suggested behavior or to accept some alternative view of things, the basic general diagnosis is this: As they see things, they have stronger reason not to.

Ideally, therapy would be resistance-free. Our clients, in the face of some potentially beneficial new behavior or view of reality, would have stronger reason to engage in this behavior or consider this view, and would proceed accordingly. The policy, "avoid generating resistance," advocates that to the extent possible we conduct therapy so as to minimize the presence of resistance; i.e., to minimize the presence or salience of those "stronger reasons not to." (Bergner, 1993; deShazer, 1984; O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 2003).

It may be noted that many of the policies articulated above, along with their other benefits, serve to minimize resistance to our therapeutic agendas. We position ourselves on the client's side in an alliance, thereby giving the client reason to cooperate with us. We seek to understand and to convey this understanding to the client, thereby becoming persons who speak to the client from a true understanding, and thus more likely to be listened to and found credible (cf. Covey's maxim, "seek first to understand, then to be understood" [1989, p. 235]). We offer portrayals of the client's reality that are realistic yet minimally degrading or otherwise invidious, thereby rendering them easier to accept. In our reframes and suggestions for new behavior, we carefully align these with the client's existing motivations. Finally, we custom tailor our messages in terms of the client's favored language, metaphors, world views, and conceptions of the problem. Thus, successful adherence to all of these policies greatly enhances the likelihood that clients will be receptive to and cooperative with our inputs, and greatly reduces the likelihood of resistance.

In addition to adhering to these policies, another critical element if we are to avoid generating resistance is to avoid doing anything in the therapy hour that might in fact be, or might be seen as being, coercive toward the client, on the premise that such coercion tends to elicit resistance (Ossorio, 1976). That is, the presence of any pressure from us as therapists that is perceived as untoward by our clients will tend to elicit resistance on their part. The pressure at issue may be seen as unfair, insensitive, threatening, authoritarian, presumptuous, or in any other way untoward.

At times, of course, whether we have generated it or not, we do encounter resistance. In the face of such resistance, working this policy in reverse as it were, the recommendation is that we attempt to ascertain its source, and address the client's resistance or reluctance depending on what we discover. Have we as therapists been coercive, or been seen as coercive, in some way? Have we miscalculated the client's reasons for and against something, and thereby suggested something that he or she has stronger reason not to accept? Have we asked the client to do something that he or she is not ready to do, or that is currently beyond his or her capabilities? Establishing any of these, we act to adjust our directives and messages in relevant ways, or to remove ourselves from a position of perceived coercer and back to that of supportive and understanding ally.

Policy #17: Establish and Maintain Self as Credible

Truism: *The statements and action implications of credible persons are more likely to be believed and accepted than those of non-credible persons.*

Discussion. If clients are to accept our ideas, suggestions, and status assignments, they must find us *credible* (Bergner & Staggs, 1987; Frank & Frank, 1993; Schwartz, 2008). In practice, this means that we must strive to be honest, knowledgeable, and competent, and that clients must see us in these ways. Behaviors such as interviewing skillfully, conveying an accurate and empathic understanding of the client, providing explanations that are cogent and compelling, citing relevant research and other literature, presenting ourselves in unobtrusive ways as experienced and successful, dressing and behaving professionally, and creating a physical environment with elements such as books and diplomas that suggest competence, are all helpful in achieving credibility with most clients. Behaviors such as denigrating ourselves, conveying undue confusion or tentativeness, espousing theories that appear strange or unconvincing to the client, lying, or behaving unprofessionally will as a rule detract from credibility, and therefore damage our ability to function as effective agents of change.

Policy #18: Assess What Matters

Truism: *An assessment based only on facts that are relevant to the problem at hand is likely to be superior to one that contains many extraneous and irrelevant factors.*

Discussion. This policy advocates that we as clinicians behave in a manner analogous to a detective who first determines the precise nature of the crime to be solved, and then uses this as a guide to determine what other facts seem to be evidentially relevant to solving this crime. On this "detective model," in contrast with assessment methods in which the information to be gathered is predetermined, the clinician begins by getting a clear picture of the presenting concern(s). He or she then uses this picture to determine what kinds of facts are relevant to creating an explanatory account of the problem, and focuses efforts on gathering these facts. Such an approach streamlines the assessment process by minimizing time spent gathering extraneous information. Assessment practices such as *routinely* performing a mental status examination, giving questionnaires or projective measures, administering intelligence tests, and asking about numerous pre-selected topics are ruled out. The recommendation is that such procedures be employed only in circumstances where the specifics of the case indicate that there is probable cause to warrant such use. For example, in certain cases, it might prove very difficult to establish something important unless one administers an MMPI to the client.

Policy #19: Go First Where You Are Welcome

Truism: *A person is more likely to admit his or her own problematic actions and attitudes to another person when they are assured that this other appreciates their point of view with respect to problems and issues.*

Discussion. There is fairly universal agreement in the field of psychotherapy that one of our initial jobs as therapists is to establish an alliance with our clients in which we function as accepting, supportive individuals who are genuinely on their side (Orlinski et al., 2004). Not infrequently, however, clients present a panoply of information during initial assessment which leads us to conclude, not only that they are suffering and struggling to cope with difficult circumstances, but that they are themselves the perpetrators of untoward behavior and/or the holders of quite unbecoming attitudes. In such circumstances, the policy, "Go first where you are welcome" advocates that we initiate treatment by focusing first on clients' distress and complaints, and only later take up the matter of how they themselves may be contributing to these in questionable ways. Thus, early attention would focus on listening carefully to clients' emotional suffering and personal dilemmas, conveying an empathic understanding of them, and establishing both that we genuinely understand their point of view and that we are on their side. Later, once the alliance is established, we tactfully broach the matter of clients' contributions to their own problems. In such a circumstance, clients, assured that we understand and accept them, that we see their point of view, and that we are there for their benefit, are far more likely to disclose these aspects, to be less defensive about them, and to be responsive to our interventions.

Policy #20: If It Works, Don't Fix It

Truism: *If it works, don't fix it.*

Discussion. The recommendation here is that, if as therapists we discern client characteristics, attitudes, or behaviors that are functional, we ought not to portray such elements to the client as problematic or pathological. While this point is obvious, it is also frequently violated. One of the areas where this seems especially so is when clients conduct themselves in ways that are not in conformity with a certain widespread ethos among therapists. When dealing with issues between themselves and others, for example, they may never raise their voice and "get out their anger"; nonetheless, the facts indicate that their message gets across and that they are effective in their negotiations. Other clients may use humor to lighten problematic situations, but there is no indication that they thereby fail to comprehend their gravity or to deal adequately and realistically with them. Yet others communicate more with their actions than with their words; the facts of the case reveal, however, that the message is generally clear and received. The policy, "If it works, don't fix it," advocates that, rather than portraying such clients to themselves in terms such as "can't express anger," "uses humor as a defense mechanism," or "can't communicate," we recognize and appreciate the client's way of doing things so long as we see that "it works."

Discussion

Policies and Common factors

An important topic in the field of psychotherapy has been the exploration of *common factors* that transcend, and are critical to the success of, a wide variety of therapeutic approaches (Luborski, 1995; Messer & Wampold, 2002; Reisner, 2005).

The policies presented in this paper all represent common factors. They do so, not in the traditional sense, but in the logical sense that they are compatible with any approach to therapy. Though historically generated in connection with various schools of psychotherapy, they are not confined to their original homes or to any single theoretical approach, and may be followed beneficially in connection with any of them. It is beneficial, for example, to "respect both sides of the client's ambivalence," "deal with the basis of emotions," and "appeal to what matters" regardless of whether one is undertaking cognitive, behavioral, systemic, or status dynamic intervention strategies.

Policies and Therapy Integration

A further important topic in the field of psychotherapy has been the search for an integrative framework that would unify what are now considered discrete and competitive approaches to psychotherapy (Norcross & Goldfried, 2005). In this regard, it was noted above that various prominent theoretical points of view are integrated into the set of policies described in this paper, and that the overall set is thus integrationist in nature. For example, the first four policies incorporate the core ideas of the cognitive, behavioral, biological, and family systems schools of psychotherapy. Each is presented, however, not as a discrete theory in a balkanized world of competitive theories, but as (a) a prima facie sensible policy to be followed in relevant circumstances, and (b) one that is logically related to the others via its relation to the kinds of deficits at issue when persons are restricted in their ability to behave in critical ways; i.e., when they are in psychopathological states (Bergner, 1997, 2004).

Policies, Flexibility, and Creativity

As noted in the introduction, policies are not posed at the level of concrete behavioral procedure, but at the level of engaging in some (unspecified) action whose desirability rests on definitional or other prima facie grounds. Their form is, "act in accord with this policy guideline," not "engage in this concrete behavior," leaving the latter an open (and more empirically driven) matter. Pragmatically, what policies do is provide enormous directionality to therapeutic behavior. In this respect, again, they are not unlike recommending to the chess novice that he or she "try to checkmate the king." Further, and again analogous to that instruction, policies do not restrict the practicing clinician to a limited number of concrete interventions, such as the set that has currently received empirical support. Aaron Beck, for example, in a commercially distributed demonstration of cognitive therapy with a depressed woman, engages in at least four distinct ways to get her to rethink a maladaptive belief (Beck et al., 1979). In doing so, he is clearly guided in his efforts by the broad, policy-level agenda of helping this woman to abandon her core maladaptive schema. In the session, when he meets with limited success by using certain standard interventions such as reviewing the empirical evidence for her belief, he "goes outside the standard playbook" and intervenes in other very creative and flexible ways. Consistent with this example, policies in general lend themselves to enhanced levels of creativity and flexibility.

Modular Structure Permits Easy Expansion

In this article, I have tried to provide, not an exhaustive list of therapeutic policies, but a sample sufficient to exhibit how a policy framework might be used to form a comprehensive framework for psychotherapy. Rather than introducing further policies, I will conclude only by noting how this essentially modular structure lends itself to easy expansion via the addition of further policies.

Summary

This article has explored the use of therapeutic policies in the conduct of psychotherapy, and in doing so introduced an alternative intellectual framework for psychotherapy. Part 1 of the paper explicated the nature of therapeutic policies. Parts 2, 3, and 4 presented and discussed a selection of representative policies. Finally, part 5 argued the value of policies as common factors in psychotherapy, as embodying an integrative framework for therapy, and as lending themselves to enhanced levels of creativity and flexibility in the practice of psychotherapy.

Author Notes

The author wishes to thank Nora Bunford, Joe Jeffrey, Wynn Schwartz, and Sonja Holt for their very helpful reviews of an earlier version of this paper. Please direct all correspondence to: Raymond M. Bergner, Department of Psychology, Il-linois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4620.

References

Beck, A. (1976) *Cognitive therapy and the emotional disorders.* New York: Meridian.

Beck, A., Rush, A., Shaw, B. & Emery, G. (1979). *Cognitive theory of depression.* New York: Guilford.

Beck, A., & Weishaar, M. (2008). Cognitive therapy. In R. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Current psychotherapies* (8th ed., pp. *263-291*). Belmont, CA: Thomson/Brooks-Cole.

Bergner, R. (1985). Paranoid style: A descriptive and pragmatic account. In K. Davis & T. Mitchell (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 203-230). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Bergner, R. (1993). Victims into perpetrators. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice, 30*, 452-462.

Bergner, R. (1995). *Pathological self-criticism: Assessment and treatment.* New York: Springer.

Bergner, R. (1997). What is psychopathology? And so what? *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 4*, 235-248.

Bergner, R. (1999). Status enhancement: A further path to therapeutic change. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 53*, 201-214.

Bergner, R. (2003). Emotions: A relational view and its clinical applications. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 57*, 471-490.

Bergner, R. (2004). An integrative framework for psychopathology and psychotherapy. *New Ideas in Psychology, 22,* 127-141.

Bergner, R. (2007). *Status dynamics: Creating new paths to therapeutic change.* Ann Arbor, MI: Burns Park Publishers.

Bergner, R. & Staggs, J. (1987). The positive therapeutic relationship as accreditation. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice, 24*, 315-320.

Bowen, M. (1978). *Family therapy in clinical practice.* New York: Jason Aronson.

Biletzki, A. & Matar, A. (2011). Ludwig Wittgenstein. In E. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (URL =<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/wittgenstein/>).

Colapinto, J. (2000). Structural family therapy. In A. Horne (Ed.), *Family counseling and therapy* (3d ed., pp. 140-167). Itasca, IL: Peacock.

Covey, S. (1989). *The seven habits of highly effective people.* New York: Fireside/Simon & Shuster.

de Shazer, S. (1984). The death of resistance. *Family Process 23:* 1-17.

de Shazer, S., & Dolan, Y. (2007). *More than miracles: The state of the art of solution-focussed brief therapy*. New York: Haworth Press.

Ellis, A. (1962). *Reason and emotion in psychotherapy*. New York: Lyle Stuart.

Ellis, A. (2008). Rational emotive behavior therapy. In R. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Current psychotherapies* (8th ed., pp. 187-220). Belmont, CA: Thomson/Brooks-Cole.

Fisch, R., Weakland, J. & Segal, L. (1982). *The tactics of change.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Foa, E., Dancu, C., Hembree, E., Jaycox, L., Meadows, E., & Street, G. (1999). A comparison of exposure therapy, stress inoculation training, and their combination for reducing posttraumatic stress disorder in female assault victims. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 67,* 194-200.

Frank, J., & Frank, J. (1993). *Persuasion and healing: A comparative study of psychotherapy.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Gottman, J. (2011). *The science of trust: Emotional attunement for couples.* New York: Norton.

Haley, J. (1980). *Leaving home.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Julien, R. (2008) *A primer of drug action (11th ed.)*. New York: Worth.

Kazdin, A., Siegel, T., & Bass, D. (1992). Cognitive problem solving skills training and parent management training in the treatment of antisocial behavior in children. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 60*, 733-747.

Kohut, H. (1977). *The Restoration of the Self.* New York: International Universities Press.

Luborski, L. (1995). Are common factors across different psychotherapies the main explanation for the dodo bird verdict that "Everyone has won and all must have prizes"? *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 2,* 106-109.

Merrill, K., Tolbert, V. & Wade, W. (2003). Effectiveness of cognitive therapy for depression in a community mental health center: A benchmarking study. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 71*, 404-409.

Messer, S., & Wampold, B. (2002). Let's face it: Common factors are more potent than specific therapy ingredients. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 9*, 21-25.

Minuchin, S. (1974). *Structural family therapy.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Miller, W., & Rollnick, S. (2002). *Motivational interviewing* (2d. ed.). New York: Guilford.

Norcross, J., & Goldfried, M. (Eds.) (2005). *Handbook of psychotherapy integration* (2nd. ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

O'Hanlon, W., & Weiner-Davis, M. (2003). *In search of solutions* (2d. ed.). New York: Norton.

Orlinsky, D. E., Ronnestad, M. H., Willutski, U. (2004). Fifty years of psychotherapy process-outcome research: Continuity and change. In M. J. Lambert (Ed.), *Handbook of psychotherapy and behaviour change* (5th Ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Ossorio, P.G. (2013). *Seminar on clinical topics*: *The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. VII.* Ann Arbor, MI. Descriptive Psychology Press. (original work published 1976.)

Ossorio, P.G. (1997). *Essays on clinical topics.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P.G. (1998). *Place*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P. G. (2006). *The behavior of persons.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Papero, D. (2000). Bowen family therapy. In A. Horne (Ed.), *Family counseling and therapy* (3d ed., pp. 272-299). Itasca, IL: Peacock.

Raimy, V. (1975). *Misunderstandings of the self*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Raskin, N., & Rogers, C., & Witty, M. (2008). Client-centered therapy. In R. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Current psychotherapies* (8th ed., pp. 141-186). Belmont, CA: Thomson/Brooks-Cole.

Reisner, A. (2005). The common factors, empirically validated treatments, and recovery models of therapeutic change. *The Psychological Record, 55,* 377-399.

Rogers, C. (1957). The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. *Journal of Consulting Psychology, 21*, 95-103.

Schwartz, W. (1979). Degradation, accreditation, and rites of passage. *Psychiatry, 42*, 138-146.

Schwartz, W. (2008). Self presentation and the status dynamics of psychotherapy and supervision. *American J Psychotherapy, 62*, 51-65.

Spitzer, R. (1999). Harmful dysfunction and the DSM definition of mental disorder. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 108,* 431-432.

Wakefield, J. (1992). The concept of mental disorder: On the boundary between biological facts and social values. *American Psychologist, 47*, 373-388.

Wakefield, J. (2007). The concept of mental disorder: diagnostic implications of the harmful dysfunction analysis. *World Psychiatry,* 6, 149-156.

Watzlawick, P., Weakland, J., & Fisch, R. (1974). *Change: Principles of problem formation and problem resolution*. New York: Norton.

Wechsler, R. (1991). Personality and manic states: A status dynamic formulation of bipolar disorder. In M. Roberts & R. Bergner (Eds.), *Clinical topics: Contributions to the conceptualization and treatment of adolescent-family problems, bulimia, chronic mental illness, and mania* (Vol. 6, pp. 203-234). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Widiger, T., & Trull, T. (1991). Diagnosis and clinical assessment. *Annual Review of Psychology, 42,* 109-133.

White, M. (1993). Deconstruction and therapy. In S. Gilligan & R. Price (Eds.), *Therapeutic conversations.* New York: Norton.

Wilson, G. (2008). Behavior therapy. In R. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Current psychotherapies* (8th ed., pp. *223-262*). Belmont, CA: Thomson/Brooks-Cole.

Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical investigations.* New York: Macmillan.

The Parameters of Empathy: Core Considerations for Psychotherapy and Supervision

Wynn Schwartz, Ph.D.
Core Faculty, Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology
Clinical Instructor, Harvard Medical School

Abstract

A theory neutral and pre-empirical formulation of empathy as empathic action is presented as a basic feature of shared social practice, a core social competence, always more or less present if a person is to adequately engage with others. The conceptual tools of Paradigm Case Formulation and Parametric Analysis are employed to clarify the "more or less" quality of empathy and to provide a format to map agreement and disagreement on meanings. The paradigm case is described as the communication of the recognition of the significance of another person's ongoing intentional actions and emotional states in a manner that the other person can tolerate. The parametric analysis involves the parameters of Wants, Knows, Knows-How, Significance, Performance, Achievement, Identity and Personal Characteristics.

Keywords: empathy, paradigm case formulation, parametric analysis

> "You don't know how it feels, no, you don't know how it feels, to be me"
>
> Tom Petty

Years ago, I worked with Bobby, a 13-year old boy, an only child, who was having difficulty in school at a time when his family was falling apart. His grades were poor and maybe once a week he would jump from his chair and run from the

classroom without explanation. He would also get into fights during recess with boys who taunted him. The harassment involved typical but relentless comments that he was gay.

His mother showed signs of hypomania and would disappear for days at a time. When she returned, she would be flamboyantly dressed and clownishly made up, and declare her plans to leave the family for New York. This persisted off and on for the first two years of my work with Bobby. Bobby's father, an attorney rarely at home, appeared in Bobby's descriptions as loving but clueless. I urged his parents to enter couples therapy, but they refused, although they were supportive of my work with their son and met with me from time to time.

Although earlier testing had shown Bobby to have strong concept formation skills, he had a weak vocabulary, a pronounced stutter, and a reluctance to talk unless he was certain what he wanted to say. As my relationship with him deepened, his stutter became less apparent. Bobby remarked on various occasions that he thought that if I were his father, his life would be easier. I really liked Bobby and frequently found myself examining the paternal feelings that he evoked.

Once, seemingly out of the blue, he said that I would look better if I used eye shadow. I think he thought he was joking.

One afternoon as Bobby entered my office, he slipped and fell. Neither of us thought much of it although I checked the rug to see if it was loose. It wasn't. Two weeks later this happened again but this time he seemed to be looking at my face as he lost balance. We talked a bit about this but he seemed fine and was clearly not interested in exploring why he fell down and he claimed he was not falling down elsewhere. Running out of the classroom had also been an issue during these two weeks. A few sessions latter, he slipped again as he walked to his chair and again did not want to talk about it. (I remember thinking at the time that at Bobby's age I was reading Ian Fleming's *Goldfinger*: "Once is an accident. Twice is a coincidence. Three times is enemy action" (1959).)

In my own psychoanalysis, some days later, I was talking about my relation to Bobby and wondering what to do about his falling down "symptom". The night after Bobby's last slip, I had a dream in which I was playing high school football in the stadium near my childhood home. In the dream, I catch a pass: as my hands grasp the ball, I slowly fall to the ground. As I fall, I look to the stands where my mother is smiling at me. The dream is comforting. As I associated to this dream, I remembered going on a hayride with my father around the same football field and how I impulsively jumped off the cart. My father jumped down, picked me up and we resumed the ride. It was a happy memory although I remember my father being angry with me. In that same session I recalled a series of impulsive behaviors, when I was seven or eight, that involved a compelling desire to open the back seat door of my parent's car as they drove around the city arguing. I ended the session believing I understood Bobby's symptom as a message needing a response.

Conveniently enough, at the start of a session the following week, Bobby again tripped. This time I offered my hand and said, "Bobby, I'm not going to pick you up but I will stand beside you for as long as you need me." He said OK, and we went on to discuss how I would continue to work with him as long as he wanted. During that session he remembered a time in the first grade when he fell on the playground and how good it felt when his teacher rushed over and picked him up.

He never again tripped in my office and his running from the classroom ceased. I will return to Bobby later, but keep in mind that I did not explicitly explain or interpret his apparent accidents since I did not believe he could make use of the insight, nor did I think he would tolerate my saying what I believe he was unknowingly up to. Rather, I acted from my understanding of the significance of his intentions in a way he could manage and I think he felt appreciated and safely understood as a result. Since he had successfully gotten his message across and achieved his desired response, he no longer needed to repeat it.

My primary interest here is to explore empathy as a basic feature of shared social practice, always more or less present. Empathy is a core social competence, an ordinary feature of engagement, necessary for functioning in a world of persons and their ways. Only, however, in situations where one person's vulnerability is at stake does empathy appear as a pronounced aspect of how the engagement feels and proceeds. Where hurt and misunderstanding is likely, empathy especially matters, since the vulnerable party may need evidence that it is safe to engage.

In what follows, I will provide a Paradigm Case Formulation of empathic action followed by a Parametric Analysis of that paradigm. These formulations provide a set of tools useful for the practice of psychotherapy and supervision. I believe they may be helpful in other trainings and practices as well, particularly with people whose empathic skills are limited.

The formulations are useful when I sense I am not being empathic or attuned to my client, or when supervising another therapist, I want to make sure I understand what they understand about the person we are discussing. During supervision, the parametric analysis of empathy can structure an informative interview that enables the supervisor to get a clear handle on what the supervisee understands about his or her client.

Empathy, Paradigm Case Formulation, and Parametric Analysis

Paradigm Case Formulations may be employed in situations where it is desirable to achieve a common understanding of a subject matter but where definitions prove too limiting, various, ambiguous or impossible. Empathy poses this definitional problem.

Finding an inclusive definition is a common conceptual dilemma. Consider how difficult it is to exactly define what is meant by the word "family" or the word "chair" if we wish to achieve agreement on all examples of possible "families" and "chairs". Must all families have two parents of different genders plus their children? Must all chairs have four legs and a backrest? A Paradigm Case Formulation of a

concept should provide all competent users a conceptualization that can serve as a starting point of agreement. Generally, it should consist of the most complex case, an indubitable case, or a primary or archetypal case (Ossorio, 2013). It should be a sort of "By God, if there were ever a case of "X", then that's it." For example, most would agree that a group of people living together, consisting of a married father and mother, and their biological son and daughter would be a family. But what if there is only a husband, his husband and their dog? Or three best friends who live under one roof, share expenses and make their significant decisions together? What elements must be present and what can we add or leave out and still meet what different people would call a family?

By starting with a paradigm case that everyone easily identifies as within their understanding of a concept, it becomes possible to delete or change features of the paradigm with the consequence that with each change some people might no longer agree that we are still talking about the same thing. But because of the shared paradigm, they can show where we disagree.

A Parametric Analysis, on the other hand, attempts to clarify how one example of the subject matter can be the same or different from all other examples (Ossorio, 2013). Each parameter should identify a necessary and independent dimension of the concept. For example, all figures in plane geometry are the same or different depending on their varied location on the parameters of the ordinate and the abscissa. All colors are the same or different depending on how they vary on the parameters of hue, saturation and brightness.

For my purposes, the concept that will be the subject of a Parametric Analysis will be the general case of Intentional Action (Ossorio, 1973; 2013).

Empathy is variously understood to involve an appreciation of being in another person's position, an appreciation that is both accurate and attuned to the other's current predicament and state of awareness, a sort of "feeling into" the other. Empathy is often connected to an altruistic or sympathetic stance and is a feature of the "I-Thou" relationship. It tends to be respectful and kind.

An empathic appreciation of the subjectivity of another person is central to the developmental achievement of "mentalization" (Fonagy et al., 2002) and the kindred notion of "Theory of Mind." Across various theoretical orientations, empathy is seen as a vital aspect of psychotherapeutic, healing and positive and nurturing relationships.

Physiological study has identified neural patterns that respond in a mirror-like manner when certain vertebrates observe another animal behaving (Rizzolatti & Craighero, 2004). This "mirror neuron" response highlights the ordinary and natural manner of certain shared responses that correspond to a common physical embodiment. Having similar bodies with corresponding systems of sensation and perception facilitates a common affective experience, a shared experience of how another's actions feel. This works across species, too. When I yawn, my dog it likely to follow suit (Romero, et. al. 2013).

As a psychotherapist and supervisor of psychotherapy, I believe that empathy is a defining feature of effective treatment (See, for example, Meissner, 1991, and Shedler, 2010). In my training, the three most influential theorists of empathy were Carl Rogers, Heinz Kohut, and Roy Schafer. These authors offer a similar vision of the therapist's empathic activity and of the effect empathy has on the client. Schafer further describes empathy as both a psychological state and as an action, a position I find particularly useful in building a tool for empathic inquiry. These authors provide a starting point for my conceptualization.

Carl Rogers (1975) makes the following points about empathy. It involves "entering the private perceptual world of the other", "being sensitive, moment to moment, to the changing felt meaning which flow in this other person", assuming a nonjudgmental stance, and being careful not to uncover meaning that the other would find threatening.

Heinz Kohut (1984) describes empathy as "the capacity to think and feel oneself into the life of the another person", as "vicarious introspection". Kohut also underscores that appropriate and therapeutic empathy is "attenuated empathy", a diminished response that is not overwhelming to either party and protects both from becoming too defensive or "walled off".

Roy Schafer (1959, 1983) describes empathy as sharing and comprehending the momentary psychological state of another person. For Schafer, empathy is a central feature of the analyst's attitude from which the analyst constructs a mental model of the analysand, and expresses this understanding with care not to "mortify" the client. Schafer (1983) writes about empathy as "empathic activity", a form of intentional action. My analysis will correspond in significant ways to Schafer's "mental model".

All three authors present empathy as an understanding that is accurate, attuned to the present interaction and tolerable to both people. The requirement that empathy is experienced as tolerable is central to my formulation.

In ordinary usage, empathy is understanding the perspective of being in the other's shoes, of "entering the private perceptual world of the other". Seeing from another's perspective is a useful reminder and a fiction. I can only walk in my shoes and see from my perspective. What I have available are my observations and thoughts regarding my interactions with other people. I observe other people's actions but I do so from where I stand. There is no way around this fact. Since we cannot get inside another's head, our sense that the other is being empathic will follow, correctly or not, from whether we experience them as understanding the significance of our actions.

A Paradigm Case Formulation of Empathic Action

In earlier work, I developed a Paradigm Case Formulation of empathy as activity that communicates an accurate understanding of the significance of another person's intentional actions in a way they can tolerate (Schwartz, 2002). This requires understanding a person's currently active motivations, knowledge and skills and how they view the significance of their actions in the current circumstance.

As a Paradigm Case Formulation, I take it that what I have described is recognizable as empathy and that the formulation allows for alterations within the ordinary shared meaning of the concept. For example, although I have described this as a two-person interaction the number of participants can be increased. The accuracy of the understanding can be shared by all or just assumed by one party ("I'm being empathic even if you don't realize it."). The accurate representation of the content of each of the parameters can be more or less available or certain. Deficits or changes in the content of the parameters may result in the judgment that the act in question is not or no longer empathic, and this may lead to disagreement, but the parameters of the formulation should allow observers to know how they agree and where they differ.

What follows is a parametric analysis of empathic action as a particular type of intentional action. The systematic use of the parameters can generate a set questions and reminders that can be used in clinical interviewing and in self-reflection.

The parametric analysis of intentional action developed by Peter Ossorio provides the dimensions for my conceptualization of empathy (Ossorio, 2013, and see Bergner, 2011). Ossorio presents intentional action as the most inclusive concept of behavior that includes the behavior of humans and other animals (and non animal persons and intentional beings should we ever create or encounter any (Schwartz, 1982)). The general case of intentional action allows for various forms of deliberate and non-deliberate intentional action as well as intentional action performed consciously, pre-consciously or unconsciously.

In Deliberate Action, the actor attempts to choose among options relevant to reaching a goal whereas in non-deliberate intentional action only the recognition of a goal matters independent of whether the actor sees alternatives. Impulsive and emotional action may be merely intentional, whereas the recognition of choice and alternative typify deliberate action. The guiding notion is that intentional activity involves a purposeful and meaningful attempt to accomplish something. This is in contrast to "behaviors" that are accidents, matters of reflex, forced or coerced. Most often, when speaking about behavior, we mean some form of intentional action, although the paradigm case of the behavior of persons will be deliberate action. Persons are sometimes but not always deliberate actors. The eligibility to be a deliberate actor is a fundamental to the full concept of "Person".

Here's the parametric analysis of behavior that indentifies the dimensions one behavior can be the same or different from another behavior:

Behavior=Intentional Action=< I, W, K, KH, P, A, S, PC >

I: The Identity of the actor.

W: What the actor Wants to accomplish.

K: What the actor Knows, distinguishes, or recognizes in the circumstance that is relevant to what the actor Wants. (In Deliberate Action the actor recognizes different options, in Cognizant Action the actor is self-aware of the ongoing behavior).

KH: What the actor Knows-How to do given what the actor Wants and

Knows about the relevant circumstance.

P: The procedural manner or Performance of the action in real time.

A: The Achievement of the action.

S: The Significance of the action for the actor. What the actor is up to by performing the act in question.

PC: The Personal Characteristics of the actor expressed by the action.

These parameters roughly correspond to the content of Schafer's "mental model" and are implicit in people's basic understanding of each other. We implicitly understand each other as having specific motives, knowledge and skills. We also see people's behavior as a manifestation of their personal characteristics and we expect that people can appraise the significance of their actions and the actions of others.

To the extent that these parameters cover the full range of purposeful behavior, they should also cover the distinctions relevant to an explication of empathy. The parameters also serve as a guide or checklist when I am uncertain about my empathy toward another person. I find the following useful reminders. I might ask or wonder:

1. Given their understanding of the overall circumstance, what does this person want and value? (And do we share an understanding of what the overall circumstance call for?) (The "W" parameter)

2. What exactly do they recognize in their circumstance that is relevant to what they want and value? (And do we share a common appreciation of the situation?) (The "K" parameter)

3. What do they know how to do given what they see as their current opportunity or dilemma? (And do they have the skill or competence that is needed to successfully manage the circumstance?) (The "KH" parameter)

4. What is the significance to them of how they behave in these circumstances? (The "S" parameter)

5. What personal characteristics are they employing and what is the significance of these characteristics to them? (The "PC" and "S" parameters)

6. Can they tolerate the way I express what I understand about them?

I have the option of directly or indirectly asking these questions. I might wonder if the answers offered are accurate or serviceable, and I might ask myself the same should our appraisals of the situation differ. While this is happening, I try to be aware that I only know so much and should not presume to know more. Given that a person can only know how it seems to them, I might suspect, should my understanding differ, that they see the situation differently. I keep in mind that people take things as they seem unless they have sufficient reason to think otherwise. If I think the situation is different from how they see it, the burden of evidence is mine.

Ordinarily, people are not conscious of any of this, and certainly not as a set of parameters or questions. They just "get it". People ordinarily make good enough sense to each other. When things go smoothly, they have little reason to question their understanding. But therapy is different from ordinary social life. In therapy,

when the relationship turns awkward, when the client suddenly appears anxious, or when the topic of concern is evaded, the therapist has reason to question his or her empathy, and the questions that follow from the parameters might help regain accord. Since people come to psychotherapy because they feel misunderstood, because they have significant trouble in managing intimacy and may have problems expressing their thoughts and feelings, it is a good for their therapist to have a systematic method to address these issues.

For most ordinary understandings of empathic action, some parameters are more useful than others. In my clinical work the W, K, KH, and S parameters serve as a basic checklist, but as I will offer, under certain circumstances the other parameters are relevant. What follows is a commentary on the parameters with specific focus on problematic issues attending these conceptual distinctions. Especially problematic are behaviors that involve values, motives, recognitions, significances, and personal characteristics that the client unconsciously employs or is deeply reluctant or unwilling to acknowledge. There are personal qualities that are too painful or shameful to directly confront. When vulnerability is central, safety and empathy matters most.

Let's look more closely at the parameters and some associated reminders. They could serve just as well for any activity that requires an adequate conceptualization of behavior.

Wants. Perhaps the most general answer to the question of why someone does something is answered by reference to some state of affairs that the person wants to bring about. Wants refer to the motivations or values that are involved in how a person appraises his or her opportunities and dilemmas given what they see as their options in any given circumstance.

Although the paradigm case of a human behavior involves a cognizant person knowing their values and being able to deliberate, i.e., choose whether or not to act on the values, it is also clear that a person can act on motives and values that are not consciously recognized (Schwartz, 1984), or involve motives that the person is deeply reluctant to claim as theirs (Kris, 1982). This is the subject matter of psychological defense and the dynamic unconscious, the traditional domain of psychoanalytic inquiry.

Motivations that a person is reluctant or unable to acknowledge requires empathic tact to be explored, and psychotherapeutic techniques that honor the "conditions of safety" (Schafer, 1983) are employed in exploring them. Given our personal values we are prone to judgment, and attempts to maintain empathic neutrality is crucial. Since we cannot give up our judgments, this boils down to self-awareness and the exercise of caution in how we show what we value. We learn to bite our tongue. Without the attempt to withhold judgment, the client is likely to hide what they do not want judged.

Some reminders: Actors and their observers might be accurate in knowing what "wants" are in play or they might be mistaken. Even when known, people might not be in a position to articulate what they want. Clarity and accuracy have

a "more or less" quality and this will hold for the content of all the parameters. It is important to keep this in mind since insistence in attributing motivation, especially when there is disagreement or discomfort, tends to disrupt the safety of a relationship and may foreclose on exploring and appreciating the complexity of a situation.

What is wanted is often simple and clear and easy to say. Other times it is complicated, multiply determined, conflicted, murky, ambiguous or "unspeakable", especially in the dilemmas that bring people to therapy. People often sense their complexity even if they aren't able to speak about it, and this is frequently the case when they feel they are not adequately understood. Telling someone why they act as they do is commonly met with the rejoinder, "but it's more than that", since it often is. And some people sometimes take offense at being told what they are feeling.

Ossorio (2006) indicated that there are four classifications of intrinsic or fundamental motivation*: hedonic, prudential, aesthetic,* and *ethical*. There may be more. To say they are fundamental is to claim that they intrinsically provide reason enough to do something. These reasons for action can conflict, operate in a complementary or independent fashion, and so on. If you have two reasons to do something, you have more reason than if you only had one, etc.

Hedonic refers to pleasure, prudent to self-interest, aesthetic to values of truth, rigor, objectivity, beauty, closure, or fit, and ethical with concerns of right and wrong, fairness and justice. Hedonic and prudent motivations can operate consciously, pre-consciously, or unconsciously. Aesthetic and ethical motivations require that the actor is eligible to choose or refrain from an action, to potentially deliberate about a desirable course to follow. In the service of being able to choose, a person's aesthetic and ethical motives are often consciously available (Schwartz, 1984). I can't help it that it feels good, or that I see it as in my self-interest, but I can consciously attempt to refrain from seeking pleasure or self-interest on aesthetic and/or ethical grounds. Since choice is a defining feature of Deliberate Action and Deliberate Action is part of the paradigm case of the concept of Persons, Aesthetic and Ethical behavior is quintessentially human.

Another point. Not doing a pleasurable act because of utter coercion, overwhelming guilt, or unconscious taboo may appear to be an ethical performance, but if the actor had no choice, their performance was not one of renouncing pleasure or self-interest but of forced constraint. A person can do the right thing because they really had no choice. It may be a mistake to point his out. Without enough shared history, it is hard to judge how a critical observation will be tolerated. This is a key feature of therapeutic tact and why careful listening comes first and may take considerable time before problematic motivations and constraints are interpreted. This is also the reminder that a person's observable performance and their psychological state are conceptually separate. (And this is also why they involve distinct sets of parameters).

What a person wants is often not a simple matter. An empathic appreciation is respectful of this. It can be the case that what looks intended is instead an

accident or coerced, and in these situations the empathic response acknowledges the absence of motive. Still, while we tend to be skeptical of the claim "the devil made me do it", it pays to be sensitive to why a person might make such a claim. The empathic therapist waits until it is safe enough to suggest otherwise.

Knows. Along with the basic question of why a person does something comes the question of why they are doing it now. The answer will always be some version of their recognition, correct or not, that the current circumstance provides an opportunity to do something they now want to do. Action requires a correspondence between motive and recognized or known opportunity.

The Knows parameter refers to the range of concepts, facts and distinctions a person has available and employs in a given situation. Knowledge, a personal characteristic, is acquired through observation and thought. Knowledge is relevant to the extent that it involves recognitions that can be acted on, differences that make a difference in behavior. As a rule of thumb, people tend to notice what they value, including what they want to avoid. People can also act on distinctions and not be cognizant of doing so, just as people might not recognize an opportunity when it stares them in the face

A person might be wrong about what they know and this will have consequences especially if they believe they are competent or eligible in ways they are not. Knowledge can be clear or unclear, certain or uncertain, serviceable or unserviceable. Knowledge relevant to behavior is evaluated on how effectively the known distinctions are employed, and this necessarily has a "more or less" quality to it.

The Knows parameter includes the potential awareness or cognizance of one's own actions and potential choices. Cognizant recognition of choice is a conceptual requirement for an ethical perspective to be employed or considered. The recognition of choice, including the potential to renounce a choice, serves as one of the ordinary standards for accountability. Negligence occurs in situations where community standards hold that an ethical dilemma ought to be recognized but isn't. Significant negligence of ethical considerations with attendant action (or inaction) is central to most conceptualizations of criminality and tort (see, e.g., Prosser, 1941).

The eligibility for certain recognitions and choices has a learning history. Given where and how someone has grown up, what can they be expected to know? What we expect people to know will be influenced by shared cultural expectations and an appreciation for the idiosyncratic. Even though membership in a culture involves knowing standard choice principles, we should be careful what we presume. Similarly, understanding that a person might have underdeveloped or diminished capacity is also part of the empathic observer's knowledge of the other. If a situation would ordinarily call for a person to do something, if they lack the relevant knowledge (or values or competence), they will do something else instead. A person can only act on the values, concepts and skills they have available unless their performance is coerced (or they get lucky).

Know-How. An action is always an expression of a particular skill, competence or know-how if it is something a person can expect to perform non-accidently. Competence is acquired through having a prior capacity and the relevant practice and experience. Not everyone has the needed prior capacity, practice and experience to develop the competencies that a community might take for granted. And some people are more talented than others in acquiring or exceeding the expected skills. Their performance can look like magic (Putman, 2012).

Having the relevant know-how means that a person can perform an action in a variety of ways with the expected outcome that the actor achieves what is intended. Think of driving a car or dancing with a friend or throwing a fastball high inside at ninety-five miles an hour. Drivers, dancers and professional pitchers have their expected know-how acquired by having a prior capacity and sufficient practice and experiences. Behavior going wrong calls for an explanation once adequate competence has been achieved; behavior going right requires no explanation. Bobby's walking toward the couch and sitting down requires no explanation, but his repeated stumbling does.

Akin to what some call procedural memory, once competence is acquired, people are rarely self-conscious of each move necessary in the performance of a task. We tend to be more self-conscious when we believe, correctly or not, that we lack the competence to act in a manner that a situation demands. The absence of self-recognized competence may turn what would be opportunity into threat, manageable hazard into feared danger. It is unsurprising when worry, anxiety or panic are features of a situation where a person believes they lack the relevant competence to handle a problematic or even desired state of affairs. This is why the Know-How parameter is of special relevance to what a person can tolerate (Schwartz 2002).

Defensively, we are only somewhat able to tolerate how we are seen or what we consciously know. Defensive styles represent personal characteristics, sometimes unconscious, that limit or shelter a person's awareness to what they can tolerate at any given time. Defensives may be automatically applied even when a person has outgrown their serviceability. The empathic clinician keeps this in mind. I think many successful "interpretations of defense" are a result of an empathic therapist recognizing that the client can now tolerate what in the past gave them good reason to remain defensively unaware. What was good to avoid in infancy and childhood may no longer be intolerable, even if the person hasn't recognized this yet. Empathic confrontation that a person can do more than they claim follows a careful gathering of the evidence.

Psychotherapy is often an exercise in acquiring the competence to sit still and experiment with thought and emotional response. Except when immediacy is actually necessary, people learn to look and think before they leap. Empathy is a major aspect of making it safe enough to sit still and practice confronting what might otherwise be unthinkable or intolerable. Patience and practice are required. This is the love in the work.

Significance. Significance is what a person is also doing by doing an act in question. It is, so to speak, what they are up to. Behavior is organized by its significance and implemented by the particular practices a person engages in.

Emphatically, I am aware that what a person's behavior signifies to me may be different from what it means to them. I also keep in mind that they may not appreciate what I see as the significance of their behavior, regardless of how compelling the evidence. I don't have a pipeline to the truth. I to Thou requires being clear that mystery and uncertainty remain.

In appreciating the significance of an action, especially when that acknowledgment involves interpretation, all of the dilemmas of attempting to make the unconscious conscious, all of the problems of attempting to get someone in touch with what they are reluctant to see, come into play. Therapeutically, confronting someone while they are defensive requires tact. Tact requires empathy; it requires an empathic appreciation that a person at any given time can tolerate knowing only so much. People have to cope with how they are seen and this comes into play during psychotherapy. Being seen in ways that a person is careful or reluctant to show is akin to the vulnerability that attends welcome and unwelcome intimacy. One's lovers, close friends, and therapists may be given permission to test the boundaries of self-understanding, but even when potential insight comes from a person's closest confidants, it still might be intolerable.

Here's a story that I tell my students.

> A baseball player, a pitcher, regularly throws a fastball high inside at ninety-five miles an hour. He mixes this up with a nasty curveball and is known for the occasional wild pitch. He has hit more than one batter in the helmet. Those that know him outside the game have seen him tease his wife and children beyond what makes his audience comfortable. This teasing clearly upsets his children. He doesn't seem to notice their unhappiness. With his wife and kids, he thinks he is just being playful. You might think he is sadistic and mean and enjoys making people uncomfortable and helpless. This is why his preferred pitch to a batter he has previously hit is to throw fast, high and very inside,
>
> He had a severe and strict moralistic upbringing and now looks at himself from a perspective of moral superiority. Guilt is very hard for him to acknowledge or bear. It is reasonable to assume that he'd feel guilty and ashamed if he knew how he looks but defensively he is not going to see himself in that light.
>
> Instead, he sees himself as a talented pitcher with a clear appreciation of the strike zone and of the pitches hardest for his opponent to hit. He views himself as a tough-minded sportsman, hypercompetitive but fair, and accepts only that the significance of his pitches is to strike out the batter, end the inning and win the game. If he was asked if these pitches are also how he'll get his contract

> renewed, feel the admiration of the crowd, and live the life of the ball player, he could probably acknowledge all of that. But beyond what he can acknowledge about the significance of his pitches, he may also use his style of throw to achieve some sort of sadistic pleasure. It could be that the way he felt helpless and punished as a child is being worked out unconsciously in his manner of play both on the field and off. He cuts that high inside corner on the wrong side more often than his consummate skill should allow. His satisfaction at making the batter wince is too much for him to resist. Since he is unaware of his sadism, he doesn't control it well. An empathic interpretation of his sadism would require considerable tact and care. It would be resisted.

Generally, I make use of the parameters of Wants, Knows, Know-How, and Significance in judging the empathic nature of an interaction, so I will only say a little about Identity, Personal Characteristics, Performance and Achievement.

Identity. Every action is someone's action and that someone has a name and a title or some sort of status marker. The Identity parameter specifies that. A person's name or title used out loud or silently in social interaction is a significant status marker and may frame how one person appreciates the context and meaning of the other's action. Addressing or responding to someone by their nickname has different implications than responding to them as Professor or Doctor or Ms. or boy or "hey you".

How a person feels understood, and what they will tolerate from another's representation of them may significantly reflect the names that are used. Empathy involves being held in mind in a fashion that may be reflected in the means of address. And, of course, people have various responses to their names being forgotten and may experience such a forgetting as a breach in empathy.

Personal Characteristics. Similarly, people's behaviors are an expression of their personal characteristics as they show their colors, true or otherwise. People vary in their powers and dispositions. A person's behavior in the world follows from their psychological state and status, their values, knowledge and skills, and their traits, attitudes, interests, and styles.

People may want their actions judged as "in character" or not. Problematic or laudable behavior labeled as "out of character" does not create the conditions for degradation or accreditation that these same actions do if they are recognized as "in character" (Ossorio, 2005; Schwartz, 1979). We offer praise or give people breaks in ways that depend on this distinction. It gives us wiggle room.

Performance and **Achievement.** A performance is an episode of behavior in real time with a beginning and an end. It can be interrupted and achieves some difference.

We do not directly observe what a person wants, knows, and knows how to do in the sense of being inside their head; instead, we observe their performance. We watch and participate in their social practices. But whatever their behavioral

performance, if it is an aspect of an Intentional Action, it achieves some difference in the world, be it trivial or profound.

We only have access to their observable behavior and our shared social practices. Of course, we also have access to a person's verbal behavior, written, spoken, etc., as part of their representation of what they are doing. As a rule of thumb, what a person says provides only some evidence of what they can tolerate being told. They may be able to dish it out but not take it.

It is in through mutual social practice that we take for granted shared intentionality (Tomasello & Carpenter, 2007). When the shared practice feels attuned, harmonious, cooperative and effective, we do not ordinarily question whether an empathic appreciation occurs. In contrast, when a shared practice feels awkward, broken, ruptured or breached, a deliberate attention to the parameters of intentional action may be helpful. In general, the more similar we assume to be to the other in values, knowledge, skills and other characteristics, the less likely we are to question our empathy, even if we should. But when differences in culture, gender, age, embodiment, mental state, social class, etc. are a features of interaction, attention to the parameters may be useful. Given how frequently psychotherapists are a different gender, age, race and social class from their clients, deliberate attention to the parameters provides a useful set of distinctions for self-refection and supervision (Schwartz, 2008).

Let's return to Bobby. I came to see Bobby's stumbling and classroom behavior as having significance, an intentional communication and a compromise formation that involved conflicting motivations (W). What Bobby wanted (W) was support, to be picked up and held, and he wanted that from me. His problem was that that wish put him in an intolerable position since he felt only women or mothers are proper for that sort of contact. It would be too "gay" for him to recognize that he wanted to be held by me. This is why I think he remarked that I'd look better with eye shadow, making me more like his mother. Bobby was very concrete this way.

Consciously, Bobby recognized (K) that I provided an opportunity for support and he knew how (KH) both to stand and to fall. Of course, only the falling required explanation, since Bobby's competence in standing was not in question. He also knew (K) that falling results in being picked up and held, but given his fears, he could not directly ask for that support. Instead, he unconsciously demonstrated his dilemma by his stumbling performance (P). In the form of a compromise formation, Bobby achieved (A) both my support and the avoidance of his homophobic concerns. The significance (S) of Bobby's falling and disruptive classroom actions was a tolerable way to represent an intolerable wish given his concerns with appearing gay. I, too, understood those feelings but am not nearly as homophobic as was my teenage client. By telling Bobby that I would stand beside him as a comrade rather than hold him as a woman, I found a way to provide for Bobby's request in a way he could tolerate, even though he remained without insight.

Author Note

Corresponding author: Wynn Schwartz, Ph.D ,
Core Faculty, The Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology
Clinical Instructor, Harvard Medical School
288 Newbury Street
Boston, MA, 02115
(617) 262-7494

References

Bergner, R. (2011). What is behavior? And so what? *New ideas in psychology*, *29,* 147-155.

Fleming, I. (1959). *Goldfinger*. London: Penguin Books

Fonagy, P., Gergely, G., Jurist, E.L., Target, M. (2002). *Affect regulation, mentalization and the development of the self*. New York; Other Press.

Kohut, H. (1984). *How does analysis cure?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Kris, A. (1982) *Free association*. New Haven: Yale University press

Meissner, W. (1991). *What is effective in psychoanalytic psychotherapy?* Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson

0ssorio, P. (1973) Never smile at a crocodile*. Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior. 3,*121-140.

Ossorio, P. (2005). *What actually happens: The representation of real world phenomena. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, vol, 4*. Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P (2013) *The behavior of persons.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Putman, A. (2010). Ordinary Magic: What Descriptive psychology is and why It matters. In Davis, Lubuguin and Schwartz (eds.) *Advances in Descriptive Psychology,* vol. 9. Ann Arbor: Descriptive Psychology Press

Prosser, W. (1941). *Handbook of the law of torts.* St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co.

Rizzolatti G., & Craighero, L. (2004). The mirror–neuron system. *Annual review of neuroscience.* (27) 169-192.

Romero, T, Konno, A., & Hasegawa, T. (2013). Familiarity Bias and Physiological Responses in Contagious Yawning by Dogs Support Link to Empathy, *Plos One,* 8(8)

Rogers, C. (1975). Empathic: An Unappreciated way of being, *The counseling psychologist,* 5(2)1-10.

Schafer, R. (1959). Generative empathy in the treatment situation. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly,* (28) 342-373.

Schafer, R. (1976). *A new language for psychoanalysis*, New Haven, CT: Yale Univeristy Press

Schafer, R. (1983). *The analytic attitude.* New York: Basic Books

Schwartz, W. (1979) Degradation, accreditation, and rites of passage. *Psychiatry 42,* 138-146.

Schwartz, W. (1982) The problem of other possible persons: Dolphins, primates and aliens. In K. Davis (Ed.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology, vol. 1.* (pp 31-56). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press

Schwartz, W. (1984) The two concepts of action and responsibility in psychoanalysis. *J. of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, *32,* 557-572.

Schwartz, W. (2002). From passivity to competence: A conceptualization of knowledge, skill, tolerance and empathy. *Psychiatry, 65,* 338-345

Schwartz, W. (2008) Presentations of the self and the status dynamics of psychotherapy and supervision. *American J. of Psychotherapy, 62,* 51-65.

Shedler, J. (2010) The efficacy of psychodynamic psychotherapy. *The American Psychologist, 65,* 98-109.

Tomasellom M., & Carpenter, M, (2007) Shared intentionality. *Developmental Science, 10,* 121-125

.

Characteristics of Romantic Love: An Empirically-Based Essentialist Account

Raymond M. Bergner[1]
Keith E. Davis[2]
Lauren Saternus[1]
Samantha Walley[1]
Tiffany Tyson[2]

[1] Illinois State University
[2] University of South Carolina

Abstract

The present 4-part study reopens certain basic issues regarding people's conceptions of romantic love. Evidence collected at two sites with a total of 390 participants supports the following contentions: (1) The concept of romantic love may not be, as widely maintained, a Roschian prototypical term, but may instead be a definable, essentialist one. (2) Foremost among love's essential characteristics may be *"Care for the well-being of the partner for his or her own sake."* (3) The concept of *romantic love* itself and the concept of a good *romantic love relationship* may be two related but distinct concepts, the former essentialist and the latter prototypical.

Keywords: love, romantic love, essentialist concept, prototypical concept

The present 4-part study reopens several issues on matters that we and most others have regarded as largely settled in our understanding of love. Data is presented supporting each of the following three possibilities. (1) The concept of "love" may not be, as widely maintained, a Roschian prototypical term (Aron, Fisher, & Strong, 2006; Bergner, 2000; Davis, 1985; Davis & Todd, 1982; Fehr, 1988, 1993, 2006), but may instead be a definable, essentialist one. That is to say, the concept

of love, unlike that of a Roschian prototypical concept, may imply the presence of certain essential characteristics, and any relationship lacking these characteristics may not be perceived by people as a case of love at all. (2) *Care for the well-being of the partner for his or her own sake*" (hereafter, *"CWB")* may constitute love's foremost essential characteristic (Hegi & Bergner, 2010; Rempel & Burris, 2005; Singer, 1984). (3) People may have two different but related concepts pertaining to romantic love: the first of these, an essentialist one, is that of *romantic love itself*; the second, a prototypical one, is that of a *good romantic love relationship*.

Let us discuss each of these matters in turn before turning our attention to the methods employed and results obtained in these studies. This work is part of an ongoing body of work on the nature of love undertaken within the conceptual framework of Descriptive Psychology (Bergner, 2000; Bretscher & Bergner, 1991; Davis, 1985; Davis & Todd, 1982; Davis & Bergner, 2009; Hegi & Bergner, in press).

Love: Prototypical or Essentialist Concept?

The intellectual custom in psychology, dating back to the work of Eleanor Rosch on prototypical concepts (Mervis & Rosch; 1981 Rosch, 1973), has been to posit two distinct ways to articulate the meaning of a concept. The first and more traditional of these is the essentialist one of giving a formal definition; i.e., of stating the universal necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct employment of a term (Ossorio, 2006). The second is based on the observation that most real world concepts cannot be formally defined, because there is no single feature that all instances of these concepts have in common (Mervis & Rosch, 1981; Rosch, 1973; Wittgenstein, 1953). Thus, they lack the universal necessary and sufficient condition(s) required for a formal definition. What they have instead are "family resemblances" that render them amenable to a procedure of articulating a *prototype* (e.g., "in depression, we generally but not always find a syndrome comprising sadness, anhedonia, demotivation, fatigue, etc."), resemblance to which is what justifies our use of that term on any given occasion.

The recent, and seemingly settled, position in the close relationship literature has been that concept of love is prototypical in nature (Aron et al., 2006; Bergner, 2000; Davis, 1985; Fehr, 1988, 2006: Fehr & Russell, 1991). This position has been maintained both for love in general (Aron et al., 2006; Fehr, 1988, 2006; Fehr & Russell, 1991) and for specific kinds of love such as romantic love (Bergner, 2000; Davis, 1985; Davis & Todd, 1982), companionate love (Davis, 1985; Davis & Todd, 1982), and compassionate love (Fehr, Sprecher, & Underwood, 2009; Fehr & Sprecher, 2009). Aron et al. (2006) articulate this position well when they state that "the longstanding philosophical controversies over the meaning of love and the corresponding diversity of conceptual and operational definitions in the scientific literature are due to the possibility that ordinary people recognize instances of love not by their conforming to some formal definition but rather by their family resemblance to a prototypical exemplar" (p.597).

In the present research, we explore the possibility that the concept of romantic love may not be a prototypical concept, but may instead be a definable, essen-

tialist one. That is to say, we explore whether there is some feature or features that are (a) common to all instances of romantic love, and (b) regarded by persons as *necessary* – as *essential* – for them to judge that person A "loves" person B. Thus, just as they would judge that, "If John is not single, then he cannot be a bachelor," so they would judge that, "if Jack's relationship to Jill lacks characteristic(s) X, Jack does not love Jill."

How methodologically can we establish the existence of such essential characteristics, if there be any? The first part of an answer to this question comes from Fehr (2006) who, in discussing some new methodological possibilities in research on love, speculates that "...people may not necessarily produce the full range of important features when asked (a recall task), but 'know them when they see them' (...a recognition task)" (p. 242). Consistent with Fehr's conjecture, it is an easily observed fact of everyday life that people use concepts that embody criteria that they are unable to articulate. Asked what time it is, they tell us the time. Asked to describe their friend's personality, they tell us that she is shy, generous, and considerate of others. Asked to give an example of humor, they tell us a joke. However, asked to define or otherwise articulate the concepts of "time," "personality," or "humor," they are for the most part at a loss. They possess the correct distinctions, they make correct judgments on the basis of them, but they cannot articulate well the conceptual criteria they are using or the manner in which they are using them. Thus, if we wish to identify how people actually use a term, a logically compelling procedure would seem to be to get research participants to make judgments in which they utilize the concept at issue (here, judgments about whether person A romantically "loves" person B), and then to deduce from their judgments what criteria they are using.

In the present research, something further is needed: a way to determine, not only what criteria are being employed, but whether these criteria are seen as essential or non-essential to the target concept – and thus whether this concept is an essentialist one or not. Essentialist concepts, since they have necessary criteria for their employment, are subject to judgments of the form, "If it lacks characteristic X, then it cannot be a case of concept Y" (again, "If John is not single, then he cannot be a bachelor."). Prototypical concepts, per Rosch, have no such necessary criteria, and thus are not subject to contradiction based on the presence or absence of any feature. Nothing is essential to them; nothing is a *sine qua non* for their employment. Accordingly, a research task that involves participants making judgments about the necessity or non-necessity of criteria will enable us to distinguish essentialist concepts from non-essentialist ones. The procedures employed in the 4 studies presented below embody this logic, and are designed to enable us to determine (a) what, if anything, is seen as essential to judging that person A *loves* person B romantically; and (b) what, if any, other characteristics are seen as important, but not essential to love itself, in participants' broader models or prototypes of good romantic relationships.

Critical Characteristic: Care for the Partner's Wellbeing

Of especial interest in this research is a relationship characteristic that we term *"Care for the partner's well-being for his or her own sake"* (*CWB*). The reasons for this interest are several. The first of these comes from the work of Irving Singer (1984) who, in his classic 3-volume study of the history of the concept of romantic love in Western culture, concluded that such care was love's essential feature – that it was in effect "the essence of love." Singer expresses this in the following way: "The lover takes an interest in the other as a person, and not merely as a commodity...He bestows importance on her needs and her desires, even when they do not further the satisfaction of his own...In relation to the lover, the other has become valuable for her own sake" (1984, p. 6). In love, on Singer's conception, the lover is invested in the well-being of the beloved for the latter's own sake, and not merely for how his or her well-being might benefit the lover: the beloved has become an end and not merely a means to the lover's ends. In maintaining that such unselfish care is love's essential characteristic, Singer is not denying that there are elements of both love and self-interest in any actual relationship; his point is only that, insofar as Romeo *loves* Juliet, he is genuinely invested in her well-being for her sake.

There are further reasons for placing a particular focus on CWB in the present research. First, Margaret Clark and her associates (Clark & Mills, 1979; Clark & Monin, 2006), while they have not promoted it as an essential feature in a formal definition of love, have in their research on love placed primary emphasis on a concept very similar to *CWB,* one that they term "communal responsiveness." In an important body of research undertaken over many years, they have established numerous and critically important implications of the presence of communal responsiveness in human relationships. Second, Rempel and Burris, in their conceptually oriented 2005 account, argue extensively and persuasively for a classical definition of love as "a motivational state in which the goal is to preserve and promote the well-being of the valued object" (p. 299). Paraphrased in terms of the current discussion, they are claiming in effect both that love is an essentialist concept, and that motivation for the well-being of another is its essential defining feature. Third and finally here, early findings from two studies of our own (Hegi & Bergner, 2010) revealed that CWB was the most strongly endorsed of 14 traditional relationship characteristics for four different varieties of love: romantic, parental, companionate, and compassionate/altruistic. If such findings are born out by subsequent research, *CWB* may prove to be the single characteristic that transcends and is essential to all of the major types of human love. Conceptually, and anticipating our methodologies, it is suggestive to consider whether or not it is contradictory to say of any alleged love relationship, regardless of kind, that, "He loves her, but he cares little about her personal well-being."

Lay vs. Expert Conceptions of Love

The central concern of this research is to capture people's conceptions of romantic love and romantic love relationships. Such conceptions have traditionally been posed as "lay" conceptions, and contrasted as such to "expert" ones (Fehr,

2006). To say that they are lay conceptions, however, is to say that they are the conceptions *in actual use* by persons in the conduct of their lives (Kelley, 1983). They embody the distinctions that people actually draw when they are trying to decide such vitally important questions as whether their partners love them, whether they love their partners, or whether their son's or daughter's fiance seems genuinely to love their child. Thus, they have a critical impact on vital real world judgments, decisions, actions, and emotions. For this reason, it may be argued that there is no better *scientific* conception of love than that embodied in lay conceptions. There are no better conceptions – no better schemas – for helping us to predict and to understand how real people make judgments about the presence or absence of love, why the feel as they do, and why they make the decisions that they do (Kelley, 1983).

Hypotheses

The 4 studies presented here all embody the same hypotheses. (1) Participants will employ the concept of *romantic love* as an essentialist concept; i.e., they will regard the presence of certain relational features as necessary for them to judge that person A loves person B, and will indicate this by judging the absence of these characteristics as grounds for judging that person A does not love person B. (2) Participants will perceive *CWB* to be an essential feature of romantic love. With respect to other possible essential features, we make no predictions, but let the data speak for itself in this regard. (3) Participants will have two distinct conceptions pertaining to romantic love, an essentialist one for *romantic love itself,* and a prototypical one for a *good romantic relationship*. They will demonstrate this by exhibiting prototypical relationship models that include, not only love's essential characteristics, but many further characteristics that they deem important for a romantic relationship, but whose absence would not necessarily imply for them the absence of love itself in that relationship.

Study 1

Participants

100 students from a large midwestern state university participated in study 1. Solicited by means of a Psychology Department sign-up board, the sample was comprised of 50 females and 50 males ranging in age from 18 to 57 years, with a mean age of 21.4 years. The majority of participants identified themselves as Caucasian (86%), followed by African-American (6%), Hispanic/Latino (2%), Asian-American (2%), and "other" (4%).

Measures

Factors in Intimate Relationships (FIR) Scale. A revised version of a questionnaire developed by Bretscher and Bergner (1991), "Factors in Intimate Relationships" (FIR), was used for this research (see Appendix A). Retitled "Personal Meanings of Romantic Love" for purposes of the present study, this measure informs participants at the outset that "This questionnaire is designed to get at your idea of what should be present in a good romantic love relationship." It then presents

them with a series of possible relationship characteristics (*Acceptance, Affectionate Feeling, Care for Partner's Well-being, Commitment, Enjoyment, Emotional Intimacy, Exclusiveness, Freedom to be Ourselves, Knowledge/Understanding, Preoccupation, Respect, Sexual Desire, Trust,* and *Similarity)* derived from earlier research exploring prototypical characteristics of romantic love (Bretscher & Bergner, 1991; Davis & Todd,1982; Davis, 1985; Fehr, 1988, 1993, 2006; Regan, Kocan, & Whitlock,1998). In the FIR, in order to minimize individual differences in interpretation, each of these characteristic is defined for participants. For example, the variable *CWB* is defined as follows: *"In some relationships, we have a sense that each of us truly cares about the well-being of the other. We have a sense that each of us genuinely cares about, and is willing to make personal efforts when needed, to further the other's welfare and happiness. Such caring may be expressed in various ways. For example, it might be expressed as a desire to give to the partner in ways that will make him or her happy...or in wanting to help and to stand by each other when the other is hurt or ill or unhappy... or in being willing to do things to assist each other in important matters. In all of this, finally, our sense is that our partners are not just giving to get. They are not just doing all of this because there is something in it for them. Rather, they are doing it because our welfare and happiness genuinely matter to them."*

Following their reading of the definition of each relationship characteristic, participants are asked to consider a hypothetical male-female relationship between two persons, "Jack" and "Jill," who are engaged to be married, in which the specific characteristic just defined is "*basically missing*," and to make a judgment regarding the meaning its absence would have for them personally. For example, for the variable *CWB*, the item reads as follows:

> "CONSIDER A RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH CARE FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THE PARTNER WAS BASICALLY MISSING on the part of one or both partners. For example, suppose that JACK DID NOT CARE ABOUT JILL'S WELL-BEING. Which of the following statements would be closest to what you would think?
>
> *a. If this were missing, I would have a hard time believing that Jack* actually loved Jill.
>
> b. If this were missing, I could still believe that Jack might love Jill, but I *would consider the lack of care for Jill's well-being to be a* ***serious deficiency*** *in their relationship.*
>
> c. If this were missing, I could still believe that Jack might love Jill, but I would consider the lack of care for Jill's well-being to be a ***moderately important deficiency*** *in their relationship*
>
> d. If this were missing, I could still believe that Jack might love Jill, but I *would consider the lack of care for Jill's well-being to be a* ***minor deficiency*** *in their relationship*
>
> e. If this were missing, I could still believe that Jack loved Jill, and I would *consider the lack of care for Jill's well-being as being* ***no***

deficiency at all in their relationship."

Two versions of the FIR questionnaire were created, with items presented in a different order in each. Further, the genders of the hypothetical engaged parties were systematically varied such that, in 50% of items, the featured person was male, and in the other 50%, female.

Rationale. The rationale for this form of question is that, first of all, it distinguishes between whether or not the concept of romantic love is essentialist or prototypical. Essentialist concepts, since they have necessary criteria for their employment, are subject to contradiction (e.g., "John is a bachelor, but he is married."). Prototypical concepts, since they have no such necessary criteria, are not subject to contradiction based on the presence or absence of any feature (Mervis & Rosch, 1981; Rosch,1973). Accordingly, the selection of option "a" signifies that the participant views the concept of romantic love as an essentialist one, in which the relationship characteristic in question is seen as necessary for love of this kind. Participants are endorsing in effect the proposition that, "You can't say that person A *loves* person B romantically if element X is missing from his or her relationship to B." The endorsement of any other response option indicates that the factor in question is not viewed, in varying degrees, as essential to person A loving person B. Secondly, with regard to prototypes, if participants indicate that a given characteristic's absence would *not* lead them to draw the extreme conclusion that person A does not love person B, but that it would constitute a *"serious deficiency"* or "*moderately important deficiency*" from his or her relationship to B, then they are viewing it as prototypical for a good romantic relationship, but not as essential to romantic love. In the bargain, they are indicating that their prototypes of romantic love relationships are different from and broader than their conceptions of what is essential to romantic love itself. We view this procedure as providing a stringent test of whether or not the absence of a characteristic was incompatible with love since 4 of the 5 options available to respondents represented rejections of that characteristic as essential.

Demographic data. In addition to the FIR scale, participants were given a brief 20-item survey sheet calling for them to provide demographic information regarding such things as their age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, and current relationship status.

Procedures

Participants were brought in groups of approximately 6 to 8 to an experimental room. All were first provided with a written statement of their rights as participants, informed that all of their responses were anonymous, and told that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. They were then given a packet containing the FIR scale and the demographic survey, and asked to complete them. Upon completion, all participants were provided with a debriefing statement regarding the significance of the study.

Results

Table 1 lists the 14 variables investigated in Study 1 in descending order from those most widely endorsed as essential to those least widely endorsed on the basis of the percentage of Ss who viewed each characteristic as essential; i.e., who judged the absence of the relationship characteristic at issue as grounds for endorsing the option that person A did not love person B.

The test of which characteristics are deemed to be essential was accomplished with a non-parametrical X^2 in which alternative *a,* the judgment that person A did not love person B, was compared with the 4 other categorically different alternatives, all of which indicated the judgment that person A could still love person B if the characteristic at issue was missing from their relationship. In Table 1, column 2 lists the overall group means, while column 3 lists the percentage of participants who rated each variable essential to love, as well as the Chi-square figures for this variable. As can be seen in the table, *Care for the Partner's Well-being* emerged as the characteristic most widely endorsed as essential on both a percentage (77%; $X^2 = 29.16$, $p<.001$) and group mean (1.31) basis. Also emerging as essential were three further characteristics, *Enjoyment (69%;* $X^2 = 14.44$, $p<.001$, *M=1.34), Commitment (66%;* $X^2 = 10.24$, $p<.001$, *M=1.43),* and *Exclusiveness (62%;* $X^2 = 5.76$, $p<.05$, *M=1.46).*

Table 1: Group Means and % Rating Essential (Study 1)

Characteristic	Mean	% Rating Essential	X^2	
Care for Partner's Well-being	1.31	77	29.16	(p<.001)
Enjoyment	1.34	69	14.44	(p<.001)
Commitment	1.43	66	10.24	(p<.001)
Exclusiveness	1.46	62	5.76	(p<.05)
Acceptance	1.51	58	2.56	(p=.11)
Affectionate Feeling	1.52	59	3.24	(p=.07)
Respect	1.62	47		
Trust	1.83	22		
Emotional Intimacy	2.11	14		
Freedom to Be Ourselves	2.13	19		
Knowledge/Understanding	2.16	21		
Sexual Desire	2.43	13		
Preoccupation	3.06	9		
Similarity	3.30	2		

N = 100

In this sample, 97 out of 100 (97%) participants rated at least one variable essential to love. Since seeing something as essential to a concept indicates, ipso

facto, that one holds an essentialist view of that concept, this means that 97% of our participants held an essentialist view of love.

In addition to the four characteristics rated essential, the following characteristics yielded group means between 1.5 and 2.5, indicating that participants, on average, regarded their absence as "serious deficiencies" in their models of good romantic relationships: *Acceptance, Affectionate Feeling, Respect, Trust, Emotional Intimacy, Freedom to be Oneself in the Relationship, Understanding,* and *Sexual Desire*. The absence of *Preoccupation* and *Similarity* were regarded by participants as "moderately important deficiencies" in these personal models. Thus, as predicted, participants' models or prototypes of romantic love relationships were different from, and broader than, their conceptions of what is essential to romantic love itself.

Study 2

Study 2 is a replication of study 1 conducted at a large southeastern state university. The measures employed, predictions made, and analyses performed were all identical. The only differences lie in the procedures used to gather data. With respect to these, participants in this study were recruited from a large undergraduate psychology class. They were asked to participate voluntarily, and if they decided to do so received extra credit for the course. A total of 108 out of a possible 144 students chose to participate. Of these, 92 were female and only 16 were male. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 37 years old, with a mean age of 21.01(SD=2.87). With respect to ethnicity, 87 participants were Caucasian, 14 African-American, 4 Asian, and 3 Hispanic.

Table 2: Group Means and % Rating Essential (Study 2)

Characteristic	Mean	% Rating Essential	X^2	
Care for Partner's Well-being	1.29	75.0	27.00	(p<.001)
Enjoyment	1.39	71.3	23.15	(p<.001)
Exclusiveness	1.40	71.3	19.59	(p<.001)
Commitment	1.54	66.0	4.59	(p<.05)
Acceptance	1.51	58.0	2.31	(p=.149)
Affectionate Feeling	1.61	55.5	1.33	(p=.248)
Respect	1.93	49.1		
Trust	1.93	15.6		
Emotional Intimacy	2.07	17.6		
Freedom to Be Ourselves	2.08	18.5		
Sexual Desire	2.23	16.7		
Knowledge/Understanding	2.35	11.1		
Preoccupation	3.05	7.4		
Similarity	3.11	1.9		

N=108

As Table 2 illustrates, results for this sample were identical to those obtained in study 1. Again, *CWB* emerged as the characteristic most widely endorsed as essential on both a percentage (75%; $X^{2=}27$, $p<.001$) and a group mean (1.29) basis. Also emerging as essential once again were *Enjoyment* (71.3%; $X^{2=}23.15$, $p<.001$; $M=1.39$), *Exclusiveness* (71.3%; $X^{2=}19.59$, $p<.001$; $M=1.40$), and *Commitment* (66%; $X^{2=}4.59$, $p<.05$; $M=1.54$). In study 2, 107 out of 108 (99.1%) participants rated at least one relationship characteristic as essential to love, again indicating that an extremely high percentage of participants held an essentialist view of this concept.

In addition to the four characteristics rated essential, the following characteristics yielded group means between 1.5 and 2.5, indicating that participants, on average, regarded their absence as "serious deficiciencies" in their models of good romantic relationships: *Acceptance, Affectionate Feeling, Respect, Trust, Emotional Intimacy, Freedom to be Oneself in the Relationship, Sexual Desire*, and *Knowledge/Understanding.* The absences of *Preoccupation* and *Similarity* were regarded by participants as "moderately important deficiencies" in these personal models. Thus, as in Study 1, participants' models or prototypes of romantic love relationships emerged as different from, and broader than, their conceptions of what is essential to romantic love itself.

Study 3

Participants

Study 3 was performed at the same midwestern university as Study 1. The sample for this study, again solicited by means of a Psychology Department sign-up board, was comprised of 55 females and 53 males. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 55 years, with a mean age of 20.3 (SD = 3.99). The majority of participants identified themselves as Caucasian (78.7%), followed by African-American (13%), Hispanic (7.4%), and Asian-American (0.9%).

For study 3, participants took two different measures. Entitled *"Personal Meanings of Romantic Love, Part 1"* and *"Personal Meanings of Romantic Love, Part 2,"* both were very similar to the measure employed in studies 1 and 2. For *Personal Meanings of Romantic Love, Part 1,* participants were again informed in the introduction that *"This questionnaire is designed to get at your idea of what you think should be present in a good romantic love relationship*." Then, as in the previous studies, each item began by designating a relationship characteristic such as *Trust* or *Acceptance*, and then defining it. Following their reading of this definition, participants were called upon to respond to queries of the following form:

Consider a relationship in which X (e.g., trust) was ***missing*** *on the part of one or both partners. For example,* ***suppose that Jill did not trust Jack****.*

> ***1****. When you consider your idea of what a good romantic love relationship should be, how serious a* ***deficiency*** *would you consider such a* ***lack of trust*** *to be?*

a. not a deficiency at all
b. a small deficiency
c. a moderate deficiency
d. a fairly serious deficiency
e. a very serious deficiency

For *Personal Meanings of Romantic Love, Part 2,* participants were first oriented toward the notion of questions about *contradiction* with the preamble: "After each statement below, please rate the degree to which you think the statement is *contradictory.* For example, most people would probably find it contradictory, in the sense of a contradiction in terms, to say, 'Jack loves Jill, but he hates her.' In contrast, most would probably not find it contradictory to say, 'Jack loves Jill, but he sometimes gets irritated with her because she tends to be late.'" Following this instruction, a series of items of the following form were presented to participants:

> Consider a relationship in which X (e.g., trust) was missing on the part of one or both partners. For example, suppose that, in the relationship between our *young engaged couple,* ***Jill did not trust Jack. To what degree would you find it contradictory*** *to say the following?*
>
> ***9.*** *"Jill loves Jack, but she does not trust him."*
>
> a. Very contradictory
> b. Somewhat contradictory
> c. Neither contradictory nor non-contradictory
> d. Somewhat non-contradictory
> e. Not contradictory at all

Rationale. The first measure, *Personal Meanings of Romantic Love, Part 1*, is intended to provide information only about participants' prototypes of a good romantic relationship. All items are designed only to capture the degree to which participants would consider the absence of different relationship characteristics to represent important deficiencies from their personal models of a good romantic love relationship. Nothing in this measure pertains to essentiality, thereby affording an additional contrast between participants' conceptions of romantic love itself and of romantic relationships.

Personal Meanings of Romantic Love, Part 2 requires participants to review the same 14 relationship characteristics, but now to answer a different question about each of them. This question represents an alternative way (from studies 1 and 2) to establish whether or not a concept is essentialist. As noted previously, essentialist concepts, since they have universal and necessary conditions for their employment, can generate contradictory propositions. Prototypical concepts, since they have no such necessary conditions, are not subject to contradiction based on the presence or absence of any feature (Mervis & Rosch, 1981; Rosch, 1973). Endorsement of option *a* in Part 2 would therefore indicate that the participant regarded the relationship characteristic at issue as essential to love. Again, as in studies 1 and 2, we view this procedure as providing a stringent test of whether or not the absence

of a characteristic was incompatible with love since 4 of the 5 options available to respondents represented rejections of that characteristic as essential.

Thus, Part 1 yields a prototype, while Part 2 yields a picture of what, if anything, is held to be essential to romantic love. Any mismatch between the two is ipso facto a difference between participants' prototypes of a good romantic relationship and their conceptions of what is essential to romantic love itself.

Procedures

The procedures employed in study 3 were identical to those in study 1, except for the following. Two questionnaires, rather than one, were administered to each participant. Further, the demographic survey was administered between these two questionnaires in order to reduce the likelihood that participants would remember their responses from the first questionnaire while they were taking the second one.

Results

Table 3 lists results from *Personal Meanings of Romantic Love, Part 1*, ranked according to the percentage of participants who saw the absence of the relationship feature at issue as a serious deficiency from their prototype of a good romantic relationship.

Table 3: Group Means and % Rating as Deficiency (Study 3):

Characteristic	Mean	% Endorsing Very Serious Def	% Endorsing Very + Fairly Serious
Trust	1.29	76.9	97.2
Enjoyment	1.32	71.3	97.2
Care for Partner's Well-Being	1.40	64.8	95.4
Exclusiveness	1.59	63.9	81.5
Respect	1.52	58.3	89.8
Freedom to be Ourselves	1.69	48.1	87.0
Affectionate Feeling	1.70	40.7	88.9
Commitment	1.81	47.2	76.9
Acceptance	1.84	37.0	80.6
Sexual Desire	2.06	24.1	76.9
Emotional Intimacy	2.15	24.1	71.3
Knowledge/ Understanding	2.26	16.8	66.4
Preoccupation	3.02	3.7	26.9
Similarity	3.04	7.4	25.0

N=107

As noted above, this measure inquires only about participants' prototypes of a good romantic relationship. On this scale, endorsement of the two extreme categories would indicate that participants viewed the absence of some characteristic as "a very serious deficiency"" or a "fairly serious deficiency" from their models of what a good romantic relationship should embody. Reversing the scores here to make them compatible with others in these studies (i.e., 5 becomes 1, etc.), any group mean between 1.0 and 1.5 would indicate that participants on average viewed a characteristic's absence as a "very serious" deficiency in a romantic relationship. Three characteristic were rated in this interval: *Trust (M=1.29), Enjoyment (1.32),* and *CWB (1.40).* Rated as *"fairly serious deficiencies"* (i.e., yielding group means between 1.5 and 2.5) were absences of *Respect (1.52) , Exclusiveness (1.59), Freedom to be Oneself in the Relationship (1.69), Affectionate Feeling (1.70), Commitment (1.81), Acceptance (1.84), Sexual Desire (2.06), Emotional Intimacy (2.15), and Knowledge/ Understanding (2.26).* Rated as *"moderate deficiencies"* were absences of *Preoccupation* (3.02) and *Similarity* (3.04). These data suggest, then, that 12 of the 14 relationship characteristics examined represent, in varying degrees, important elements in participants' prototypes of romantic relationships. Since the variables under consideration were selected on the basis of their centrality in previous studies of prototypical conceptions of romantic love, these findings are consistent with that extensive literature.

Table 4: Group Means and % Rating Essential (Study 3)

Characteristic	Mean	Percent Very Contradictory	X^2	Percent Very + Somewhat Contradictory
Care for Partner's Well-Being	1.35	76.9	31.15 (p<.001)	96.3
Exclusiveness	1.58	69.4	16.33 (p<.001)	85.2
Enjoyment	1.47	66.7	12.00 (p<.001)	90.7
Affectionate Feeling	1.57	63.8	8.33 (p<.001)	88.9
Respect	1.56	57.4	2.70 (*p*=.10)	91.7
Freedom/Ourselves	1.74	54.6		82.4
Acceptance	1.73	50.0		86.4
Commitment	1.88	42.6		91.7
Trust	2.14	33.3		68.5
Knowledge/ Understanding	2.19	25.0		68.5
Emotional Intimacy	2.27	24.1		72.2
Sexual Desire	2.33	28.7		66.7
Preoccupation	2.93	3.7		38.9
Similarity	3.15	3.7		29.6

N =108

Table 4 lists results from *Personal Meanings of Romantic Love, Part 2*, ranked by percentage of participants who viewed each characteristic as essential (i.e., who judged the statement, "A loves B, but characteristic X is missing from A's relationship to B" to be "*very contradictory*").

In Study 3, *CWB* achieved the highest levels of endorsement with respect to its essentialness to love, with 76.9% ($X^{2=}31.15$, $p<.001$) of participants endorsing the proposition that to say that Jack (Jill) loves Jill (Jack), but that he is not invested in her well-being, is a contradiction in terms (96.3% rated it either "very" or "somewhat" contradictory). Also viewed as essential were *Exclusiveness* (69.4%; $X^{2=}16.33$, $p<.001$; M = 1.58), *Enjoyment* (66.7%; $X^{2=}12.00$, $p<.001$; M = 1.47), and *Affectionate Feeling* (63.8%; $X^{2=}31.15$, $p<.01$; M = 1.57). Three of these 4 characteristics *CWB, Exclusiveness,* and *Enjoyment*, were identical to those most widely viewed as essential in studies 1 and 2. The single difference from those studies was that *Affectionate Feeling,* rather than *Commitment ,* emerged as the fourth characteristic achieving significance.

As in studies 1 and 2, participants' models or prototypes of romantic love relationships, comprising 12 characteristics, emerged here as different from, and broader than, their conceptions of what is essential to romantic love itself, which comprised only 4. In this sample, 103 out of 108 participants (95.4%) rated at least one variable as essential to love, again supporting the hypothesis that people employ this concept in an essentialist way.

Study 4

Study 4 is a replication of study 3 performed at the same large southeastern state university as study 2. The measures employed, predictions made, and analyses done were all identical. The single difference was in the procedures used to gather data. In this study, participants were recruited from two different undergraduate social psychology classes. They were asked to participate voluntarily, and 74 out of a possible 88 students elected to do so. With respect to gender, 50 females and 24 males participated, ranging in age from 18 to 38 years old, with a mean age of 22.3 (SD=6.19). The majority of participants identified themselves as Caucasian (64%), followed by African-American (23%), Hispanic/Latino (3%), Asian-American (3%), and "other" (8%).

Results

Table 5 lists results from *Personal Meanings of Romantic Love, Part 1,* ranked according to the percentage of participants who saw the absence of the relationship feature at issue as a serious deficiency from their prototype of a good romantic relationship.

In Study 4, 7 characteristics yielded group means between 1.0 and 1.5, indicating that participants on average viewed their absence as "very serious" deficiencies from their prototypes of a good romantic relationship. These were *Trust (M=1.18), CWB (1.27), Exclusiveness (1.30), Respect (1.31), Enjoyment (1.34),*

Commitment (1.46), and Acceptance (1.49). Rated as *"fairly serious deficiencies" (group means between 1.5 and 2.5)* were absences of *Freedom to be Oneself in the Relationship (1.54), Affectionate Feeling (1.65), Emotional Intimacy (1.85), Knowledge/ Understanding (2.24),* and *Preoccupation* (2.22). Rated as a *"moderate deficiency"* was the absence only of *Similarity* (2.81). These data suggest, then, that 13 of the 14 relationship characteristics examined represent, in varying degrees, important elements in participants' prototypes of romantic relationships.

Table 5: Group Means and % Rating as Deficiency (Study 4):

Characteristic	Mean	% Endorsing Very Serious Def	% Endorsing Very+Fairly Serious
Trust	1.18	73.0	98.7
Care for Partner's Well-being	1.27	78.4	93.2
Exclusiveness	1.30	76.7	96.7
Respect	1.31	66.2	93.2
Enjoyment	1.34	72.9	93.2
Commitment	1.46	62.2	83.9
Acceptance	1.49	55.4	95.9
Freedom/ourselves	1.54	56.9	91.9
Affectionate feelings	1.65	51.4	86.5
Emotional Intimacy	1.85	40.5	78.4
Sexual Desire	1.91	41.2	73.3
Preoccupation	2.22	1.4	16.2
Understanding	2.24	10.8	68.9
Similarity	2.81	10.8	32.4

Note. $N = 74$

Table 6 lists results from *Personal Meanings of Romantic Love, Part 2*, ranked by percentage of participants who viewed each characteristic as essential (i.e., who judged the statement, "A loves B, but characteristic X is missing from A's relationship to B" to be "*very contradictory").*

In Study 4, *CWB* achieved the highest levels of endorsement with respect to its essentialness to love, with 84.9% ($X^{2=}35.63$, $p<.001$) of participants endorsing the proposition that to say that Jack (Jill) loves Jill (Jack), but that he is not invested in her well-being, is a contradiction in terms (98.6% rated it either "very" or "somewhat" contradictory). Also viewed to a significant degree as essential were *Exclusiveness* (72.9%; $X^{2=}14.22$, $p<.001$; $M = 1.59$), *Affectionate Feeling (*65.6%; $X^{2=}7.25$, $p<.01$; $M = 1.45$*),* and *Enjoyment (*63.8%; $X^{2=}4.95$, $p<.05$: $M = 1.48$*).* Three of these 4 characteristics, *CWB, Exclusiveness,* and *Enjoyment*, were identical to those most widely viewed as essential in studies 1, 2, and 3. Again, as in Study 3, *Affectionate*

Feeling, rather than *Commitment,* emerged as the fourth characteristic achieving significance.

Table 6: Group Means and % Rating Essential (Study 4)

Characteristic	Mean	Percent Very Contradictory	X^2	Percent Very + Somewhat Contradictory
Care for Partner's Well-Being	1.16	84.9	35.63 (p<.001)	98.6
Exclusiveness	1.59	71.2	14.22 (p<.001)	80.8
Affectionate Feeling	1.45	65.6	7.25 (p<.01)	93.2
Enjoyment	1.48	63.8	4.95 (p<.05)	91.8
Acceptance	1.45	60.3	3.08 (p=.08)	94.5
Respect	1.64	52.1	0.12	89.0
Freedom/Ourselves	1.70	54.8	0.67	84.9
Commitment	1.85	45.2		83.6
Emotional Intimacy	1.99	27.4		79.5
Trust	2.14	32.9		84.9
Sexual Desire	2.32	24.7		64.4
Knowledge/ Understanding	2.58	17.8		64.4
Preoccupation	3.03	8.2		31.5
Similarity	3.10	8.2		37.0

N =73 (One participant failed to complete the contradictariness ratings)

As in all 3 previous studies, participants' models or prototypes of romantic love relationships, comprising 13 characteristics, emerged here as different from, and broader than, their conceptions of what is essential to romantic love itself, which included only 4. In this sample, finally, 74 out of 74 participants (100%) rated at least one variable as essential to love, again supporting their assumption of an essentialist view of love.

Male-Female Differences in the 4 Studies

Some previous research has indicated that women have higher standards than men in matters of mate selection (Regan, 1998; Regan & Berscheid, 1999). To determine if this difference applied to the specific question of what they considered to be essential to love, we ran Chi-square analyses for men and women in all 4 studies for all 14 relationship characteristics. In 48 of these 56 separate analyses, no male-female differences were obtained. The differences that were forthcoming were the following. More women than men thought that the following relationship characteristics were essential to love: *Understanding* (Study 2, $X^2 = 6.358$, p = .012; Study 4, $X^2 = 3.913$, p = .048); *Acceptance* (Study 2, $X^2 = 7.245$, p = .007; Study 4, $X^2 = 5.140$, p = .023); *Exclusiveness* (Study 2, $X^2 = 8.087$, p = .004); and *Enjoyment*

(Study 2; $X^2 = 6.687$, $p = .01$). There was no relationship characteristic that men endorsed as essential more widely than women. Thus, in the matter of what is considered essential to love, there is some weak support for the thesis that women are more demanding in their criteria than men. However, the preponderance of evidence from these 4 studies suggests that men and women in the American culture differ little in the matter of what they consider to be essential to love. Finally, with respect to the variable of central interest in this research, *Care for the Partner's Well-being,* no significant gender differences were obtained.

Discussion

Overall, these studies provide strong and consistent evidence that undergraduates at two different large state universities hold an essentialist view of romantic love. In all 4 studies, when certain characteristics were described as absent from a relationship, a significant percentage of participants (a) judged that person A did not love person B (studies 1 and 2), or (b) found it contradictory to assert that person A loved person B (studies 3 and 4). The fact that two different methods of assessment were used to access participants' judgments of essential characteristics adds support to the finding. Over all 4 studies, a total of 381 out of 390 participants (97.7%) rendered the judgment that one or more relationship characteristics was essential to love, thus indicating their subscription to an essentialist view of that concept.

The characteristic most widely and consistently endorsed as essential to romantic love was *CWB.* In the 4 studies, no fewer than 75% and as many as 84.9% of participants endorsed this characteristic as essential. Thus, what we have termed "*Care for the Partner's Well-being,*" what Margaret Clark and her associates have termed "communal responsiveness" (Clark & Mills, 1979; Clark & Monin, 2006), and what both Singer (1984) and Rempel and Burress (2005) regard as the essence of love, here receives strong early support as *the* factor most widely viewed as essential to romantic love. Also receiving consistent wide support as essential to romantic love were the relationship characteristics *Enjoyment* and *Exclusiveness,* both of which were endorsed as such by participants in all 4 studies. Receiving lesser degrees of support were *Commitment* and *Affectionate Feeling,* both of which were found to be significant in 2 of the 4 studies.

As anticipated, participants' conception of a *good romantic relationship* emerges as different from and broader than their concept of romantic love itself, and fits the prototypical analyses previously reported by ourselves and others (Aron et al., 2006; Bergner, 2000; Davis, 1985; Fehr, 1988, 1993, 2006; Regan et al., 1998). If one counts as constitutive of such protypes those characteristics whose absences were judged to be "very serious," "serious," or "fairly serious" deficiencies from a romantic love relationship, in no study did fewer than 12 of the 14 possible characteristics emerge as prototypical elements in participants' models of such relationships. This stands in sharp contrast to the total of 4 characteristics regarded as essential to romantic love itself in each of the 4 studies.

Is CWB Multidimensional?

The question might be raised as to whether the concept of *CWB* is multidimensional. In considering this, it is instructive to consider two contrasting analyses. First, in Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love, his *Intimacy* factor contains the subfactors trust, intimate disclosure, understanding, and feelings of closeness, warmth, and comfort (Sternberg, 1988; 2006). These are conceptually distinct relational features placed into one factor on the basis that they tend empirically to covary, thus rendering Sternberg's concept of *Intimacy* multidimensional. In contrast, consider an analysis that states that "Generosity is a willingness to give of oneself and one's possessions to others; it might be exemplified by such behaviors as donating to charities, volunteering for civic causes, and giving of one's time and energy to the members of one's family." Here, a definition of a single concept is given, followed by a list, not of conceptually distinct elements, but of concrete ways in which this concept might be instantiated, rendering the analysis unidimensional and not multidimensional. If one revisits our definition of *CWB* in the text, it should be clear that this definition is of the latter and not the former sort. A single concept, "*Care for the partner's well-being,*" is defined and then, to concretize it for participants, several examples are provided of how this concept might be instantiated in actual relationships.

Necessary and Sufficient?

Traditionally, formal definitions have been held to be specifications of the necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct employment of a concept (Ossorio, 2006). In the present four studies, the preponderance of evidence suggests that people view certain features as *necessary* for them to judge that a given relationship is an instance of the concept of romantic love. What is not clear is whether or not this research has established *sufficient* conditions. Might there be other characteristics that we did not think of that might have proven essential for romantic love? This possibility should and will be a matter of scrutiny in our future research on this topic. However, this lack of finality regarding sufficiency should not obscure the conclusion that, once one has established the presence of necessary conditions, one has ipso facto shown that a concept is not prototypical in character. Prototypical concepts, per Rosch (1973; Mervis & Rosch, 1981), are by definition concepts *without necessary conditions*.

Limitations and Future Directions

Important limitations of the present research, all of which we intend to address in future work, are the following. First, as just noted, while our findings lend support to a certain set of characteristics being regarded as necessary for romantic love, they do not establish sufficiency. Thus, consideration of further characteristics is currently needed. Second, our samples were restricted to college students at two large American state universities. As such, they consisted heavily of persons who were (a) young, (b) relatively limited in life experience, (c) primarily Caucasian, (d) socialized in a single Western culture, and (e) relatively successful and advantaged in life. In the future, we plan to explore the generality of our findings

to a sample of individuals who are older, more relationally experienced, and more demographically and culturally diverse. Underscoring this last element of cultural diversity, an especially important need is that of replicating the present research in different cultural settings (e.g., Asian or Middle Eastern ones) where conceptions of love as having essential characteristics, as well as what these might be, may be quite different.

Conclusion

The portrait of romantic love suggested by our findings, one that we hope will stimulate further research into these matters by others, is the following: First, the concept of romantic love may be, contrary to what we and others have previously maintained, a definable, essentialist one. Second, *Care for the Partner's Well-being* may be the single characteristic most widely perceived as essential to such love, closely followed by *Exclusiveness* and *Enjoyment*, and possibly *Commitment* and *Affectionate Feeling.* Third and finally, beyond their possible employment of ro-mantic love as an essentialist concept, people may possess related, but different and broader models or prototypes of what good romantic relationships would ideally embody.

Author Note

Address correspondence either to

References

Aron, A., Fisher, H. E., & Strong, G. (2006). Romantic love. In A. Vanglisti & D. Perlman (Eds.) *The Cambridge Handbood of Personal Relationships* (pp. 595-614). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Berscheid, E. (2006). Searching for the meaning of "love." In R. J. Sternberg & K. Weis (Eds.), *The new psychology of love* (pp. 171-183). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Bergner, R. (2000). Love and barriers to love: An analysis for psychotherapists and others. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 54,* 1-17.

Bretscher, F. & Bergner, R. (1991). Relational qualities as factors in mate selection decisions. In M. Roberts & R. Bergner (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 6, pp. 107-123). Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Clark, M. & Mills, J. (1979). Interpersonal attraction in exchange and communal relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37*(1), 12-24.

Clark, M. S. & Monin, J. K. (2006). Giving and receiving communal responsiveness as love. In R. Sternberg & K. Weis (Eds.), *The new psychology of love* (pp. 200-224). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Davis, K.E. (1985). Near and dear: Friendship and love compared. *Psychology Today*, (February), pp. 22-30.

Davis, K. E. , & Todd, M. (1982). Friendship and love relationships. In K. Davis & T. Mitchell (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 79-122). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Davis, K., & Bergner, R. (August, 2009). Do laypersons distinguish two concepts of romantic love? Poster session at the Convention of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada.

Fehr, B. (2006). The prototype approach to studying love. In R. Sternberg & K. Weis (Eds.), *The new psychology of love* (pp. 225-248). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Fehr, B. (1993). How do I love thee...? Let me consult my prototype. In S. Duck (Ed.), *Understanding personal relationships: Vol. 1: Individuals in relationships* (pp. 87-120). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Fehr, B. (1988). Prototype analysis and the concepts of love and commitment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 55*, 557-579.

Fehr, B., Sprecher, S., & Underwood, L. (Eds.). (2009). *Compassionate love: Theory, research, and applications*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Fehr, B., & Sprecher, S. (2009). Prototype analysis of compassionate love. *Personal Relationships*, *16*, 343–364.

Hassebrauck, M. (1997). Cognitions of relationship quality: A prototype analysis of their structure and consequences. *Personal Relationships, 4*, 163-185.

Hegi, K. & Bergner, R. (*2010*). What is love? An empirically-based essentialist account. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *27*, 620-636.

Hendrick, C. & Hendrick, S. (2006). Styles of romantic love. In R. Sternberg & K. Weis (Eds.), *The new psychology of love* (pp. 149-170). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Kelley, H. (1983). Love and commitment. In H. Kelley et al. (Eds.), *Close relationships* (p. 265-314). New York: W. H. Freeman.

Lee, J. A. (1973). *The colors of love*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Mervis, C., & Rosch, E. (1981). "Categorization of Natural Objects," *Annual Review of Psychology, 32*: 89-115.

Ossorio, P.G. (2006). *The behavior of persons.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Regan, P. (1998). Of lust and love: Beliefs about the role of sexual desire in romantic relationships. *Personal Relationships, 5*, 139-157.

Regan, P., & Berscheid, E. (1999). Lust: What we know about human sexual desire. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Regan, P., Kocan, E., & Whitlock, T. (1998). Ain't love grand! A prototype analysis of the concept of romantic love. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 15*, 411-420.

Rempel, J., & and Burris, C. (2005). Let me count the ways: An integrative theory of love and hate. *Personal Relationships*, 12, 297-313.

Rosch, E. H. (1973). Natural categories. *Cognitive Psychology, 4*, 328-350.

Singer, I. (1984). *The nature of love, Vol. 1: From Plato to Luther* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Sternberg, R. (2006). A duplex theory of love. In R. Sternberg & K. Weis (Eds.), *The new psychology of love.* New Haven: Yale University Press.
Sternberg, R. (1988). The triangle of love: Intimacy, passion, commitment. New York: Basic Books.
Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical investigations*. NY: MacMillan.

Appendix A: Definitions on FIR Questionnaire

Acceptance: In some relationships, we have the sense that we are *accepted by the other as the person we are.* Even though our partner may at times object to certain things we do (e.g., to our smoking or driving too fast or being late), we do not get the sense that they want us to be *different persons*. Rather, our sense in the relationship is that we are basically accepted as the person we are.

Trust: In some relationships, we have a basic sense that we can *trust* each other--that we can count on each other not to betray us or to violate the relationship that we have. We confidently believe, for example, that our partners will not be sexually unfaithful, or lie about important matters, or reveal sensitive information about us to others, or use or take advantage of us.

Knowledge/Understanding: In some relationships, we really *know* each other--really *understand* each other--to a high degree. In other words, each of us knows things about the other such as his or her deepest values, most cherished goals in life, strengths, weaknesses, sensitivities, and interests. As a rule, this knowledge means that we will understand the reasoning and the feelings that are behind each other's actions, and will not be puzzled or confused by them. If the other is troubled or moody, for example, we are likely to be able to make a good guess as to what is bothering them. We know what "makes each other tick."

Care for Partner's Well-being: In some relationships, we have a sense that each of us *truly cares about the well-being of the other.* We have a sense that each of us genuinely cares about – and is willing to make personal efforts when needed – to further the other's welfare and happiness. Such caring may be expressed in various ways. For example, it might be expressed in a desire to *give* to the partner in ways that will make him or her happy...or in wanting to help and to stand by each other when the other is hurt or ill or unhappy... or in being willing to do things to assist each other in important matters. In all of this, finally, our sense is that our partners are *not just giving to get* – they are not just doing all of this because there is something in it for them – but rather because our happiness and welfare genuinely matter to them.

Respect: In some relationships, we have the sense that each of us *respects* the other. In other words, we consider each other to be persons who are worthy of esteem and high regard. This respect might be based on a variety of factors. We might, for example, respect each other as caring persons, as morally good persons, as intelligent persons, as capable persons, or for some combination of these quali-

ties. Whatever the particular reasons might be, however, we find that each of us has a basic respect for each other.

Exclusiveness: In some relationships, we regard each other as our "one and only." We have a sense that we want to have this kind of a special relationship *only* with each other. We wish to form a sort of "two person community" in which no one else is allowed in in just the way that our romantic partner is. While we may continue our friendships just as before, there is a specialness to the relationship with our romantic partner which is unique to it and reserved for it only.

Preoccupation: In some relationships, we find ourselves *preoccupied* with each other. That is, we find ourselves thinking about each other a great deal of the time. The other is on our mind a lot, perhaps even at times when we should be thinking about other things.

Sexual Desire: In some relationships, there are strong *feelings of sexual desire* for each other. Whether the partners actually become sexually intimate or whether they do not, there is a strong *desire* to touch and to be touched, to hold each other, and to engage in sexual intercourse.

Emotional Intimacy: In some relationships, we *confide intimately* in each other. We share with each other what is going on in our lives. We disclose intimate personal experiences and feelings, both positive and negative, to each other. We feel we can "really talk to each other," really "open up" to each other about deeply personal matters. Essentially, we include each other in our intimate worlds.

Enjoyment: In some relationships, partners *enjoy* each other. They enjoy being together--enjoy being in each other's company. Even though there may be times of conflict, of boredom, or of tension in the relationship, for the most part the experience of being with each other is an enjoyable one.

Commitment: In some relationships, partners are *committed* to each other. They have a deep and abiding sense that they wish to be with each other for a very long time and even forever. They experience a sense of personal willingness and desire to fulfill the traditional marital vow to remain together and to stand by each other "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health... 'til death do us part."

Freedom to Be Ourselves: In some relationships, we *feel free to be ourselves* with our partners. We do not feel like we have to play any kind of false role with them, or hold back from being the way we really are. We feel like we can just relax and be the person who we really are when we are with our partner.

Similarity: In some relationships, we find that we are *similar* to our partners in many ways. For example, we might find that we want similar things out of life, that we have similar values, that we have many common interests, or that we tend to enjoy the same things.

Affectionate Feeling: In some relationships, partners have strong *feelings of affection* for each other. They experience strong emotions of warmth, of fondness, and of liking toward each other.

Gender as One's Eligibility to Engage In Social Practices: Unpacking the Relationship between Masculinity and Intimate Partner Violence

Christopher Allen
Center on Violence against Women and Children
Rutgers University

Abstract

Among men's studies scholars, violence is a major focus of attention. Research findings of the past two decades indicate that violence is gendered, and can only be understood in the context of gender inequality. And though contemporary theories on men and violence have rejected the notion that violence is a necessary result of being male, the field continues to struggle with the need for a more contextual understanding of men's relationship to violence. Drawing from Descriptive Psychology and existing paradigms for studying gender and violence, I argue that conceptualizing gender as a status that confers eligibility to engage in some social practices rather than others holds promising potential for explicating masculinity's relationship to intimate partner violence. Acknowledgment

Keywords: masculinities, Descriptive Psychology, intimate partner violence

Current research has begun to examine how aggression arises from an interaction of individual characteristics and pressure to conform to social standards (Cohn & Zeichner, 2006). Specifically, social psychological literature and clinical research have demonstrated that characteristics associated with masculinity, such as authoritarianism and need for social power, may activate a desire to appear dominant and, therefore, increase a man's propensity to enact harmful and violent behavior (Kilianski, 2003). Stress resulting from failing to adhere to the "male role," commonly referred to as gender role stress, has also been linked to increased levels

of direct aggression, emotional lability, misogynistic attitudes, and sexual prejudice (e.g., homophobia) (Blazina, Pisecco, & O'Neil, 2005; Good, Robertson, & O'Neil, 1995; Hayes & Mahalik, 2000; Moore & Stuart, 2004). Other literature indicates that some aspects of masculinity are strongly linked to reports of psychological distress, aggression, violent behavior, and conduct problems in men (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Hill & Fischer, 2001; Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002; Monk & Ricciardelli, 2003). For example, perpetrators of violent behavior endorse potent "masculine" attitudes, such as the need to be powerful, dominant, and likewise, support of the use of aggression to gain status. Moreover, men who endorse traits that indicate "hypermasculinity" (i.e., overt and strict endorsement of masculine identity) have been linked to significantly higher levels of aggression, sexual prejudice and use of force against women compared with men who do not endorse such traits (Mosher & Sirkin, 1984; Parrot, Adams, & Zeichner, 2002; Parrot & Zeichner, 2003).

However, one of the most important research findings of the past two decades is that violence is gendered and can only be understood in the context of gender inequality (Schwartz, 2005). Like other scholars (e.g., Martin, 2003; Seymour, 2009), the word gendered is used to connote that gender is a social institution that both defines and constrains interactions. While gender commonly structures interactions in ways that are unremarkable (Seymour, 2009), violence is a striking exception (Eardley, 1995; Hearn, 1996). The link between gender and violence, however, is complex. For example, gender may be defined through "the performance of violence, the potential for violence, the emulation of other's violence, the rejection of violence, or even opposition to violence" (Hearn, 1996, p. 51). The research literature on intimate partner violence (IPV) provides a case in point. Extant research has consistently found that approximately equal numbers of women and men use physical violence against their intimate partners in the U.S. (Archer, 2000). Research indicates, however, these similar prevalence rates should not be interpreted to mean that men's and women's violence against intimate partners are the same phenomena (DeKeseredy, 2006; Renzetti, 1999; Swan & Snow, 2003, 2006). While frequencies of men's and women's physical aggression against partners are similar, men are more likely to commit sexual abuse (Archer, 2000; O'Sullivan, Byers, & Finkelman, 1998; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996; Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, & Anderson, 2003). Men are also more likely to control, isolate, and dominate their partners (Johnson, 2006a; Stark, 2007; Swan & Snow, 2003). Consequences of violence differ by gender as well. Men are more likely than women to cause injury (Archer, 2000; Zlotnick, Kohn, Peterson, & Pearlstein, 1998) and to engender fear in their partners (Hamberger & Guse, 2002; Jacobson et al., 1994). Studies have also found that men report less distress and fewer depressive symptoms related to IPV victimization than do women (Anderson, 2002; Dansky, Byrne, & Brady, 1999; Frieze, 2005; Williams & Frieze, 2005).

Such findings indicate that the relationship between gender and IPV is far from straightforward. A possible explanation for the complexity of findings on gender and IPV is that the theoretical construct of gender goes well beyond sex

differences. As a socially constructed characteristic (Totten, 2003), gender is a dynamic construct that emerges at the intersection of multiple social structures (e.g., economic, historical, political, linguistic, psychological, etc.) (Falmagne, 2000). As such, gender—and hence, masculinity—must be considered as a socially situated occurrence. Thus, any attempt to understand masculinity's relationship to IPV must seek to understand masculinity as a context-dependent process. However, many dominant research paradigms used to examine the relationship between masculinity and IPV have not utilized such an approach.

Consequently, a goal of this paper is to also critique the research findings of the major theoretical paradigms that have been used to study the relationship between masculinity and IPV. This critique will take the form of a paradigm case formulation (PCF) (Ossorio, 1981, 2006b), which, in this case, will be a prototypical IPV case that embodies all of the features researchers studying masculinity and IPV have been seeking to understand.

Johnson's Typology of IPV and Intimate Terrorism

In seminal works on types of IPV, Johnson identified three major types of IPV: intimate terrorism, violent resistance, and situational couple violence (Johnson, 1995, 2008a). For the purposes of the PCF, we will be using intimate terrorism as our paradigm case. As described by Johnson, (2011, p. 290) a case of intimate terrorism is, "the pattern of violent coercive control that comes to mind for most people when they hear the term 'domestic violence'…it involves the combination of physical and/or sexual violence with a variety of non-violent control tactics, such as economic abuse, emotional abuse, the use of children, threats and intimidation, invocation of male privilege, constant monitoring, blaming the victim…" While this form of IPV is not exclusively perpetrated by males against female partners (Cook, 1997; Hines & Douglas, 2010; Renzetti, 1992), research to date shows clearly that the primary perpetrators of intimate terrorism are men in relationships with female partners (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003a; Johnson, 2006b, 2008a). Additionally, several other researchers have found that misogyny and gender traditionalism are crucial components of heterosexual intimate terrorism (for a review, see Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). From this description above, we see that intimate terrorism meets Ossorio's (2006b, pp. 29-30) recommendations for selection of a paradigm case; it is archetypal, complex, and agreed upon as an indisputable case of IPV. The following discussion delineates the components of the paradigm case to illustrate how violence is gendered.

Understanding Behavior

Ossorio (2006a) describes individual behaviors as being embedded in larger systems of behaviors. Specifically, he writes, "Individual behaviors are embedded in a system of behaviors and occur (are produced) *as* realizations of that system" (p. 169). Put simply, while we may speak of an individual behavior, a behavior only has that particular meaning in a specific context—a person yelling at a sporting event does not mean the same thing as it does in a classroom. Such systems of behaviors are referred to as *social practices.* As defined by Ossorio (2006a, p. 169), "A social

practice is a social pattern of behavior. In general, the pattern includes more than one behavior, and most social practices involve behavior on the part of more than one person." In addition, he notes, "As social patterns of behavior, social practices are learnable, teachable, do-able, and paradigmatically, done" (Ossorio, 2006a, p. 170).

From Johnson's (2011) definition, we see that intimate terrorism *is* a pattern of behavior. In fact, Johnson names several individual behaviors (e.g., physical violence, sexual violence, economic abuse, etc.) which, *in combination*, constitute intimate terrorism. Here, Johnson is particular in pointing out that none of these behaviors should be considered in isolation. Rather, he asserts that the behaviors (e.g., physical violence, sexual violence, economic abuse, etc.) are related (an assertion empirical research supports), creating a *social practice* that he calls "intimate terrorism." Furthermore, he suggests that intimate terrorism is a *gendered* social practice (and most often engaged in by men) by including the invocation of male privilege as part of its definition.

We can also note that Johnson's (2011) definition relies on other concepts that are fundamental to Ossorio's (2006a) notion of social practice such as: status(es), constraints, and versions. For example, a description of the intimate terrorism requires that someone be assigned the status of perpetrator, and another that of victim. As will be discussed below, one's status has important implications for the way in which the social practice of intimate terrorism is played out. In fact, as we will see, it is precisely one's status(es) that dictate the behavioral constraints one has within a given social practice and how behaviors interact to create different versions/forms of the social practice referred to as "intimate terrorism." (Johnson's definition alludes to the idea that intimate terrorism may take many forms by identifying types of behaviors often seen in cases of intimate terrorism, rather than offer strict diagnostic criteria.) To more clearly illustrate that intimate terrorism, when perpetuated by men, involves acting from gendered (specifically masculine) positions we must first consider the concept of gender.

Gender is not merely the doing of a discrete behavior; the term "gender roles" refer to a pattern of behaviors that are ascribed a particular meaning in a particular social context. This notion is self-evident; as discussed earlier, masculinity is neither static nor anachronistic. West and Zimmerman's (1987) notion of "doing gender" provides an illustration of this point. They noted that masculinity (and gender in general) is not merely an individual attribute or a set of simply normative gender-based practices. Rather, it is something that is accomplished through interactions with others. *Gender,* according to West and Zimmerman (1987), is a *condition* of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors appropriate for one's sex category (i.e., male or female). Gender activities emerge from and bolster claims to membership in a sex category. According to West & Zimmerman (1987, p. 127) "the analytical independence of sex, sex category, and gender is essential for understanding the relationships among these elements and the interactional work involved in <u>being</u> a gendered person in

society." Returning to Johnson's (2011) definition of intimate terrorism, we can see that his reference to male privilege (which is itself – as a package of eligibilities – identifiable as a part of a status) is an acknowledgement that the *social practice* of intimate terrorism is predicated on pattern of behaviors *within* the larger system of gender. In other words, because intimate terrorism occurs within a system (gender) where men, masculinity and associated behaviors are privileged over women, femininity, and corresponding behaviors, intimate terrorism is inherently a *gendered* social practice (regardless of the perpetrator's gender). It is because the practice is embedded in the gender institution that control/domination of a victim is a defining characteristic of intimate terrorism.

There are two important implications for conceptualizing intimate terrorism as a gendered social practice. First, by recognizing that the social practice of intimate terrorism is embedded within the gender system, one gains a clearer understanding of masculinity's relationship to IPV. As just one of infinite social practices that could be used to communicate membership in a gender category, intimate terrorism (for those who engage in it) is part of "being a gendered person in society" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 127). Thus, as masculinity (or gender more generally) emerges from interaction, we must study it *as it emerges in particular social situations where partner violence occurs in order to understand their relationship to one another*. Solely identifying and describing masculine traits and/or norms in the study of intimate partner violence fails to tell us how the social practice of intimate terrorism is related to masculinity *in a particular situation*. Though it could be argued that intimate terrorism violence (or IPV more generally) is typically seen as a "masculine" behavior, this does not explain why other non-violent behavior was not used, nor how such behavior creates gender or gender privilege within the established gender system.

A second and related implication of this perspective is that we cannot determine the relevance of masculinity to violence (or any behavior, thought, or feeling) apart from other social roles which may be concurrently produced (Fenstermaker, West, & Zimmerman, 1991). People have many different social identities that may be relevant or muted, depending on the situation. Masculinity (or gender in general) may not be relevant in all situations. In other words, it is not the case that all violence signifies gender. This point highlights the fact that gender explanations cannot explain all intimate violence. Rather, masculinity provides only part of the explanation for men's use of violence against intimate partners (O'Neil & Nadeau, 1999). Nonetheless, any relationship between masculinity and IPV can only be understood within a particular context. In order to relate the social practice of masculinity to behavior, we must have some conceptual scheme for understanding how difference is produced through the social practice of gender, and how such differences are related to the assignment of status. For this, we first turn to Ossorio's (2006a) Actor-Observer-Critic model for understanding behavior.

Actor-Observer-Critic: Fundamental Roles of People Engaging in Social Practice

In order to understand behavior within social practices and the ways in which gender will enter, Ossorio (2006a, pp. 242-243) identifies three roles which are "fundamental to being persons": actor, observer, and critic. As *actors*, we "act on [our] impulses, desires, and inclinations…We [are] the author[s] of [our] behavior." As *observers*, we participate in the social world and note, "(1) what is the case now, (2) what is happening now, (3) what has happened in the past and what works generally, (4) what is the case generally, and (5) how things work" (p. 243). As *critics*, we evaluate whether what is happening in a particular context is acceptable. If things are deemed to be "good enough" then, so be it. However, if things are not "good enough," as critics we formulate an account of what is wrong, and a *prescription* – a specification of what to do differently. In some cases, as critics we may even deem something extraordinarily successful and declare a celebration. Collectively, these roles form a negative-feedback loop representative of people's relationship to negotiating social contexts (see Figure 1). This provides the logic for self-regulation and self-control, and identifies one of three classic ways in which self-regulation can fail: (a) by failure of impulse control, (b) by failure to observe how things work, and (c) by a failure to diagnose problematic actions.

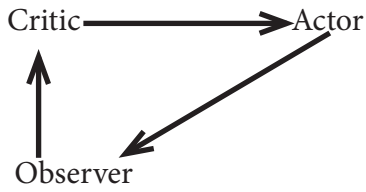


Figure 1 – The Actor-Observer-Critic Loop

The relationship between these three roles can be described as follows: As Actors, we initiate a behavior (or most often, a series of behaviors); once begun, as Observers we monitor its course and expected results; when the series has progressed far enough, as Critics we evaluate it, the result of which informs us as Actors. Ossorio's (2006a) description maps neatly onto West & Zimmerman's (1987) account of gender as a socially-situated accomplishment; variation in gender roles are produced as a result of the contextual management of behavior through observation and evaluation.

The Dramaturgical Model: Contextualizing the Relationships between Actor-Observer-Critic

If we are to critically examine how masculinity relates to intimate terrorism, a description of how masculinity is produced by the roles of Actor, Observer, and Critic is insufficient. Delineation of these roles offers a basis for how others might understand our behavior, but says little about how our behavior makes sense ***to us*** in real life. Put simply, we need a model which articulates how our own behavior

relates to our own understanding of the world. In other words, we must have some way of linking our own behavior (violent or otherwise) to our own understanding of masculinity. For this, Ossorio (2006a) posits the Dramaturgical Model of behavior. This model links behavior to our understanding of the world by using three concepts: *appraisal, unthinkability, and status assignment*.

Appraisal. Ossorio (2006a, pp. 259-260) defines an appraisal as "discrimination which tautologically carries motivational significance." Two characteristics of appraisals should be noted here. First, appraisals are first person judgments. Though it is certainly the case that judgments made can be made by others, with regard to our own behavior, we are most concerned with judgments made by us. This is simply because our judgments specify our relationship with some part of the world around us. Second, as appraisals are said to "tautologically carry motivational significance," they necessarily are made from the perspective of the Actor. In other words, appraisals have such significance, because they constitute a reason to act. As Actors, our job is to "act authentically" (Ossorio, 2006a, p. 262). In any given situation, the only means for acting "like ourselves" is through responding to judgments about the world around us (i.e., our circumstances). Consider this example. While out with some mutual friends, my girlfriend ridicules me for taking an "excessive" amount of time to get dressed and ready to go out. At this point, I make an appraisal: I am being emasculated! Note, this judgment specifies a judgment about myself and my relationship to the surrounding world (more specifically, my friends and girlfriend) and motivates me to act (after all, I don't want anyone to think I'm unmanly). At this point, I act; I respond with a colorful sexist slur and note that I'd be willing to take my girlfriend out more often if she spent more time taking care of her appearance. This brings us to an important caveat about our chosen actions - the notion of unthinkability.

Unthinkability. Within the Dramaturgical Model, the "unthinkable" is a behavioral concept. It does not refer to the cognitive act of calling something to mind or even speaking about some imagined possibility. Rather, it refers to the idea that as Actors, some things are "unthinkable" for us to do, in the sense that they are not a possibility for us to do. Ossorio's (2006a) example is appropriate here: it is unthinkable for us to walk through walls. Thus, the notion of the unthinkable reminds us that we can only act on possibilities which are ***real for us.*** In colloquial terms, it is a "Given" (Ossorio, 2006a, uses this term as well) that there are just some things which we (as Actors) cannot do. I will illustrate by returning to the example above. Instead of psychologically abusing my partner, I may wish to perform a Jedi mind trick (such that my friends and girlfriend will for all time consider me the ultimate "alpha male"). Note, I can easily call to mind the possibility of performing a Jedi mind trick—but I am not a Jedi. Thus, it is *unthinkable* for me to do so. Instead, I respond in the manner described above.

It is important to point out that people can be mistaken when it comes to unthinkability. That is, we may think that something is not possible for us (as Actors) to do when, in fact it is. In their study examining perpetrators' attributions of

responsibility for violence, Whiting, Oka, and Fife (2012) recount how some abusers feel as though it is unthinkable for them to refrain from violence if provoked. One participant explained it thusly: "...the arguments would be, 'Don't say another word. If you say another word, I'm gonna throw something,'…and she'd say another word and, I'd pick up an object and throw it…" (Whiting, et al., 2012, p. 140). In cases where one is mistaken about unthinkability, it becomes the responsibility of the therapist to make the unthinkable "thinkable," so to speak. Research has found that such reactive impulses can be overridden by deliberate, conscious reflection on the problem behavior (Honeycutt & Cantrill, 2001). A therapist working with such perpetrators would facilitate this process by using language that requires the abuser to take responsibility for their actions (Whiting, et al., 2012).

Status Assignment. Status assignment refers to "giving something a place in a scheme of things" (Ossorio, 2006a, p. 268). In other words, we assign everything (people, places, things, feelings, etc.) a place (or status) relative to others in our world. It is important to note that the "place that a thing has in the scheme of things is something that is decided, not merely discovered. This holds for both My [our own] scheme of things and for Our [others'] scheme of things" (Ossorio, 2006a, p. 268). Two forms of status assignment which are particularly relevant for understanding behavior are *degradation* and *accreditation* (see Garfinkel, 1967, for the classic statement of conditions). *Degradation* and *Accreditation* refer to changing the place a person has in My [our own] scheme of things or in Our [others'] scheme of things. In the former case, it is reducing a person's place in that scheme; in the latter case, enhancing/improving a person's place in that scheme. Thus, with regards to persons, status assignment necessarily implies implications for degradation or accreditation (Ossorio, 2006a). Returning to behavior, the point of assigning status to something (such as people) is simple: "(a) I am going to treat it accordingly–it sets the terms of my behavior concerning that something. And (b) I am going to demand from it accordingly and evaluate it accordingly" (Ossorio, 2006a, pp. 273-274). For example, if I assign myself the gendered status of "masculine", I will treat myself (i.e., behave) accordingly. I will not, generally speaking, behave in a manner that is inconsistent with that status, because I expect myself to be "masculine" (i.e., demand [masculinity] from it [myself] accordingly) and evaluate my behavior in regards to my "masculine" status (i.e., evaluate it [myself] accordingly). In this way, one's status is characterized by a set of eligibilities to play various roles in social practices. Within the field of gender studies, recognition of this has led to movement away from the traditional, unitary conceptualizations of masculinity to discussions of masculinit*ies* as "configurations of practice within gender relations" (Connell, 2000, p. 29).

Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity (1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) is useful for illustrating how status and eligibilities are intimately related with regard to behavior. Connell distinguishes what he called "hegemonic masculinity" from other masculinities by describing it as the "currently most honored way of being man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and

it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). In this definition we see that men who embody qualities of hegemonic masculinity are deemed eligible to: (a) receive privilege(s) above others, (b) serve as models for other men, and (c) exert power and control over women. Being "accredited," so to speak, as a hegemonically masculine male confers eligibility for behaviors that one would not otherwise have. Consequently (as pointed out by the second clause of Connell's description), men who fail to embody such qualities are subject to degradation—they lose those eligibilities reserved for the hegemonically masculine.

Actor-Observer-Critic as Status Assigning

Given the above descriptions of the roles of Actor, Observer, and Critic, it should be noted that "treating things accordingly" based on status amounts to very different things in each role. Only as Actors does treating things accordingly involve actual behavior. As Observers and Critics, treating things accordingly means continuing to place things in a scheme of things, and in the latter case, evaluating things based on that scheme. I will discuss these distinctions a bit further below by using the roles of Actor, Observer, and Critic to illustrate how a social practice might unfold in real-time.

Actor. In the role of Actor, we respond to things in our own behavioral scheme, treating them accordingly. That is, things which are assigned the status of "masculine" (ourselves included) are treated in "masculine" ways. This notion is crucial to understanding masculinity as it relates to behavior. This is because, as noted by Ossorio (2006a, p. 276), "Contingent on the social practice I am enacting or preparing to enact, certain states of affairs will constitute reasons that I would not have had otherwise. Usually, there will be reasons for engaging in behaviors that I would not otherwise have significant reason to engage in. And I will treat certain things and certain persons in ways that I would not otherwise have reason to do." In other words, to the degree to which one is enacting a particular social practice in a "masculine" way, one has reasons to engage in behavior (e.g., violence) that one would not have otherwise. For example, as a response to derogatory name-calling (if responding in a hyper masculine manner), one has a reason to punch a man in response to his derogatory name-calling; he was challenging/questioning one's masculinity. The defensibility of violence in response to name-calling is irrelevant here. The point is that defending one's "masculinity" provided a reason to engage in behavior that one would not have otherwise.

Observer. As observers, we seek to "recognize the thing observed, and to assign it the appropriate placeholder" (Ossorio, 2006a, p. 274). With regard to gender, we seek to recognize things which are indicative of gender (i.e., "gendered" part of a particular social practice), and assign them the status of "masculine" and "feminine." Over time, such statuses become part of conceptual schemas (i.e., norms/roles/scripts) for making sense of the world. Simply put, masculinity becomes associated with thoughts, feelings, behaviors (i.e., traits) which allow us to assign the status of "masculine" appropriately to things within that gender scheme.

For example, violence is typically associated with masculinity. Is this because all men are violent? No. Rather, the abundance of admired males who use violence (e.g., athletes and military personnel) provide models of masculinity which include violent social practices.

Critic. As critics, our primary function is to evaluate things within the scheme of our culture. In essence, it is judging things based on cultural standards and making a determination of how to properly treat such a thing based on those standards (Ossorio, 2006a). Thus, to say that being masculine is good/desirable, we not only reference some cultural standard for masculinity (e.g., traditional masculinity), but also the proper behavior towards things based on that status. Both men and women are expected to treat men who conform to traditional notions of masculinity with admiration and defer to their privileged position in the gender system. For example, consider the gender hierarchy displayed in the overwhelming majority of high school/college "coming of age" movies. The men at the top of the hierarchy are, without fail, those who possess the most traditionally masculine characteristics: White, wealthy, and able-bodied. Men who possess slightly fewer of these characteristics are seen as allying themselves with the "alpha male," while those with markedly fewer "masculine" traits are outcasts. On the other hand, women, regardless of their position in the hierarchy, are expected to be most romantically interested in the men at the top of hierarchy. However, only women at the top of the female hierarchy are "allowed" to actually pursue these "alpha males." Social order is maintained in these movies (at least in the beginning), because individuals are evaluating their position in the gender hierarchy and acting in ways consistent with the culture. Conflict in these movies arises from people choosing to act in a manner inconsistent with their social position (e.g., a "jock" trying out for the glee club, or the president of the ornithological society asking the captain of the cheerleading squad on a date).

The above example simultaneously illustrates why some men feel justified in their use of violence against women and why women's calls for justice often go unanswered; violent men feel like they are maintaining the status quo and women should expect such retribution for not "knowing their place." In this way, gender can be thought of as social position that confers eligibilities to engage in particular social practices (such as IPV). In other words, masculinity and IPV are related via a relationship in the gender system. By framing masculinity and IPV as related through the social position of gender, we can begin to develop contextual understandings of how violence is produced. The process through which this occurs can be better understood by reviewing how the social practice roles of Actor and Critic provide feedback from the world regarding our behavior.

Behavior and Critic-Actor Feedback

It is necessary to remember that each one of us acts dynamically as Actor, Observer, and Critic. The knowledge and skills acquired in any one of these roles is available to us, because we as individual persons are the medium for their enactment. However, the relationship between the role of Critic and Actor are

particularly important for thinking about masculinity as it relates to behavior. Recall, as Critics it is our job to determine whether our behavior (as Actors) is proceeding acceptably in a given context (i.e., based on the assignment of status). If the behavior is proceeding acceptably, then so be it. If it isn't, as Critics we generate a "diagnosis" of what is wrong and a "prescription" for what to do about it. For example, some men may determine that being violent toward their partner is appropriate when their masculinity is challenged. In these cases, feedback (as Critics) matches our behavior (as Actors); thus, no change is needed and violence will likely continue on future occasions.

From the description above, it is important to note that our judgments as critics and actors do not always agree. Because we are always engaging in one or more of the social practices of the community, Actor judgments (in general) fit well within Critic judgments. Put simply, what I think is appropriate behavior is often considered by others to, in fact, be so. For example, in the case of the social practice of greeting another person, giving a firm handshake would rarely be considered inappropriate and it would usually be considered a "masculine" thing to do. When in distress, however, crying may be seen as either a sign of weakness (as when one should be keeping a stiff upper lip) or as an appropriate response to true grief, which any man would show as well.

There are two ways in which our judgments in the role of Critic may differ from those in the role of Actor. First, it may be the case that the two judgments are incompatible. For example, a particular man may think it generally appropriate ***for him*** to cry, but is well aware that it is not appropriate for men, as a group, to do so. Here, the judgment of my behavior is simply dissonant with that of our [men's] behavior. Second, it may be the case that, in a given situation, Critic judgments do not constitute a reason for me (as an Actor) to do something (i.e., to act). Recall the concept of appraisals from earlier. Though all appraisals are judgments, not all judgments are appraisals. Consider the following example. While attending my brother's funeral, I suddenly begin to cry. At this point, I make a judgment; namely, that I am sad about my brother's passing. In this case, the judgment about why I am crying (i.e., sadness) does not constitute a reason to act (i.e., to inhibit crying). However, I could have easily made an appraisal that did constitute a reason to act. An example of an ***appraisal*** in this situation might be: I shouldn't be crying, none of the other men are. Note that this statement specifies a judgment about myself and my relationship to the surrounding world, thereby motivating me to act. This could account for why some men cry at a funeral, while others do not.

This potential for discrepancy means that each kind of judgment can serve as a reality check on the other. In other words, either judgment can serve to correct the other. Often, we think of the judgment of others as being a "check" on our own views; this is commonly referred to as social comparison. However, it can work both ways; that is, our individual judgments can serve as a "check" on the judgments of others. Ossorio (2006a, p. 284) highlights this point: "We are all familiar with the ways the social can serve as a corrective to the individual view. We are less

familiar with the fact that it can *and should* work the other way as well. 'Us' does not refer to an all-knowing, impeccable group soul, but rather to a group of individual 'Me's.'"

Comparing Framework to Understand the Relationship Between Masculinity and IPV

The discussion above has summarized how it is that, being in the social position of a man, one is sensitive and responsive to feedback from self and others about how well one's behavior fits one's role. How does this approach compare to the major theoretical paradigms used to investigate masculinity and intimate partner violence?

The Essentialist Framework

An essentialist position on masculinity posits that "masculinity is rooted in actual differences between men and women and primarily analyzes the personality and behavioral attributes more often associated with men than women" (Thompson & Pleck, 1995, pp. 130-131) In this way, masculinity is conceptualized as an individual property; those who possess particular personality attributes and behavioral tendencies are referred to as "masculine." Essentialist paradigms explain the relationship between masculinity and IPV by attributing perpetration of violence against a partner to characteristics of masculinity endorsed by the individual. Such a conceptualization has several limitations.

First, as illustrated by the discussion above, essentialist formulation of the masculinity/IPV relationship *misstates* the relationship between masculinity and behavior (IPV). In this framework, masculinity is a "critic's" term; in other words, it is a term used to judge things based on cultural standards. As such, it is a term of evaluation used by any or all of us in our role as critics/judges, and hence it is not something that produces "more" or "less" masculine behavior. Behavior is a function of personal characteristics and circumstances, and one's position is a central personal characteristic. Second, as the paradigm assumes differences between sexes and similarity within, it cannot sufficiently account for variation among men or women. For example, an essentialist paradigm can only account for men who endorse "masculine" traits, but do not engage in IPV by classifying such behavior as deviant. The astoundingly high prevalence rates of IPV summarily refute such an explanation. Third, this paradigm cannot specify the mechanisms that link traits to violence; having a particular trait does not sufficiently explain how violence results. Fourth, conceptualizing gender as solely an individual attribute methodologically justifies the study of masculinity outside the context in which it occurs. Such a trend is seen in extant literature applying an essentialist paradigm to the study of masculinity and IPV. Operationally, this paradigm uses quantitative assessment measures to identify "masculine" traits associated with violence. Trait measures that have been used to study the relationship between masculinity and violence include: the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) (Bem, 1984), Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) (Spence, Helmreich, & Holahan, 1979), and the Hypermasculinity Inventory (HMI) (Mosher & Sirkin, 1984).

A recent review by Moore & Stuart (2005) noted that studies measuring masculinity using trait-based assessment measures found inconsistent relationships between masculinity and partner violence. For example, several studies examining the relationship between masculinity and IPV using the BSRI found no statistically significant relationship between masculinity and IPV. In fact, the most consistent finding across such studies is that nonviolent men endorsed more "feminine" traits than violent men (Bernard, Bernard, & Bernanrd, 1985; Coleman, Weinman, & Hsi, 1980; Worth, Matthews, & Coleman, 1990). In contrast, using the PAQ, Rosenbaum (1986) found that physically abusive husbands scored lower on "positive" masculinity characteristics (e.g., caring/providing for family members) than non-abusive husbands. No relationship was found between "negative" masculinity characteristics (e.g., willingness to use violence) and abuse. More recently, Jenkins and Aube (2002) found that "negative" masculinity characteristics predicted frequency of college men's physical and psychological aggression against female partners using the PAQ. Using the HMI, Ray and Gold (1996) found no significant relationship between hypermasculinity and use of physical or verbal aggression, while Parrott and Zeichner (2003) found that men scoring high in hypermasculinity displayed greater aggression in a lab setting. Given the theoretical limitations of this paradigm and conflicting research findings, it would seem that sole use of essentialist gender paradigms are insufficient for understanding the relationship between masculinity and IPV.

Social Learning Frameworks

Approaches grounded in social learning paradigms of gender assume that gendered behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes are learned from social environments through basic processes of reinforcement, punishment, modeling, and the acquisition of gendered schemas or belief systems (Eckes & Trautner, 2000; Fagot, Rodgers, & Leinbach, 2000). Rather than viewing masculinity as a fixed set of traits, masculinities are seen as historically changing roles supported by gendered norms, stereotypes, and ideologies (Pleck, 1981). For example, O'Neil, Good, & Holmes (1995) developed the concept of gender-role conflict to describe the psychological consequences of socialization according to restrictive traditional masculine ideologies and norms. This paradigm postulates that gender roles are inconsistent, ever changing, and often violated by men, resulting in negative psychological consequences (i.e., stress) and overcompensation through the use of dysfunctional behaviors (e.g., violence, drug abuse) to meet gender role expectations (Brooks & Silverstein, 1995; Levant, 1996) Thus, when faced with perceived or actual challenges to their masculine gender role ideology, some men may experience significant conflict and engage in traditionally masculine behaviors (e.g., violence) to maintain their sense of masculinity (Eisler, 1995; Marshall, 1993). These ideologies and norms have been variously described as emphasizing physical toughness, emotional stoicism, anti-femininity, a potentiate preoccupation with success, power, and competition, as well as rigid self-reliance, and homophobia (Brannon, 1976; Mahalik et al., 2003; O'Neil, et al., 1995; Thompson & Pleck, 1986). How would

social learning paradigms explain relationships between masculinity and IPV? This perspective would attribute a person's commission of violence against a partner to the endorsement of cultural gender scripts/roles/norms which support such behavior. In fact, Levant – a strong proponent of the social learning framework – noted in his discussion of the origins of male violence against female partners that, "[it is] certain facets of the male socialization process that potentiate battering" (Levant, 1995, p. 92) However, the application of this paradigm to the study of masculinity and IPV also has limitations.

Methodologically, studies have tended to focus on quantitative measurement of associations between various masculine scripts/roles/norms and various types of violence. Measures representative of a social learning approach include: the Male Role Norms Scale (MRNS) (Thompson & Pleck, 1986), the Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (GRCS) (O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986), and the Male Role Norms Inventory Scale (MRNI) (Levant et al., 1992). For example, according to a recent review by Moore & Stuart (2005), studies using the MRNS to assess masculinity found no relationship with physical violence and moderate support for a positive association with psychological abuse. Studies using the MGRS found support for a positive relationship between masculinity and physical and psychological abuse. Taken together, research conducted to date shows moderate support for an association between social learning of gender and IPV. The fairly consistent and positive relationship between gender roles/norms/scripts, and the use of verbal and physical aggression in relationships suggests that social learning may be a critical component in understanding why some men behave violently. Interestingly, Jakupcak and colleagues (2002) noted that gender roles/norms/scripts may be particularly predictive of being violent in a relationship when men also espouse traditionally masculine traits.

Social learning frameworks do have some benefits over those previously discussed. First, the notion that one's ideas about masculinity and gender roles are socially learned, change over time, and differ across cultures at the same time are all consistent with a Descriptive psychological approach. After all, to function effectively as actor, observer, or critic one must be "culturally competent" in order to engage in a social practice in the desired gendered manner. Additionally, researchers have been able to develop models to explain how and when masculinity will lead to violence. Slotter and Finkel (2011) recently proposed I^3 theory, which posits that all risk factors promote IPV perpetration by men through one or more of three types of processes: instigation, impellance, and inhibition. *Instigation* refers to the exposure to discrete partner behaviors that normatively trigger an urge to aggress (e.g., provocation). *Impellance* refers to dispositional or situational factors that psychologically prepare the individual to experience a strong urge to aggress when encountering this instigator in this context (e.g., dispositional aggressiveness). These two factors are theorized to determine the potential perpetrator's "urge-readiness"—the readiness to experience an urge to aggress in response to this particular instigator in this particular context. Due to variability in impellance, people may

sometimes be unaffected by an instigator, experiencing virtually no urge to aggress, or they may be strongly affected, experiencing a powerful urge to aggress. In other words, instigation and impellance interact, such that the urge to aggress is most powerful when both are strong. Finally, *inhibition* refers to dispositional or situational factors that increase the likelihood that people will override this urge to aggress (e.g., executive control). When the strength of inhibition exceeds the strength of the urge to aggress, people behave nonviolently; when the reverse is true, they behave violently. For instance, a man with sexist, negative views of women may not get violent unless his self-regulatory resources have been lowered, say by alcohol (see Graham, Bernards, Wilsnack, & Gmel, 2011 for a review).

Despite having some empirical support, there are theoretical limitations of social learning paradigms that call for even greater *contextual* understanding of the relationship between masculinity and IPV. The social learning perspective privileges behavioral explanations over contextual ones. As mentioned above, social learning perspectives contend that violence is a result of overcompensation through the use of dysfunctional behaviors (e.g., violence) to meet masculine gender role expectations (Levant, 1996). While preventing violent behavior is important, the paradigm does not directly challenge the social conditions and inequalities that produce IPV, only the problem behaviors. Using the I^3 theory for the purposes of illustration, we see that two of its three constructs, instigation and inhibition, are markedly behavioral in nature. Slotter and Finkel's (2011) description of instigation as *exposure to behavior*, suggests a target's behavior is at least partially to blame for IPV. More importantly, use of the term "urge" in the description of both instigation and impellance is misleading in that it implies a lack of volitional control or thought. A brief return to the dramaturgical model shows how this is incorrect.

Consider the following example. My girlfriend refuses my sexual advances after we return from a date. Starting from the role of observer, I categorize her refusal as an insult. Then, in the role of critic, I judge this insult as degrading. (If, for some reason, you think all insults are necessarily degrading, consider the silly taunts you probably heard/used as a child. As an adult, it is unlikely you would consider the vast majority of them degrading.) Finally, in the role of actor, I respond to this degradation with more forceful and coercive sexual advances. From this example, we can see that an "urge" to act is entirely dependent on the either the categorization or judgment made about the target behavior.

The concept of inhibition is equally problematic. The conflation of dispositional and situational factors in the definition make it functionally impossible to understand if gender's relationship to IPV is due to either or both causes. Consider this example. I notice my girlfriend engaging in many flirtatious interactions with others while out drinking at a bar. Do I refrain from calling her one of many promiscuity-related slurs because she's an amateur mixed martial arts fighter (dispositional; "I'm not as strong as her") or because I'm generally having a good time and don't wanna kill my "buzz" (situational; "I'm drunk")? Or is it both?

Despite its moderate empirical support, the conceptual limitations of the social learning paradigm make it insufficient for understanding the relationship between masculinity and IPV.

Social Constructionist Frameworks

Social constructionist frameworks are currently the most common approaches to studying gender in a variety of social sciences other than psychology (e.g., Gergen, 1999; Harré, 1993; Shotter, 1993). Although social constructionist paradigms can be confused with social learning frameworks, there are some critical differences. Both frameworks begin with the assumption that gender is socially formed, rather than existing naturally as qualities inherent to men or women. However, social learning approaches focus on the way social environments shape gendered behavior, whereas social constructionist perspectives highlight the different ways gender itself is actively constructed by persons in their communities. Thus, the emphasis shifts from a view of individuals as respondents to processes of reinforcement and punishment (i.e., social learning), to a view of individuals as active agents who construct particular meanings of masculinity in particular social contexts.

From a social constructionist perspective, masculinities are flexible; they are constantly being constructed and challenged as men "do gender" in ways that mark themselves as masculine (Connell, 1995; West & Zimmerman, 1987). The expression "doing gender" is jarring because strictly speaking, one does not "do" a social position; rather, one engages in the social practices available in one's community by exercising the options in those practices for one with a certain position. In this sense, gender is interactive and social. Gender does not exist as a set of fixed roles set forth by culture or society, nor as a group of stable personality traits, but rather as a dynamic repertoire put into action by persons interacting with their social environments. Thus, a wide variety of "manly" expressions of the gender role "man" can be performed without any question being raised about the degree of masculinity of the actor. Only when one (either oneself or others) acts as critic does the issue of "masculinity" come up, but when it does, perceived deficiencies in "masculinity" can be powerful motivators for corrective actions—some of which can be coercive and violent. The social construction of gender also occurs at more macro levels of social organization. For example, professional sports can be seen as a set of cultural practices in which particular meanings of masculinity are constructed through advertising, media coverage, and a wide array of symbols associated with competitiveness, physical prowess, and insensitivity to pain (Messner, 1990; White, Young, & McTeer, 1995).

A central assumption in social constructionist frameworks is that there is not a singular masculinity or man's role, but rather multiple competing masculinities that are continuously being constructed and contested (Connell, 1995). For example, White lower-class suburban masculinities may take different forms than Latino urban masculinities, although they may also share some features. Thus, some social constructionist theorists have emphasized the different ways

race, ethnicity, and social class are simultaneously constructed alongside different masculinities. In effect, there is nothing universal called *masculinity*, but rather urban African-American masculinities, White middle-class masculinities, and so on. Finally, social constructionist frameworks allow, and in fact expect, considerable contextual variability in the construction of masculinities. How would social constructionist paradigms explain relationships between masculinity and IPV? As it assumes masculinity is constantly being created and re-created through interactions, this paradigm would posit that partner violence is one possible way in which men would express their desires to be "masculine" when they felt their status challenged. However, there often seems to be conflation of the mechanisms used to understand the construction of masculinities. While an individual's masculinity is created through the social practices in which one engages, the social practices of masculinity (and therefore, masculine statuses) themselves are created, revised, abandoned, etc. at higher levels of analysis over the course of time. In other words, it is not an individual who is responsible for such changes to the social practice of gender, but rather the repeated actions of many. Thus, the individual choice of enacting a violent masculinity is predicated on the existence of such a status within the social practice. To my knowledge, no research has applied this paradigm to the study of masculinity and IPV.

Feminist

Similar to social constructionist perspectives, feminist paradigms view gender as a social formation that can occur at a variety of levels of social organization (Falmagne, 2000). Both paradigms also cross traditional disciplinary boundaries in the social sciences to incorporate sociological, anthropological, historical, and psychological perspectives. Where feminist perspectives on masculinity depart is in the degree to which power differences between men and women are seen as central to any analysis of gender. Gender is understood as a multilevel system that organizes relationships between men and women in such a way that men are economically, politically, and often interpersonally dominant. Thus, masculinity cannot be understood apart from men's place as a group in a social order that privileges them. In addition, power is not distributed evenly among all men, and a person's social position affects his subjective sense of power. In the United States, men facing discrimination by other men on the basis of socioeconomic class, ethnicity, skin color, or sexual orientation do not have equal access to the variety or degree of social resources available to white, upper class, heterosexual men.

How would feminist paradigms explain relationships between masculinity and IPV? As it assumes gender processes define and justify difference betwixt and between men and women (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999), it would posit that violence can be used to simultaneously create gender and privilege. One study by Totten (2003) used qualitative interviews to investigate how girlfriend abuse was part of young, marginalized males' construction of masculinity. Results from the study suggest that use of violence against female partners served as a way to access traditional benefits of patriarchy, such as dominance and authority. Thus, while

this paradigm offers intriguing insight about masculinity and IPV, this approach is not without shortcomings. Specifically, how is it that men are able to successfully construct masculinity unless there is knowledge of "what counts" as masculine in a particular context? From our discussion above, we can see that the function of status(es) in the social practice of masculinity could be used to address this issue. As the medium through which privilege, prestige, and power is conferred, explicit discussion of status could be used to incorporate the strengths of the feminist perspective into any of the paradigms reviewed above.

Summary and Directions for Future Research

This paper has briefly summarized four paradigms which have been used to explain the relationship between masculinity and IPV: essentialist, social learning, social construction, and feminist. Each contributes to understanding the relationship between masculinity and IPV by offering a theoretical explanation for the apparent link between the two. From an essentialist perspective, men's violence against women is a result of inherent physiological and psychological characteristics that produce violence. Social learning frameworks posit that IPV results from learning (traditionally) masculine norms and stereotypes. Social constructionists argue that IPV is one of many ways in which masculinity can be actively constructed. Feminist paradigms maintain that men's perpetration of IPV against women is a result of a system of oppression (e.g., gender) which creates and bestows privilege (to men). While the range of empirical support for each of these paradigms varies, all fall short of specifying how masculinity leads to violence in a given situation. The crux of this issue is how to relate theoretical causes (e.g., gender traits, norms, constructions, privilege) to violent behavior in context. I have argued that applying Ossorio's (2006a) notions of social practice and of gender as a status (position) within social practices allow us to explicate the psychological mechanisms linking theoretical causes to men's actual perpetration of IPV. Specifically, by dynamically functioning as Actor, Observer, and Critic, men can: (a) assign themselves traits that condone IPV, (b) learn norms and stereotypes that encourage IPV, (c) actively negotiate masculinity in ways that lead to IPV, and (d) utilize and access gender privilege through IPV. In short, the social practice analysis of how gender acquires the eligibilities to engage in IPV allows us to see how the various research tradition each make worthwhile but partial contributions to the understanding of IPV.

Ultimately, the goal of social practice analysis is to understand particular behaviors (such as IPV) within larger systems of behaviors (such as gender). To realize this, it is simply not enough to examine extant research in new ways; we must also employ a broader range of methodology. As can be seen from the literature discussed in the current paper, exploration of the relationship between masculinity and IPV in psychology has been dominated by quantitative methods. Though qualitative studies on masculinity and partner violence have been conducted, such as Totten's (2003) study of girlfriend abuse, it is not always clear how such studies complement existing bodies of quantitative research. Thus, future research in this area will be best served by employing mixed methodologies (see Johnson &

Onwuegbuzie, 2004 for a comprehensive review). In this way, researchers can explicitly examine how masculinity is related to IPV within the context of (gendered) relationships.

For example, application of a social practice framework could potentially lead to more rigorous empirical validation and differentiation between coercive controlling violence and situational couple violence in heterosexual couples. The term *coercive controlling violence* is used by researchers to refer to physical violence that occurs in an intimate relationship within a larger pattern of intimidation, coercion, and control (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003b; Johnson, 2008b). *Situational couple violence* refers to violence that is not part of a general pattern of controlling behaviors, but rather occurs when specific conflict situations escalate to violence (Johnson & Leone, 2005). In an effort to validate these types of relationships empirically, Graham-Kevan and Archer (2003b) conducted analyses of data where the presence of controlling behavior was used as the sole criterion for distinguishing between coercive controlling and situationally violent couples. While this decision was empirically supported by their results, their analysis fails to capture if and how situational factors may contribute to violence. In fact, Graham-Kevan and Archer (2003b, p. 1262) explicitly state that studies employing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies are necessary to understand situational couple violence. Results of such mixed methods studies are imperative to the development of gender-based prevention and intervention strategies.

Conclusion

I have argued that gender is a status that mediates the participation of individuals in social practices, including the social practices of IPV. It is important to note that the details of gender as a status evolve in response to the experience of individuals and communities in the social practices in which it is involved. The evolution of gender as a status within the social practice of IPV can be seen by the constant development of more nuanced understandings of IPV; we no longer speak of men as "batterers" (which focuses on the physical aspects of IPV) but rather, use terms that are more inclusive of the range of behaviors comprising IPV, such as "abusers" or "perpetrators." If we are committed to ending the wide range of men's violence against women, we must seek to understand how violence does and does not fit into men's experience of gender. Such experiences are integral to identifying and challenging the statuses that perpetuate violence against women.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to thank Keith Davis, Ph.D. and Paul Zeiger, Ph.D. for their support, encouragement, and guidance throughout the preparation of this article.

References

Addis, M. E., & Mahalik, J. R. (2003). Men, masculinity, and the contexts of help seeking. *American Psychologist, 58*, 5-14.

Anderson, K. L. (2002). Perpetrator or Victim? Relationships between intimate partner violence and well-being. *Journal of Marriage & Family, 64*, 851-863.

Archer, J. (2000). Sex difference in aggression between heterosexual partners: A meta-analytic review. . *Psychological Bulletin, 126*, 651-680.

Bem, S. L. (1984). Androgyny and gender schema theory: A conceptual and empirical integration. . *Nebraska Smyposium on Motivation, 32*, 179-226.

Bernard, J., Bernard, S., & Bernanrd, M. (1985). Courtship violence and sex-typing. *Family Relations, 34*, 573-576.

Blazina, C., Pisecco, S., & O'Neil, J. M. (2005). An adaptation of the Gender Role Stress Scale for adolescents: Psychometric issues and correlates with psychological distress. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 6*, 39-45.

Brannon, R. (1976). The male sex role: Our culture's blueprint for manhood and what it's done for us lately In D. David & R. Brannon (Eds.), *The forty-nine percent majority: The male sex role* (pp. 1-48). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Brooks, G. R., & Silverstein, L. S. (1995). Understanding the dark side of masculinity: An interactive systems model. In R. F. Levant & W. S. Pollack (Eds.), *A new psychology of men* (pp. 280–333). New York: Basic Books.

Cohn, A., & Zeichner, A. (2006). Effects of masculine identity and gender role stress on agression in men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 7*(4), 179-190.

Coleman, K. H., Weinman, M. L., & Hsi, B. P. (1980). Factors affecting conjugal violence. *Journal of Psychology, 105*, 107-202.

Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Connell, R. W. (2000). *The men and the boys*. St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society, 19*(6), 829-859.

Cook, P. W. (1997). *Abused Men: The Hidden Side of Domestic Violence*. Westport, C.T.: Praeger Publishers/Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

Dansky, B. S., Byrne, C. A., & Brady, K. T. (1999). Intimate violence and post-traumatic stress disorder among individuals wth cocsaine dependence. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, 25*, 275-268.

DeKeseredy, W. S. (2006). Future Directions. *Violence Against Women, 12*, 1078-1085.

Eardley, T. (1995). Violence and sexuality. In S. Caffrey & G. Mundy (Eds.), *The sociology of crime and deviance: Selected issues*. Greenwhich: Greenwich University Press.

Eckes, T., & Trautner, H. M. (2000). *The developmental social psychology of gender*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Eisler, R. M. (1995). The relationship between masculine gender role stress and men's health risk: The validation of a construct. In R. F. Levant & W. S. Pollack (Eds.), *A new psychology of men* (pp. 207–228). New York: Basic Books.

Fagot, B. I., Rodgers, C. S., & Leinbach, M. D. (2000). Theories of gender socialization. In T. Eckes & H. M. Trautner (Eds.), *The developmental social psychology of gender*. Mahwaw, NJ: Erlbaum.

Falmagne, R. J. (2000). Positionality and thought: On the gendered foundations of thought, culture and development. In P. H. Miller & E. Scholnick (Eds.), *Developmental psychology through the lenses of feminist theories*. Florence, KY: Routledge.

Fenstermaker, S., West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1991). Gender inequality: New conceptual terrain. In R. Lesser-Blumberg (Ed.), *Gender, Family, and Economy: The Triple Overlap* (pp. 298-307). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Frieze, I. H. (2005). Female violence against intimate partners: An introduction *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 29*, 229-237.

Garfinkel, H. (1967). Conditions of sucessful degradation ceremonies. In J. G. Manis & B. N. Meltzer (Eds.), *Symbolic interaction: A reader in social psychology* Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Gergen, K. (1999). *An invitation to social construction*. London: Sage.

Good, G. E., Robertson, J. M., & O'Neil, J. M. (1995). Male gender role conflict: Psychometric issues and relations to psychological distress. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 42*, 3-10.

Graham-Kevan, N., & Archer, J. (2003a). Intimate terrorism and common couple violence: A test of Johnson's predictions in four British samples. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 18*(11), 1247-1270.

Graham-Kevan, N., & Archer, J. (2003b). Intimate terrorism and common couple violence: A test of Johnson's predictions in four British samples. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 18*, 1247-1270.

Graham, K., Bernards, S., Wilsnack, S. C., & Gmel, G. (2011). Alcohol may not cause partner violence but it seems to make it worse: A cross national study comparision on the relationship between alcohol and severity of partner violence *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26*(8), 1503-1523. doi: 10.1177/0886260510370596

Hamberger, L. K., & Guse, C. E. (2002). Men's and women's use of intimate partner violence in clinical samples. *Violence Against Women, 8*, 1301-1331.

Harré, R. (1993). *Social being: A theory for a social psychology*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hayes, J. A., & Mahalik, J. R. (2000). Gender role conflict and psychological distress in male counseling cilents. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 2*, 116-125.

Hearn, J. (1996). The organization(s) of violence: men, gender relations, organizations and violences. In B. Fawcett, B. Featherstone, J. Hearn & C. Toft (Eds.), *Violence and gender relations: Theories and interventions*. London: Sage.

Hill, M. S., & Fischer, A. R. (2001). Does entitlement mediate the link between masculinity and rape-related variables? *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 48*, 39-50.

Hines, D. A., & Douglas, E. M. (2010). Intimate terrorism by women towards men: Does it exist? *Journal of Aggression, Conflict, and Peace Research, 2*(3), 36-56.

Honeycutt, J. M., & Cantrill, J. G. (2001). *Communication, cognition, and romantic relationships*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Jacobson, N. S., Gottman, J. M., Waltz, J., Rushe, R., Babcock, J., & Holtzworth-Munroe, A. (1994). Affect, verbal context, and psychophysiology in the arguments of couples with a violent husband. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 62*(982-988).

Jakupcak, M., Lisak, D., & Roemer, L. (2002). The role of masculine ideology and masculine gender role stress in men's perception of relationship violence. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 3*, 97-106.

Jenkins, S. S., & Aube, J. (2002). Gender differences and gender-related constructs in dating aggression. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 28*, 1106-1118.

Johnson, M. P. (1995). Patriarchal terrorism and common couple violence: Two forms of violence against women. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 57*(2), 283-294.

Johnson, M. P. (2006a). Conflict and control: Gender symmetry and asymmetry in domestic violence. *Violence Against Women, 12*, 1003-1018.

Johnson, M. P. (2006b). Conflict and control: Gender symmetry and asymmetry in domestic violence. *Violence Against Women, 12*(11), 1-16.

Johnson, M. P. (2008a). *A typology of domestic violence: Intimate terrorism, violent resistance, and situational couple violence* Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Johnson, M. P. (2008b). *A typology of domestic violence: Intimate terrorism, violent resistance, and situational couple violence.* Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Johnson, M. P. (2011). Gender and types of intimate partner violence: A response to an anti-feminist literature reveiw. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 16*, 289-296.

Johnson, M. P., & Leone, J. M. (2005). The differential effects of intimate terrorism and situational couple violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women survey. *Journal of Family Issues, 26*, 322-349.

Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher, 33*, 14-26.

Kilianski, S. E. (2003). Explaining heterosexual men's attitudes toward women and gay men: The theory of exclusively masculine identity. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 4*, 37-56.

Levant, R. F. (1995). Male violence against female partners: Roots in male socialization and development. In C. D. Spielberger, I. G. Sarason, J. M. T. Brebner, E. Greenglass, P. Laungani & A. M. O'Roark (Eds.), *Stress and emotion: Anxiety, anger and curiosity* (pp. 91-100). Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis.

Levant, R. F. (1996). The new psychology of men. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 27*(259-265).

Levant, R. F., Hirsch, L., Celentano, E., Cozza, T., Hill, S., MacEachern, M., & al., e. (1992). The male role: An investigation of norms and stereotypes. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling, 14*, 325-337.

Mahalik, J. R., Locke, B. D., Ludlow, L. H., Diemer, M. A., Scott, R. P. J., Gottfried, M., & Freitas, G. (2003). Development of the conformity to masculine norms inventory. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 4*, 3-25.

Marshall, D. L. (1993). Violence and the male gender role. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy, 8*, 203-218.

Martin, P. Y. (2003). "Said and done" verusus "saing and doing": Gendering practices, practicing gender at work. *Gender & Society, 17*(3), 342-366.

Messner, M. A. (1990). When bodies are weapons: Masculnity and violence in sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 25*, 203-220.

Monk, D., & Ricciardelli, L. A. (2003). Three dimensions of the male gender role as correlates of alcohol and cannabis involvment in young Austrailian men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 4*, 57-69.

Moore, T. M., & Stuart, G. L. (2004). Effects of masculine gender role stress on men's cognitive, affective, physiological and aggressive responses to intimate conflict situations. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 5*, 132-142.

Moore, T. M., & Stuart, G. L. (2005). A review of the literature on masculnity and partner violence. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 6*, 46-61.

Mosher, D. L., & Sirkin, M. (1984). Measuring a macho personality. *Journal of Research in Personality, 18*, 150-163.

O'Neil, J. M., Good, G. E., & Holmes, S. E. (1995). Fifteen years of theory and research on men's gender role conflict: New paradigms for empirical research. In R. F. Levant & W. S. Pollack (Eds.), *A new psychology of men*. New York: Basic Books.

O'Neil, J. M., Helms, B., Gable, R., David, L., & Wrightsman, L. (1986). Gender Role Conflict Scale: College men's fear of femininity. *Sex Roles, 14*, 335-350.

O'Neil, J. M., & Nadeau, R. A. (1999). Men's gender role conflict, defense mechanisms, and self-protective defensive strategies: Explaining men's violence against women from a gender-role socialization perspective. In M. Harway & J. M. O'Neil (Eds.), *What causes men's violence against women?* (pp.

89-116). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
O'Sullivan, L. F., Byers, E. S., & Finkelman, L. (1998). A comparison of male and female college students' experiences of seuxal coercion. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 22*, 177-195.
Ossorio, P. G. (1981). Conceptual-notational devices: The PCF and related types`. In K. Davis (Ed.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 83-104). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
Ossorio, P. G. (2006). *The behavior of persons.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.
Parrot, D. J., Adams, H. E., & Zeichner, A. (2002). Homophobia: Personality and attitudinal correlates. *Personality and Individual Differences, 32*, 1269-1278.
Parrot, D. J., & Zeichner, A. (2003). Effects of hypermasculinity on physical aggression against women. *Personality and Individual Differences, 4*, 70-78.
Pleck, J. H. (1981). *The myth of masculinity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Ray, A. L., & Gold, S. R. (1996). Gender roles, aggression, and alcohol use in dating relationships. *Journal of Sex Research, 33*, 47-55.
Renzetti, C. M. (1992). *Violent Betrayal: Partner Abuse in Lesbian Relationships*. Thousand Oaks, C.A.: Sage.
Renzetti, C. M. (1999). The challenge to feminism posed by women's use of violence in intimate relationships. In S. Lamb (Ed.), *New versions of victims: Feminists struggle with the concept* (pp. 42-56). New York: New York University Press.
Ridgeway, C. L., & Smith-Lovin, L. (1999). The gender system and interaction. *Annual Review of Sociology, 25*, 191-216.
Rosenbaum, A. (1986). Of men, macho, and marital violence. *Journal of Family Violence, 1*, 121-129.
Schwartz, M. D. (2005). The past and future of violence against women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 20*(1), 7-11.
Seymour, K. (2009). Women, gendered work and gendered violence: So much more than a job. *Gender, Work, and Organization, 16*(2), 238-265.
Shotter, J. (1993). *Conversational realities: The construction of life through language*. London: Sage.
Slotter, E. B., & Finkel, E. J. (2011). I^3 Theory: Instigating, impelling, and inhibiting factors in aggression. In P. R. Shaver & M. Mikulincer (Eds.), *Human aggression and violence: Causes, manifestations, and consequences* (pp. 35-52). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
Spence, J. T., Helmreich, R. L., & Holahan, C. K. (1979). Negative and positive components of psychological masculinity and femininity and their relationships to self-reports of neurotic and acting out behaviors. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37*, 1673-1862.
Stark, E. (2007). *Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Straus, M. A., Hamby, S. L., Boney-McCoy, S., & Sugarman, D. B. (1996). The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2): Development and preliminary psychometric data. *Journal of Family Issues, 17*, 283-316.

Struckman-Johnson, C., Struckman-Johnson, D., & Anderson, P. B. (2003). Tactics of sexual coercion: When men and women won't take no for an answer. *Journal of Sex Research, 40*(1), 76-86.

Sugarman, D. B., & Frankel, S. L. (1996). Patriarchal ideology and wife-assault: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Family Violence, 11*(1), 13-40.

Swan, S. C., & Snow, D. L. (2003). Behavioral and psychological differences among abused women who use violence in intimate relationships. *Violence Against Women, 9*, 75-109.

Swan, S. C., & Snow, D. L. (2006). The development of a theory of women's use of violence in intimate relationship *Violence Against Women, 12*, 1026-1045.

Thompson, E. H., & Pleck, J. H. (1986). The structure of male role norms. *American Behavioral Scientist, 29*, 531-543.

Thompson, E. H., & Pleck, J. H. (1995). Masculinity ideologies: A review of research instrumentation on men and masculinities In R. F. Levant & W. S. Pollack (Eds.), *A new psychology of men* (pp. 129-163). New York: Basic Books.

Totten, M. (2003). Girlfriend abuse as a form of masculinity construction among violent, marginal male youth. *Men and Masculinities, 6*(70-92.).

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society, 1*(2), 125-121.

White, P., Young, K., & McTeer, W. (1995). Sport, masculinity, and the injured body. In D. Sabo (Ed.), *Gordon, D.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Whiting, J. B., Oka, M., & Fife, S. T. (2012). Appraisal distortions and intimate partner violence: Gender, power, and interaction. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 38*(1), 133-149. doi: 10.1111/j.1752-0606.2011.00285.x

Williams, S. L., & Frieze, I. H. (2005). Courtship behaviors, relationship violence, and breakup persistance in college men and women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 29*, 248-257.

Worth, D. M., Matthews, P. A., & Coleman, W. R. (1990). Sex role, group affiliation, family background, and courtship violence in college students. *Journal of College Student Development*(31), 250-254.

Zlotnick, C., Kohn, R., Peterson, J., & Pearlstein, T. (1998). Partner physical victimization in a national sample of American families. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 13*, 156-166.

The Nefarious "Is"

Mary Kathleen Roberts
Independent Scholar

Abstract

The simple word "is" has been noted since ancient times for its slipperiness. Three of its uses — the genus-species "is", the predicative "is", and the "is" of identity — are discussed in this paper. For each kind of "is", historical sketches are given to provide background and perspective, and examples are presented from the Person Concept.

Keywords: genus-species, predication, identity, Aristotle, Kant, Frege

Like "and", "or", "not", and "if", "is" is used in expressing logical form and structure. But since ancient times, scholars have recognized its slipperiness. Even those who know and respect the laws of logic may be led astray by it.

It is therefore valuable to have clarity about the ways it is used in the Person Concept, a system in which fundamental conceptual structures are formulated. Three of these ways — the genus-species "is", the predicative "is", and the "is" of identity — are discussed in this paper. In each case, before presenting examples from the Person Concept, historical sketches are given to provide background and perspective.

Genus-Species Structures

In the fourth century BC, demonstrative (apodeictic) argument was an essential skill for educated persons in ancient Greece. To give students practice and experience in the social practice, teachers would lay down true premisses, and students would argue whether a conclusion based on the premisses was necessarily true. Teachers in different schools sought ways to make their students more competent at demonstrating the truth or falsity of conclusions.

Aristotle was one of these teachers. As is well known, he worked out a system of syllogisms for his students so that they could "thoroughly understand many arguments in the light of a few" (quoted in Kneale & Kneale, 1962/2008, p. 41). He created his system by dropping the subject-matter details of arguments, and looking for the patterns that remained.

He recognized fourteen forms, of which the most basic are:

- If every M is P and every S is M, then every S is P. ("If every dog is a mammal, and every collie is a dog, then every collie is a mammal.")
- If no M is P and every S is M, then no S is P.
- If every M is P and some S is M, then some S is P.
- If no M is P and some S is M, then some S is not P.

The use of letters as placeholders for specific content was his innovation (Kneale & Kneale, 1962/2008, p. 61).

Presented in this way, his forms might be mistaken for a mere list rather than a system. But in his lectures, Aristotle showed the systematic interrelationships among them (Kneale & Kneale, 1962/2008, p. 76). His system codified constraints on valid inference, and enabled students to recognize the validity of a conclusion based simply on its form. It also inspired system-builders for centuries, in both bottom-up and top-down approaches to understanding the world.

A Bottom-up Approach

In a bottom-up approach to understanding the world, we start with particulars and move upwards, creating concepts as needed to organize the particulars into categories. By moving recursively from more specific categories (species) to more general categories (genera), we build hierarchical conceptual structures in which each higher level genus subsumes the lower level genera beneath it. We are limited only by our own ingenuity in the number of levels we create.

Most of us encountered this kind of structure in school when we studied botanical and biological taxonomies. The sunflower in the garden, for example, is an instance of the species H. annuus, the genus Helianthus, the family Asteraceae, the order Asterales, and the kingdom Plantae. The doggie in the window is an instance of the species C. lupus, the genus Canis, the family Canidae, the order Carnivora, the class Mammalia, and the kingdom Animalia. These structures were created in the 18th century by Carl Linnaeas, whose goal was to catalog all the particulars — animals, plants, and minerals — that God had created.

A Top-down Approach

In a top-down approach to understanding the world, we start at the highest level, and proceed from the more general to the more specific, from possibilities to actualities, from the pre-empirical to the empirical. An example of a top-down formulation is Immanuel Kant's system for understanding the conditions and limits of human knowledge.

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant began by dividing the conditions for knowledge into sensible and intellectual conditions (see Figure 1). He then subdivided the conditions of sensibility into a priori and a posteriori conditions. (A priori concepts are in our minds prior to any experience and always carry with them necessity. In contrast, a posteriori concepts are derived from experience). Kant (1781/1787/1996) presented the pure forms of space and time as conditions of sensibility that are "in us a priori, i.e., prior to any perception of an object" (B 41, p. 80).

On the intellectual side of the hierarchy, he divided the intellect into understanding and reason, and then subdivided the conditions of the understanding into a priori and a posteriori. He generated twelve categories — pure concepts of the understanding that are in us a priori — and placed them under the titles of "quantity", "quality", "relation", and "modality". According to Kant (1781/1787/1996), the categories, in conjunction with the forms of space and time, "make possible the formal unity of experience" (A 125, p. 171).

The categories correspond to basic functions of judgment that Kant found in traditional logic (the logic of Aristotle and the Stoics). For example, the category of "unity", under the heading "quantity", is used in making universal judgments ("All men are mortal."). The category of "negation", under "quality", is necessary for making negative judgments ("The soul is not mortal."). The category of "causality", under "relation", is involved in making hypothetical judgments ("If there is a perfect justice, then the persistently evil person is punished.").

Category Mistakes

In creating systems, people sometimes make mistakes, treating facts or concepts that belong to one logical type or category as if they belong to another. Some of these mistakes are relatively easy to see and correct, e.g., when a species of plant is moved from one genus to another based on genetic studies. But some kinds of errors are harder to recognize. Especially if we have been using concepts in ways that are logically illegitimate for a long time, it may be difficult to see the nonsense built into a system. System critics therefore use the genus-species relation to elucidate errors, and facilitate the reallocation of facts and concepts to correct categories.

An example is Gilbert Ryle's classic work, *The Concept of Mind*, in which he offers a critique of the influential system created by René Descartes in the 17th century. Descartes had formulated "minds" and "bodies" as the fundamental subdivisions of a person, and talked about mental states and processes in the same ways as physical states and processes. Ryle treats this dualism as nonsense. He exposes "a family of radical category-mistakes" that led to Descartes's misrepresentation of a person as "a ghost mysteriously ensconced in a machine" (1949, p. 18).

The family of errors includes familiar ways of talking about volitions, emotions, dispositions, sensations, etc. In a discussion of the imagination, for example, Ryle (1949) observes that 'pictures' does not denote "a genus of which snapshots are one species and mental pictures are another, since 'mental pictures' no more denotes pictures than 'mock-murders' denotes murders" (p. 253). To speak of something as a mental picture is to disqualify it as a real picture, just as to speak of something as a mock-murder is to say that no murder was committed. For Ryle, the way out of this kind of confusion is to focus on behavior, not private sensations and imaginings.

The Genus-Species "is"

In light of the preceding historical sketches, the following instances of the use of "is" can be recognized as expressing genus-species relationships:

- Miniature poodles are Carnivoras.

- Causality is an a priori concept of the understanding.
- A mock-murder is not a murder.

Now we are in a position to ask, "Where is the genus-species "is" used in the Person Concept?"

One example is the relationship between the jobs of Actor, Observer, and Critic. As Ossorio (2006) notes, in addition to being functionally related, the jobs are logically related. "The [logical] relation is that of genus-species. Specifically, the Observer-Describer task is a special case of the Actor task and the Critic task is a special case of the Observer-Describer task, hence also of the Actor task." (p. 248)

A second example is the division of Person Characteristics into the categories of "Dispositions", "Powers", and "Derivatives", with the subcategories of "Traits", "Attitudes", "Interests", and "Styles" under "Dispositions", the subcategories of "Abilities", "Knowledge", and "Values" under "Powers", and the subcategories of "States", "Capacities", and "Embodiment" under "Derivatives". Based on this division, we can say, for example, that a Trait is a (species of) Disposition, and an Ability is a (species of) Power.

On the whole, taxonomies are kept to a minimum in the Person Concept. Instead, the primary use of the genus-species "is" involves the identification of category mistakes. Reviewing selected works by Ossorio, we find the following reminders:

- "The Person Concept is essentially *sui generis* and cannot be meaningfully understood as a species under any substantive or methodological genus of 'psychological theory'..." (Ossorio, 1969/2010, p. 6)
- "Implicit theories are no more a species of theory than imaginary wolves are a species of wolf... Such vague characterizations do not pin the subject matter down well enough to talk sensibly about it." (Ossorio, 1982/1998, p. 4)
- "Behavior is no more a species of movement that the queen of hearts is a species of cardboard." (Ossorio, 1967, p. 21)
- "Behavior is not a species of movement because (a) what distinguishes one behavior from another is not what distinguishes one movement from another, and (b) what makes one behavior the same as another is not what makes one movement the same as another." (Ossorio, 1969/2010, p. 13)
- "Unmotivated behavior is not a kind of behavior any more than fictitious assets are a kind of asset." (Ossorio, 1982/1998, p. 5)
- "Neither human behavior nor human history is a species of process, though each has process aspects." (Ossorio, 1982/1998, p. 108)
- "It is not the case that behavior is a genus comprising several species, of which verbal behavior is one." (Ossorio, 1969/2010, p. 84)
- "There is not a genus-species relationship between behavior and verbal behavior. Verbal behavior is not a species of behavior in the way that the Stutz Bearcat is a species of automobile." (Ossorio, 2006, p. 134)
- "Persons are not a species of material object." (Ossorio, 1980/1982, p. 18)

Readers are encouraged to see Ossorio's explanations of each of the errors in the citations given.

Function-Argument Structures

In spite of the usefulness of the genus-species form, scholars have recognized since Roman times that it is inadequate for dealing with the complexity of relationships in the real world. Consider the following examples, discussed by logicians over the centuries:

- X is bigger than Y; therefore, Y is smaller than X.
- X has twice as much as Y, and Y has twice as much as Z; therefore X has four times as much as Z.
- X is a grandparent of Z; therefore, there are two persons Y and Z such that X is a parent of Y, and Y is a parent of Z.
- "A circle is a figure; therefore anyone who draws a circle draws a figure." (Kneale & Kneale, 1962/2008, p. 313)
- "All dogs are animals; therefore, all heads of dogs are heads of animals." (Gensler, 2002/2010, p. 225)

None of these relationships fits the forms of traditional logic.

What forms would enable us to represent these relationships? What notations would make it possible to handle them logically? In 1879, answers to these questions were given by Gottlob Frege, in his pamphlet *Begriffsschrift* ('Conceptual Notation').

A German mathematician and philosopher, Frege had the utmost respect for Immanuel Kant and looked up to him "with grateful awe". Nonetheless, Frege disagreed with Kant about the status of arithmetic. Kant had treated our knowledge of arithmetic as dependent on the sensible forms of space and time, as well as the pure concepts of the understanding. But Frege believed that arithmetic was timelessly, objectively true. It was known to us independently of sensory intuition, and its truths could be derived based on logic alone — albeit not on the logic that Kant had accepted as given.

For arithmetic to have the status of logic, logic needed to have a formal structure at least as complex as arithmetic. Frege therefore created his own system of logic, in which it was possible to represent a range and complexity of relationships far greater than in any previous formalism. Rather than using the familiar subject-predicate form of ordinary language, he made the function-argument structure of mathematics a building block of his system.

In a mathematical equation such as $f(x_1 \ldots x_n) = y$, f is a function. The arguments to f are $x_1 \ldots x_n$, and the value of f is y. A function is said to be a "mapping" from members of its domain (the set of possible values for $x_1 \ldots x_n$) to a member of its range (the set of possible values for y). For example, the square root function $f(x) = \sqrt{x}$ maps real numbers to real numbers. Its domain is $[0, \infty)$ and its range is $[0, \infty)$. Frege recognized the representational power of this notation for logic.

In his system, there are two fundamental categories: objects and concepts. An object is something that is complete and can be named, but is not necessarily

perceptible. Frege "expressly includes among his objects such things as numbers, places, instants, and periods of time" (Kneale & Kneale, 1962/2008, p. 496).

In contrast to objects, concepts are incomplete in the way that mathematical functions are incomplete. Concepts have an unlimited number of gaps or places that await completion by objects. For example, '( ) is gentle' has a place for one object; '( ) is the brother of ( )' has gaps for two; and '( ) donates ( ) to ( )' has places for three.

When the gaps are completed by objects, concepts yield truth-values. If it is a fact that the dog is gentle, the function yields 'the True'. If it is not a fact that the man donates money to the NSPCA, then the function yields 'the False'. The True and the False are themselves objects. "For according to Frege's usage objects include all things that are not functions, i.e. not only sticks and stones and men, but also numbers and truth-values. If we ask what a function is, he tells us that its essence is to be found in a certain connexion or co-ordination between the objects which are its arguments and those which are its corresponding values." (Kneale & Kneale, 1962/2008, p. 499)

The Predicative "is"

Simple examples of the use of the "is" of predication include:

- The cat is on the mat.
- The cat and the dog are friends.
- The cat is sociable.

Using the functional notation $f(x_1 \ldots x_n)$, the content of these sentences is expressed as:

- on(cat, mat)
- friends(cat, dog)
- sociable(cat)

In each case, the cat is described as standing in some relationship ("on", "friends") or as having some property ("sociable").

Examples like these can be understood in light of the familiar semantic model, in which case the focus is on the naming and describing of objects, followed by verification ("Is it true that the cat and the dog are friends?"). But they can also be seen from a pragmatic perspective, in which case the focus is on behavioral significance ("What difference does it make if they are friends?"). When the predicative "is" is used in the Person Concept, the pragmatic approach is primary.

The Relationship Formula is a straightforward example. Discursively, the formula states: "If A has a given relationship, R, to P, then the behavior of A with respect to P will be an expression of R unless..." (Ossorio, 2006, p. 230). The formula highlights the difference it makes if R(A, P), and hence what the point of saying it is. If they are friends, they will treat each other differently than if they are enemies or indifferent to each other.

The emphasis on behavioral significance is also evident in the formulation of Person Characteristics. As noted earlier, Person Characteristics are organized

in a taxonomy in the Person Concept. But it is a taxonomy with a difference. The pigeonholes at the bottom do not contain the names of specific traits like "brave", "gentle", or "sociable", or the names of specific attitudes, abilities, states, etc. Instead of such content, they contain rules for generating Person Characteristics (originally called Individual Differences, or IDs). These rules are functions, as Ossorio (1967) states explicitly:

> Just as we classify together "square root", "sine", "logarithm", etc. as "mathematical functions", which take numbers as their arguments and have numbers as their values, the formal ID concepts are correctly described as a set of logically interrelated "person functions", which take intentional actions as their arguments and have intentional actions as their values. (p. 17, italics omitted).

We use "person functions" in our understanding of persons and in our behavior towards them. For example, if we assimilate a hostile action to a Trait function ("He's an angry person."), we treat that action differently than if we assimilate it to a State function ("He's in a bad mood.").

In short, in the Person Concept, the "is" of predication is *not* understood primarily in light of truth functions. It is understood in light of pragmatic functions that guide our behavior.

Calculational Systems

Frege's system, known today as "predicate logic" or "predicate calculus", revolutionized logic. In addition to notation for functions, Frege also introduced symbols for connectives (words like "and", "or", and "if") and for quantifiers (words like "all" and "none"). He gave specific rules for operating with his symbols, so it was possible to calculate with them, just as we calculate with algebraic symbols.

Recall a simple rule of substitution from algebra: "Any number *c* may be added to both sides of an equality." In algebraic notation, that rule is expressed as "If $a = b$, then $a + c = b + c$", where "=" is the symbol for equality, "+" is the symbol for addition, and "a", "b", and "c" represent known quantities. The rule is useful in changing the form of a complicated algebraic equation so it is possible to reach a simpler form. Likewise with Frege's rules: they are designed for the creation and simplification of logical formulas.

Frege's calculus inspired generations of system-builders, just as Aristotle's system had done. Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead (1910), Rudolf Carnap (1937), and Noam Chomsky (1957) are examples. Chomsky's original model for Generative Grammar involved a calculational system in which a noun phrase and a verb phrase are substituted for a sentence (S = NP + VP), a determiner and a noun are substituted for the noun phrase (NP = D + N), and so forth, until a "surface structure" is reached in which English words are substituted for the symbols. Chomsky's calculus revolutionized the study of grammar just as Frege's had transformed logic. (One linguist, lamenting the passage of traditional grammars, wrote that modern linguistic papers "bristle like a page of symbolic logic" (quoted in Tomalin, 2002, p. 838)).

A side effect of Frege's achievement was the undermining of Kant's categories. When Kant (1781/1787/1996) published the second edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he wrote of logic: "Since Aristotle...it has not been able to advance a single step, and hence is to all appearances closed and completed" (B *viii*, p. 15). He believed that he had given his categories an unassailable foundation by basing them on forms of judgment found in traditional logic. But after Frege's work became known, Kant's categories were criticized by many as pointless. "Regardless of how plausible Kant's project might appear within the context of classical Aristotelian logic, it is regarded as an obvious non-starter when viewed in the light of modern truth-functional and predicate logic." (Allison, 2004, p. 134)

The "is" of Identity

To understand the use of the "is" of identity in the Person Concept, consider the following examples:

- To say "Hold the rope" is to give a warning.
- Pumping water to the people is poisoning them.
- John Barrymore is Hamlet tonight.
- '5 + 3' is '2 × 4'.
- A state of affairs is a totality of related objects and/or processes and/or events and/or states of affairs.
- A process is a sequential change from one state of affairs to another.

The first three are empirical identities that depend on context: "In *these* circumstances, to say "Hold the rope" is also to give a warning, even though in general (i.e., in most circumstances) it is not" (Ossorio, 2006, p. 60). In the Person Concept, empirical identities are involved in talking about the significance of behavior ("What is she doing by doing that?") as well as in understanding the relationship between statuses and the historical individuals who embody them (cf. Ossorio, 1982/1998, p. 124).

The second three examples are categorical identities that always and necessarily hold. "'5 + 3' is '2 × 4'" is a good model for understanding this kind of "is": '5 + 3' is (always and necessarily) the same as '2 × 4', even though the forms of representation are different. Categorical identities are used in the State of Affairs (SA) System, one of the four component concepts of the Person Concept.

The SA System is responsive to the idea — originally expressed by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* — that there must be "logical relationships among the concepts in terms of which our observations are made and our world described". Without these logical relationships, "our observations would be as unrelated as the number 17, the color orange, and the Day of Judgment; and the very concept of "observation" would be lacking" (Ossorio, 1971/1978, p. 16).

But how can we formulate these relationships? Ossorio's solution reflects the logical complexity that Frege made possible. Rather than talking about a small set of a priori concepts in the mind, Ossorio treats four basic reality concepts — "object", "process", "event", and "state of affairs" — as elements in a calculational system, and presents rules for calculating with them. (Two of the rules are given

above.) The rules codify the systematic relationships among the reality concepts, and govern the transitions that people make in generating and connecting forms of representation of the real world. The single operation in the system is identity coordination, represented by the categorical "is".

Additional examples of the use of the categorical "is" in the Person Concept include:

- "P acts on concept C" is the same thing as "P acts on the distinction of C vs. some set of alternatives, C1, C2, C3..." (Ossorio, 2006, p. 18)
- "My having that status... is the same thing as my having the relationships I do with everything there is, singly and jointly." (Ossorio, 2006, p. 379)
- "My having that place and those relationships is the same thing as my having the behavioral possibilities (behavior potential) I do." (Ossorio, 2006, p. 379)
- "My self-concept is the same thing as my summary formulation of my status as a person." (Ossorio, 2006, p. 377)
- "Specifying the various Elements of the process is the same thing as specifying the various statuses involved in the process (e.g., Catcher, Pitcher, Ball, etc.), and in this sense Elements are statuses." (Ossorio, 1982/1998, p. 124)
- "The key fact is that the Cs are the same as the Rs. Remember, Cs were the relevant circumstances that give us reasons. That's a careless way of saying it. The correct way is to say that these circumstances are states of affairs that *are* reasons. There is an identity between the C and the R." (Ossorio, 1990, p. 32)
- "The error involved in trying to define psychopathology in concrete, observable terms is the same as the error involved in trying to define "trumps" by pointing to the queen of hearts." (Ossorio, 2006, p. 412)

Conclusion

The genus-species "is", the predicative "is", and the "is" of identity have been discussed in this paper. For each kind of "is", historical sketches were given to provide background and perspective, and examples were presented from the Person Concept. My hope is that the paper evokes curiosity about the Person Concept, and makes it a little easier to understand its logic.

Author Note

This paper is based on my presidential address, "Invisible to the Naked Eye," given at the Society for Descriptive Psychology annual meeting in Golden, Colorado, September 20th, 2012.

Special thanks to Keith E. Davis, Ph.D., for his unfailing support of my efforts to present the Person Concept in a wider historical and intellectual context.

Correspondence concerning the paper should be addressed to Mary K. Roberts, Society for Descriptive Psychology, PO Box 17761, Boulder, CO 80308.

References

Allison, H. (2004). *Kant's transcendental idealism*: *An interpretation and defense* (Rev. ed.). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Carnap, R. (1937). *Logical syntax of language*. London: Keegan Paul Trench.

Chomsky, N. (1957). *Syntactic structures*. The Hague: Mouton.

Gensler, H. J. (2010). *Introduction to logic* (2nd ed.) New York: Routledge. (Original work published 2002)

Kant, I. (1996). *Critique of pure reason*. (W. S. Pluhar, Trans.) Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing. (Original work published 1781 and 1787)

Kneale, W. & Kneale, M. (2008). *The development of logic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. (Original work published 1962)

Ossorio, P. G. (1967). *Rule-following in grammar and behavior* (LRI Report No. 7). Whittier, CA & Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.

Ossorio, P. G. (1978). *"What actually happens": The representation of real-world phenomena.* Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press. (Original work published 1971)

Ossorio, P. G. (1982). Embodiment. In K. E. Davis & T. O. Mitchell (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 11-32). Greenwich, CN: JAI Press. (Original work published 1980)

Ossorio, P. G. (1990). *The human condition: Some formal aspects* (LRI Report No. 47a). Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.

Ossorio, P. G. (1998). *Place. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. III.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press. (Original work published 1982)

Ossorio, P. G. (2006). *The behavior of persons. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. V.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press.

Ossorio, P. G. (2010). *Meaning and symbolism. The collected works of Peter G. Ossorio, Vol. VI.* Ann Arbor, MI: Descriptive Psychology Press. (Original work published 1969).

Russell, B. & Whitehead, A. (1910). *Principia mathematica.* Cambridge University Press.

Ryle, G. (1949). *The concept of mind*. New York: Barnes & Noble.

Tomalin, M. (2002). The formal origins of syntactic theory. *Lingua* (*112*, 827-848)

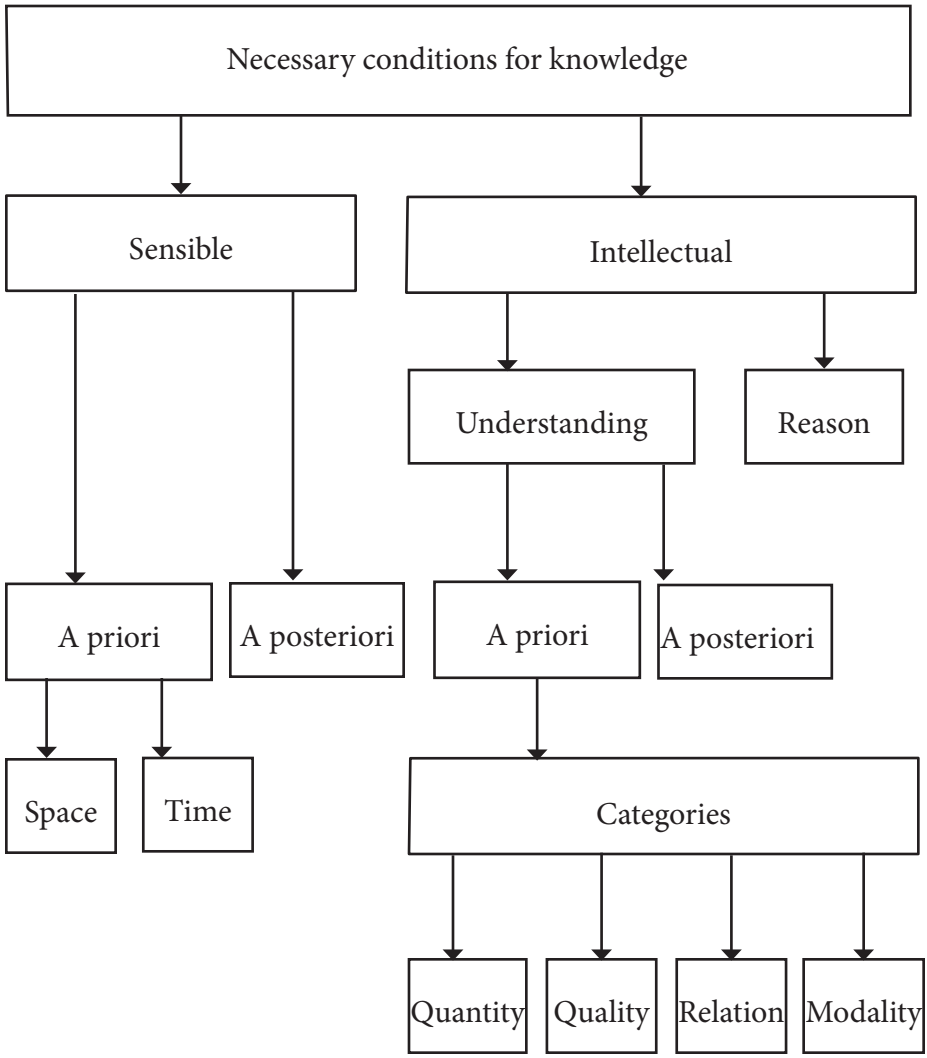


Figure 1. Kant's top-down analysis of the necessary conditions for knowledge.

Author Biographical Sketches

Christopher T. Allen completed dual bachelor's degrees in Psychology and Sociology at Dartmouth College. His research interests in the areas of gender, violence and prevention developed while pursuing his master's degree in Forensic Psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. His doctoral work in Clinical-Community Psychology at the University of South Carolina focused primarily on how gender socialization of men and boys has contributed to their underrepresentation in efforts to prevent violence against women. After leaving South Carolina, Dr. Allen became the first postdoctoral associate in the history of the Center on Violence against Women and Children at Rutgers University. He has worked on the development, implementation, and evaluation of multiple programs designed to prevent intimate partner violence.

Raymond M. Bergner received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Colorado under the direction of Peter Ossorio. He is currently Full Professor of Psychology at Illinois State University and has a private practice in Bloomington, Illinois. His work in Descriptive Psychology has been concerned with its applications to psychopathology and psychotherapy. He is a two-time President of the Society for Descriptive Psychology (1984 and 2004), a member of the Editorial Board of *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* since its inception, and the co-editor of four volumes in this series. Dr. Bergner has published over 80 articles, book chapters, books, and edited books. Many of these articles have appeared in such national and international journals as *Family Process*, *Psychotherapy*, the *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, *The Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, and *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*.

Nora Bunford received her M.S. in Clinical-counseling Psychology from Illinois State University in 2010, and her M.A. in Philosophy from Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, Hungary, in 2011. She is currently in the Graduate Clinical Psychology Program at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

Keith E. Davis is Distinguished Professor Emeritus in the Department of Psychology at the University of South Carolina. He received his B.A. and Ph. D. from Duke University, and taught at Colorado with Peter Ossorio during the 1960's. He chaired the Department of Psychology at Livingston College of Rutgers University and has held several positions at the University of South Carolina. He was the first President of the Society for Descriptive Psychology and the founding editor of *Advances*. His research has focused on personal relationships, friendship and love as well as intimate partner violence and stalking. The departmental website at USC contains a link to his vitae, representative publications and course syllabi.

Charles Kantor obtained his Ph.D. in clinical psychology under the direction of Peter G. Ossorio at the University of Colorado in 1977. Trained as a child clinical psychologist, he practiced as a play and family therapist at the Rochester Mental Health Center, Rochester, NY, for 16 years. In 1992, he started a full time private practice and has continued as a private clinician for the last 21 years. Besides continuing to see children, adolescents and families, he now includes individual adults and couples in his practice. He has recently started applying the major Descriptive Psychology concepts of Culture, Community, World and Status to understanding political behavior and political communities.

Fernand Lubuguin received his B.A. with highest honors in 1982 from the University of California, Berkeley. He received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in 1993 from the University of Colorado, Boulder under the mentorship of Peter Ossorio. He worked as a staff psychologist at Kaiser Permanente (a health maintenance organization) for over 10 years before becoming a faculty member at the University of Denver. He has been a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, in Aurora, Colorado. Currently, he is a Clinical Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Professional Psychology, where he is the Director of Diversity and Multicultural Training and the Director of the Professional Psychology Clinic. He also maintains a small psychotherapy private practice. He has served as President of the Society for Descriptive Psychology and is a long-standing Board Member. In addition to applying Descriptive Psychology to many aspects of his personal and professional endeavors, he is especially interested in utilizing it to train culturally competent psychotherapists.

Anthony O. Putman, Ph.D. studied with Peter G. Ossorio at the University of Colorado where he received his Ph.D. in 1973. He was a founder of the Society for Descriptive Psychology, which he has twice served as President. He was a founder of Descriptive Psychology Press in 1989 and has published *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* Volumes 5 through 10, and the on-going series *The Collected Works of Peter G. Ossorio*. He has contributed to the conceptual foundations of Descriptive Psychology in a number of articles in Advances, including Communities (1981), Organizations (1990) and Being, Becoming and Belonging (1998). In 2007 he founded the Descriptive Psychology Institute, which he serves as Executive Director. He is an internationally known consultant and coach with over forty years of experience helping organizations grow and succeed. Chairman of The Putman Group in Ann Arbor, Michigan, he has personally coached over 1000 leaders in hundreds of client organizations, ranging from giants among the Fortune 100 to one person firms. Some specific organizations he has served include IBM, Deloitte & Touche, Ford Motor Company, Nike, Bell Labs, Health Partners of Minneapolis, The University of Michigan, AT&T, and the United States Department of Defense.

Mary K. Roberts is a writer in Boulder, Colorado. She received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Colorado, Boulder in 1980 and practiced as a clinical psychologist for nine years. She then earned her M.S. in computer

science from the University of Colorado and worked as a software engineer for eight years. She has served twice as President of the Society for Descriptive Psychology and as a member of the Editorial Board for *Advances in Descriptive Psychology*. She also created the Society's first web site and served as the first Webmaster. Her recent work in Descriptive Psychology focuses on understanding a range of world reconstructive phenomena, including dreams, imaginary companions, and worlds of uncertain status.

Lauren Saternus, earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Duke University in 2006. She graduated from Illinois State University with a Specialist degree in School Psychology in 2009. Lauren is a Nationally Certified School Psychologist and currently works in the Illinois public school system and in private practice.

Tiffany Tyson, BA worked with Professor Keith Davis on two studies of love relationships during her senior year at the University of South Carolina.

Samantha Walley, at the time of this research, was an undergraduate student in the Department of Psychology at Illinois State University. She graduated in 2007.

Ralph Wechsler, Ph.D.'s interests in psychosis, psychological trauma, and suicidal behavior started while working on an emergency psychiatric service during his graduate training at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Under the direction of Professor Peter G. Ossorio, in 1983 he completed his doctoral dissertation on the relationship between personality characteristics and manic states. After completing his training, he worked primarily in inpatient settings, including a long-term inpatient unit that focused on psychotic disorders or complex personality disorders. Since coming to the Denver V.A. Medical Center in 1990, Dr. Wechsler continued working with individuals with psychotic disorders as well as posttraumatic stress disorder. In 1995, he was President of the Society and spoke about trauma in his presidential address. He also served as the Director of Psychology Training from 1997-2001 and as the Director of Inpatient Mental Health Services from 1996-2010. Dr. Wechsler is currently the Aftercare Coordinator for the PTSD Residential Treatment Program at the Denver Veterans Administration Medical Center, where he provides Cognitive Processing Therapy-focused aftercare services (including telemental health technologies) to graduates of the 7-week program. In addition, he maintains a private practice of psychotherapy and assessment with adults and adolescents. He is also on the faculty in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Colorado.

Index

D

E

F

G

H

I

J

K

L

M

N

O

P

R

S

T

U

V

W

Z