

**Development of Self in Sociocultural Context: Building a Conceptual Bridge Between  
Psychoanalysis and Cultural Psychology**

Uri Goldin

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of  
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology  
In partial fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Psychology**

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## **Abstract**

### **Development of Self in Sociocultural Context: Building a Conceptual Bridge Between Psychoanalysis and Cultural Psychology**

Uri Goldin

Since its conception by Freud, psychoanalysis has evolved into a diverse and rich field incorporating different perspectives. It is suggested that the progression of psychoanalytic thought takes the direction of incorporating environmental factors early in development and throughout life. In this paper, the development of a self, as it emerges within a sociocultural context, is investigated. Until recently, Psychoanalysis has mostly failed to address cultural differences and the impact of culture on character formation and functioning. This dissertation reviews the different approaches to culture and critiques the relatively consistent absence of reference to cultural context within which all psychoanalytic meaning is generated, and elaborates on the ways in which cultural psychology may contribute to our understanding of character formation and personality functioning.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Historically, psychoanalysis has failed to adequately address cultural differences and their impact on character formation and functioning. This tendency has been a tradition from the time when Freud stressed the universality of the Oedipus complex. Throughout the many theoretical changes, viewing “other” societies as primitive, and as psychologically underdeveloped has been persistent in psychoanalytic theory (Mattei, 1996).

Since psychoanalysis was first conceived by Freud, many approaches, schools, and perspectives have developed as part of the field. Freud’s original topographical drive theory was modified later into a structurally based conceptualization of the personality (Freud, 1920, 1933). The focus then shifted to the ego, with its regulatory, modulatory and reality-based functions, as well as the various defense mechanisms employed by the ego to manage and utilize a functioning self (Freud, 1936; Hartmann, 1939). Object relations shifted the focus from the ego to the relational realm (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). Self-psychology focused on the narcissistic needs of the individual (Kohut, H. 1971, 1977), and the relational and intersubjectivist schools emphasized self and other configurations in everyday social interactions. (Benjamin, 1995).

These developments, in theory, create a continuum of the progressive incorporation of the environment into the psychodynamics of the individual. This paper will focus on these shifts in theory as they address (or often fail to, and therefore necessitate a discussion of) the development and functioning of the experience of self and other, as it emerges in a sociocultural context.

In a paper addressing the traditional psychoanalytic outlook on culture, Mattei (1996) writes

The attempt to examine the relationship between the “social” and the “individual” has frequently led to a *deemphasis* of culture in psychoanalytic inquiry. Culture comes to be perceived as an outward layer as opposed to the more important core of the psyche...in its extreme, some psychoanalysts have dismissed social dynamics as a screen or stage for the playing out of the intrapsychic ... consequently, psychoanalysis has often been criticized for neglecting the sociocultural context in which the psyche develops (p.223).

For example, in his introduction to the new paper edition of his classic *The Interpersonal World of the Human Infant*, Daniel Stern (2000) responds to a critique from social-constructionists that his study was decontextualized “because I do not examine how the assumptions, methods, and nature of this local culture (which I share) determine the results of the study and hence, ultimately, the theory that emerges from it.” (p. xxvi). He continues to say

I agree with much of this social-constructionist critique...I count on the social constructionists to write about it, but to have done so myself in the depth required to do justice to the effort would have resulted in my writing a different book (p. xxvi).

This sense of a lurking threat of ending up with something inherently different than what one has intended to demonstrate seems to prevail in the way psychoanalytic theory has shied away from a more pluralistic approach implied by introducing cultural constituents to theory.

Jessica Benjamin (1995), in *Like Subjects, Love Objects*, remarks about “the surprising development of a new openness to opposing ideas and pluralistic perspectives, a desire among different groups to join the argument, to confront their differences and consider them seriously” (p. 2). Unlike Stern, I believe that contextualizing developmental



contributions in sociocultural contexts would not necessarily create “a whole different book,” but rather provide a better understanding of such development.

Reading developmental psychoanalysis within the framework of a mostly relativist (rather than a universalist) interpretive model (Shweder, 1991), will advance a discussion of how psychoanalysis may be understood as “the science of the unique, the particular, as it deals with the distinct truth of a subject” (Golan, 2002, p. 12).

This project attempts to contextualize developmental psychoanalysis within a sociocultural context. This dissertation will utilize theories many of which have evolved within a postmodern understanding of human behavior. The evolving discipline of cultural psychology has incorporated such theories as social constructivism. Key concepts in this field, such as the construction of social phenomena into meaning, symbolic events, and a subjective reality, may be elaborated in the context of culture and broaden the discussion of development to diverse cultural realities.

## CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHOD

### Research Questions

Based on a thorough review of the literature pertaining to the area under discussion, this dissertation will examine the following research questions:

1. How is sociocultural context manifest in the formation of a self?
2. Why have psychoanalytic theories of development thus far failed to adequately address sociocultural factors in personality formation and functioning?
3. In what ways do cultural and social constructs, values, and attitudes become embedded in the intrapsychic formation of character?

### Method

This is a theoretical dissertation which will examine and attempt to integrate what have largely emerged as two distinct fields, psychoanalysis and cultural psychology, as they pertain to a specific problem, character formation. The conceptual basis of this dissertation is rooted in theory, and as such, a theoretical dissertation is essentially inseparable from a literature review. The structure of this dissertation is designed to encompass areas of investigation which will adequately address the above research questions.

This dissertation will address the above questions through a critical review of the literature, followed by a theoretical analysis of the findings. I will examine the various ways in which psychoanalysis has historically conceptualized cultural differences. An examination of the major premises in the psychoanalytic literature on character development will follow. I will study those aspects of psychoanalytic thought that attend to the cultural in personality

development and functioning, examine the different indications of cultural variance made by psychoanalytic schools of thought, and critically evaluate the depth and level of integration of the concept of culture within psychoanalytic theory.

Contributions to the study of personality-in-culture in the evolving discipline of cultural psychology will be examined, as they pertain to the understanding of character formation. Following these explorations, this study intends to instigate an integrative analysis of the disciplines, and evaluate the potentiality of a conceptual bridge between them.

CHAPTER 3: THE FOUNDATIONS: EARLY PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPLORATIONS  
OF CULTURE IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S PSYCHOLOGY

Sigmund Freud

At the very introduction to his essay on Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego", Freud contends that

The relations of an individual to his parents and to his brothers and sisters, to the object of his love, and to his physician- in fact all the relations which have hitherto been the chief subject of psycho-analytic research - may claim to be considered as social phenomena (1922, p.69)

Freud had developed a complex and thorough body of theory in which he had consistently and throughout much of his career attempted to explain the relationship between the individual and his or her society. He continues:

group psychology is therefore concerned with the individual man as a member of a race, of a nation, of a caste, of a profession, of an institution, or as a component part of a crowd of people who have been organized into a group at some particular time for some definite purpose (p. 70).

Freud also put out the question: "What then, is a group? How does it acquire the capacity for exercising such a decisive influence over the mental life of the individual?" (p. 72). Freud's perspective on this relationship, however, seems to preclude the developmental phase of the individual within the group. He conceptualizes the group as providing the conditions for an individual to "allow him to throw off the repressions of his unconscious instinctual impulses," (p. 74) but fails to discuss the introduction of the individuals' psyche to the group as he is born into it.

The group, in his theory, is set for a purpose, and therefore society and cultural milieu at large are precluded. In this respect, individuals are seen as relatively developmentally mature adults who come together into a group, and after which “all their individual inhibitions fall away and all the cruel, brutal and destructive instincts...are stirred up to find free gratification.” (p. 84).

Freud did acknowledge the establishment of language as a social creation/achievement, in his view of “accounts of collective mental life.” (p. 88) He conceptualizes the social realm as one which an individual enters, and his psychic functioning is somehow modified, the individual’s “liability to affect becomes extraordinarily intensified, while his intellectual ability is markedly reduced.” (Freud, 1951, p. 89). For these purposes Freud makes use of libido theory to explain libidinal ties between group members, primarily in the form of identification. Freud conceptualizes this process as

The earliest and original form of emotional tie; it often happens that under the conditions in which symptoms are constructed, that is, where there is repression and where the mechanisms of the unconscious are dominant, object-choice is turned back into identification-the ego assumes the characteristics of the object (Freud, 1951, p. 107).

When Freud theorizes about the function of the superego in groups, his thought seems closest to the idea of cultural influences on development. In Freud’s theory, the superego is mainly characterized by, and connected to, moral conscience and censorship as it plays a chief influence in repression. The superego “gradually gathers up from the influences of the environment the demands which the ego cannot always rise to.” (p. 110). Freud equates this regression from object tie to identification with a mental activity of an earlier stage “such as we are not surprised to find among savages or children.” (p. 117). He subsumes that this particular characteristic is essential to all common groups, though it can be

disciplined in what he labeled organized and artificial groups such as the army and the church.

The individual's tendency to function with a group is further explained by Freud as the herd instinct, which is earlier experienced as anxiety of being alone. Freud further connects this tendency to envy generated in siblings, in which the hostility is transformed into identification, concluding that "social feelings are based upon the reversal of what was first a hostile feeling into a positively-toned tie in the nature of an identification." (Freud, 1951, p. 121).

In Totem and Taboo, Freud hypothesizes that social organizations, religion included, are the result of the transformation of the violence connected with the killing of the leader (chief) transformed into "a community of brothers" (1950, p. 6). Freud continued to conceptualize social organization as a transformation from a primal horde, a group whose psychology he refers to as "the dwindling of the conscious individual personality, the focusing of thoughts and feelings into a common direction, the predominance of the affective side of the mind and of unconscious psychical life" (Freud, 1950, p. 35), equating the state of regression to a primitive mental activity.

For Freud the primal horde signified the primary process which may be revived in any group formation "just as primitive man survives potentially in every individual" (Freud, 1950, p. 71). For Freud, the dichotomy of primitive versus civilized marks his understanding of the social as well as the psychological.

Nevertheless, as Freud observes "an individual man of today" (Freud, 1950, p. 129), he realizes the complexity and multiplicity of social phenomenon:

Each individual is a component part of numerous groups, he is bound by ties of identification in many directions, and he has built up his ego ideal upon the most various models. Each individual therefore has a share in numerous group minds - those of his race, of his class, of his creed, of his nationality, etc. (p. 129).

Yet, he continues immediately thereafter “and he can also raise himself above them to the extent of having a scarp of independence and originality” (1951, p. 129). Making it most evident that Freud did not think of ego development within a social context but rather despite of social groups dangerously primitive constituents.

He concludes that while in many individuals the ego ideal substitutes for the group ideal, which is in turn not sufficiently separated from the ego, the individual is described as either identifying with a group entailing a degree of loss of his individuality, or is able to differentiate from it and somehow function outside of it. Thus Freud talks of a “libidinal structure of groups” made possible by “identification, and putting the object in the place of the ego ideal.” (p. 133).

In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1961) Freud continues to explore the “irremediable antagonism between the demands of instinct and the restrictions of civilization” (Strachey, 1961, p. 60). In this paper, Freud alludes to the avoidance of unpleasure as opening the path to becoming a member of the human community. Yet, the comfort of society includes the taming of the instinctual impulse, so that its aim will not encounter frustration in the external world, resulting in the sublimation of the instincts.

Moreover, Freud contends “it was discovered that a person becomes neurotic because he cannot tolerate the amount of frustration which society imposes on him in the service of its cultural ideals.” (p. 86). Again, it is clear here that Freud understood the social sphere as making demands upon the psyche from the outside, and later on as it was

internalized by the superego, yet the idea of the ego itself as a manifestation of its social environment was alien to his writings.

In this paper (1930) Freud writes about civilization (versus the horde in his Group Psychology paper) as an element which encourages humans towards “higher” mental activities, such as intellectual, scientific, and artistic achievements. The value-laden ways in which Freud understands such human achievements reflect the views of his time and appear strikingly foreign to the ways in which culture is understood in a postmodern era.

Freud mentions another aspect of what he calls civilization, which appears to resonate with the field of cultural psychology. He writes:

The last, but certainly not the least important, of the characteristic features of civilization remains to be assessed: the manner in which the relationships of men to one another, their social relationships, are regulated - relationships which affect a person as a neighbor, as a source of help, as another person’s sexual object, as a member of a family and of a state (p. 94-95).

The element of civilization (i.e. culture) as a quality that regulates social relationships was therefore not alien to Freud. Yet he conceptualizes this quality solely in terms of power dynamics. “The members of the community restrict themselves in their possibilities of satisfaction, whereas the individual knew no such restrictions.” (p. 95) The civilization and the individual therefore are in need of adaptation and modification, in his view. This leads to his idea of a “cultural frustration” which he views as dominating social relationships and producing sublimation of instinct.

In his attempts to investigate the origin of the social realm, Freud asserted that human beings simply discovered it was useful to live together, adding that through such arrangements “genital satisfaction...took up its quarters as a permanent lodger.” (p. 99). Freud therefore views communal living as founded on the “compulsion to work” and “the



power of love,” (p. 101). The first based on improving one’s fate, the second based on the unwillingness to be deprived of a satisfying sexual object. Freud is therefore developing a theory of “cultural development” by “tracing it to the inertia of the libido” (p. 108). The inhibition of libido is thus understood: “civilized man has exchanged a portion of his possibilities of happiness for a portion of security.” (p. 115).

The inhibition of libido is then supplemented by the means in which civilization inhibits aggression. The superego is the agency which carries this function, in the form of conscience: “civilization, therefore, obtains mastery over the individual’s dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city” (p. 124). Again, we see in Freud’s theorizing a dichotomous sensibility of man and his social environment. The two are inherently in conflict which results in compromise formations in the individual as one collides and clashes with civilization’s demands and prohibitions on oneself. After all, Freud’s dynamic psychology is premised on conflict, and in his explorations of the social, this remains the fundamental organizing concept. Thus, the authority of society, immersed in anxiety, guilt, and the need for punishment, all fueled by the aggressive impulses, are internalized through the establishment of the superego.

This is one of the few times in which Freud introduces a clearly developmental characteristic in his discussion of the social realm. Here, the superego is viewed as “the new authority” (p. 123) taking over the external world, as the monitoring, watchful body over the ego. “It (i.e. the superego) is simply a continuation of the severity of the external authority, to which it has succeeded and which it has in part replaced.” (p. 127). This agency brings with it

a sense of guilt to which the ego is continuously exposed and which Freud assumes to play an essential part in the function of culture in an individual's life.

Guilt is inherent in the conflict between the libidinal and the aggressive which one is bound to face in a social context, and which Freud believed one may find hard to tolerate. This sense of guilt, Freud contends, is the price we pay for "our advance in civilization" (p. 138) as it means a loss of happiness resulting from the unconscious need for punishment.

Freud sets out to find comparisons between the psychology of the individual and that of the social order:

When, however, we look at the relation between the process of human civilization and the development or educative process of individual human beings, we shall conclude without much hesitation that the two are very similar in nature, if not the very same process applied to different kinds of object (p. 140).

He finds similarities between the individual superego and what he describes as "the precepts of the prevailing cultural super-ego. The cultural ideal and demands are seen as coinciding with that of the individual, with no sensitivity to the resources of the ego in its mastery over the id." (p. 142).

Towards the end of his paper *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud voices a concern which exemplifies the conflicting dichotomy between human instinct and the social sphere: "The fateful question for the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent their cultural development will succeed in mastering the disturbance of their communal life by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction." (p. 145).

In *The Future of an Illusion* (1961), Freud's discussion of culture is embedded within class, and the inaccessibility of "the masses" to satisfaction afforded by culture. Defining

nature as opposed to culture, he understood civilization's principle task to be defending against nature's powerful influence.

It is here that Freud's work is most clearly understood in the context of his era, which incorporated values of the modern versus the primitive, which in our postmodern minds seem prejudiced and distorted. This divide is also what seems to have thwarted a deeper examination of development within a society, rather than against it, so to speak, in Freud's work.

Freud believed that individuals are shaped by a fundamental antagonism between the id, which includes wishes and desires, and societal prohibitions. These inhibitions and social values are internalized by the individual as part of superego development (Mattei, 1996). Thus, it is evident that the impact of social and cultural elements has existed within psychoanalytic theory from the outset.

### Carl Jung

Jung's discussion of stages of life is permeated with comments on different geographical areas, cultures and age groups, yet it appears he does not organize these into a coherent theory. He compared the power of older people in indigenous tribes, who have always been the "guardians of the mysteries and the laws" (Jung, 1930, in Campbell, 1971, p. 18) to what he identifies as an American ideal of the parent to be put side by side with his or her child.

Jung defined his distinctive concept of the collective unconscious as follows: "the collective unconscious is a part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not, like the latter, owe its existence to personal

experience” (Jung, 1936, in Campbell, 1971, p. 59). He contends the contents of the collective unconscious has never been conscious (and later repressed), and has never been individually acquired. He related the themes of this part of the psyche to mythological motifs, or collective representations. It is easy to identify in this concept elements that connect it to the cultural embeddedness of the human psyche, as it is studied in this dissertation.

In attempting to examine Jung’s stages of human development, one is bound to struggle with a very distinct language of a metapsychology unique to analytical psychology. Jung understood our psychological existence in childhood to be transformed in puberty, the latter he conveys as psychic birth. Adolescence, in Jungian theory, is the second stage of life, in which one is confronted with the demands of life. It is during this time, he believes, that achievement and other ideals motivate one to broaden and consolidate oneself.

Jung distinguished between outer social marks, which he said lie outside in society in the collective consciousness, from what he felt was collective psyche outside the individual that is unconscious and concealed. The relationship between the individual and society was used by him to describe the idea of a collective unconscious: “just as the individual is not merely a unique and separate being, but is also a social being, so the human psyche is not self-contained and wholly an individual phenomenon, but also a collective one.” (Jung, 1928, In Campbell, 1971, p. 93). He continues: “in as much as there are differentiations corresponding to race, tribe, and even family, there is also a collective psyche limited to race, tribe, and family over and above the ‘universal collective psyche.’” (Jung, 1928, In Campbell, 1971, p. 94).

The concepts of individuation and the collective unconscious, both pillars of Jungian thought, converge when he writes about the development of a personality within community.

Jung believed that as one develops a personality, which he believed was important to be seen within the context of life in a community, it is under threat of a premature dissolution by an invasion of the collective psyche.

He writes: “for the development of personality, then, strict differentiation from the collective psyche is absolutely necessary, since partial or blurred differentiation leads to an immediate melting away of the individual in the collective.” (Jung, 1928, In Campbell, 1971, p. 99). Here, Jung delineates a dichotomy between self and other, in which boundaries, at least at a certain stage, are permeable and weak and need to be created amid a “collective other” and oneself. At the same time, he asserts, “the personal grows out of the collective psyche and is intimately bound up with it.” (Jung, 1928, In Campbell, 1971, p. 102).

He perceives a tension between the individual and the collective, where the collective pulls for the mediocre, the vegetated state. The smaller the society, Jung posits, the better the individuality of its members is safeguarded. Jung points to a parallel process to that of society and the individual in the influence of the collective unconscious upon the individual psyche. In what may appear as an early statement anticipating social learning theory, Jung contends that “collective psychology cannot dispense with imitation,” (Jung, 1928, In Campbell, 1971, p. 103). yet he warns of an unconscious, compulsive bondage to the environment.

Thus, it appears Jung considered development within a social context, yet he stripped it of its complexity, attributing it to a collective unconscious, and perceiving it with a dichotomized tension between annihilation and isolation of individuality within a society. Jung viewed the conscious personality as an arbitrary segment of the collective psyche, felt to be personal by a particular person. This segment, which he termed the persona, is only mistakenly seen as something individual, hence it is only a mask of the collective psyche,

which feigns individuality. A persona is only a compromise between the individual and the society, and therefore nothing real, Jung contends. In relation to the essential individuality it is only a secondary reality, or a compromise formation.

### Alfred Adler

Alfred Adler has allocated many efforts to developing a theory of personality and human development. Much of his work has been influenced by his ideas about inferiority and compensation. His work was very amenable to the contingencies of the social environment, and he constructed different concepts in his considerations of social influences on development, primarily the concept of social interest (1929).

In writing on compensation and the social environment (1917), Adler points out the significance of what he calls mutual interaction and the need to “observe phenomena in their context.” (Adler 1917, in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 27). He maintained that the expression of compensation is “limited by the social environment and by the culture” and is permitted by “the expressions of the psyche to unfold only when they can fit themselves into the frame of the culture.” (Adler 1917, in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 27).

Adler, as early as 1914, suggested, “the ego drives must be understood, not as something rigidified and separate, but as the tension and attitudes toward the environment.” He immediately continues, “striving toward power, toward dominance, toward being above” (Adler 1914, in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 64) (in congruence with his ideas of masculine protest). Unlike Freud, which attempted to explain the social by the psychology of the individual, Adler recognizes “the constant factor is the culture, the society, and its institutions.” (Adler 1914, in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 64).

Adler asserted “in addition to regarding the individual’s life as a unity, we must also take it together with its context of social relations.” (Adler 1929, in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 127). Adler’s original standpoint is antithetical to that of Freud. Whereas Freud examined the community by breaking it down to the libidinal strivings of its individuals, Adler’s originating stance was that “before the individual life of man there was the community. In the history of human culture, there is not a single form of life which was not conducted as social. Never has man appeared otherwise than in society.” (Adler 1929, in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 128). This gave rise to the notion of Adler’s social embeddedness of the individual. Adler has made such statements as equating reality with society: “reality, that is society, the community” (Adler, 1914, in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 133).

Adler’s concept of social interest integrates his ideas of striving for superiority and perfection with the individual’s responsiveness to reality, “which is primarily the social situation” (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p.126). Adler asserts that social interest comes into being only in the social context, as the child’s subjective understanding of it. He writes: “the mother is the first other person whom the child experiences. Here is the first opportunity for the cultivation of the innate social potentiality.” (Adler, 1935, in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p.135). In this quote, Adler points to the early introduction of culture to the psyche.

His ideas of social interest are closely related to the notion of libido, as he attempted to substitute instinct with social interest. The social interest therefore, much like libido, is assumed to involve the investment an individual makes in his environment.

## Erich Fromm

Erich Fromm wrote about neurosis as the outcome of a struggle of the child against the breaking of his will, of his need for freedom and self-development. He stressed that neurosis has a 'social genesis' in that the authority exercised by parents is intimately related to the prevailing patterns of the society. The metaphor of a struggle between self-actualization and the culture introduced by the parents is therefore once again encountered (such as we have seen in Freud's and Jung's depictions).

In his writing on character, Fromm emphasized social factors as the most significant factors in the etiology of characterological differences. He also spoke of social processes as having a social character developed out of common experiences and living (1941). The focus of psychoanalysis itself, he suggested, is on how the individual's life experiences, consisting mainly, though not exclusively, of early childhood experiences. As such, early life experiences in the form of societal norms influences one's view of reality. (delAmo, 1994).

Fromm explicitly stated he attempted to use psychoanalysis as an interpretive tool to show how the economic basis is translated into an ideological superstructure. He says we can form certain types of character structures which "are roughly representative for various groups of individuals" (Fromm, 1962, p.77). He provides us with such titles as the receptive, the exploitative, the hoarding, the marketing, and the productive character orientation, all types resonate with his Marxist emphasis on economics. Fromm also discussed nations, societies, and classes as having characteristic character structures- which he terms social character. Like individual character, Fromm poses, "social character" speaks to the specific way in which energy is channelized.



He understands it to be an essential element in the functioning of society. He defines this concept as “the nucleus of the character structure which is shared by most members of the same culture” (1962, p. 78), and can only be understood in reference to its function. He discusses the operation of a society and the influences which come upon it, such as climate, size of population, political and geographical factors, cultural traditions and influences, industrial techniques, and methods of production. All of which pertain to specific social structures rather than a given “society” in general. A society, Fromm postulates, can only exist within its given structure, and its members need to function in ways required by their social systems. As such, the continuation and survival of the society is dependent upon the function “to mold and channel human energy within a given society” (Fromm, 1962, p.79). Here Fromm essentially discusses the relation between society and culture. In considering character structure as molded by the role which the individual has to play in his culture, Fromm determines that the family may be considered the psychic agency of society. This is, Fromm asserts, the institution which has the function of transmitting the requirements of society to the growing child. He asserts that the character of most parents is to some degree the expression of the social character. Fromm’s theoretical investigations are rooted in the socio-economic structure of society. The term of social character he coined is specifically intended to be “the intermediary between the socio-economic structure and the ideas and ideals prevalent in a society” (Fromm, 1962, p.87).

Fromm also refers to what he called a social unconscious- areas of repression common to most members of a given society. He understood Freud’s concept of repression to hold a social element in that the more society develops into “higher forms of civilization”

(1962, p. 92) the more instinctive desires become incompatible with the existing social norms.

Fromm advocated that Marx was able to give a concrete and precise expression to the idea of the function of human consciousness and the objective factors influencing it. In short, it is not the consciousness determining life, but life is what determines the consciousness, or the person's social existence, despite beliefs one may hold about oneself. The production of ideas, conceptions and consciousness is directly interwoven with the material activity, the language of real life. Marx, Fromm contends, has observed the connection between consciousness and language and emphasized the social nature of consciousness.

Marx's contextualizes consciousness in a person's practice of life, mode of producing livelihood, mode of production, distribution and consumption. The fundamental difference, as Fromm depicts it, is that Freud, unlike, Marx, believed that man can overcome repression without social changes. Fromm, advocating a Marxist understanding, attempts to show how consciousness is determined by social forces:

For any experience to come into awareness, it must be comprehensible in accordance with the categories in which conscious thought is organized. I can become aware of any occurrence, inside or outside of myself, only when it can be linked with the system of categories in which I perceive (1962, p. 114).

The whole language, Fromm asserts, contains an attitude of life, and is a frozen expression of experiencing life in a certain way. Fromm states that the need to be related, and to find union with others is essential for humans to stay sane. He views it as the strongest passion, stronger than sex and often stronger than one's wish to live (1962, p.126). Thus, individuals go through many extremes to identify with their groups. Fromm goes further to

state that uncovering the unconscious to experience our humanity must extend to the uncovering of the social unconscious, and appraising one's own society.

In another paper (1976) Fromm places Freud within a philosophy of humanism and enlightenment, in its universal form, and not as it is manifest in various cultures. He understands Freud's conception of man to be the self-isolated, self-sufficient kind who has to enter into relations with others in order that they may mutually fulfill their needs. Like Marx's conception, man is seen as driven for satisfaction. The family itself, Fromm states, in its whole psychological and social structure, with all its specific educational goals and emotional attitudes, is the product of a specific social and class structure. He asserts that "in the interplay of interacting psychic drives and economic conditions, the latter have primacy" (1976, p. 148). And the family is the medium through which the economic situation exerts its formative influence on the individual's psyche. The human psyche remains a psyche that has been modified by the social process, and psychoanalysis, Fromm asserts, can help explain this historical materialism.

A child's object relationships gradually change, as his or her bodily growth proceeds, followed by increased demands, gradually increasing one's encounters with reality that is not always gratifying. While development entails gradual exposure to environmental factors, it also marks the physical maturation of the individual. It is the family, Fromm contends, the medium through which character formation is oriented towards the surrounding society, that determines to what degree "pregenital strivings are suppressed or intensified, and the manner in which sublimations or reaction formations are stimulated" (Fromm, 1976, p.177). Character development, Fromm concludes, involves the adaptation of the libido structure to a given social structure, first through family and later through other social interactions.

## Erik Erikson

A human being, Erikson posits, is at all times an organism, a personal self, and a member of society, and he or she is continuously involved in all three processes of organization. It is this distinction between the individual and social selves that separates and differentiates Erikson's postulations from the present approach. He delineates three processes: the somatic, that of the self, and that of the social. Though he criticized the three processes as in need of integration, he continued to reason within this division.

Another aspect of his writing is that Erikson approaches culture and society as a neo-Freudian. As such, his views of psychopathology or symptoms are as manifestations of a specific psychic structure (i.e. compromise formation). A contemporary relational perspective focuses on subjective experience to understand psychic organizations, pathological or not, instead.

Erikson mentions the important aspect of Freud's theory which deals with sublimation, and its cultural course. In his essay, Erikson writes about native-American tribes and their deep psychological differences from the Caucasian majority, specifically around issues of child rearing. He analyzes the dynamics of a conquered minority confronted by, and from a cultural standpoint, defending against, the intrusion of an overbearing, threatening culture of the majority.

His discussion, though illuminated with psychoanalytic language (mostly Freudian metapsychology), is primarily within the realm of an anthropological investigation of cultural conflicts between two clashing cultures (the Anglo-Saxon majority and Native- and African-American minorities). Erikson describes the ways in which we are all susceptible to, and

indeed inflicted by, a system of images, ideals, and negative identifications which ultimately relate to cultural and social phenomena of race, culture and gender. He posits that the unconscious negative identification is ultimately manifested in the sphere of an outside ethnic group or disadvantaged minority.

Along the lines of a Freudian metapsychology, Erikson views differing cultural systems as allocating different venues and vicissitudes to the psychosexual stages of libidinal unfolding. For example, as he describes a Sioux ritual involving the man piercing a rod through his chest, he describes it as turning onto himself the infantile instinct to destroy his mother's elusive breast. Regardless of its validity, Erikson therefore reduces the varied cultural phenomena he encounters to the organizing metapsychology of libido theory.

Erikson suggested that in forming a sense of self, the individual incorporates the topology of his/her social environment and his/her image of a physical self, as it was interpreted to him/her in its social meaning. Thus, Erikson advocates investigating the relationship between a patient's childhood and his/her family history of geographical whereabouts as they reflect the inclusion of these areas in the Anglo-Saxon version of an American identity. He posits that the family's last stronghold of a sense of cultural identity should be the focal point.

Erikson identifies a continuation in the developing ego-identity between the stages of early childhood, when the body-ego and parental representations established particular meanings, to later stages, in which a variety of social roles are adjoined. The ego's growing sense of potency, according to Erikson, is a sign for a healthy society that allows the gradual integration of the individual with the structure of social institutions.

In his discussion of the growth of the self, Erikson describes a developing sense of agency in the child over his or her body as a socially significant achievement. This movement towards what he calls a social prestige, in which the individual learns to function within a well defined communal future, is essentially a description of ego development within a specific social reality. Thus, Erikson understands development in social context and towards an identity within a group as motivated by the experience of a sense of agency and control. An ego-identity is thus carved out of achievements that hold a meaning within a specific culture.

Erikson, much like Freud, makes a psychological distinction between a primitive and an industrial society. In a primitive society, according to him, there is training and an expectation for the child to take a responsible part in the social life, whereas the child in an industrial society is faced with no such expectations. He also posits that the image of man in modern civilization is more abstract and broadened. In modern culture, Erikson notes, new syntheses of economical and emotional securities are continuously being explored and negotiated, as identities are based on more incorporated elements.

Erikson suggests that different civilizations at different points in history make use of the different stages of identity development as delineated by him, to create and sustain a narrative that integrates the community.

Erikson posited personal identity with social stratification. Anchoring the problem of ego-identity within cultural identity, he suggests that it is at the end of adolescence that different stages are integrated.

Erikson further attempted at portraying a prototypical development of an American identity. This attempt, to this examiner, appears to be a downfall in his investigations, as it

often amounts to statements that are often stereotypical and clichéd. In his concluding remarks, Erikson posits the question of the extent to which the individual will project his or her infantile anxiety onto the social processes which his/her historical-geographical reality presents him/her with.

Ego psychology introduced an emphasis on character formation as it utilizes specific defensive styles. Erikson's work placed identity at the center of psychoanalytic inquiry, suggesting a lifelong progression of stages in the context of the individual's culture. Erikson's focus on identity, including minority identity, has expanded the psychoanalytic attention to the impact of culture on psychological development (Mattei, 1996).

## CHAPTER 4: PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

Developmental psychoanalytic theories, specifically those mostly recognized and accepted today, have on the most part relied on the object relational paradigm of self and other. Developmental theories have generally focused on the pre-oedipal period, i.e. the mother. A key concept in this field is the mother-child dyad, as well as the organization, or regulation of sense of self, or self-experience, and object constancy.

### Object Relations

*D.W. Winnicott*

Winnicott was a pediatrician, and his thought is developmental in its essence. Personalization, for Winnicott, has to do with the relationship between the growing child and his or her body. In “the location of cultural experience” (1971) he writes about the cultural experience as related to the capacity for creative play.

Winnicott approached the cultural space as “the potential space between the individual and the environment (originally the object)” (Winnicott, 1971, p. 8). This potential cultural space, according to Winnicott, is at the interplay between the infants’ experience of there being nothing but me, and there being objects outside ones omnipotent control. As the mother-child dyad develops, the mother, family and society are introduced into the cultural space.

This capacity he contrasts with psychic reality and the actual world in which one lives, and which can be objectively perceived. Developmentally, he traces these dynamics to



the potential space between the baby and its mother, between child and family, and between individual and society or the world. He related these to experiences that lead to trust, as it exists in the potential space between there being nothing but me and there being objects and phenomena outside omnipotent control.

A closely tied concept in Winnicott's writing is that of the holding environment. In his view, inadequate maternal care prevents the infant from coming into existence in the psychological sense. A good enough maternal care, Winnicott posits, is in a position to meet the infant's dependence. The mother's adaptation of herself to the needs of the infant makes possible the development of an intermediate area of transitional objects and transitional phenomena, allowing the infant the illusion that what it creates really exists. Retained later in life, Winnicott suggests, this experience is at the heart of religious and creative living. Winnicott writes: "the family has a clearly defined position at the place where the developing child meets the forces that operate in society" (1965, p.91).

Winnicott observed an existing confusion about the relative importance of personal and environmental influences in the development of the individual. Winnicott thought of early ego development as essentially being an act of integration. He observed the mastery of the infant in its development of reality as closely tied to the maternal care. The maternal ego, Winnicott postulates, implements the infant's ego and in that way makes it more stable. The primary stage in the development of the infant, Winnicott postulated, was that of holding. During this phase, Winnicott states, secondary processes, the dawn of intelligence and the beginning of mind as distinct from the psyche, and symbolic functioning take place. Maturity, Winnicott states, implies not only personal growth but also socialization, in which "the adult is able to identify with society without too great a sacrifice of personal

spontaneity” (1965, p. 83). Yet Winnicott asserts that independence is never absolute. It can be argued that the continuum of development, from dependence to independence Winnicott outlines is culturally bound. Winnicott ties it with the concept of identification, or the infant’s capacity for imagination, in the developing understanding of the mother’s separate existence. When a sense of not me, followed by a sense of me, is established, Winnicott postulates, the infant’s growth begins to take the form of a continuous interchange between inner and outer reality. “In ever-widening circles of social life the child identifies with society, because local society is a sample of the self’s personal world as well as being a sample of truly external phenomena” (Winnicott, 1965, p. 91), Though Winnicott does not go beyond this statement to study the nature of the connections between what he calls local society (i.e. the primary object) to the 'truly external phenomena' as interrelated elements in development.

Winnicott (1971) asserted that Freud, in his topography of the mind, did not have a place for the experience of things cultural. He viewed the existence of a cultural experience to be localized in the potential space between the individual and the environment (originally the object).

#### *Margaret Mahler*

Margaret Mahler refers to the psychological birth of the human infant (1975) as the separation-individuation process. She considered the principal psychological achievements of this process to take place in the period from about the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> month to the 30<sup>th</sup> or 36<sup>th</sup> month. This process refers to both adaptation and object relationship. The 1<sup>st</sup> subphase of the separation individuation process is called hatching, the second subphase practicing, the 3<sup>rd</sup>

rapprochement and the 4<sup>th</sup> consolidation of individuality and the beginning of emotional object constancy.

Mahler's developmental theory, like most psychoanalytic attempts, concerned itself mainly with the emergence of the sense of self. It assumed two basic points of reference from which the infant builds up his or her self-schemata: 1) his own feelings (or states), forming the primitive core of the self, on the one hand, and 2) his sensing of the care giving by the libidinal object. An important aspect of the development of object constancy and individuality is the concept of internalization, as the forerunner for the development of psychic structure.

The first step to identity formation, according to Mahler, takes place in self-object differentiation within the context of the mother-child dyad. The infant develops out of symbiosis, a period of psychological oneness with the mother. Similar to Winnicott, Mahler postulates that the libidinal availability of the mother, because of the emotional dependence of the child, facilitated the optimal unfolding of innate potentialities.

Mahler et al (1975) understand this process as a slowly unfolding intrapsychic process in which "the more or less normal adult, the experience of himself as both fully "in" and fully separate from, the "world out there" is taken for granted as a given for life (P. 3). This establishment of a sense of separateness from, and relation to, a world of reality is the main focus of the separation-individuation process taking place in the period from the fourth or fifth month to the thirtieth or thirty-sixth month.

Mahler understands separation and individuation as two complementary, yet distinct, developments. Separation refers to the child's emergence from a symbiotic fusion with the mother, and individuation refers to achievements "marking the child's assumption of his own

individual characteristics” (p. 4). The infant is seen as being born into adaptational demands made upon him or her from the outset, to be shaped by and shape himself to, his environment.

Separation-individuation is a process in which a sense of separateness from the mother is achieved, and through that, from the world at large. It suggests the development of the sense that I am before who I am, and as such considered the earliest phase of personality development. Mahler’s metaphor to this process described it as “hatching from the symbiotic mother-child common membrane” (p. 53). She hypothesized that symbiotic psychotic children were unable to use the mother as a real external object as a basis for developing a stable sense of separateness from, and relatedness to, the world of reality. Social interaction, in her theory, is a developmental achievement in the rapprochement phase, which allows for imitation, identification and mirroring. “The rapprochement child develops relationships with others in the environment besides father and mother” (p. 91).

In these theories the environment is consistently seen as an abstraction that is developmentally introduced into the child’s world at different stages of his development. A linear exposure to the “other” is suggested, beginning with the mother, then the father, the family, a community, the society, and the world at large. Who is this mother? what does she bring into this dyad, or membrane, other than a “good enough” ability to relate to her child? What does her imagination of a baby consist of? How does she imagine herself? Herself in relation to the child? How isolated is this mother from a world, how much does she reflect it and how much does she deject it? How is she constructed into this role and what does she bring with her?

The psychoanalytic literature on development writes about the mother in the dyad from the evolving experience of the infant and her capacity to imagine, contain, facilitate and hold. While this is accepted, it is hypothesized that even from the experience of the infant, the mother brings much more to this encounter, or dyad.

Object relations theories have placed the emphasis on the relational matrix (Mattei, 1996) of the developing psyche, forming the basis of our internal lives and the external world. American object relational schools emphasized the differentiation process from, and within a relationship with a primary other (Mahler, 1975) From this perspective, our parents' "fantasies, thoughts, wishes, and anxieties about the color of the infant, effect how we 'put together' who we are" (Mattei, 1996, p.230).

### Self Psychology

#### *Joseph Lichtenberg*

Joseph Lichtenberg wrote about personality developmental from a self-psychological perspective. His goal was to offer an alternative to drive theory that accommodates the developmental insights of infant research. He wrote of five stages affecting the sense of self from birth to age 6. (0-2 mo, 2-8 mo, 9-15 mo, 12 mo and 18 mo-6yrs).

He postulated that development depends on the intersubjective context, and cannot be conceptualized in a linear manner. He relied on attachment theory as a developmental perspective through which psychoanalytic theory is amplified. He suggests that through play, the child's life is organized in the form of symbolic representations in activities during which objects or words are used as substitutes.

His concept of self and developmental stages is closely related to five motivational systems that develop in infancy as a response to a basic need, each involving particular affects. The motivational systems he observes are: 1) developing in response to physiological requirements, 2) attachment and affiliation requirements, 3) exploration and assertion needs, 4) withdrawal and antagonism and 5) sensual enjoyment and later sexual excitement. Human development, in his view, follows the development of experience and evidencing four properties: self-organizing, self-stabilizing, dialectic tension, and hierarchical arrangements.

Lichtenberg asserted that infant research shows that the primary effect of the reappraisal of classical analysis was to refocus analytic attention on development from the Oedipal stage to the early life of the toddler. He describes such factors in development as self-differentiation, development of self-images, the integration of the self-images with the experience of the cohesion of the self, and the integrative effect on general psychic functioning which follows the cohesion. These self-images, Lichtenberg postulates, are seen as developing from body-part images, to the experiencing of the self and object as separate, and ultimately self-images which arise from grandiose images and idealized self-objects. A resulting cohesive sense of self is seen as having continuity in time, space, and state.

#### *Joseph Palombo*

Joseph Palombo (2001) has also approached developmental theory from self-psychology. His main focus is learning disorders and how they relate to disorders of the self and the child's development in broad terms. He conceptualizes disorders of the self as occurring at the intersection between the context within which the child is raised and the neuropsychological strengths and weaknesses he or she brings to that context.

His developmental perspective is based on both self psychology and the narrative metaphor, which involves the ways in which individuals attach specific meanings to phenomena to which they are exposed, and the ways in which they organize those meanings into themes within their self-narratives. The main aspects of his developmental theory focuses on development of meaning and the organization of the meanings of experience into self-narratives.

The self, according to Palombo, may be distinguishable but not separable from others. He postulates that to be a self is to be a possible member of some human community. The development of a sense of self is based on the meanings conferred on self-experiences by the community within which the infant is raised. The cohesive self as a structure, Palombo asserts, may be conceived as the totality of the sets of meanings woven together into a coherent whole called the narrative self.

He asserted that learning disorders do not occur in a vacuum, but rather children exist in an environment that is significant to their functioning. He focused therefore on the sense of self, the person's subjective experience, rather than a "self" per se. He posited that "to be a self is to be a member of a human community that constitutes the context in which the child is raised" (2001, p. 27). He believes that a person cannot be separated from the context within which he or she is embedded, though he or she can certainly be distinguished. A context interpenetrates one's experiences, and constitutes the social, cultural, and historical milieu.

A self constitutes 'endowments' that are embedded in context, which in turn construe both the physical and the emotional milieu of the child. Palombo asserts that each person's experiences are filtered through his or her endowment and the context in which he or she exist. Rooted in self-psychological thought, Palombo understands human motivation as

striving to maintain a sense of self-cohesion, and the context as primarily providing these functions in the form of selfobject functions.

An important aspect of self-experience is the self-narrative, which focuses on the meaning the child construes from his or her experience, how others in the child's environment confer meaning on those experiences and how the child organizes those meanings into thematic units within the narrative to create a coherent story. A self-narrative is constructed of memories of life events, which encode both the event and associated affect creating a coherent self-narrative, in which a person is able to make sense of his/her experience as a general motivator. In this sense, Palombo states "coherence represents the integration of the personal and the shared meanings patients have drawn from their experience into the self-narrative" (2001, p. 92).

Self-psychology emphasizes self-cohesion as a primary experience. This is achieved through the empathic attunement of our environment to developmental selfobject needs that we have. From this perspective, assaults on the self often occur differentially according to categories of gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, and sexual preference (Donner, 1988, in Mattei, 1996). These assaults, from a self-psychological vantage point, are closely affected by the social environment of current values of what is admirable, and what is devalued. These elements go far beyond devaluing and mirroring, they are deeply ingrained in the organization of the person's character.



## Integrated Theories

*Fred Pine*

According to Fred Pine, who co-authored Mahler's psychological birth of the human infant, recent findings about the sophisticated functioning of infants bring into question the idea that an infant is unaware of the mother-infant boundary and experiences itself as merged with or undifferentiated from the mother (Pine, 1990).

Pine has made a major attempt at synthesizing what he calls "the four psychologies of drive, ego, object relations and self" (1990, p.1). His attempts have focused on theory and technique, as well as the developmental process, the last of which will be the focus of this study. He proposes a model for understanding personality organization across the four psychologies, which he conceptualizes as separable perspectives on the functioning of the human mind.

An important aspect of his attempt is the focus on self-experience and its evolution. From this standpoint grow his ideas that use affect states, and later 'moments,' as the link between developmental phases. He has suggested that intrapsychic life is organized differently at different moments, an aspect of a psychology of self-experience. He contended that "each of these moments, differently organized, have major affective and developmentally formative significance, and that our theories would do well to encompass them all." (1990, p. 59). Pine therefore relies on the human capacity to generate meaning as "the conceptual glue" (p. 59) to each of the four psychologies.

He explored the concept of environment as addressed by Winnicott, Mahler, and Hartmann, the last of which introducing the concept of "the average expectable environment"

(p. 61), which, from a theoretical standpoint, is understood as adequate for development to proceed. Pine asserts, "It is the precise individual environment, and not the average expectable one, that matters in development" (p. 62). This assertion, in contrast to the ones delineated by the former theoreticians, resonates with ideas from a constructivist perspective, which focus on the particular rather than the universal.

Pine suggested a multiple-function approach, in which drive-defense mechanisms function with regard to gratification, object relationships, adaptation, and sense of self, attempting to resolve the chasm of conflict and defense vs. developmental failure. He posits that early developments involve "the core patterning, the structuralization and hierarchical organization, the socialization and integration of biologically based drives-or the failure in any of these." (1990, p. 65).

Within the psychology of object relations, Pine stresses how the individual develops a representational world, in which the world of internalized object relations gets recorded in memory and can lead to expectations and actions determinative of later object relations, patterned on early internal representations. Following Piaget's delineations, he posits that later relationships are assimilated to early beliefs and wishes, and only in part will new events in the relational world lead to accommodation and alteration in the inner representational world.

Pine differentiated development to two general features, one widespread within a culture, the other individual and particular. This is a different version of the dichotomy previously encountered between the private and the social. He has also attempted to look at development from the perspective of object loss along the life cycle. He associates this idea with Erikson's stages of development, and of integration.

He suggests that the developmental process be viewed as a series of successive challenges ("tasks"), which the individual meets in part in new ways and in part by trying to absorb them into old ways of functioning. He posits that early developments in each of the four psychologies has

A special place in producing...the creation of an intrapsychic life, the structuralization of the personality, and an individual that enters as a causal agent in his or her own life stream because of the establishment of preference, specific repetitions, mechanisms, and structural limitations (1990, p. 76).

Pine studies such core concepts as structure and organization in psychoanalytic developmental thought, asserting that theory is required to account for stability. He looks at structures as processes with a slow rate of change, and the concept of the organizer as something in the course of development that "both reflects an achieved organization of prior developments and sets a future developmental course" (p. 100-101). The emergence of an organizer, states Pine, alters personal functioning. Otto Kernberg's view that the building blocks of intrapsychic life are images of self and object bound together by an affect exemplifies cumulative organization.

He states that in these formulations, personality organization is viewed as developmental progression narrowing the degrees of freedom subsequently available. He speaks of moments as states of experience, in which a moment is consistent with a particular conceptual model. These moments are particularly formative, and help to develop individual personalized organizations, personal hierarchies of the four psychologies.

*Daniel Stern*

A classic in the field of developmental psychoanalysis, Daniel Stern's *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* (1985) is a prolific work which integrates infant research with many developmental psychoanalytic concepts and theories. Stern sets out to investigate the evolving sense of self, or subjective experience. He focuses on the infant's experiential sense of events. He devised four senses of self: the sense of an emergent self, the sense of a core self, the sense of a subjective self, and the sense of a verbal self.

Stern has made the distinction between the clinical infant and the observed infant, the former a reconstruction of his or her early experiences by the adult in psychotherapy. In his view, "the clinical infant breaths subjective life to the observed infant," alluding to his integrative approach of applying theory that complements research in developmental psychology.

His focal point is that how we experience ourselves in relation to others provides a basic organizing perspective for all interpersonal events. He originates this sense in the preverbal infant. By sense of self, Stern talks of an awareness essential to everyday social interactions. He posits that any change in the infant comes about partly by "virtue of the adult interpreting the infant differently and acting accordingly...organizational change from within the infant and its interpretation by the parents are mutually facilitative." (p.9). He suggests that maturation of capacity allows new organizing subjective perspectives about self and other. He suggests that infants are predestined to be aware of self-organizing processes.

In his new introduction (2000) he suggests that the central idea of his book is that internal objects are constructed from repeated small interactive patterns. These, he contends,

are not people, or parts of people, but constructed from a repeated experience of self in interaction with another.

He posits that from birth infants embark on the task of relating diverse experiences with social capacities and goal directedness towards social interactions. “These interactions produce affects, perceptions, sensorimotor events, memories, and other cognitions.” (p.28) Thus, from as early as birth, Stern theorizes, social interactions are central to the creation of a psychological structure, though these integrative networks do not yet fall under a single organizing subjective perspective.

While the infant makes direct eye-to-eye contact, and smiles responsively at age two months and little thereafter, Stern posits that until that age the infant is forming “a sense of organization in the process of formation. They are still in a state of undifferentiation, or non-organization” (p. 46). The infant, Stern offers, makes use of diverse experiences by associating, assimilating, and connecting them in some way to create the emergence of organization that is sensed as a reference point, chiefly the body. Different sensorimotor schemas are adapted, and then consolidated. He writes, “Interpersonal relatedness does not yet exist as distinct from relatedness to things. The infant is asocial, but by virtue of being indiscriminate, not by virtue of being unresponsive.” (p. 63)

He also offers that research findings suggest infants never experience any salient human form (face, voice, breasts) as nothing more than particular physical stimulus array among others, but rather that they experience persons as unique forms from the start. It is almost peculiar, following such statements, that diversity in human experience, as mediated by culture, is omitted from any discussion.

The sense of a core self begins at the age of two to three months until the infant is about six months old. During this time, infants appear “more wholly integrated” in social interactions. There is a sense of themselves as distinct and coherent bodies, with control over their own actions, a sense of continuity, and a sense of other people as distinct and separate interactants.

While Mahler conceptualizes the two to three months old infant to be in an undifferentiated phase, Stern posits that later findings in infant research challenge this idea, suggesting that “the capacity to have merger- or fusion-like experiences as described in psychoanalysis is secondary to, and independent upon, an already existing sense of self and other” (p. 70). From this perspective, an organized sense of a core self must include self-agency, or authorship of one’s own actions, self-coherence, sense of physical boundaries, self-affectivity, or a sense of feelings that match experiences, and self-history, or a sense of continuity.

During this time social interactions involve mainly the regulation of affect and excitation. Face-to-face social interactions serve as the peak of emotional life, taking the place of such activities as feeding, i.e. physiological regulation. Another aspect of this period is the development of a sense of being with an other with whom one is interacting. It is around this time that what Stern calls “representations of interactions that have been generalized” (RIGS) (p. 97), take place. He conceptualizes these as flexible structures that average several actual instances and form a prototype to represent them all. He states that the experience of being with a self-regulating other gradually forms RIGs. These are essentially memories that are retrievable whenever one of the attributes of the RIG is present.

Stern posits that a third “quantum leap” (p. 124) in the development of the infant takes place when he or she “discover” that he/she as well as other people have an inner subjective experience, a mind. This takes place between the seventh and ninth month of life. This new phase, he posits, amounts to an intention (“I want a cookie”), a feeling state (“this is exciting”), or a focus of attention (“look at that toy”) (p. 124). Infants now have a new organizing subjective perspective about their social lives, they include inner subjective states of experience. It is during this phase for the first time that one may attribute to the infant the capacity for intimacy, the desire to know and be known, in the sense of mutually revealing subjective experience.

Stern posits that

With the advent of intersubjectivity, the parents’ socialization of the infant’s subjective experience comes to be at issue...what is ultimately at stake is nothing less than discovering what part of the private world of inner experience is shareable and what part falls outside the pale of commonly recognized human experiences (p. 126).

Stern briefly mention’s what he terms “the other half of the story” (p.119), meaning the mother’s subjective world. He admits this is not symmetrical in practice, since the mother brings so much more personal history to each encounter, with what he terms “a working model” of her infant, her own mother, her husband (whom the baby may remind her of) etc. Also briefly mentioned are the mother’s fantasies about who the infant is and is to become.

The fourth phase, the sense of a verbal self, emerges during the second year of life. This allows a new medium of exchange with which to create shared meanings, a new domain of relatedness that enormously increases possible ways of “being with.” Stern also raises language’s limitation as it drives a wedge between interpersonal experience according to him, as it is lived and as it is verbally represented.

He posits that experiences in the domains of emergent, core, and intersubjective relatedness, “which continue irrespective of language,” (p. 162) can only partially be expressed in the domain of verbal relatedness. He concludes that language causes a split in the experience of self, “away from the personal” (p. 163). Intrinsic to his thought, as once again is exemplified here, is the dichotomy between the “personal”, and whatever it is he understands to be represented by language.

Along with the development of a capacity for verbal expression, around fifteen to eighteen months old, comes the capacity to imagine and represent with signs and symbols. Having psychic mechanisms and mental schemas, interpersonal interaction can now involve past memories, present realities, and expectations of the future based on the past.

In attempting to formulate how acquisition of language changes the sense of self, Stern relies on such thinkers as Vygotsky who suggested that the relationship between thought and word “is not a thing, but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to thought.” (Vygotsky, 1962, In Stern, 1985, p. 170). In this sense language is learned through shared experiences that establish a personal order of relating. From this perspective, the acquisition of language, rather than a major step in the achievement of separation individuation, is understood as solidifying a mental commonality with members of that language culture.

Daniel Stern (2000) differentiates between culture as viewed from the outside, at a distance, and its specific enactment in terms that could influence an infant. This isolation of the space in which the mother-infant dyad unfolds from a cultural context is the very one which this investigator finds questionable in reading leading psychoanalytic developmental theories.



Stern suggests that “the number of variables through which any culture can be enacted early in life such that they will be perceivable by the infant is comprised of a limited repertoire of facial expressions, gestures, ways of being held etc” (2000, p. xxvii) he proclaims that different cultures can make different use of this repertoire, again viewing culture in the general sense.

## CHAPTER 5: CULTURE AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT ACROSS POSTMODERN DISCIPLINES

### Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics in its definition is the study of interpretation (Follesdal, 2001). The hermeneutic circle involves going between part and whole of a phenomenon as well as from the phenomenon to its context, including the linguistic and cultural setting. The context may help understand the phenomenon, which in turn may help us see the setting and context in a new light, which again may change our interpretation of the phenomena. Going back and forth between part and whole, hypotheses and observed material, until a fit is achieved, or a reflective equilibrium is arrived at (Follesdal, 2001) is a tradition in hermeneutic methodology. Understanding development of personality in culture within this tradition is important as it involves the interpreting subject and the interpreted object in understanding how they are inter-related or co-constructed. Follesdal states that Husserl was interested in studying subjectivity, or “what happens when we live in a society with others to whose anticipations we gradually come to adjust” (p. 377).

Zeddies (2002) states that Gadamer’s perspective on language is based on the notion that language is the primary and fundamental medium through which culture, tradition, and custom are transmitted down through history. As such, it is seen as the messenger of our collective human history. “The possibilities of language are synonymous with the possibilities of understanding. It constitutes our experience to the very core” (p. 8). language is symbiotically related to culture and community.

Taylor (1995b, in Zeddies, 2002) discusses a social and cultural context as constituting a background. As it is not something one is simply unaware of, it confers intelligible what one is aware of, yet one is not explicitly aware of it. Conceptualized as a background composed of not only cultural and historical influences, Zeddies adds interpersonal and intrapsychic variables to what shapes and is shaped by relationships, in references. Meaning is understood as socially mediated. This historical and cultural embeddedness of human existence implies an understanding of subjectivity as the experience of a historically situated subject. Historical and cultural past is inextricably tied to the present orientation of the interpreter (Chessick, 1990). Meaning is therefore inevitably rooted in a given sociohistorical setting. Knowing and understanding are interpretive and take place within a specific contextual domain, such as bodily activities, symbol systems or cultural practices. This ontological view calls into question the separation of a knowing subject from an object of study. Chessick asserts that according to Heidegger human existence always involves a context or cultural totality within which experience occurs. Gadamer also asserts self-knowledge as being deeply imbedded in culture, history, and our bodily being. Chessick continues to state that our own self-interpretations, self-understanding, and self-reflections are largely determined by our shared world, which provides us with modes of knowledge through which we know ourselves in any given culture at a given time.

Silvern (1990) argues that clinical psychology suffers from “ a fundamental confusion about the kind of knowledge that can provide a legitimate basis for clinical expertise” (p. 5).

The relevance of hermeneutics to psychoanalysis may be put into question as it rules out any legitimate basis for knowledge about psychological life that is independent of and

free from prior concepts, culture, language, and social practices. The very meaning of an object or event depends on its place in its conceptual and practical context- a view which is strikingly similar to the definition Shweder provided to the growing field of cultural psychology. Wittgenstein (1968, in Silvern 1990) held that the meaning of a thing is its 'use' in social practices. Constructivist knowledge sets its goal as the making sense of events by interpreting their significance as part of a broader pattern. For example, Wittgenstein's assertion with regards to suffering pointed out how, within the same society or community, individuals share expectations about the conditions and expressions of suffering. Thus, experience is mediated and felt with accords to social practice.

Radical aspects of hermeneutics challenge such terms as the 'unconscious' and 'drives' saying they are not extra-linguistic causes of non-intentional new behavior, but rather that they should be viewed as metaphors of privatized language. This radical view asserts these metaphors mark the limit of ordinary discourse and raise the need for 'expert interpretation.' Clinical aspects raise the limitations of this radical hermeneutics as people do present a privatized language- private to their own idiosyncratic world and culture. It also limits any knowledge about development, because anything beyond the interpretation made by a meaning-making adult is unavailable to this system of thought. Constructivism, as well as hermeneutics, are contextually based systems of knowledge, both view knowledge as an intentional act of interpretation.

Friedman (2000), writing about hermeneutics in psychoanalysis, suggested that many long lasting relationships build a small, private culture. He argues that what makes culture an "invisible prejudice" (p. 238) is its pervasiveness. Hermeneutic phenomenology, Friedman

contends, is a modern school of philosophy that is concerned with the relativity of conceptual understanding.

### Constructivism

Constructivist psychologies theorize and investigate how systems of meaning of one's world and experience are created. Following postmodern reasoning, a constructivist attempts to follow the creation, rather than a discovery of, personal and social realities- the viability is stressed, as opposed to the validity (Raskin, 2002). Epistemological aspects are given attention- and investigators are also concerned with how people know, as well as what they know. "The process of knowledge and understanding (is) social, inductive, hermeneutical, and qualitative" (Sexton, 1997, p. 8, in Raskin, 2002, p. 3). Cultural aspects of a developing psyche are inevitably an aspect of this trend, since the construction of knowledge is a phenomena that is by and large context based. Constructivism focuses on ways in which persons and societies create constructions of reality.

Within the field of constructivism, the question of reality outside of the observer arises. While epistemological constructivism adheres to the existence of an external reality outside the observer, our understanding of it is complicated by human-made constructions. Hermeneutic constructivism, on the other hand, considers knowledge to be a product of linguistic activity, where discourse and communication are central to how knowledge systems are developed and maintained (Raskin, 2002).

Constructivism holds that there are innumerable versions of the world, many of which are contradictory. It holds that our descriptions, formulations and laws are products of our own minds, accomplished through the creation and manipulation of the symbols and the

systems we invent to use them to express understanding (Loewus, 1998). In constructivism, the concept of knowledge is replaced with understanding.

Social constructivism emphasizes the primacy of relational and “social practices as the source of individual psychic life” (Stam, 1998, p. 199, in Raskin, 2002, p. 17). Raskin continues:

Social constructivism is relativistic in emphasizing how contextual, linguistic, and relational factors combine to determine the kinds of human beings that people will become and how their views of the world will develop. In social constructivism all knowledge is considered local and fleeting. It is negotiated between people within a given context and time frame (p. 17).

Personality is therefore understood as a socially constructed idea. The self is seen as socially constituted within the boundaries of culture, context and language. Personhood becomes a matter of how “people are talked about, the social practices they engage in, and the particular relationships they find themselves in” (Raskin, 2002, p.18).

Social constructivists argue that reality is socially negotiated, challenging the assumptions of traditional psychology which focus on the individual and minimizing contextual and cultural factors.

Social constructionism is defined as a tradition of many diverse approaches, closely linked to postmodernism. A core assumption of social constructionism is a view of discourse as prior to and constitutive of the world. Psychological processes are seen as products of discourse that are constituted in interaction. Moving beyond the dynamics of the individual psyche, or subjectivism, and the determined characteristics of the external world, or modernism/objectivism, it sets out to study the flow of continuous interaction between humans. It assumes that the world cannot be known independently of cultural meanings and practices.

From this perspective, to possess an identity is to play a part in relational configurations. An emotion is an appropriated performance in a relational scenario, and to possess a memory is to act according to socially negotiated rules. Cultural meanings and practices in this field are treated as continuously transforming, calling into question the possibility of distinguishing between communities on the basis of cultural beliefs and practices.

Social constructionism therefore allows developing theories to highlight the complexity of culture, paying attention to language as a form of action and communal participation. It poses a problem in attempting to formulate hypotheses, as it does not give sufficient weight to the individual as agent to have any explanatory force, “with the rejection of the notion of the psychological self, it becomes difficult in social constructionism to account for individual opposition to cultural practices” (Miller, 1997, p. 101).

Within this postmodern view of reality, social constructivism offers ideas about how power, knowledge, and truth, are negotiated in families and other cultural “aggregations” (Freedman & Combs, 1996, p.22).

Writing from a Marxist’s perspective, Ollman (1976) asserts that the mode of production of material life determines the social, political, and intellectual life process in general. Marx, Ollman contends, viewed things and their relations not as fixed but as constantly changing, allowing his thought to operate with mutually exclusive social factors.

Social relations, Ollman proposes, is a major aspect of Marx’s philosophy. He asserts that our knowledge of the real world is mediated through the construction of concepts in which our contact with reality, “is a contact with a conceptualized reality” (p. 12). He considers social relations as the “irreducible minimum” (p. 14) in Marx conception of social

reality. What Marx has developed, Ollman suggests, is the uncovering of real social ties. The idea that things in reality appear and function as they do because of their ties with other things is principal in this context. To conceive of things as relations, Ollman suggests, "is simply to interiorize this interdependence" (p. 26) Marx also called man the assemble [aggregate] of social relations' (in Ollman, P. 27) a thing for Marx is equal to social relations. In a short history of the philosophy of social relations, ollman traces Hegel's denial of the existence of a 'thing in itself' behind observed reality, and affirming that through their interrelations things are more than they appear. Ollman sees Marx's theory as shifting our attention to the real world. Any thing that is torn out of its contextual relations ceases to exist. Ollman states that "above all else Marx's dialectic is a way of viewing things as moments in their own development in, with, and through other things" (p. 52). Ollman attempts to delineate generalizations on the relations which exit, beyond stating that everything is interconnected. These include the transformation of quantity to quality, a development through contradiction or negation. Things which appear opposite and distinct are in reality joint by internal relations, and are not logically independent of one another. Ollman defines a dialectical mode of inquiry in which research is focused on the manifold ways in which entities are internally related, taking the whole world to be its object, a world perceived to be relationally contained in each of its parts. The question on how to decide on the parts, or the need to divide reality into instrumental units is, Ollman states, a common problem for all philosophers of internal relations.

Explanation has to do with clarifying relationships, according to Marx. By ascribing to Marx a philosophy of internal relations, Ollman calls attention to Marx's underlying assumptions in his analysis of different processes and institutions. As relations, these are



conceived as aspects of each other and the whole they compose. It is the organizing principle in Marx's epistemology, according to Ollman.

Concerning character formation, Marx states that social conditions determine character:

Every person experiences with the social group to which he belongs how his particular tie to the mode of production and the familial, educational and religious training which that occasions, blocks certain personality developments and allows for and even spurs on others. These conditions fix the state of one's powers and needs, just as they determine the degree to which such needs will find satisfaction (Ollman, p. 120).

This idea is related to the constructivist model suggesting that much of early experience is lost and forgotten not because it was actively repressed or dissociated because of conflict or trauma, but because it never finds its way into culturally and familiarly mediated schemas that give form, structure and persistence to memory. Our families and cultures provide us with cognitive and linguistic resources to encode and capture certain types of experience, while others are left unformulated. 'Starved' experiences never get integrated into our organization of the world and our selves (Schachtel, 1949, in Hollan, 2000).

Constructivist approaches maintain that language is the means by which experience is mediated as it becomes an "objective repository" (Freedman & Combs, 1996, p.28) of vast accumulations of meaning and experience.

Gergen (1998) makes a distinction between psychologically based critiques of positivism and ones that are essentially social in character. The former, Gergen argues, asserts that it is mental processes that exert a force on one's conception of reality, where as

the social critique, he poses, emphasizes the question of the relation between language and its object. He concludes that both are concerned with representation. In any case, Gergen states, knowledge is not about accessing a person's internal state but "a communal undertaking and the understanding of persons, both self and other, as the coordination of action within a communal tradition" (p. 47). Gergen attributed to psychoanalysis, specifically with relation to issues of culture, a grounded depth and see it as and an essential supplement to humanist investments in the individual.

Stam views social constructivism as human psychological processes that are conditional to the linguistic and cultural practices and structures of human communities. A historical symbiosis was said to exist between the psychological and the social that manifests itself in a way that the reality we take for granted has a kind of constructed nature. Stam views the challenge of psychology to be capable to transform and not merely reproduce the social forms embedded in the commodified knowledge economy.

Theories of the mind, Gergen (1997) argues, do not grow from observations (inductively) but are derived from prevailing metaphors and cultural conventions of narrative and story telling. Postmodern thought itself is situated within a sociology of knowledge and the history of science. Ways in which social processes shape the profession's assumptions about its subject matter. Gergen asserts that constructionism does not obliterate the concept of self, agency, or uniqueness. It understands these as "representative forms of constructing the person within an evolving professional community" (1997, p. 731) or creating an interdependent relationship with common modes of discourse within contemporary culture. Tracing human action to psychological sources, Gergen asserts, creates an artificial view of relationships as artificial byproducts of otherwise autonomously functioning individuals; the

social is secondary to and derivative of the personal. The constructionist viewpoint attempt to orient the psychological world and reconstitute it as a domain of the social, and views itself as based in a long intellectual tradition, which Gergen terms the environmentalist tradition, citing such thinkers as Bruner, Vygotsky, Barlett, and Mead in proposing that it is culture, not biology that shapes human life and the human mind, that gives meaning to action by situating its underlying intentional states in an interpretive system. In characterizing self within ongoing relationships, the binary of individual/culture is challenged.

Jenkins (2001), acknowledging the tension around the concept of self with relation to intrapsychic versus socially contextualized, chooses to elaborate on “certain individual processes involved in the construction of personhood while acknowledging the necessary and complementary contribution of social processes as well.” (p. 347). He stresses that it is just this concept of self which can serve as mediator between person and society. Jenkins views Gergen's position that the chief locus of understanding is not the psyche but social relationships, as highly problematic, as it dismisses the need for distinct psychological processes contributing to the construction of meaning. He states that there are many observations which agree with the idea of the self as a culture-specific concept.

#### A Case Example: A Constructivist Critique of Stern's Theory of Development

Cushman (1991) critics Daniel Stern's theory of infant development, as contextual culture-bound reflections of development rather than universal elements. It is, Cushman argues, not much more than a description of a Western attitude and subjectivity. He calls the attempt to remove individuals from the history and culture in which they are embedded, and study them as isolated, decontextualized entities, merely a fantasy. All findings in the field of

psychology, he argues, are embedded in a particular sociopolitical matrix. As such, they participate in and are suggestive of a current sociopolitical moment which they serve. The most important aspect of decontextualizing sociohistorical causes of psychiatric illness, Cushman argues, is discounting sociopolitical change as a viable solution, and as such serve current status quos. Cushman stresses that his argument is directed at “the basic epistemological framework of psychology” (p.206) rather than Stern’s theory per se. It is a critique of all decontextualized psychology theories, and though Stern’s theory is especially pertinent to this dissertation, as it discusses development from a psychoanalytic perspective, this critique may serve to understand the contextual aspect which cultural psychology offers. In Cushman’s words, Stern has become popular simply because his formulation is a statement of present indigenous psychology. “Stern has captured the heart of psychotherapists because he has reproduced it in the guise of a universal scientific theory” (p. 207).

Cushman observes circularity in Stern’s theories, which arises from the inability to study humans outside of their lived context. It is not possible to develop universal transhistorical laws, Cushman argues, because humans are not separable from their culture and history. Constructionists argue that human nature is not universal, it is local. Claiming to operate outside local knowledge reflects the degree of potential political uses that are obscured. The more a theory claims to be objective, Cushman argues, the more its political aspects are obscured. Following Foucault, he asserts that discourse is power, and the social sciences have become an indispensable exercise of power in the Western world. The more a cultural context is obscured, the more its political uses are too. What is being called into question, Cushman suggests, are the foundations of the current cultural frame of reference.

While the radical notion that “discovering significant universals is highly unlikely, not possible, or not relevant (to psychology)”(p.207) may be a statement which would not integrate well with psychoanalytic thought. Cushman’s assertions that local, historical, and particular phenomena cannot be removed from either the data psychological subjects produce or the findings that researchers produce. This perspective, offered by a social-constructivist, may serve well psychoanalytic theories of development. Instead of attempting to factor out the local and particular of a culture, Cushman suggests it is a valuable area of study, viewing the self as essentially a social artifact. This focusing on the particular is eminently similar to Lacan’s definition of psychoanalysis as the science of the particular. Studying the self as a social artifact, one must study its context, if one is not to dismiss its socioeconomic and political constituents. Cushman states that Stern's theory is “a restatement of a local theory of a particular culture. This type of unintentional misrepresentation necessarily contributes to the mystification of power and the reproduction of wealth and privilege in our time” (p. 208). Decontextualizing his psychological study makes Stern’s hypothesis necessarily true, Cushman argues. He says that Stern's depiction of the infant, as bounded, cohesive, independent and preoccupied with relating to others is so appealing to the modern Western reader because it is them. It describes who they are, their interests and what is important to them. He states the question shouldn’t be “Is this an accurate picture?” but rather, “why is the picture accurate?” (p. 208) - the degree to which his description appears accurate is the degree to which his interests, methods, and ideas fit with the dominant social construction of the time.

Cushman views Stern as a romantic and places him within the humanistic-romantic tradition of thought which sees the individual as having a predestined unfolding pattern of

development, applicable across time and culture, and the actualization of the self, where the good is the inner essence. Cushman argues that Stern's interpretations were unintentionally affected by what constitutes the self of his time and place, being unable to see this circularity because they are so culturally embedded with his social terrain. Cushman states that one should beware of scientific theories that seem like common sense; when they seem like that, they usually are, as they are so much in tune with dominant indigenous psychology of the era, not discoveries of universal truths. As an example, Cushman brings LeVine's report on a tribe in Africa (the Gusii) in which mothers are prohibited from looking directly into their children's eyes or encouraging their children to look into the parent's eyes. Infants are held more than they are by Western mothers, left alone less, but paid much less direct attention to:

Around the age of 18 months, when Stern dates attunement behaviors, the infants are placed almost exclusively in the care of their slightly older siblings, cousins and neighbors. It is difficult to imagine how attunement behaviors could be enacted in such a setting, or how a masterful bounded self could be constructed (p. 213).

Does that mean the current, Western self is predestined, and the rest are aberrations, primitive misunderstandings, or poor copies? Cushman asks. Cushman also questions Stern's contention that it is only through words and verbal language that culture is transmitted. He states that it makes more sense to argue that both language and the frame of reference of a culture are enacted, taught, and discussed as soon as the parents begin interacting with the fetus through movements, touch and sound. "The millions of clues, nuances, and indicators that delineate the shared horizons...of approval ...that pass across the face or through the body of the parent are all aspects of language happening long before infants can articulate their culture's indigenous language" (p. 215). He asserts that "the infant is immediately and profoundly surrounded, held by, and embedded in the practices of a culture" (p. 215).

The culture frame of reference is omnipresent. Thus the preverbal infant is far from being free of cultural influences. All activities that parents and infants participate in, the language they use, and the meanings imputed in them, consist of everyday habits that are embedded in culturally transmitted heritage. Stern depicted the introduction of language as “the fall from grace” (p. 216) where a split is created between nature and society, emotion and rationality, where the infant is pure and whole but with the advent of language its self becomes divided and its experience becomes mediated. Cushman thinks this stance Stern took was because he had to introduce the influence of culture which he didn’t want to acknowledge in earlier stages of development. He had to posit a time of life essentially free from cultural influence in order to collect the ahistorical, decontextualized data that he believes exists. Cushman states Stern’s themes of the culture and worldview dominate current psychology.

## CHAPTER 6: PSYCHOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Personality has early on become a part of anthropological investigation. Prominent representatives of this school in anthropological thought are Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead. These investigators paid little attention to the political and economic aspects of the societies they studied, and rather concentrated on the relationship between psychological factors (personality, emotions, character) and cultural conditions, such as socialization, gender roles and values, a perspective that was absent from anthropology before. A focal aspect of their investigations was addressing the question of to what extent human mental characteristics are inborn, and to what extent acquired (Eriksen & Nielsen, 2001).

Mead and Benedict viewed culture as a shared pattern of values and practices. The cultural variations among humans were seen as a strong indication that culture is not inborn. They argued that patterns of emotion could be shared, as parts of culture, and they took the first effective steps toward establishing a psychological anthropology.

Geertz and Schneider expanded the field of culture as a symbolic system, as an independent, self-sustaining system, that can be studied without taking societal conditions into account. Geertz posited that society (or culture) could be interpreted as a text, and the individual participant as a reader, someone interpreting what they see, rather than a mere actor in that culture. Levi-Strauss was interested in uncovering the hidden structures governing social life.

A current lively discourse in the literature identifies two main dimensions to the self. These two poles are characterized, on the one hand, by such concepts as individualist, independent, autonomous, and separate, and the other pole is defined in such terms as



collectivist, interdependent, communal, and relational (Kashima et al, 1995). The first set typically attributed to men and people in Western individualist cultures, the second to women and people in Eastern collectivist cultures. Geertz summarized the individualistic dimension of the self as a “bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastingly both against other such wholes and against its social and natural background” (Geertz, 1974, p. 126, in Kashima et al, 1995, p. 925).

A collective conception is described as not making a distinction between personal and collective goals, or if such are made, they subordinate to the collective goals. Triandis (1989, in Kashima 1995) argues that individualistic, collective, and relational self-construals are present in peoples of all cultures, but differentially accessed in different cultural contexts. Both the gender and geographical splits described above may be viewed as culturally-bound. In the case of the gender-bound dichotomy, differing ethnotheories within the same local culture and family are indicative.

Michael Cole (1996) describes cultural psychology as the study of culture’s role in the mental life of human beings. He poses the question: “why do psychologists find it so difficult to keep culture in mind?”(p. 1), and attempts to discover the reasons for culture becoming so marginal in the discipline. Approaching the topic with the belief that culture is a fundamental constituent of human thought and action, he attempts to formulate a 'culture-inclusive' psychology. His attempt focuses on finding “tools for psychologists who seek a deeper understanding of how culture and mind create each other” (p. 5).

Cole suggests that when psychology treated culture as an independent variable and mind as a dependent variable, it broke apart the unity of culture and mind and ordered them

as culture-stimulus, mind-response. He suggests that with the institutionalization of psychology as a social/behavioral science, the constituent processes of mind were divided among several sciences: culture to anthropology, social life to sociology, language to linguistics, the past to history etc. His approach to psychology as a culture-inclusive discipline considers culture as “the species-specific medium of human life, and artifacts as the elementary units of culture” (p. 331). The important aspect of this intricate definition is the attempt to interpret schemas not as “inside the head mental entities,” but rather as “constraining relations between what is in the head and what the head is in” (p. 331).

Cole confronted the concept of context, as he continuously returns to the essential point that all human behavior must be understood relationally, in relation to its context. He refers to such terms as environment, situation, practice, and activity. In attempting to understand the concept, he confronts it in different manners. First, he attempts to understand context as “that which surrounds” (p. 132). Different levels of contexts, thus, relate to a unit “in the middle.” in this sense, embedded systems are layered. Another perspective he posits is context as “that which weaves together” (p. 135). In this sense, context is understood as “the connected whole that gives coherence to its parts” (p. 135). conceptualized in this manner, context cannot be reduced to that which surrounds, but a qualitative dynamic relation. He asserts that the concept of context recognizes the power of social institutions relative to individuals and the potential of individuals to change the environments that condition their lives.

Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre (1997) state that individuals internalize whatever allows them to identify with a particular society. Though Writing in the field of cultural psychology, this statement has many implications within psychoanalytic thought, specifically

from a developmental prism. They understand this to happen by all means of learning-imitation, identification, play, role taking, language acquisition, media etc., following Mead's idea that "the individual becomes the product of society and the society is a continuous creation of individuals". (Deschamps, 1991, p. 51, in Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre, 1997, p. 50). Identity is thus viewed as an interactive process of assimilation and differentiation.

Writing about human development in culture across the life span, Valsiner & Lawrence (1997) contend that developmental psychology has consistently not been culture inclusive. They argue that the traditional focus of developmental psychology on childhood has made it easy to neglect cultural meaningfulness of psychological phenomena, an argument negating an understanding of development as culturally imbedded from the earliest. They also contend that cross-cultural psychology has not been specifically developmental in its approach, creating "reciprocal and parallel blind spots" (p. 71). They note the emergence of context-related approaches to psychology which emphasize how culture is intricately intertwined with personal psychological functioning, with a focus on systemic processes that make person and culture unified in studying how people function in their social worlds (Valsiner & Lawrence 1997). Thus, development of the person is studied as interdependent with the culture and the systemic organizational form of the ways in which person and culture are unified:

This interweaving reflects the general process in which the culture becomes individual and the individuals create their culture. Theoretical formulations of cultural psychology emphasize transactions between person and social world. This methodology and direction of study focuses on how human development is organized in general by observing it closely in particular (p. 82).

Freud's use of case studies as a research method, and qualitative methods of one-case studies are of relevance. Attention here is given to social structural constraints that need to be

addressed in terms of how cultural phenomena actually guide processes of human development. Development is regulated by boundaries continually introduced and constructed in relation to social structures. Paraphrasing Freud, in this sense, the infant may be seen as polymorphously social, or multi-directional. Development occurs within a specific collective-culture that sets historical and ideological parameters around its social structures. In other words, it “provides the conceptual frame and tools with which the person constructs personal meanings” (Valsiner & Lawrence, 1997, p.90).

In attempting to explore the self cross-culturally, differences in perception also “relate to some remaining implicit ethnocentrism in social scientific inquiry” (DeVos et al, 1985, p. 2). In this paper, they argue that the self must be considered apart from one’s social role as well as being distinguished from underlying concepts of ego structure. They state that “the principle argument...is that cultural traditions of thought influence how the self perceives itself and, in turn, how this perception interacts with, rather than is determined by, the operation of underlying coping mechanisms that comprise personality structure” (p.6-7).

In studying cultural factors in the development of personality functioning, many authors have differentiated between the biological organism and the human being (see Devereux, 1953). Culture and the human psyche expand biologically determined processes of individualization and variability in human behavior (Devereux, 1953). He contends that both methodologically and functionally, the human psyche and culture are inseparable concepts. Devereux also finds equations in the study of psychoanalysis and anthropology, both studying that which is distinctly human, person-in-culture. He refers to a point at which

Convenience and economy of effort alone determine at what point in one’s investigation of a given action it is desirable and efficient to discontinue further

The notion that individuals are not born full members of any culture but learn to become such is not new, yet questions of 'culture and mind' in developmental perspective are becoming more prevalent in today's discourse. Super and Harkness (1997) point to a discouraging state of disciplinary isolation, especially between psychology and social anthropology which have each acquitted a century of methods, core facts, theories, paradigms, and functions to protect its integrity. The term individual-in-context shows how recent thinking has emphasized the cultural structuring child development as an integrated process. These authors state that "it is our belief that sufficient information about culturally structured variations in human development has been accumulated to support a new understanding of how both development and cultural transmission take place" (p. 4).

A chief approach to the development in cultural context they identify is the cultural organization of settings. This tradition is related to the 'culture and personality' school in social anthropology, in which physical ecology, cultural history, and social and political structure form the structures to which parenting must adapt, which in turn shape children's development and promote culture specific patterns of personality, including anxieties, conflicts, and defensive systems. In this system of thought, what is studied are aspects of experience in early childhood. It also underlines the importance of regarding the infant's caretaking environment as a system rather than a function of a single caretaker's behavior.

Another important theme in studies of development in culture was that of culture as a communicative medium. In this conceptualization, two systems, the individual and the contextual interact. Another researcher (Goodnow, 1990, in Super & Harkness 1997) emphasized the tacit messages conveyed by aspects of the cultural environment (in contrast to verbalized ones), as these were found to be more likely to be perceived as reality itself.

culture and the self. He views the person as the repository of cultural influences, as they have been internalized by “biological and psychological codification” (p. 288).

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A chief approach to the development in cultural context they identify is the cultural organization of settings. This tradition is related to the 'culture and personality' school in social anthropology, in which physical ecology, cultural history, and social and political structure form the structures to which parenting must adapt, which in turn shape children's development and promote culture specific patterns of personality, including anxieties, conflicts, and defensive systems. In this system of thought, what is studied are aspects of experience in early childhood. It also underlines the importance of regarding the infant's caretaking environment as a system rather than a function of a single caretaker's behavior.

Another important theme in studies of development in culture was that of culture as a communicative medium. In this conceptualization, two systems, the individual and the contextual interact. Another researcher (Goodnow, 1990, in Super & Harkness 1997)

emphasized the tacit messages conveyed by aspects of the cultural environment (in contrast to verbalized ones), as these were found to be more likely to be perceived as reality itself. Child language researchers offered a linguistic conceptualization of the process of internalization, in which rather than “being socialized,” the child is seen as “acquiring language” (p. 10) in a process analogous to the acquisition of a first language. The concept of practices allows researchers to define a way of describing development in context, without separating it to separate domains. They reflect a social and moral order, and provide a route by which children come to participate in a culture (Miller & Goodnow, 1995, In Super and Harkness 1997). The unit of analysis becomes the forms of interaction by which individual psychological functioning and its socioculturally structured environments are intertwined.

Cultural beliefs, or parental ethnotheories as a topic of study, had recently emerged. LeVine's framework, for example, has to do with parental goals which are mostly unconscious, shared assumptions as a kind of schema. This is not only a representation of reality, but what is culturally expected and pursued, or in psychoanalytic terms, fantasized in a socially shared, implicit way. Cross-cultural variations in parental expectations and beliefs about development have been demonstrated. Such models not only shape perceptions of reality but also may be experienced as reality itself. Super and Harkness (1997) state that sleeping arrangements studied cross-culturally have been recognized as reflecting deeply held cultural convictions about the self, the family, and the nature of human development. These authors define three areas of study to this developmental perspective: the physical and social settings in which the child lives, the culturally regulated customs of child care and childrearing, and the parental ethnotheories of child development subsystems.

Social-cognitive theories about the self have also acknowledged both the development of a self as being “linked with knowledge about significant others” (Andersen & Chen, 2002, p.619), as well as the variability in relational aspects depending on “interpersonal contextual cues” (p.619). The same authors argue for a self that is relational in the sense that significant others implicate self-definitions and personality functioning. The importance of this argument is that it is made within a social-cognitive model stressing past experiences as fundamental to personality functioning:

At the crux of our theory is the idea that, given the profound importance of significant others in people’s lives, the self and personality are shaped largely by experiences with significant others. The importance of these others derives from their emotional and motivational relevance for the self (Andersen and Chen, 2002, p.621).

The authors acknowledge the emergence of approaches to contextual variability in the self, and explain their theory as a social-cognitive language of knowledge in which personality is understood as a function of both the person and the situation. This growing emphasis on contextuality in the field of personality theory, as it has emerged in recent years, has influenced cognitive understandings of the personality.

Cross-cultural psychology, in contrast to cultural psychology, accepted the assumptions of the discipline of general psychology that psychological processes are fundamentally unaffected by content or context. It has also attempted to identify psychological universals. Cultural learning, as well as reproduction of cultural systems, was treated deterministically in this subdiscipline.

Relatively recently, language learning has been approached as based on processes of cultural communication, negotiation, and meaning creation, rather than solely on code acquisition (Miller, 1997). Recent cultural considerations, states Miller, view psychological



processes and structures as patterned in part by cultural meanings and practices, and have significance only with reference to particular communities.

Psychological structures and processes, from a cultural psychological perspective, may vary fundamentally in different cultural contexts. In her paper, Miller attempts to address problems in developing cultural approaches to psychology, asserting that recent cultural perspectives hold the promise of contributing new theoretical and methodological insights to psychology. She identifies the dominant stance within cultural psychology as viewing culture and psychology as mutually constitutive phenomena, i.e., as phenomena which make up each other or are integral to each other.

From this perspective, culture and individual behavior are neither reducible to each other, nor can they be understood in isolation or as separate factors, a tendency seen in cross-cultural psychology, in which culture is conceptualized as an independent variable that impacts the dependent variable of individual behavior (as noted by Cole, 1996).

In attempting to represent the complexity of culture, such aspects as the multiple functions of cultural meanings and the differentiated and dynamic nature of culture need to be addressed. Also, the interdependence of culture and the self is stressed: the self's multifaceted and culturally grounded nature, as both the agent (the self) and culture are examined as active influences on psychological processes.

Cultural approaches to the self, Miller suggests, have been introduced through developmental or social psychology, and many have roots in psychological anthropology, developmental sociolinguistics, and research in social development. The main argument in this framework is that cultural meanings, as expressed in cultural symbols and as embodied in cultural practices, "form as essential source of patterning of human psychology" (p. 94).

In order to understand a person's experiences and his or her acts one must understand his or her intentional states, which in turn, may only be understood through participation in the symbolic systems of the culture. Cultural communication is therefore essential in the development of understanding. Language is seen as a medium for "creating, maintaining, and communicating social and psychological realities, rather than merely as a representational system." (p.94)

Children are also understood to be developing culturally saturated views of the self and of society as they learn language. Theoretical frameworks for understanding child development, Miller asserts, must take into account both the symbolic and utilitarian aspects of cultural practices, and may include such variables as the physical and social settings in which the child develops, culturally regulated systems of child care, and culturally informed beliefs and values that inform the ways in which parents and others structure environments and respond to children.

Cultural psychology assumes that it is essential to understand that processes of internalization are entailed in cultural learning. If, it is proposed, our cultural-ideological milieu were unchanging and internally consistent, it would have not been as essential to study how social messages are appropriated by individual minds. Yet as we recognize that conflicting messages, ambiguity, and change are found in all societies, even "traditional" ones, it is not enough to know what information people are exposed to.

Emotions need to be understood in relational terms.

Miller points to two differing working definitions of culture. Herskovits's definition "the man-made part of the human environment" (Herskovits, 1948, P. 7, in Miller, 1997, p. 102) reflects a "functional" approach.

A “semiotic” approach to culture (such as Geertz’s definition) focuses on meaning instead of the functional aspects of culture. Semiotics posits “a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols” (Geertz, 1973, p. 89, in Miller, 1997, P. 103). Here, culture is seen as an intersubjective reality through which worlds are known, created, and experienced. Culture serves to create or to define intentional realities that depend on social agreement for their existence. These include shared affective associations which may not be explained simply by linking them to particular contexts or events. Cultural meanings therefore are seen as having multiple functions, and cannot be discerned merely by observation, but through cultural communications that inform cultural practices.

In a seminal paper from 1990, Richard Shweder attempted to define what the emerging discipline of cultural psychology is, and what it isn’t (“cultural psychology – what is it?” 1990). He defined cultural psychology as

The study of the way cultural traditions and social practice regulate, express, transform, and permute the human psyche, resulting less in psychic unity for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self, and emotion. Cultural psychology is the study of the ways subject and object, self and other, psyche and culture, person and context, figure and ground, practitioner and practice live together, require each other, and dynamically, dialectically, and jointly make each other up (p. 1).

Shweder considers our existential uncertainty as the motivator to seize meanings and resources out of a sociocultural environment. He asserts that humans and sociocultural environments interpenetrate each other’s identity and “cannot be analytically disjoined into independent and dependent variables,” (p.1), as their identities are interdependent. One’s subjectivity and mental life is co-constructed through the process of seizing meanings and resources from a sociocultural environment, which itself is co-constructed through the sharing of subjectivities.

An emphasis is placed on the intentionality of the human artifactual world. Our worlds are intentional (made, bred, fashioned, fabricated, invented, designated, constituted) because they do not exist independently of our involvements with them and reactions to them. They are causally active by virtue of our mental representations of them. An intentional world might contain such events as “stealing’ or ‘taking communion,’ such processes as ‘harm,’ or ‘sin’, such stations as ‘in-law’ or ‘exorcist,’ such practices as ‘promising’ or ‘divorce’.” (p. 2). These do not exist independently of the intentional states (beliefs, desires, emotions, etc.) directed at them and by them, by the persons who live in them.

Shweder gives an example of a daisy turning up in a vegetable patch being plucked as a weed, while in other intentional worlds dandelions or crabgrass are not constituted as weeds, but cultivated as cash crops. Thus, there is no neutral, 'objective,' independent of human response, and no botanical definition in the pure abstract which one can count as weeds. In an important sense, Shweder asserts, weeds in our gardens achieve their reality because we are implicated in their existence. What is intentionally true within one intentional world isn't necessarily universally true. There is no requirement that across intentional worlds the identity of things must remain fixed and universal. Cultural psychology is the study of personal functioning in particular intentional worlds. Describing this idea conceptually, realities are seen as the product of the way things get represented, embedded, implemented, and reacted to in various contexts.

Defining cultural psychology in contrast to general psychology, Shweder makes important distinctions primarily in relation to the concept of a 'psychic unity.' He suggests that general psychology presupposes a central processing mechanism for experiencing and learning inherent in human beings, a mind as machine model.

General psychology, Shweder asserts, sets out to describe that central mechanism, which is presumed to be fixed and universal, just as all. A necessary step following this rational is to distinguish intrinsic psychological structures from extrinsic environmental conditions, insisting on a fundamental division between the processing mechanism of the person versus his or her personal or group history.

A principle held by general psychology is that “deep down,” or “inside,” where the central processing mechanism exists, people are the same. The rest: a context, values, meanings, knowledge, religion, language, institutions, is conceived to be external to or outside of the central processing mechanism.

The aim within general psychology is therefore to get behind superficial appearances, local manifestations, to isolate the intrinsic central processing mechanism of mental life and describe its laws of operation. Shweder denotes an anthropologist who argued that “the thinking processes of West African tribesmen do not differ from our own; only their values, beliefs, and classifications differ, which is why the Kpelle (a West African tribe) perform differently on psychological tests.” (p.5)

A central processing device is imagined to stand over and above, or to transcend culture, context and stimulus material. This means, in effect, that the functional properties of the processor must be context and content independent, and must be describable in terms of properties that are general to all contexts/contents.

Within this paradigm, it is assumed that one can enter a realm where the effects of context, content, and meaning can be eliminated, standardized, or kept under control, and the central processor will be observed in the raw. This suggests an image of a central processing mechanism in which the researcher searches for a window or a peephole through which to

view it naked and pure. It also presupposes a view of the nature of knowledge as composed of discrete, fixed, universal truths and observations, rather than as consisting of webs of contextually dependent relative meaning systems. Cultural psychology assumes there is no context-free environment. We live in a world of contextually constituted and represented particulars, domain-specific, concrete, subject-dependent, artifactual things.

Cross-cultural psychology is seen as a subdiscipline of general psychology which shares the notion of an inherent central processing mechanism of mental life, carrying the research to different cultures. However, the main discovery of cross-cultural psychology is that many descriptions of mental functioning emerging out of laboratory research with educated Western populations “do not travel very well to subject populations in other cultures.” (Shweder, 1990, p. 11).

Presupposing the principle of psychic unity, cross-cultural psychology is struggling as to how to interpret population-based differences through a developmental framework, in which some cultures are assumed to be not yet fully developed. Or it is suggested that the tests of the psychologist may be denying other cultures a fair opportunity to display properly the central processing mechanisms of their mind. From this standpoint, psychic unity is assumed as either a potential or an already achieved, waiting to be discovered universal property of mind. Cross-cultural psychology does not challenge the interpretive principle of general psychology, except as it introduces more “noise,” rationalized as the distorting effects of environment by the cultural variations in the norms.

Cultural psychology, in contrast, offers an alternative interpretation, by viewing the mind as contextually dependent and domain-specific. It does not search for universal properties of a central processing mechanism for all human psychological functioning.

Cultural psychology may further be distinguished from psychological anthropology. The latter aims to understand the way ritual, language, belief, and other systems of meaning function or are put together in the lives, experiences and mental representations of people. Yet, at least traditionally, this has also been done with the assumption of psychic unity, searching for the transcendental in the world of appearances.

An assumption made in this paradigm is that long-surviving cultural environments are relatively distortion-free, ideal facilitating environments. Viable sociocultural environments are seen as expressive of a central processing mechanism, molded into a limited number of possible designs for living. Cultural variants are thus interpretively reduced to categories or universal structures. Traditionally, psychological anthropology assumed that the structure and functioning is not fundamentally altered by the content or sociocultural environment.

A comparison to another subdiscipline, ethnopsychology, emphasizes the psychological in cultural psychology. Ethnopsychology is less concerned with the actual psychological functioning and subjective life of persons. It is the study of ethnic variations in the theories of mental life. It is concerned with the investigation of mind, self, body, and emotion as topics. It is cultural psychology without the individual functioning psyche. Cultural psychology is more person-centered, studying the individual psyche in different parts of the world.

The life of the psyche, Shweder asserts, is the life of intentional persons responding to, and directing their action at, their own mental objects or representations, and undergoing transformation through participation in an evolving intentional world that is the product of the collective mental representations that make it up.

Philip Cushman (1995) assumes that when we speak of the self, “we are signaling about something familiar yet beyond comprehension” (1995, p.4). He also asserts that it would not be possible to tease out and separate where culture ends and nature begins.

Kleinman, writing about context-bound expressions of pain and suffering (1988), suggests that local cultural orientations organize our conventional common sense in which the practitioner too has been socialized into a particular collective experience of illness. “Symptoms in that sense are accepted forms of knowledge about the body, the self, and their relationship to each other” (p. 11). He states that for many cultures the body is an open system linking social relations to the self. In these cultures (primarily non-Western according to Kleinman), bodily complaints are also moral problems- they are icons of disharmonies in social relationships and in the cultural ethos. A description which seems closely related to the ways in which Freud understood his hysteric patients- and opening the door to his early psychoanalytic discoveries. Kleinman points out that meaning of a social kind is stamped into bodily processes and experiences. He points to a “great concern in North American culture with unblemished skin surface, deodorized, youthful bodies, sexualized body shapes and gestures is part of a diffused capitalist system of commercialized symbolic meanings, which, like all cultural systems, orients the person to body and self experiences and to the proprieties and expectations of the group” (p. 13). Thus, integral aspects of local social systems inform how we feel, perceive bodily processes, and how we interpret those feelings and processes. It is important to notice that not only our interpretations of our feelings but our initial perception is culture-bound. We all learn to monitor bodily processes, to communicate bodily states- there are distinctive culture bound styles of eating, laughing and crying, urinating,



defecating, menstruating and so forth. These idioms crystallize the dialectic between bodily processes and cultural categories, between experience and meaning.

Meaning in experience is created, not only discovered in meeting obstacles and resistances in the real world. As such, it is co-constructed by the individual. Kleinman asserts that there is a definite tendency in the contemporary world to medicalize problems and turn to the cultural authority of the health professions and science for an answer to our predicaments. He sees a “symbolic continuum between psyche and soma” (p. 40).

The mind cannot be conceptualized as independent of baser bodily processes such as hunger, urination, and sexuality. As early Freudian thought points, early childhood bodily experience was constitutive of psychological structures. The constructivist emphasis on meaning structures need to take into account that our lives are devoted to less than meaning of life. As Soldz pointed out, “people spend an outrageous amount of time and energy on sexual fantasy” (1996, p.291).

People change and are changed by the particulars of their own mentally constituted forms of life. This conceptualization of dynamic mental representations aptly fits with psychoanalytic thought. Psyche and culture are seamlessly co-constructed. A person’s psychic organization is largely made possible by, and expressive of, a conception of itself, society, and nature. To understand these conceptions one must examine the way they are organized and function, in the subjective lives of individuals. Thus, like psychoanalysis, cultural psychology is essentially an interpretive enterprise.

## CHAPTER 7: CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

As early as 1927, Malinowski challenged Freud's assertion that the Oedipus complex is a universal derivative of taboos against cannibalism and parent child incest (Foulks, 1977, in Applegate, 1990). This was based on his field research with the Trobriand Islanders of Melanesia. Though attachment appears to be a universal pattern, Malinowski asserted it varies widely in relation to differing familial and communal and social contexts. Though social elements have been recognized as crucial in psychic development and structuralization, differences in cultures were rarely examined in relation to different societies, nor was it expanded to include other elements besides its prohibitive nature.

Research on the development of transitional objects in cultures with varying feeding practices, levels of physical care in the caregiver-child dyad, and sleeping arrangements, found that the kind and quality of transitional phenomenon that emerge differs between these cultures (Applegate, Hong and Townes 1976, Litt 1981, in Mattei, 1996). Children from urban, industrialized, white, middle-class communities tended to develop attachments to inanimate objects more often than other groups. This example suggests differences in cultural use of an inanimate transitional object, and in turn the ways in which a child learns to organize his/her world, and his/her sense of self.

A psychoanalyst working with Indian and Japanese cultures made distinctions between a Western sense of self, which is more individualized in nature than an eastern sense of self, which he defines as a we-self (Roland 1988, 1991, in Mattei 1996). This configuration is highly relational in a different social context. Family and community are closely embedded, and often take precedence over individual concerns.

Roland (1996) wrote about variations in the self between Americans and Asians as resulting from different “culturally patterned selfobject relationships and object relationships from earliest childhood” (p. 464). Whereas the American self is more bounded, self-directed, and assertive, verbally self-expressive and individualistic, the Asian self is much more relationally experienced with others, suggesting a we-self. Roland (1991) wrote about cross-cultural differences relying on contemporary psychoanalytic thought where social relations and cultural symbols can be viewed as being filtered through and internalized into the psyche. He views these internalized aspects as being closely related to the emotional patterning of interpersonal relationships “as they vary across civilizations” (p. 161).

Kakar (1990) had the impression that the content of Indian case histories in comparison with western ones- differs in the fluidity of the patients’ cross-sexual and generational identifications. “In the Indian patient the fantasy of taking on the sexual attributes of both the parents seems to have a relatively easier access to awareness” (p. 433). He states that cultural ideals and ideas pervade the innermost experience of the self. One cannot speak of an “earlier” or “deeper” layer of the self beyond cultural reach. “As a ‘depth psychology,’ psychoanalysis dives deep, but in the same waters in which the cultural river flows” (p. 443). He concludes that the impact of culture on the development of a construction of self has been underestimated.

Ernest Jones (1974) understands neurosis as one of the many ways in which an individual responds to “certain difficult social situations through which everyone has to pass” (p. 208). He states “in its endeavor to become a human citizen the infant is asked to recapitulate 50,000 years of human development in the first five years of its life.” (p. 208-209).

As Lasch (1989) has pointed out, psychoanalysis points to human limitations more than human potential. Freud had no faith in social progress. Civilization, in Freud's view, is founded on repression. It is therefore not surprising, Lasch argues, that many social critiques have aligned with psychoanalysis in explaining their systems of thought. Despite this, psychoanalysis has never claimed to be a general theory of culture, and has always concerned itself primarily with clinical data (Lasch, 1989).

A psychoanalytic developmental perspective of character structure which utilizes cultural factors must rely on other disciplines, such as cultural psychology, to define its area of study.

Roheim (1950), in a collection of essays titled *Psychoanalysis and Anthropology: Culture, Personality and the Unconscious*, asserts he understands psychoanalysis as an interpretative tool while all interpretations can only be meaningful in their cultural context. Roheim also points to Freud's discoveries as pointing to the co-constructive elements in the meeting of the child with its environment. At the same time he asserts that "psychoanalysis purports to have something to say about human nature apart from its local variations" (p. 397), suggesting he views psychoanalysis as both an interpretive discipline and a metapsychology. Roheim states that the delayed infancy of the child and the maternal instinct of the mother constitute in the life of the individual both the first cultural and first social situation (p. 434). He quotes Kroeber (1948) stating that cultural activity may be described as bodily-mental activity. While he contends that the psychic unity of mankind is more than a "working hypothesis" (p. 435) he struggles with the idea of searching for "unconditioned human nature" (p. 435) saying it is a paradoxical statement "because the essence of human

nature is that *it is conditioned*" (p. 435). He states that the essence of human nature is not only that it is conditioned but also that it conditions.

Roheim also contends that culture as we know it cannot exist without language. Finally, Roheim declares that "interpretation in terms of unconscious content is sub-cultural, the unconscious is the same for every culture. There are differences in the ego and in defense mechanisms but not in the id" (p. 444). Using terms from the structural and topographical terms introduced by Freud, Roheim neglects unconscious aspects of ego functioning, including the ego's mechanisms of defense which are by definition unconscious. He asserted that Freud assumed the origin of culture and the process of growing up are really the same thing. He later asserts that some groups certainly emphasize certain defense mechanisms more than others. Yet he emphasizes cultural differences as they crystallize in that part of character formation which he calls the ego ideal, as the mores of a culture. He also quotes Opler (1945) who stated that a limited number of dynamic affirmations he calls themes can be identified in every culture and "the key to character structuring and direction in every culture is to be sought in the nature, expression, and interrelatedness of these themes" (p. 456). Roheim summarizes his thesis by differentiating a universal latent content versus a context-determined meaning manifest symbolically differently in different cultures. Once again, we come across a resistance, or a difficulty, to think of the ego (or its complementaries), which is the psychic apparatus formed with accordance to the reality principle, as culturally bound. This, despite the fact that it is exactly this reality that is culturally embedded.

Harrington (1993) advocated the mutual methodological and theoretical relevance of psychoanalysis and anthropology each for the other. He views science as being about models

built from inferences, and as such, all accounts of reality are seen as constitutive of it. He views all explanatory concepts such as personality, culture, and the self as being on the constructive side of the dimension as they are analytic models that would not exist had they not been made up. Rather than viewing personality as a reduction of culture, he conceptualizes culture as an organization of diversity. He asks, given the central role of the concept of self (and related concepts like the ego, personality, identity) in psychoanalysis, what can anthropology tell us about the cross-cultural universality of the concept. The tension between the two disciplines may be defined thus: do members of different cultures live in different worlds altogether?

The interpersonal tradition in psychoanalysis was familiar with criticisms dismissing the so-called American cultural school (including Horney, Fromm, and Sullivan, as well as others) as not being truly psychoanalytic because its formulations include recognition of the impact of social forces. In this view, to include the effects of external reality is assumed to neglect the importance of internal reality.

In an increasingly pluralistic world, the way people view their own ethnicity and race in relation to that of others is of large importance (Applegate, 1990). These variables influence internal representations of self and other and may form a sense of self transmuted with the unique self-representations. Sociocultural factors influence the organization of one's experience in relation to oneself, one's ethnic group, and individuals and groups of other ethnic origins, in relation to which one has integrated a representation. A child, for example, may take in the parent's ambivalence about their skin color which may relate to, and fuel an organization of experience that is defensive, questioning ones world and living in it (Bowles, in Applegate 1990).

Herron (1998) has posed that although an individual psychology does not have to be opposed to a social psychology, in psychoanalysis that has frequently been the case. He defined the ethnic unconscious as material “derived from identification with a particular group of people who have sufficient characteristics in common” (p. 347). The ethnic component in the psyche is contextual, he poses, and the psyche’s adaptability has an attunement that is supported by the defenses made available by the culture. The repression creating the ethnic unconscious, he suggests, is essentially a defensive adaptation to the drives and relations, and their accompanying fantasies, that are complementary to a given culture.

A constructivist approach suggests that our mind, rather than serving as an empty vessel onto which our understanding of the world pours, is much more resistant and selective in its development (Hollan, 2000).

Josephs (1991) maintains that character, in today’s discourse, is synonymous with personality, both pointing to a temporal stability and cross-situational consistency in personal conduct, which in turn reflects the operation of underlying organizational principles that account for the inner logic. The universal aspect of human behavior, as Josephs reads Freud, are the Id aspects of love, sexuality, dependency, competitiveness, and aggression.

What distinguishes individuals, Josephs observes, is the particular manner of defending against intrapsychic conflict that constitute the human condition. Before Hartmann’s adaptive emphasis, character structure was seen as essentially emerging out of frustration, in avoidance of anxiety, and as compensation for perceived deficiencies. Sullivan (1953) emphasized that adaptation is made essentially to a specific sociocultural

environment- thus character formation in his perspective is an interpersonal adaptation, a strategy to fit in and be accepted (Josephs, 1991).

Josephs stresses the need to maintain a sense of self-sameness that represents a conservative force in personality organization. This self-consistency was a major aspect of Erikson's work on identity. This concept points to a functioning of the whole person as an integrated unit, "yet Freud demonstrated how deeply conflicted and divided humans tend to be" (p.13).

Writing about the Cultural, Emotional, and Unconscious Aspects of Self (1991), Westen focuses on the philosophy of science in relation to the concept of self, in which clinical and self experience, he believes, guide how researchers determine what needs to be studied and how to understand it. Westen discusses unconscious representations of the self, or self as object. Self-representations have both conscious and unconscious components- this distinction, Westen notes, is crucial.

Erikson, Westen argues, stressed that identity also includes recognition by the social and cultural milieu that one is indeed who one thinks one is. Westen also attempts to distinguish and assess the impact of technological development, Westernization, and capitalism on self-structure. He identifies several factors in technological development that implicate changes in the experience and valuations of self.

Crapanzano (1990) adheres to a dialectical view of the self in which self-awareness arises when the ego views itself from the vantage point of the other. The characterizations of the other are subject to conventional constraints embedded in language and desire, which itself is articulated and constrained by language. In his view, one casts the other in order to cast oneself, in a circular fashion.



Soldz (1996) writes about psychoanalysis as being until very recently a relatively isolated discipline which had very little dialogue with other intellectual traditions.

Psychoanalysts, Soldz says, have been paying increasing attention to the formal properties of psychic structures. He concludes that the common interest in psychic structures suggests that this is an area where cross-fertilization between constructivism and psychoanalysis could be beneficial to both.

The postmodern critique of forms of knowledge has had a strong impact on contemporary discourse within psychoanalysis (Kirshner, 1997). Postmodernism has largely critiqued theoretical systems.

Donnel Stern (1997) suggested that “language itself represents the joined voices and perspectives of those who have come before us, and into whose world we are born” (p. 23). He adds that “our ancestors’ social innovations are “sedimented” (Foucault) in our languages, and therefore in our individual lives” (p. 23). “The one great postmodern conclusion” he concludes, is that “all experience is linguistic...understanding is inevitably linguistic, and that language is historicized, perspectival, and socially constructed” (p. 254). Hermeneutics, Stern indicates, views language as providing a “perspective on reality, a means of engaging a personal and social world that actually exists” (p. 267).

Altman (1995) asserts that words are symbols, and as such, occur in a “transitional space” (p. 70), in a socially shared world, while simultaneously being a product of individual creative activity. “Symbols have elasticity and infinite playfulness” (Harris, 1992, p. 132, in Altman, 1995, p.70), this playfulness, of which Winnicott wrote profoundly, is a direct derivative of the mother-infant dyad, and the environment’s ability to sustain a child in a playful semi-omnipotent state.

Allingham (1987) placed the context of culture and society on the interactions the adult has with the group, which according to him is the link between the two.

Underlying this study's critique of developmental psychoanalysis is the hypothesis that "while the mind constructs reality in its relationship to the world, this mental process is significantly informed by influences from social relationships" Gergen (1999, p. 32).

Gergen (1999) refers to George Herbert Mead's work from 1934, where the latter proposes that

There is no thinking, or indeed any sense of being a self that is independent of social process...it is through other's response that we slowly begin to develop the capacities for mental symbolization; or in effect, our gestures and the reactions they elicit from others come to be represented mentally (p. 33).

As humans acquired the capacity to control symbolic thought adaptively, they have become "culture bearing animals" (De Vos & Boyer, 1989 p. 3). These symbols are not idiosyncratically invented, but rather become available progressively as the infant, then child, and finally adult partakes in the "culturally transmittable collective representations of the particular group" (p. 3). The individual at the same time is drawing upon available inner experiences of his or her bodily processes as psychophysiological functioning matures. Each gradually learns to give communicable representations of inner states of pain, anxiety, and pleasure to the self as well as to others. The development of symbolic thought is distinctly human and is culture-bound from the outset. De Vos & Boyer assert that symbolizing humans utilize associative pathways governed by the same psychodynamic principles that guide the development of thought and causal reasoning through psychosexual stages starting from early infancy. Interactional patterns contribute to the cognitive schemata that characterize culturally induced distinctions developed by social learning. These distinctions,

according to De Vos & Boyer, differentiate thought patterns embedded in the language of different cultures. Symbols by definition are a mode of communication and cannot be considered independently of the process of communication. As such, man's thought is inherently interpersonal by nature. Psychoanalysis, as an interpretive science, is deeply concerned with the vicissitudes that govern the social interaction of human beings from birth onwards. This interpersonal emphasis on psychological structure contributed to understanding modes of symbolizing. Thus, commonly held symbols are deeply expressive of inner affective states and not specifically aspects of a social structure.

De Vos & Boyer view primary process as being transmuted through social living within family and community into secondary processes shared by the group as a whole, and see these as characteristic infantile maturational stages. Language is seen as verbal symbols and operates socially as such. A symbol is defined as a sign by which one knows or refers to a thing, by reason of relationship, association, or convention.

What can developmental psychoanalysis learn from Cushman's critique? What does it mean about the study of character development, the unconscious world and object-relatedness of a developing psyche? In an article titled a New View of Developmental Research for Psychoanalysts (1996) Fajardo states that both psychoanalysts and developmental psychologists claimed to base their theories on objective observation of natural phenomena, with a determination to uncover underlying realities in human nature. Restructuring in the epistemological beliefs about the nature of knowledge, reality, truth and observation have shifted around the politics of authority. Truth is now defined as contextually based, Fajardo states. A postmodern emphasis may be placed on research in the development of meaning, through the study of language, thought, and affect, and can illuminate how

meanings are construed from childhood experience. Fajardo attempts to present “a developmental research perspective...that has potential relevance for the hermeneutic constructivist psychoanalyst.” (p. 194). Her focus is essentially on the observer not being objective but also subjective, being “inextricably embedded in the field with the other who is being observed” (p. 196) and which sees truth and knowledge as based in dialogue. She focuses on asking questions about dyadic process and relationships, investigating the process of interaction between people. Studying the individual in interaction with others, Fajardo postulates, will help understand the conditions and evolution of such patterns, and will help understand the patient’s self-regulatory processes “which is the substratum of fantasies, dreams, and other carriers of meaning that have been traditional data of classical psychoanalysis” (p. 198). Taking into notice that this is what Stern seems to have attempted in his research, by studying interactions between infants and their mothers, this may not be a sufficient conclusion.

In their review article, Foulks & Schwartz (1982) discuss the concept of self in particular societies, trace its development within the context of each society, and analyze its role in shaping various modes of interaction within that context. They suggest that failure to integrate all-good and all-bad representations of self and other may be influenced by cultural patterns that reinforce a split between the two in the child’s world, and is later maintained and preserved. Bad representations become projected onto outside cultures.

The infant’s caregivers act as culture carriers. This takes place in the form of behaviors, attitudes, styles of relating that are culturally defined and limited (Applegate, 1990). Aside from socialization, culture comes to play a fundamental part in development “from the inside” (Gehrie, 1979, in Applegate 1990, p.88).

## CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

Sass (1988) contends that the nature of the self “is perhaps the central issue of psychoanalytic debate today.” (p. 553). He stresses the importance of this debate in stating that the field of psychology is central in structuring modes of experience, as well as reflecting them, in this age, taking the place once held by religion and later philosophy.

A tendency to devalue the impact of culture on character formation has been identified as a longstanding tradition in psychoanalysis. Culture, when it was addressed, was given the place of a separate field, outside psychoanalytic interest and conceptualization of intrapsychic matters. This dissertation has attempted to elaborate on the interest contemporary psychoanalytic thought had diverted towards the development and functioning of the experience of self, as it emerges in sociocultural context. Rather than conceptualizing culture as an outer layer through which the psyche manifests itself, or a screen or stage, cultural psychology has provided conceptual tools to understand development in culture as an important element in character development. The relativism and pluralism which studies of culture invite seem to have much to offer to psychoanalytic thought, without threatening its inherent assumptions.

The relativist framework to understanding development, as it emerges from the current theories of cultural psychology, integrate well with developmental psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis, as the science of the particular and distinct truth of the subject, is well prepared and set to incorporate postmodern ideas of construction of social phenomena into meaning symbolic events and subjective reality.

This dissertation has taken on the study of character formation from the perspective of two distinct fields, psychoanalysis and cultural psychology. Contributions to the study of

development of personality-in-culture were specifically examined as they pertain to psychoanalytic understandings of development. While Freud acknowledged the importance of social phenomena as a chief subject of psychoanalytic research, he viewed development as arising against primitive constituents in which the individual and his or her environment are in inherent conflict. It is only the moral aspect of society, according to Freud, that the individual internalizes as a new authority.

Jung, with the concept of the collective unconscious, explored collective aspects of human experience embedded in culture, as they influence the psyche. He too views development as occurring out of differentiation as a necessary step. The dichotomy observed in Freud's thought is apparent in Jung in the tension between annihilation and isolation of the individual within society. Adler has made the step of acknowledging society and culture as a constant factor in the individual's growth. He asserts that there is no form of life which was not conducted as social, and Fromm has elaborated on the influences of social dynamics on the development of the individual, specifically within a Marxist comprehension of the distribution of economic resources.

Erikson, in a body of work which was explicitly concerned with social and cultural aspects, has made a distinction between the individual and social selves, thus preserving the split that has been observed in psychoanalysis between the individual and his or her environment, or the psyche and the social influences made upon it. Maintaining this split, Erikson understands cultural expressions of psychopathology as manifest content of specific intrapsychic compromise formations. When he does discuss culture conflicts, it is as they occur when two cultures clash, again maintaining things cultural to one realm and things intrapsychic to another. One interesting aspect of his theory with regards to this discussion is

the cultural allocations of different venues and vicissitudes to the psychosexual stages of the libidinal unfolding. Erikson tends to reduce cultural phenomena to the organizing principles of libido theory and identifies a linear development from body-ego and parental representations to later stages of exposure to social phenomena. His ideas of cultural allocations are suggestive of a broader and more significant importance culture has for the self, as it is interpreted in its social meaning.

Winnicott expanded on the relationship between the infant and his or her mother as a primary aspect in the development of a sense of self. He emphasized the critical importance of a potential space between the individual and the environment as the psychic origin of any experience the infant has of culture and thus allocated the importance of culture in the individual's psychic to a very early developmental stage. He maintained the linear understanding of a gradual exposure from mother to family to society, limiting an understanding of the embeddedness of a developing psyche in cultural context in his theories.

Mahler has emphasized the importance of the concept of internalization as a forerunner for the development of psychic structure. A concept which has proven to be primary in building a conceptual bridge between psychoanalysis and cultural psychology. Mahler understands the child's process of individuation as occurring in response to adaptational demands made upon oneself from the outset, being shaped by, and shaping oneself to, one's environment. It is the marking of the individual's assumptions of his or her individual characteristics. This postulation, though very limited in relation to what exactly culture has to do with development, is very receptive to studying how the environment may impact individual characteristics. In these theories, environment is an important abstract which is not elaborated upon, and a linear approach to developmental exposure is suggested,

which minimizes any discussion about the magnitude of cultural diversity and its impact on development.

Joseph Lichtenberg stressed that the intersubjective context of development cannot be conceptualized in a linear manner, and instead focused on the importance of play, which, in the form of symbolic representations, serves as an organizing factor in development. His discussion focuses on self-representations (or in his words self-images) as they pertain to the integration and experience of cohesion of the self.

Palombo writes about self-narratives, rather than self-images, in an attempt to refocus attention to how individuals attach specific meaning to phenomena to which they are exposed. Palombo understands the development of a sense of self as based on meanings conferred on self-experience in a community, and the cohesive self as a structure which is the totality of sets of meanings woven together into a narrative self. Thus, Palombo resolves the tension between content (meaning) and structure (self) by equating them, in introducing the concept of a narrative self. What is there other than a narrative self, one may question.

This dialectic tension between content and structure (or construct) exists in contemporary theory with a growing emphasis on experience and the sense of self, instead of psychic reality and the self as construct. This tension is also reflected in this dissertation, as it focuses on the question whether a person's development can be separated from the context in which he or she are embedded, and whether introducing cultural elements necessarily bounds the discussion to a sense of self and experience, or the self as construct in its totality can also be studied. In other words, was the contemporary shift in theory from self to self-experience necessary for the present introduction of cultural psychological ideas of development? Fred Pine, for example, has explicitly stated that his ideas about how intrapsychic life is organized



differently at different moments relies heavily on the focus on self-experience. The human capacity to generate meaning is, according to him, his conceptual glue.

Daniel Stern also avoids a discussion about the topic by avoiding it in stating that a “sense of self is not a cognitive construct. It is an experiential integration.” (2000, p. 71). At one point he states that the central idea in his book is that internal objects are not constructed of people, or parts of people, but a repeated experience of self in interaction with another. On another occasion he states that research shows infants experience persons as unique forms from the start, and never only as particular physical stimulus. Many of the arguments introduced by cultural psychology rest within the space between these two statements, where culture is mediated through the diversity in human experience. Stern also holds a layered perspective in which, at the third stage of sense of self, “the parents’ socialization of the infants’ subjective experience comes to be an issue” (p. 126). He differentiated between culture from the outside and its specific enactment influencing the infant. Cushman’s critique of Stern’s work, as an example of how decontextualized theories reflect, rather than discover, a social reality, is a major contribution to our understanding of what is at stake if culture is neglected when hypothesizing about human development.

A culture-inclusive psychoanalysis will have to confront itself with the developmental question of how culture and mind create each other. If all human behavior is to be understood relationally, in relation to its context, then how does one understand development of character formation? Can one talk in psychoanalysis about specific psychological processes and structures as patterned in part by cultural meanings and practices, and therefore having significance with reference to a particular community? This

is a contribution cultural psychology offers. Psychological structures and processes may vary fundamentally in different cultural contexts. Culture and self are interdependent constructs.

The core of such psychological functions as emotion and cognition are understood as acting within a relational scenario, according to socially negotiated rules. Culture defines intentional realities that depend on social agreement for their existence. Rather than attempting to distinguish intrinsic psychological structures from extrinsic environmental conditions, cultural psychology assumes this dichotomy is essentially inadequate. The self is understood as configured in ways that both reflect and influence the very foundations of social life and everyday living (Cushman, 1995).

Everything in the mind can be regarded as a compromise formation. Even the realistic, healthy, or adaptive aspects can be considered narrative constructs. Fantasy may be understood as constituting the tissue of our mind and the basis of our actions. By viewing all mental contents as fantasy, such contents are systematically deconstructed and the patient is helped to disidentify from each and every fantasy/construction, and not merely from those judged to be outmoded, unrealistic, or maladaptive.

Fantasy may be viewed as a mechanism by which a child deals with lowered narcissistic cathexis of the self, restoring self-esteem through the creation of ideal and satisfying situations (Sandler & Nagera, 1963). This ideal may be seen as constructed from the child's social world, and embedded in social constructions of what provides one with self-esteem, such as how love is experienced and communicated. Freud referred to fantasy as a type of thought associated with the introduction of the reality principle and its ensuing frustrations, or essentially the introduction of the social environment to the intrapsychic life of the human infant.

Fantasizing is considered an ego function, as the ego emerges with a capacity to differentiate reality from other forms of experience. By putting reality aside temporarily, and avoiding unpleasure, this concept raises the question of what creates unpleasure, and what needs to be put aside, and are these elements in any way embedded in culture.

Schafer (1968) distinguishes between remembering, perceiving, and anticipating, in which one is oriented toward what was, is or may become real, while in fantasy the aim is to disregard the actual in some way in order to represent something wished for.

Internalization, according to Laplanche & Pontalis (1974), is a process “whereby intersubjective relations are transformed into intrasubjective ones” (p. 226). They equate it to introjection, which they define as the process by which, in fantasy, the subject transposes objects and their inherent qualities from the “outside” to the “inside” of himself or herself. It is therefore a key term in bridging between the field of cultural psychology and developmental psychoanalysis, as it delineates an axis by which one may conceptualize and study the ways in which the psyche, in all stages of behavior, develops contextually.

Schafer (1968) outlines the concept of internalization as it evolved. First, it was understood to point to a portion of the external world that has at least partially been abandoned as an object and has instead, by way of identification, been taken into the ego and thus become an integral part of the internal world. This agency continues to carry out the functions performed by people in the external world.

A later reformulation defines internalization as regulations that have taken place in interaction with the outside world and are replaced by inner regulations (Hartmann, 1962, in Schafer 1968). Internalization refers to all those processes by which the subject transforms real or imagined regulatory interactions with his or her environment, and real or imagined

characteristics of his or her environment, into inner regulations and characteristics. Parsons (1958, in Schafer, 1968) viewed all learning as internalization of cultural symbols, and values. Internalized regulations, Schafer stresses, need to be viewed as a matter of degree- the degree to which external regulations have been taken over by the subject, and stamped with his or her self-representation (P.15).

Jacobson (1964, p. 160-161, in Schafer, 1968, p.19) states that the foundations of all identifications are the infantile “wishful fantasies of merging and being one with the mother (breast)...” She is referring to the earliest stages of development, in which boundaries between self and object are fragmentary and fluid. Thus, even the earliest aspects of identification through introjections attempt to incorporate what the mother is, which in cultural psychological terms is a cultural artifact. Even in establishing the earliest boundaries, the infant develops perceptual capacities with which to communicate, and within a certain cultural artifact, with constructed believes of what it is to be a human being. From the outset, learning is an integral part of the process of internalization.

Identity, Schafer advocates, is in part a synthesis of one’s sum of internalizations and self-representations. He understands it also beyond this aspect, as a psychobiological product of psychosexual phases of development. Identity implies revisions, exclusions, and generalizations as a serious of structure-forming processes. It implies both content themes as well as abstract organizing principles.

Identification, Schafer proposes, is in its fullest sense an unconscious process (p. 140). As such, it may be related to Cushman’s (1991) assertions of the immediacy with which culture is embedded into the earliest relationships. Modifications in self-representations are made to experience being like, the same as, or merged with one or more

representations of the object. It is through identification that one both develops regulatory characteristics while at the same time maintaining a tie to the object with which one has identified. Identification, Schafer suggests, is with a representation of an object rather than the object per se. The subject's conception is only one possible version, depending on the subject's own needs, intentions, projections, etc. This conceptualization is closely tied to understanding early processes as a co-construction of reality. The forming of the wish to identify, Schafer stresses, in itself represents a motivational change.

Previous attempts to delineate development in relational terms have been highly criticized for attempting to universalize local knowledge (Stern, in Cushman 1991). Though within the field of social-constructionism, such key concepts as the social construction of the person, and the relational aspects of the self, have hardly been studied from a developmental perspective. Cushman observes circularity in Stern's thought, which he believes arises from Stern's attempt to study humans outside their lived context.

Lacking such key psychoanalytic concepts as internalization and fantasy, which are outside the realm of observed behavior a developmental psychologist may accommodate, excluded a discussion of the infant's capacity to develop in context in Stern's work. In actual fact, such concepts, which are concerned with intrapsychic aspects of depth psychology, are what precluded Stern's work from being received and recognized by social constructivism, as it lacked a discourse of variation in cultural experience.

Stern is critiqued by Cushman as belonging to a Humanistic-romantic tradition which understands development as predestined unfolding. It appears that any attempt to define an expected development in relational terms runs the risk of becoming an ethnocentric theory. If one is to study the self as a social artifact, one must study its context. The frame of reference

of culture is all too pervasive to be summarized in a passing reference to the importance of environment.

Winnicott introduced the idea of the mother as a holding environment, which he defines as denoting “not only the physical holding of the infant, but also the total environmental provision prior to the concept of living with” (1965, p. 43). Cultural psychology asserts that the infant is immediately and profoundly surrounded, embedded, and held by the practices of a culture. These two ideas do not negate each other, but rather complement our understanding and the situating of both the infant and his or her mother within a culture, as well as situating culture within the relationship of the infant with his or her mother. While Winnicott did not elaborate on his concept of cultural space as transitional space, cultural psychology’s ideas may clarify it. The infant is seen as being born to a social world which immediately speaks, gestures, and holds them. All practices and activities are embedded in culturally transmitted heritage. This is an inclusive statement that permits a relativistic perspective.

Is there a place for such a concept as the psyche in social-constructivist theory? There is dialectic tension between “the psyche “ and social relationships as the focus of understanding mental processes. A view of science in which there is a single, knowable reality where theories compete for explanatory and predictive superiority may not provide us with apt apparatus in understanding the self. With that challenge, does that dismantle the authority of psychological science?

A modern view of man, as an autonomous entity, is derived from the Cartesian view of a self-defining subject- where self-sufficiency is a central aspect of the understanding of human beings. The contemporary emphasis on self-experience and a self-defining

subjectivity lacks a developmental grounding, or the encompassing external world in which such experience is constructed. Lacan was also invested in that aspect of development in which what he called “the Symbolic”, the capacity to use language, according to him, was the beginning of accepting and participating in the semiotic system that determines human experience and society (Sass, 1988, p. 600). Saussure isolated language from the history of its users and viewed it as a self-contained structure in which words have no necessary connection to the things they signify (Holland, 1999). As such – it became a self-contained system, an absolute. From the perspective of deconstruction, we don’t speak language, but rather language speaks us, pointing the ways in which we talk within a structure of language to which we are developmentally introduced and in which context we construct our realities and experiences. From this perspective, truths outside time and language are unattainable.

A key point shared by both psychoanalysis and constructivism is that both place an emphasis on reality structured by the personal perspective of the individual. In both, the individual filters new experiences through already existing psychological structures. A developmental question that arises in both disciplines and brings about different voices and differing opinions is the degree of the role of reality in psychological development. How do we speak about the formal properties of psychic structure if we understand that one cannot speak of an 'earlier' or 'deeper' layer of the self beyond cultural reach.

Kakar (1990) stresses that the notion that the construction of the self as being greatly influenced by culture from the very beginning does not imply that there is no boundary between inner and outer worlds, but creates a tension that gives it its narrative power. A boundary, he suggests, cannot be fixed developmentally in time or psychic space.

Many authors have alluded to an existing tension between the concept of self with relation to intrapsychic versus socially contextualized constituents. A historical (i.e. developmental) symbiosis exists between the psychological and the social, as it is manifest in the way we construct reality. The unique object of psychoanalysis- the human subjectivity puts it in a special place within postmodern thought.

As Ollman (1976) maintained, a thing is equal to social relations, which he views as the irreducible minimum. The main argument from this perspective is that things in reality appear and function as they do because of their ties with other things. The tension observed between inner and outer forces on the individual throughout this discussion have been reflected by Fromm's account of the fundamental differences between Marx and Freud. He stated the differences pertain to the forces which each believed determine a person's life. For Freud, they are biological and physiological forces, while for Marx they are historical forces in the process of man's socioeconomic development. Fromm himself resolves this by stating that character development involves the adaptation of the libido structure to a given social structure.

Psychoanalysis attempts to place human action in an intelligible narrative, or as an interpretive system. The study of the self is inevitably a study of subjective experience. As such, symbolic, and interpretive explanations have gained increasing prominence and an essential ingredient in the study of the self (Kirshner, 1997). Roheim (1950) emphasized that psychoanalysis purports to have something to say about human nature apart from its local variations, while at the same time stressing that interpretations can only be meaningful in their cultural context. He also pointed to the co-constructive elements of the meeting of the child with its environment. If the essence of human nature is that it is conditioned, is there



place for a metapsychology on any level? While Roheim observes a universality in the Id aspects of human nature, Josephs (1991) suggested that what distinguishes individuals is the particular manner of defending against intrapsychic conflict. Herron (1998) asserts that certain defenses are made available by the culture, and thus their uses vary across cultures.

Can we talk of characteristic transformations and vicissitudes of cultural material?

The emphasis on the term self has often been criticized as being largely a product of Western culture and thought. Relational aspects of the self have recently been stressed both within and outside the field of psychoanalysis. Fontinell (1993) has observed a long standing “split” in which, within social theory, the social construction of the person and the historical construction of society are fundamental twin ideas that do not meet.

The development of symbolic thought is culture-bound from the outset, while at the same time the individual draws on available inner experience of his or her bodily processes. Thus, the body-self is an organic part of a socio-centric world, where emotion and cognition are integrated into bodily processes (Kleinman, 1988). Pointing to a symbolic continuum between psyche and soma.

Hermeneuticists emphasize that all human existence always involves a cultural totality, so much so that in its extreme it rejects any knowledge that is independent of culture, language, and social practices. Hermeneutics provides us with the tradition of studying the interrelatedness of the interpreting subject and the interpreted object. It also stresses the importance of language as synonymous with understanding. If we approach the study of human development as interdependent with the culture, the focus is on the process by which the culture becomes the individual and the individuals create their culture. Culture is not only seen here as the manifest content but as a system which structures the individual's world.

The constructivist approach suggests that the unconscious, with its desires, wishes and impulses, is always embedded and organized in an interpersonal matrix (Mitchell, 1988, in Hollan, 2000). Thus, our conscious awareness, and experiences of our motives and behavior may vary from context to context. Self and object-related experience crystallizes within an interpersonal realm.

### The Case of Sam Revisited

In his prominent work, *Childhood and Society* (1950), Erikson attempts to illuminate psychoanalysis with anthropological and socio-historical perspectives. In his famous case study of Sam, Erikson illuminated early psychosexual aspects within the cultural heritage of the family (Jewish), and the social context within which they live (American-gentile). Sam's pathology is understood within a culture of a family that has isolated itself from Jewish surroundings, yet carried their heritage as an "internal reality" (p. 21).

The child's crisis is seen as a reflection of the family's crisis. Erikson portrays the child's pathology within its sociocultural context; he also mentions a constitution of character and developmental phase. Moreover, Erikson talks about a "secondary process" of the organization of experience in the individual which is associated with social potentials. He writes about a third principle of organization- one of a social nature. He proposed that the individual is always, from birth until death, organized in interconnected historical and geographical cruxes of family, class, community, and nation.

Erikson titles this work *A Neurological Crisis of a Little Boy*, and creates an in-depth analysis of intra-psychic aspects of this disorder. Despite his own understanding, it is evident from beginning to end that Sam's problem has been completely medicalized by his close

environment. In the first morning of the attack, Sam's mother finds him in his bed after waking up to strange voices from his bedroom. A physician is called forth, a sedative is provided, and Sam is sent forth to the neighboring hospital.

Erikson is very careful in challenging the medical diagnosis of an epileptic episode. He explicitly states that he does not claim to cure epilepsy with psychoanalysis. He suggests that concurrent with the physiological process ("somatic self"), there are the processes of the personal self and the social self. He criticizes the division between these processes, stating that our thinking is enslaved to such a division, while at the same time maintaining the split in his thinking. When Erikson describes in the first paragraph of the case the attack the only description provided is that it was a "horrifying attack" (p. 16, 1960). The reader is immediately informed of the social and cultural milieu where such an event is described as horrifying, it is then defined as a medical emergency, eliminated with drugs, and concludes with Sam being removed from his home to the hospital. He has been declared sick. This is the cultural context within which Sam's "event" took place.

Other modes of operation and interpretations may have occurred had this event taken place in a different sociocultural context, and may have impacted Sam in ways very different than it has in this case. Had Sam been born to a lower socioeconomic class, the possibility of a home-visit by a physician, or even a hospitalization may have not been an option. In these cases, it would have been interesting to find out how the family, or indeed a community organize to meet the needs of the individual. Sam may have had to realize early on that his environment cannot provide him with medical assistance, or a physician may have been regarded by his local culture as a useless luxury altogether. Reliance on others may have

developed to be a weakness and anxiety provoking, or a communal coming together at times of stress may have marked his early experiences.

What if Sam grew in a culture where this sudden event would have been interpreted in mystical terms, and Sam's attack was to be interpreted as holding a meaning for his community instead of being rid of with an anesthetic. The different meanings and possible developments depending on the sociocultural context in which Sam's "attack" took place are numerous, and speak to the interdependence of culture and self. Sam quickly internalizes the cultural meaning of his attack as a medical disorder, while in a different context it may have been the organizing event on his way to becoming a shaman.

The reader learns that Sam spends most of his time at his home backyard, while his mother is most probably the only individual with which he interacts most of the time. She is the one that answers his questions about the dead mole he finds in the back yard. This is a scenario of life in its modern Western version, where the child is isolated from larger social circles and learns about life from a mother that is homebound, while the father is psychologically (or other-wise) absent throughout the case presentation. This construction of the family was a cultural ideal fit for 1950's America, when this work was published.

The intrusion of the visiting grandmother to this fragile equilibrium is identified as a key detrimental moment in the beginning of a domino effect in which Sam's mother is deeply disturbed by the prospect of her mother's critical eye and assessment of her family (p. 17). All these are culturally embedded ideas which are clearly reflective of not only the psychological relationships between mother and daughter, but suggestive of a larger context, in which the grandmother is an outsider to the family, coming from a distance, and with which Sam is remotely familiar. His mother is resistant to leave her son alone with her

mother since her mother has a weak heart and he is restless and tense. She inevitably does so and returns to find her mother in the midst of a heart attack. The whole story is reminiscent of a mythological narrative, but its main constituent designates Sam as a prisoner at his own house with his mother, and later his grandmother. These elements do not negate the subsequent analysis in which Erikson analyses Sam's epilepsy as related to his fear of his unconsciously experienced murderous actions, but locate it within a cultural setting that gives the impression of a very isolated and limited social world.

The child is described by Erikson as "stubborn, energetic, and intelligent." He is also described as being outspoken, determined, and as someone who would not be satisfied with 'no' or 'maybe' "from the outset" (p.18). Erikson attributes many characteristics to Sam as an isolated bounded self, without speculating about the cultural origins of these descriptions. This is congruent with his maintained division between a personal and a social self, but raises questions from a cultural psychological perspective. This is because the child may have well developed such characteristics, but it is within, and in response to, a culture with value-laden ideas about him. For example, it is disputable whether Sam would have been described in the same way (stubborn, energetic, outspoken, and determined) had he been a girl. And had he not been described in this manner by his environment, how would have that impacted his character development?

Culturally embedded elements are mentioned in passing as attributions to Sam's character and as defined facts about the settings and his condition, but from a cultural psychological sensitivity add to the understanding of what cultural constituents have been internalized by Sam. Erikson writes about constitutional elements in his personality, such as his tendency to be hostile and become easily upset, while at the same time he is seen as being

easily pleased and generally pleasant. With a change in his environment, as the family moves, Erikson describes a change in the ego-ideal, in which Sam must adjust to becoming a minority in a gentile environment in which he is expected to appease. Erikson introduces cultural elements when two cultural worlds meet, and with relation to elements of the super-ego, such as the shifts in the social ideal. With respect to Sam's aggression, Erikson hypothesizes it may have been a manifestation of his epileptic constitution, as well as being somehow related to thoughts about death. Erikson neglects cultural elements when he analyzes the child's character.

Erikson raises the hypothesis that the epileptic attack is an unconscious punishment for his primitive aggressive outbursts. Given the fact that Sam has internalized a socially constructed definition of his attack as a medical disease (his mother would immediately call a pediatrician any time minimal physical symptoms of the attack would show), we are essentially presented with an intrapsychic, unconscious mechanism that is completely founded on local, culturally embedded, constructions. This masochism gratified in fantasy, as conceptualized by Erikson, had not been possible if Sam had grown in an environment that had not been able to "manage" his symptom by providing him with the necessary medical treatment, or if it had not been given the meaning of a symptom at all.

Erikson conceptualizes the child's symptom as a compromise formation of his psychosexual developmental stage, the family's relocation to a gentile environment as a reenactment of the threatened Jewish experience in the Diaspora, and economic difficulties in the family. While his analysis is intriguing, it replicates a multi-layered perspective of the self, dividing the forces played upon Sam to the personal on the one hand, and the social and cultural on the other. Erikson considers the sociocultural elements as having conjured up

during an infantile sadism that occurs around his age, and are ultimately a manifestation of instinctual vicissitudes. The three processes of the physiological, personal, and social self ultimately organize into a symptom, according to Erikson's conceptualization, not a personality organization.

What emerges from this examination is that the sociocultural context permeates the intrapsychic world from the earliest interactions. Finding a language which allows to conceptualize this line of reasoning, such as afforded through cultural psychology, and raising a conceptual bridge between the two disciplines of psychoanalysis and cultural psychology offers better understanding of development of self in cultural context.

The implications of the societal climate within which the infant grows have been examined in this study. Our culture is embedded in our language, in the way we learn to symbolize our perceptions and encapsulate them within a signified representation of words, of internalized images and a sense of self. It is fundamentally related to the way we organize our experiences throughout our life. Our perceptions of others are organized and structured by the categories we use, such as gender or race.

### Conclusions

In this paper, this investigator has attempted to study the ways in which the experience of self and other is organized, and is embedded in "cultural values, attitudes, and narrative and linguistic resources" (Hollan, 2000, p. 539). Following the examination of psychoanalytic developmental theories, cultural psychology, and social construction theory, an in depth elaboration of the ways in which the sociocultural context plays a fundamental role in the developing psyche emerged.

It was not the aim of this analysis to reform psychoanalytic developmental theory, but rather to make a contribution towards building a conceptual bridge between the disciplines of cultural constructivism, and developmental and clinical psychoanalysis. It is hoped that this dissertation may both serve as a contribution to future research in personality development, as well as provide conceptual tools for the practicing clinician invested in providing culturally-informed, insight-oriented psychotherapy.

In addressing the second research question of why psychoanalytic theories of development traditionally failed to adequately address sociocultural factors in character formation, this dissertation affords three distinct conclusions. The first of which confronts the topic on a sociopolitical level, following Cushman's (1990) critique of Daniel Stern's theory of development (1985) as part of psychology's scientific findings in general. This critique considers psychological theories of psychic unity and universalism as embedded in a particular sociopolitical matrix and therefore participating, or more so, serving, a specific agenda.

A second conclusion confronts the absence of references to cultural context through the literature review, which consistently found that psychoanalytic theories maintained a dichotomy between culture as an abstract concept and the infant's environment, where development was seen to occur. This dichotomy between culture and environment ran across most of early psychoanalytic thought and contemporary developmental theory. Daniel Stern responds to a social-constructivist critique by stating: "to do justice to the effort would have resulted in my writing a different book." (Stern, 2000). The threat of introducing culture as the context to the developing subjectivity of an individual may arise from the fear that psychoanalysis's basic assumptions will be challenged.



A third conclusion addresses this question by examining the psychoanalytic movement and its own embeddedness in a sociocultural context. From this perspective, a resistance to internalizing the sociocultural context is related to the movement being situated within a certain social class and attempting to bear a resemblance to the medical model of practicing and maintaining a livelihood. For example, until recently the American Psychoanalytic Association did not offer membership to non-physicians. In this view, psychoanalysis serves its own agenda through neglecting cultural variations in its theories, and by tightly embracing a medical scientific model.

Implications of this dissertation for training analysts in the new millennium, as postmodern thinking finds its way into various fields that were until recently considered hard science, suggests a shift in emphasis. While the bulk of this work deals with theory, as long established in psychoanalysis, it is the clinical aspect which is of main concern and interest. If clinical psychoanalysis were to internalize the lens through which cultural psychology examines the development of a subjectivity, the question of how culture and mind create each other would principally be a clinical question. If character is viewed as structured by a historically situated subject, and the historical and cultural embeddedness of human existence are recognized, the individuality and distinctiveness of each person's psyche will be stressed. Meanings clinically generated would be seen as highly embedded, and inseparable, from a historically transmitted pattern embodied in symbols.

Moreover, as the hermeneuticist tradition implies, both knowing and understanding are interpretive and occur within a specific contextual domain. Shweder (1990) further point to the sociocultural environment as being co-constructed through the sharing of subjectivities. The analysts' own cultural embeddedness is underlined, including his or her professional

development as an internalization of a cultural symbolic system which the analysand does not share. Since culture may be viewed as an intersubjective reality through which worlds are known and experienced, an inherent chasm between the contexts within which analyst and analysand interpret meaning ought to be given attention.

Theoretical advances in developmental theory would benefit from the dialectic tension which was noted between inner and outer worlds, giving the self a narrative power. For example, while Freud's dual theory of the reality and the pleasure principle may still be viewed as a valid and powerful description of the unfolding of the ego out of the id, cultural psychology advocates that since our world is mediated through the construction of concepts, contact with reality is essentially contact with a conceptualized reality. As shown in this example, a conceptual bridge with cultural psychology may enrich our psychoanalytic understanding of development.

This dissertation examined the possibilities of a theoretical association between two disciplines. Situated and expounded at a conceptual level, it implies the need for further interdisciplinary research on the concept of self and its development within a particular context.

The emphasis is placed on the development of meaning, which is always local and contextually based. Accordingly, it points in the direction of further discourse regarding the significance, relevance, and consequence of wide-ranging conceptual tools in developmental research. Following Fajardo's (1996) statement regarding the need for a developmental research perspective that has potential relevance for the hermeneutic constructivist psychoanalyst, this dissertation also argues for a need to reevaluate research postulates in developmental psychology. The restructuring in the epistemological beliefs about the nature

of knowledge necessitates investigating the developmental process as inextricably interwoven within the contextual world of each individual.

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