

CHAPTER 9

DE-CENTERING WESTERN PERSPECTIVES

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE DISCIPLINARY ORDER IN THE FIRST AND THIRD WORLD

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In the opening chapter of *Naming the Mind* (1997) Kurt Danziger tells the story of his unsettling first encounter with an ‘exotic’ double of his discipline. He had just resumed teaching psychology at an Indonesian university when he discovered that an Indonesian colleague already taught a course that translated into ‘science of the soul.’ He thus hastened to suggest a joint seminar but when they began to discuss topics for the seminar “the problem began. There seemed to be virtually no topics that were identified as such both in his and in my psychology” (p. 1). Topics like motivation, intelligence or learning did not make much sense to the Indonesian colleague who in turn suggested topics based on the local syncretistic philosophical tradition which were unacceptable to the young experimental psychologist. The encounter took place in the early years of post-Independence Indonesia, about the same time as Clifford Geertz conducted his ethnographic studies of religion as a cultural system portraying a ‘philosophical-minded’ Javanese population. The Indonesian government had started to import Western psychology to promote modernizing reforms and Danziger was their employee (Brock, 1994). Reflecting on the intriguing encounter Danziger observed: “It was clearly possible to carve up the field of psychological phenomena in very different ways and still end up with a set of concepts that seemed quite natural, given the appropriate cultural context. Moreover, these different sets of concepts could each make perfect practical sense, if one was allowed to choose one’s practices. What did that imply for the objectivity

of the categories with which Western psychology operated?" (1997, pp. 2–3). The question remained with him, although he first addressed other major themes in the history of psychology—its social origins (1979) and the social construction of the ‘subject’ (1990)—before returning to the puzzling status of the categories that structure Western psychological discourse. Scrutinizing their universalistic claims he compellingly demonstrated that Western psychology is “a cultural construction with specific historical roots” (1997, p. 181).

Drawing on Danziger’s deconstruction of the linear textbook historiography from the imperial view of ‘center and periphery,’ I discuss some of the problems involved in the large-scale export of psychology as a discipline and profession to the non-Western world. The features of psychological discourse analyzed by Danziger were characteristic of this U.S.-made product at the height of its export. I briefly summarize these characteristics and provide the political and intellectual context in which the product ‘behavioral science’—with its universalistic presumptions—was exported to the non-Western world. I then turn to the operations of the international knowledge network and the responses of Third World psychologists to the imported product. Evidence of many voices from many locales is to emphasize the difficulties of identifying the problems with the imported product. In some quarters, the debate concerning the ‘indigenization’ of psychology focused on the theoretical question of how to develop concepts more in tune with local traditions of human self-understanding. I outline the scope of this debate and discuss some problems involved in attempts at reworking the foreign product. The expectation of some Third World psychologists that alliances with other social sciences might substantially improve the chances of making the discipline more socially relevant opens a wider problem. Drawing on other social sciences would only multiply the difficulties as they, like psychology, are each components of a disciplinary order representing a specific Western construction of reality. Expanding on some of Danziger’s observations, I argue that in order to deconstruct the hegemonic claims of psychology one must reflect upon the historicity of both the disciplinary order and modernity. This issue has been brought to the fore by postcolonial critics concerned with decolonizing the mind, theory and methodology. I discuss some contributions to stress the importance of the polycentric approach to the history of psychology and modernity advanced by Danziger.

PSYCHOLOGY AS A CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

According to positivist wisdom, psychologists developing theories about motivation, personality, intelligence or behavior and historians of psychology writing histories of ‘motivational’ or ‘personality’ psychology take their domains as natural kinds which, taken together, reflect the universal structure of ‘the psychological.’

Danziger's post-empiricist subversion of this understanding is based on an examination of "the presuppositions about our subject matter that are implied in the categories we use to define the objects of our research and to express our empirical findings" (1997, p. 8). Unraveling the various historical layers of discursive formations that have provided the components of modern psychological discourse, he has made visible a cultural construction the conceptual basis of which does not date back far beyond eighteenth century.

The origins of this conceptual basis in the socioeconomic 'Great Transformation' (Polanyi, 1944) towards commercial society in Europe is of special importance to my discussion below. The emergence of industrial capitalism gave rise to a new view of society as constituted by individual actors in marketplaces turning previous views of the relationship of society and economy upside down. The parallel 'great transformation' in British moral philosophy analyzed by Danziger consisted in the reconceptualization of questions relating to human experience and conduct as questions pertaining to a 'psychological' domain. This transformation reflected aspects of a changing self-image of human actors brought about by 'commercial society.' This entailed a "new conception of the relationship between human persons and their actions" that separated agents and their actions, so that 'motives' were needed to mediate them (Danziger, 1997, p. 46). With the new view of self-interested calculated action as "the 'natural' form of human action in general" (p. 46), 'economic man' became the model for accounts of the intelligibility of human persons and their actions. The roots of the influential binary opposition of male 'rationality' and the 'irrationality' of women, children, and savages are in this model.

A further layer of psychological discourse added in the nineteenth century was based on the adoption of physiological categories like organism, stimulation, and energy. As argued by Danziger, this biological heritage "weighs heavily on pervasive categories . . . like behaviour and learning" endorsing "an essentially biological understanding of human action and human capability" (1997, p. 182). Yet the decisive change in the establishment of the meaning of the modern psychological categories came with its institutionalization as a discipline and its professionalization. The authority of psychologists as experts depended on the maintenance of "a delicate balance between the ideal of a universalistic and uninvolved science and accommodation to the requirements of local sectoral interests" (p. 182). Mediated by specific technologies, such as the investigative practices analyzed in *Constructing the Subject* (Danziger, 1990), new categories derived from local social practices (e.g., education, management) were now infused with a universal biological meaning. For instance, the twentieth century dictum that all action or behavior is motivated gained its currency in practical contexts of social influence and control where the question was how to 'motivate' people to work harder or to display other socially valued behavior. The psychology of 'motivation' reified a set of historically contingent assumptions about the intrapersonal forces that

account for the 'why' of human behavior and elevated them to the status of universal human needs. The most prominently discussed needs, for 'achievement' and for 'self-realization,' show the cultural norms implied in the category of 'motivation' (cf. Danziger, 1997, pp. 110–123). Small wonder that Danziger's Javanese colleague did not see much sense in this category.

By the mid-twentieth century the American version of this cultural and social construction of psychology had come to dominate the discipline. Its implied notion of the individual person "as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe" (Geertz, 1983, p. 59) increasingly impacted self-understanding within Western culture. The anthropologist's caveat that this notion is "a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures" (p. 59) went largely unnoticed by psychologists.

PROMOTING PSYCHOLOGY IN THE NON-WESTERN WORLD

Modern psychology in Europe was still in the making when, at the turn of the twentieth century, it began to move west (the U.S., Canada and Latin America), east (to Russia, Asia, and Oceania), and south (Africa). Colonialism provided the main context, although this may have been noticed less in the colonial settlements of the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand than in the European-dominated colonies such as India or the Philippines where American colonial rule replaced Spanish domination. Documenting the 'silk road' to the East, Alison Turtle (1987) has shown that in British colonies such as India, Australia, and New Zealand, philosophy departments provided the gateway for psychology's entry, with the notable difference that Australia and New Zealand represented "the distinctive situation of an extension of imperial science into a cultural vacuum, as the Australian aborigines and New Zealand Maoris were sufficiently few in number to exert any influence on such matters" (1987, p. 5). Yet, like sub-Saharan Africans, Aborigines and Maori had been subjected to psychological observation in the context of anthropological research long before the first departments of psychology were established on this terrain.

As the focus of this chapter is on the post-World War II period, I can but briefly mention that historical investigation into the diversity of colonial conditions which provided an entry for psychology would obviously have to take a broader view of the complex implication of the sciences in colonialism. For instance, geography, anthropology, biology and eugenics found a role in marking and mapping places and people, in classifying non-European social worlds, and in the invention of a racialized order of human resources (Dirks, 1992; Stocking, 1991; Jahoda, 1999). Scientific racism pervaded the interpretation of human differences in terms of immutable 'race' characteristics long before psychological testing devices were used to sort the 'primitives' according to their mental capacities (Gould, 1981;

Richards, 1997; Probst, 1992). In the collective memory of the colonized, to which I will return later, these encroachments were to have a lasting effect.

The post-war period of large-scale export of American psychology to the non-Western world was marked by the dismantling of the European empires and the Cold War. Within two decades colonial struggles for independence resulted in the formation of some sixty-five new nations, since termed the Third World. The Cold War provided the pretense for a strategic view of these nations in terms of cooption or subversion. Although primarily economic, American expansionism also involved culture in its strong support for the establishment of UNESCO-linked international scientific organizations with the declared purpose of promoting 'peacefare.' This was the context in which the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS), an international body of national psychological associations, was established in 1951.

The IUPsyS started with eleven, mainly European, charter members. In 1999 membership reached a total of 68 countries (Rosenzweig, 1999). This growth strikingly reflects the global career of American-style psychology which, rivaled in only a few areas by Soviet psychology, soon superseded British and other colonially-established influences in the Third World. From a celebratory view the international congresses held in Asia (Tokyo 1972), Latin America (Acapulco 1984) and Australia (Sydney 1988) marked "a genuine global expansion of international psychology" (Rosenzweig, Holtzman, Sabourin, & Bélanger, 2000, p. 195). Membership grew rapidly after the Acapulco and Sydney congresses. More importantly, the social constituency of membership changed considerably, including representatives from increasing numbers of Third World countries and from the nations succeeding the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The very existence of the IUPsyS encouraged the formation of national psychological organizations which, in turn, presupposed the shaping of a disciplinary identity. As argued by Kitty Dumont and Johann Louw (2001), membership in the IUPsyS conveyed a sense of participating in a 'universal' discipline and could also be used to legitimize the discipline in a given country. Their case study of the psychological associations in South Africa and the German Democratic example illustrates the difficulties encountered by psychologists in legitimizing their discipline within the conflicting objectives of national politics and the IUPsyS's apolitical constitution. More case studies on the politics of membership would increase our comprehension of the IUPsyS's role in the shaping of the discipline's 'internationalization.'

The IUPsyS strongly emphasized international exchange. According to the 1951 IUPsyS statutes its aims include the development of intellectual exchange and scientific relations between psychologists of different countries, assistance for scholars of different countries to go abroad to universities, and the exchange of students and young research workers. Yet at least in the formative years of the IUPsyS, the emphasis on international exchange reads like a euphemism. In the

post-war and Cold War social and intellectual context the discipline's promotion in the non-Western world is more accurately described as a unidirectional transfer from center to periphery.

As to the intellectual context of this transfer, the conceptual framework of US dominance in 'peacefare' attempts after World War II was made up of behavioral science, the master ideology of developmentalism, and modernization theory. American psychologists, in particular, felt well-prepared to take the lead. As amply documented by Ellen Herman (1996), the World War II generation of American psychologists saw it as their postwar duty to construct a 'behavioral science' that would be theoretically and practically suitable for the prediction and control of human behavior in all areas of social life, at home and abroad. Offering their services to policy-makers they "aimed at nothing less than to 'fashion a new civilization' and 'restructure the culture of the world'" (Herman 1996, p. 306). The "career of cold war psychology" (Herman) worked on the assumption that 'civilization' can be conceptualized and studied in terms of the conditions of individual development rather than of social conditions. Adopted by the sponsorship of the Ford Foundation, this basically ahistoric and socially reductionistic conception of behavioral science was to dominate the post-Second World War period.

The master ideology of developmentalism provided the umbrella for interpreting socio-economic and political processes at home and in 'developing societies.' As analyzed by Ozay Mehmet, the new agenda for economists consisted in the "modeling of economic development as a linear, homogenized process" (1995, p. 56). Based on neoclassical versions of the market theory of capitalism with its key assumption of rational, self-interested economic man, this agenda made the Third World look irrational. In political terms, the new agenda of fostering national development with a kind of Marshall Plan of foreign aid was premised on modernization theory. In this theory, modernization was conceived in dichotomous terms of traditional and modern, Western and non-Western. It entailed "a view of the world where the particular experience of one country, notably the United States, was the yardstick against which the achievements and failures of other countries were measured" (Wittrock, 2001, p. 30). Combined with an individualistic view of society, this evolutionary model of a linear path to modernity also inspired attempts to address the subjective dimension of becoming modern.

In such attempts the category of motivation that had emerged in the inter-war period played a prominent role. Danziger's analysis of the abstraction involved in this category needs to be recalled to grasp the rationale of unifying wants, desires, and motives "insofar as they were potential objects of manipulation and influence" (1997, p. 115). The establishment of a "minor industry devoted to 'achievement motivation'" (p. 122) fit the purposes of foreign aid policy well. Conceiving economic development as a result of achievement-motivated personalities, psychological experts were then able to measure the motivational resources of a given country and offer their advice on U.S. foreign aid (Herman, 1996). Psychologists

in a Harvard-Stanford project on 'Social and Cultural Aspects of Modernization' even designed a model of individual modernity (Inkeles & Smith, 1974). In this case the requirements of factory life informed the concept of 'individual modernity' translated into attitude scales. Thus turned into individual attributes, people's sense of efficacy, their respect for science and technology, their acceptance of time discipline, and the like, were measured and served as a comparison of 'human modernity resources' in Argentina, Chile, India, Israel, Nigeria and East Pakistan.

Like anthropologists in the colonial period, psychologists exploring the motivational and attitudinal resources of non-Western populations facilitated Western science's entry into native cultures. Their investigative practices entailed the recruitment of local experts to assist them with various tasks such as communication with local institutions (e.g., schools) and the collection of data. School teachers and the like thus became recipients and transmitters of a psycho-technological toolbox even before psychology was established at the universities of their countries. For instance, at the time LeVine's (1966) study on achievement motivation in Nigeria was under way there were but a few African scholars taking a post-graduate degree in education at Western universities—degrees which would later entitle them to academic positions at home (Durojaiye, 1993). Closer historical analysis would thus be well advised to explore the networks of local assistants involved in carrying out the projects designed by behavioral scientists and funded on a large scale by the Ford and Carnegie Foundations. The 'acknowledgements' in samples of published studies might provide some clue to such analysis. To address further questions concerning "the patterns of interaction between colony and imperialist power in the areas of scientific and technological development, in terms of the derivation of ideas, exploitation one-way or mutual, emulation or rejection" (Turtle, 1987, p. 3) requires attention to the responses from the receiver side.

DISCONTENT WITH THE IMPORTED PRODUCT

The response of Third World psychologists to the imported discipline must be seen in the context of grave disparities in the structure of international knowledge production and distribution. For a considerable period US-domination in the international knowledge network operated as a one-way flow from 'center' to 'periphery' that largely turned Third World scholars into recipients and was perceived by them in this way. The impact of UNESCO efforts to promote exchange of knowledge for endogenous development remained, at best, slow (Schwendler, 1984). As described by Fatali Moghaddam (1987), when there were still three worlds, the first and second rivaled to influence the third, but the first world was the major producer of psychological and other scientific knowledge and distributed this knowledge to the other two worlds without being itself much influenced by

psychologies elsewhere. Western industrial countries—with their concentration of the sources of knowledge production—have remained largely in control of knowledge distribution to and from ‘peripheral’ countries, for instance by multinational publishing companies. Only a few countries, like Mexico and India, have themselves become regional centers while remaining peripheral in the international knowledge network. India, for instance, has become “a major producer and distributor of knowledge in its own right. It boasts the world’s third largest scientific community. Its university system is one of the world’s largest, with more than 3 million students enrolled. India is a major publishing nation, ranking eighth in the world, and it exports books to other Third World countries” (Altbach, 1985, p. 110).

Concern with the unbalanced structure of international knowledge production has thus been a pervasive theme among psychologists in Third World countries. They have identified the unilateral dependence on Western sponsoring agencies, research resources, conference and publication practices as both systemic deterrents to discipline development and a major reason for the lack of cooperation among Third World countries. In some cases, like Iran, unilateral dependence of local universities on particular US universities has even had the effect that institutional developments within the country remained uncoordinated (Moghaddam, 1993).

The response to the imported product itself has varied from unquestioned cloning to attempts at identifying the faults of the product often along with a ‘call for indigenization.’ Historical accounts from particular countries are still rare, but most reports of Third World psychologists available in Western publications provide enough historical context to permit a sketch of contexts and changes. In the late 1960s and early 1970s post-Independence liberation sentiments joined with the radical Western debate on science, society, and imperialism in the rejection of both the use of imperial language in education and the ‘psychologization’ of social problems. In the Philippines, for instance, “the teaching of the national language became an important alternative to English” (Lagmay, 1984, p. 34) and a subsequent movement for an indigenous social science (see below). From sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America to Iran, it was stressed that the problems of Third World countries are “to a large extent an historical consequence of their colonization and exploitation by the industrialized nations of Europe and North America” and that their attribution “to psychological factors within the individual members of these societies” would amount to an unethical abuse of psychological concepts to cover up politico-economic realities” (Mehryar, 1984, p. 165). In a response to Gustav Jahoda’s (1973) question of whether developing countries need psychology the Ethiopian psychologist Yusuf Omer Abdi strikes a similar key: “The concept of psychology, its theories and methods as understood by Westerners are alien to the thinking of an African . . . Africa is involved in an endless war against its arch enemies, namely: hunger and mass starvation, ignorance, disease and economic stagnation”

(1975, p. 230). Rather than a need for the Western product he sees “a need for African-oriented psychology which is based on the needs and problems of the people in Africa” (p. 230). This touches the question of what a socially relevant psychology might be like, a question that was raised in most countries sooner or later. Recent attempts to elaborate on this question show an increased awareness of contextual complexity. For example, the Cameroon psychologist Bame Nsamenang stresses that the development of a socially relevant psychology requires the recognition of both the enormous diversity of sub-Saharan countries and their similarities in terms of “patterns of ecological adaptations” and “common socio-historical experiences” (1995, p. 730).

In India discontent with colonially-established psychology dates back to Independence in 1947. Durghanand Sinha, who in 1961 started the psychology department at Allahabad University and later joined the IUPsyS executive committee, has distinguished three phases of response: (a) an early post-Independence wave of reaction against the mechanistic Western view of humans which sought an alternative in revivalism, (b) a first phase of indigenization of psychology in the 1960s that tried to redirect psychology to the problems of social change and national development, and (c) indigenization proper in the sense of exploring cultural traditions for concepts and models relevant for understanding social reality (cf. Sinha, 1993, pp. 33–36). His own research career mirrors these developments. A prominent argument in the 1960s was that in order to be relevant to a predominantly rural nation, the urban middle-class bias of Western psychology had to be abandoned in favor of a “rural psychology” focused, for instance, on farmers’ motivational patterns. He later argued that Western individual-centric micro-psychology needs to be replaced by a macro-psychology oriented to major social problems and receptive to knowledge developed in other social sciences.

Though Sinha’s ‘phases of development’ have not passed without controversy (cf. Joshi, 1992), there is agreement among many Indian observers that the majority of psychologists in India have been insensitive to the rapid and uneven national socioeconomic transformations. The social role and responsibility of psychologists has been a major concern in this respect. Envisioning a social role for psychologists, Sinha (1984) has emphasized the task of investigating how the subjective dimension of desirable change could be addressed to minimize its alienating and disabling effects. Girishwar Misra strikes a different key in suggesting that the social role of the academic psychologist be envisioned “in terms of understanding, reading, and interpreting cultural actions; sensitizing people to the potentialities of action in the existing range of intelligibilities; and inviting exploration in alternative forms of understanding” (Gergen, Gulerce, Lock, & Misra, 1996, p. 498).

For Sinha, the limited impact of psychology on the pressing problems in the Third World has reasons in “basic limitations of the discipline as it has developed in the West. Though it deals, in principle, with both the social system and individual processes, its orientation is basically microsocial in focusing on personal

characteristics of the individual actors in social processes rather than on socio-structural factors” (1984, p. 23). He also reflects on the historical reasons for this orientation. Addressing the socio-cultural milieu that supported the rise of psychology and related disciplines in Western industrial societies, he emphasizes literacy, secularism, and individualism. In a situation of relative stability these major preconditions, he argues, eased the emergence of a ‘micropsychology’ geared to increasing individual efficacy.

A brief examination of the status of psychology in Pakistan and Bangladesh after the partition of the Indian sub-continent should help illustrate the legacy of colonialism. As analyzed by Arjun Appadurai (1993), the partition had deep roots in the colonial bio-politics of enumerating and classifying populations that constructed separate Hindu and Muslim identities and imagined communities. It resulted in large-scale migrations on both sides and continuing, volatile conflicts. At institutions of higher learning in post-Independence Pakistan the migrations created a long-lasting void “because there were more Hindus and Sikhs who held these positions than Muslims available to replace them” (Moghni, 1987, p. 26). Moghni reports that in the post-Second World War years American psychology also dominated in Pakistan, with American trained teachers, textbooks, and training programs filtering into educational institutions. After the establishment of more universities and psychology departments a national association of psychologists was formed in the mid-1960s, but it was not before its second meeting in the mid-1970s that the presidential address advised psychologists “to climb the walls of their neat and tidy disciplines and acquaint themselves at first hand with the poor, illiterate and diseased people of their country” (Moghni, 1987, p. 31). The author also observed an initial impact of Sufi doctrine and practice on psychology and a “powerful movement of Islamizing knowledge including psychology” (p. 35) that makes one wonder whether this might explain the admission of Pakistan’s national association of psychologists to IUPsyS membership in 1987, nearly 20 years later than their Indian counterpart (Rosenzweig et al., 2000, Appendix E).

As to Bangladesh, Begum (1987) has observed a lasting influence of American psychology in applied areas like personnel selection for the army and industry through the pre-independence period. After Independence in 1971, English was replaced by Bengali (Bangla) in education and psychologists began to write textbooks in the national language. A national association of psychologists was formed and a nation-wide journal established, alongside the existing Dhaka University journal. By the early 1980s three professional organizations each addressed issues in clinical psychology and the care and education of mentally disabled people. A likely reason for this professional focus may be found in the ‘Health for All 2000’ report which mentions disabilities due to malnutrition, especially blindness and retardation, among the most pressing problems of the country. Much applied research consisted of adapting Western tests for use in Bangladesh, yet for the period covered by his report Begum observed “an increasing awareness amongst

local psychologists of the shortcomings of their work” (1987, p. 69). In 1996, the national Bangladesh association of psychologists became a member of the IUPsyS (Rosenzweig et al., 2000, Appendix E). Given that for more than a decade after the partition there were less than five universities in Pakistan, millennium listings indicate an explosive growth with 38 universities in Pakistan and 30 in Bangladesh, as compared to 96 in India (Förster, 1999–2001).

The polyphonic objections against Western psychology certainly stress Danziger’s observation that the more psychologists in Asia, Africa and Latin America “are raising questions about their own traditions and their relationship to the theory and practice of psychology . . . the more dissatisfied they become with the parochialism of a historiography of psychology anchored in North American and European perspectives” (Danziger, 1994, p. 477).

THEORETICAL ATTEMPTS TO INDIGENIZE PSYCHOLOGY

As discussed in 1979 by Krishna Kumar, the term ‘indigenization’ may refer to three different levels of directing social science toward the particular situation and problems of a nation (in Turtle, 1987, p. 15). The ‘structural level’ concerns the institutional and organizational resources for the production and diffusion of social science knowledge in a given country. The ‘substantive level’ entails the premise that social science ought to focus on nation-relevant issues. While these two meanings of ‘indigenization’ are widely accepted among Third World psychologists, the ‘theoretical level,’ addressing the search for alternatives to Western conceptual frameworks, generated a great deal of debate.

Approaches to theoretical indigenization are geared to the development of a distinctive conceptual framework able to reflect the culturally-rooted understanding people have of themselves and of the world. Considering the ‘peculiarity’ (Geertz) of the notion of the individual person from the perspective of other cultures, the rationale for theoretical indigenization is obvious. It involves a recognition of the relationship between collective histories in particular socio-cultural life-worlds and particular ways of mapping the human condition, which may be combined with a self-conscious assertion of ‘otherness.’ The assertion of otherness shows in trends of a ‘sinification’ (Hsu, 1987), ‘Islamization’ (Moghni, 1987) or ‘Africanization’ (Myers, 1993; Holdstock, 2000) of psychology. For example, ‘Afrocentric’ views of psychology and social science as currently advanced in African-American studies and some African quarters define ‘Afrocentricity’ as a focus on generating knowledge grounded in the life experience of Africans or people of African descent and geared to empower them to improve their collective life conditions (Hamlet, 1992). The historical roots of the conceptual frameworks used to characterize ‘Afrocentric’ views date back to the pre-independence generation of African intellectuals like Aimée Césaire, Léopold Senghor and Alioune Diop.

Challenging the ideology of white supremacy, they advanced a self-assertive view of African self-being (*'négritude'*) and participation in a natural, social and spiritual harmony. Mudimbe (1988) provides a sophisticated discussion of the problems involved in *'négritude.'* As outlined by the African-American psychologist Linda James Myers (1993), the framework for an 'optimal psychology' entails an all-encompassing opposition between a 'Eurocentric' and an 'Afrocentric' worldview and philosophy of science. From a cosmic spiritual ontology, a holistic epistemology, and an axiology that values positive human relations highest, she derives psychological concepts like lived holism, the spiritual self, and the other-centered person. In a similar vein, Len Holdstock (2000) discusses holism as a lived experience in Africa with regard to the cognitive, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and aesthetic dimension (Ch. 10).

Though such contributions accentuate the difficulties of reorienting the views and priorities of people of African descent after a long history of colonization, the alternate Afrocentric views of human being and action are problematic essentializing constructions. The way in which Myers and Holdstock depict the spirituality, sense of unity and other-centeredness as features of 'Africanity' suggests a reading that takes these features as timeless characteristics of human nature in Africa. I agree with Johann Louw in that they "come close to a position that makes these categories of human nature appear self-evident, 'natural,' and trans-historical" (2002, p. 9).

A different approach is demonstrated by attempts to 'decoloniz[e] the Filipino psyche' by developing a Filipino psychology (Enriquez, 1987; 1993). Opposed to the Marcos regime, the National Association for Filipino Psychology, established in 1975 by Virgilio Enriquez (Lagmay, 1984), advocated the use of Filipino language and the development of Filipino identity and national consciousness. It aimed at developing "all aspects of the Filipino consciousness towards an active scientific and Universal psychology" (Enriquez, 1987, p. 283). Open to social scientists, intellectuals and artists committed to a Filipino perspective, the association held annual conferences, published their proceedings, and initiated special courses at the University of the Philippines. A community field station in a rural area was established; in the mid-1980s a Philippine Psychology Research and Training House headed by Enriquez expanded into an Academy. In 1982 his achievements earned Enriquez a distinguished award as Outstanding Young Scientist in Social Science by the National Academy of Science and Technology (Lagmay, 1984). Filipino psychology is field-oriented, geared to turning "regionalism and language diversity in the Philippines into an advantage" for enriching national culture (Enriquez, 1987, p. 281). Envisioning the prospects for the 1990s, Enriquez stresses the conduct of further "studies on Filipino behavior and psychology, Filipino personality, Philippine language, culture and history by using appropriate and culturally relevant theory and methodology" (p. 285). To this end the Academy "includes historians, artists, and scientists in its staff based on the avowed belief that the Filipino

psyche is too important to leave in the hands of psychologists alone" (p. 285). The search for core Filipino concepts and their implied values is not designed as an end in itself, but as a step in the 'cross-indigenous' method geared toward a global psychology (Enriquez, 1993).

A rich spectrum of approaches to theoretical indigenization is documented in India. Among the early advocates of a theoretical grounding of psychology in the classic traditions was Ashis Nandy, who pleaded in 1974 for an 'alternative culture of psychology in India,' calling upon Indian psychologists "to participate actively in a reconstruction of the philosophical basis of psychology" in order "to generate new culture-sensitive theories" (quoted in Turtle, 1987, p. 16). Twenty years later Girishwar Misra outlined an Indian perspective on reality and human functioning on the basis of scholarly reconstructions of philosophical-psychological perspectives on Indian culture. He emphasized a holistic worldview, a relational concept of the person as well as contextualized relationships and a Dharma (duty)-centered moral code (Misra & Gergen, 1993, p. 233).

As to the impact of attempts at theoretical indigenization on psychology as a discipline, one of Sinha's more recent comments was that after twenty years many psychologists, even in India, "are finding it difficult to cast off the microcosmic and individualistic orientation acquired in the West" as they are bound by its prevailing disciplinary ethos (1993, p. 40). A different perception underlies Girishwar Misra's statement that "the universally projected modernist view of the individual as a self-determining and self-contained being is rapidly losing its functional value" among many Indian psychologists (Gergen, Gulerce, Lock, & Misra, 1996, p. 489).

A somewhat more comprehensive picture of the impact of theoretical indigenization on psychology in India can be gained from the state-of-the-art surveys initiated and supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research and published every ten years (Mitra, 1972; Pareek, 1980; Pandey, 1988; 2001). To date two of the three volumes of the most recent survey have been published and tempt me to offer some observations. The editor's preface to the series advances the view that research on 'Physiological foundation and human cognition' (vol. I) still depends strongly on Western psychology, whereas surveys on 'Applied social and organizational psychology' (vol. III) contain evaluations "from a theoretical and cultural perspective" (Pandey, 2001, p. 11). The second volume, on 'Personality and Health Psychology,' includes areas not covered in previous surveys: consciousness studies, gender issues, and health psychology. The review of consciousness studies reflects on Indian and Western theoretical perspectives, suggesting that despite "the clear advantage that Indian tradition bestows on the area," notably in the transcendental realm, "Indian psychologists have in general been preoccupied with more mundane issues" (Rao, 2001, p. 138). For the reviewer of feminist perspectives in psychology, they have regrettably "remained on the periphery of mainstream Indian psychology" (Bharat, 2001, p. 308). Answering the hypothetical question of whether a psychology of the Indian women is evolving, she arrives at a 'no'

based on observations of both “weak conceptualization” and “a lack of continuity in contemporary research efforts to span the spectrum of issues related to women’s being and existence,” due to “academic isolation” from interdisciplinary women’s studies (Bharat, 2001, p. 346, 347, 348). In his chapter on ‘Personality, Self and Life Events,’ Naidu echoes the reviewers of the three previous surveys when he writes that “most of the studies are atheoretical, imitative of western trends and of indifferent quality;” in this respect he notes only a slight increase of quality and professionalism through the 1990s (2001, vol. 2, p. 230). A declared favorite of an indigenous perspective, he calls attention to some recent studies on Vedantic views of the spiritual nature of the self. Yet as to the question of progress in indigenizing psychology in India, he can but refer to the sobering results of the empirical assessment conducted by Adair, Puhon, and Vohra (1993).

Western and non-Western psychologists advocating a place for culture in psychology have put their hope in intercultural dialogue, envisioning a mutual offering of manifold notions of person, experience, and social relations. There is, however, some romanticism in this sort of praise for the variety of cultural concepts and practices in as much as it fails to reflect the power structure of the discipline. Aydan Gulerce’s ‘Turkish Vision’ evidences an awareness of the deeper conditions for a genuine intercultural exchange when she states that it can only be hoped for once “the West has gained sufficient self-reflexivity to prevent further patronizing and the rest of the world has gained sufficient self-assertion for emancipation” (Gergen, Gulerce, Lock, & Misra, 1996, p. 501). Explicating these conditions, I argue that psychology is but one component of a disciplinary apparatus which needs to be reflected upon in terms of a particular cultural construction of reality that emerged in Europe along with colonialism.

TRANSCENDING DISCIPLINARY BLINDFOLDS

Critics of the cloning of Western psychology have shown an awareness of both the methodological individualism implied in the Western model and its particular cultural roots. There is, however, a striking absence in both the articulations of discontent with Western psychology and the attempts to indigenize. What escapes reflection is the very disciplinary model that guides “the way we think, perceive and seek to understand reality and the universe in the modern world” (Giri, 1998, p. 380). In the modern disciplinary construction of reality, ‘the psychological’ is set entirely apart from ‘the social,’ ‘the political’ etc., not to mention the ‘moral.’ The historical roots of this construction date back to modern state formation and the industrial revolutions based on the principle of a scientific division of labour. Through the nineteenth century, Enlightenment discourse on the human historical and social condition has branched into increasingly specialized areas of knowledge production. New subject matters for systematic observation were created along

with new practices of managing social relations, designed in institutional settings such as schools, factories, prisons, and asylums. The formation of social and human science disciplines largely followed the lines of this institutionalized exercise of social and human engineering. Once established, however, the disciplines tend to be taken as simply reflecting 'given' segments of reality.

The intellectual constraints imposed by the transplantation of this disciplinary model to different socio-cultural worlds become obvious, for instance, in pleas for a 'macropsychology' that would—somehow—integrate psychological concepts with those of other social sciences. Yet had psychologists been receptive to other social sciences, the problem would have merely multiplied. Economics, political science, and sociology are no less cultural constructions than psychology. In India and elsewhere, imported economics with its neoclassical version of market theory proved unsuitable for conceptualizing endogenous economic development. Critics like Ozay Mehmet have since pleaded for "a more inductive theorizing . . . grounded in actual social reality that is articulated bottom-up" (1995, p. 148). As Danziger observed, the metalanguage of variables which was subsequently exported along with the technology of quantitative social research had also been adopted within sociology. Yet he also points out that there was "quite a powerful alternative tradition—particularly in the form of symbolic interactionism" (1997, p. 171). Had this invitation to the analysis of subjective meanings ever reached the Third World it might have encouraged attempts at bottom-up social analysis. Another alternative tradition, the reading and reinterpreting of classical social theories from Marx to Max Weber, had, in fact, reached some non-Western quarters. If nothing more, it has allowed for a clearer notion of the kind of capitalist dynamics that account for Third World dependency.

Attempts to transcend the Western disciplinary order have gained some prominence in interdisciplinary centers like the Center for the Study of Developing Societies at Delhi, an independent research institution founded in 1964, and the Madras Institute of Development Studies. Ananta Giri who works at the latter has argued that "transcending disciplinary boundaries" to create new knowledge presupposes an understanding of "the limitations of the discourse and institutions of modernity" that involves "critiques of modernity" itself (1998, p. 379). Drawing on the critique of instrumental reason, she points out that the disciplinary construction of knowledge is based on an instrumental concept of knowledge and its goal of control and domination. She contrasts this concept with knowledge traditions in Asian countries to open the question of alternative modes of knowing. Psychologists, it seems, must personally 'transcend' the boundaries of their discipline. This is illustrated by the example of Ashis Nandy, an early radical critic of psychology. His investigations into political cultures in India have taken him to 'the edge of psychology' (1990) and eventually to the Delhi Center for the Study of Developing Societies. He has since published widely on the critique of developmentalism, science, and hegemony (Nandy, 1994) and has, as Director of the Center, been

involved with the recently-implemented *Forum for Alternative Thinking in South Asia*.

The question remains to what extent creative work conducted at such Centers can be expected to impact the discipline-fixated academy in the non-Western and the Western world. Pleas for alternative thinking have been heard at least in some Western quarters, and there have been journals and occasional conferences that pride themselves of the participation of Third World scholars, especially from centers of excellence. As to Aydan Gulerce's expectation of 'sufficient self-reflexivity to avoid patronizing,' much is still being found wanting. Even well-known intellectuals who seem to move easily between the First and Third World and are articulate in voicing their concerns about the postcolonial predicament, face conditions strongly expressed by Gayatri Spivak:

"For me, the question 'Who should speak?' is less crucial than 'Who will listen?' 'I will speak for myself as a Third World person' is an important position for political mobilization today. But the real demand is that, when I speak from that position, I should be listened to seriously, not with that kind of benevolent imperialism . . ." (quoted in Smith, 1999, p. 71)

DE-CENTERING WESTERN PERSPECTIVES

For Western and non-Western scholars alike, the positional superiority of the Western construction of reality remains a problem. Incarnated in the category of 'modernity' which, after the collapse of colonialism, was "convenient at once to ex-masters and ex-subjects anxious to restate their inequalities in a hopeful idiom," this construction has become "pervasive, as either a presence or a lack, an achievement or a failure, a liberation or a burden" (Geertz, 1995, pp. 137–138). The categories of 'modernity' and 'modernization' have set the terms in which countries not shaped by capitalism, industrialism, and science "are these days perceived, discussed, analyzed, and judged, both by the world at large and by their own populations" (Geertz, 1995, p. 140). Pondering the changing Moroccan and Indonesian sites of his previous research, Clifford Geertz has titled the chapter 'modernities' in the plural, indicating that there is no discernible common project in the tangle of hopes for the future, rejections of the past, and regrets of what might pass with it. The postmodern idiom of modernities, identities, emancipations, and the like, conveys at least a sense of imaginable alternatives to Western perspectives. Still, in the aftermath of colonial domination and disqualification of ways of life and modes of knowledge, of attempts to reinvent disrupted lives, the scope of alternatives remains defined by previous transformations. What needs to be reflected upon is the "irrevocable process of transmutations" brought about by European imperial dominance, which cannot be done away with as but a "a temporary repression of subject populations" (Asad, 1991, p. 314). This involves a

reflection on the categories and bodies of knowledge formed by the epistemological order of colonialism. "Decolonizing the mind," to use the famous phrase coined by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), is essential for the minds of both the colonized and the colonizers. On neither side can the colonial legacy simply be discarded. What is, however, essential is a reworking, repositioning and restructuring of the received construction of reality.

From the days of Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi colonized intellectuals and their postcolonial heirs have been 'talking back' and 'writing back' reminding the West of the dislocations brought about by colonialism for both the colonized and the colonizers. They have drawn attention to the processes of colonizing lives and minds, foremost to the ways in which the knowledge gained through colonization has been represented back to the colonized and used to structure their own ways of knowing. Drawing on both the anti-colonial and the Western critical tradition they have analyzed how the basic categories and assumptions of our received knowledge of the world have been shaped by the colonial condition. Their polyphonic challenge to Euro-American modes of thinking history and knowledge has inspired some critical scholarship in anthropology, history and cultural studies, yet it has hardly entered the hard-core social science disciplines, not to mention psychology.

Orientalism (Said, 1978) and colonial discourse at large was about categorizing the world in terms of metropolitan centers and colonial peripheries, about marking sites and people as 'foreign' and 'other,' about managing and 'civilizing' people. It took empirical shape in measuring and classifying land as well as in counting and categorizing populations, exoticizing and essentializing them. Implanted into local politics of difference, as in the case of the 'imagined communities' of Hindu and Moslem nationalism (Appadurai, 1993), the colonial order of knowledge has outlived the end of colonial rule. It is still difficult, for the heirs of the colonizers and the colonized alike, to think "outside of orientalist habits and categories" (Breckenridge & Van der Veer, 1993, p. 11) or even to make out "whether one speaks from within, . . . outside of . . . or at all without" colonial discourses (Nakata, 1995, p. 8).

For postcolonial intellectuals who position themselves within the academy in the Third World, their indigenous communities, and toward the Western world, questions of knowledge and power have been of vital importance. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Director of the International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Studies at the University of Auckland, has probed deeply into Western modes of organizing knowledge, of knowledge production, its producers, and its beneficiaries. In her book on *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) she starts with the observation that in the collective memory of the colonized, the notions of discovery, research, and knowledge are closely related to a sense of having been disowned of their knowledge and imagery. Like other indigenous peoples the Maori have long been objects of research, their cultural knowledges and systems of living have become classified, represented to Western audiences and, through the eyes of the West,

represented back to them. Supported by academic and political institutions and organizations, colonial discourse established a positional superiority of Western knowledge. Positioning herself in the liberation movement of indigenous peoples, she advocates a complementing of the political agenda (Wilmer, 1993) with an agenda for research toward the goal of social justice. For indigenous cultural politics, she argues, a constant reworking of their notions of colonial conditions and knowledge production has been essential in developing a language of postcolonial critique that not only permits deconstruction and recontextualization of Western scholarship but also designs alternative research practices and policies. 'Decolonizing methodologies,' she stresses, is "about centering our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes" (1999, p. 39).

In her critique of the intersections of knowledge, research, and imperialism, Smith outlines the Western cultural views of human nature, gender and race, individual and society, and time and space that underpin Western modes of knowledge. The disciplinary organization of academic knowledge, she argues, is particularly intriguing for indigenous intellectuals who reclaim a voice vis-à-vis the positional superiority of Western science: "Most of the 'traditional' disciplines are grounded in cultural world views which are either antagonistic to other belief systems or have no methodology for dealing with other knowledge systems" (Smith, 1999, p. 65). Due to their shared cultural foundations the disciplines are deeply implicated in each other, but also "insulated from each other" and thus "protected" from outside claims, able "to develop independently" and to keep their histories separate (Smith, 1999, p. 67). In this double-bind of disciplinary implication and insulation controversies over what counts as knowledge are thus easily caught up in either the insular protection of a discipline from other views of the significance of 'facts' or in the tangle of "reconnecting and reordering those ways of knowing which were submerged, hidden, or driven underground" (Smith, 1999, p. 69).

Her account of the historical intersections of imperialism, knowledge, and research provides a strong counterweight to Eurocentric accounts of the rewards of the pursuit of knowledge. Based on the traditions of both postcolonial critique and Western critical theories, she advances a view of research cultures as institutionalized intellectual activities that are closely connected to hegemonic or counter-hegemonic discourses. Thus her book is a convincing argument that a rewriting of the history of modernity and science cannot dispense with the critical views based on the collective experience of the colonized and their heirs.

PROSPECTS FOR A POLYCENTRIC CRITICAL HISTORY

A polycentric approach to the history of the transcultural migration of psychology as advanced by Danziger (1994; 1996) involves questions that exceed the

confines of the discipline. Emphasizing the contribution by historically-minded Third World psychologists, he has drawn attention to questions concerning the links between psychology and both “cultural imperialism” and “the historical project of modernism” (1994, p. 477). In this chapter I have argued that some challenging studies from the perspective of the colonized and their heirs are indispensable for rethinking the intersection of knowledge, imperial power, and resistance. Drawing on both anti-colonial and Western traditions of critical theory they have repositioned decisive issues pertaining to the Western construction of reality. To elaborate on both this construction and its fragmented embodiment in the disciplinary order historians of psychology and the social sciences can draw on a growing field of studies that historicize the domains taken for granted as universal in the self-understanding of Western modernity. For instance, exploring the genealogies of religion, Talal Asad (1993) has demonstrated that the universalized concept of ‘religion’ is a ‘cultural construction’ that originated in European modernity. The view of religion implied in this construction makes it “part of what is *inessential* to our common politics, economy, science, and morality” (p. 207). As a new historical object this notion of ‘religion’ authorizes particular forms of ‘history making,’ for instance the degrading of Islamic states as immature vis-à-vis Western secularization. In a similar vein, Paul Rabinow’s project to ‘anthropologize’ the West aims at showing “how exotic its constitution of reality has been” (1996, p. x). Exploring the historicity of “the relations of truth and virtue, power and culture” (p. 138), he has begun to reveal the historical peculiarity of assumed ‘universal’ domains like rationality, epistemology, science, and economics.

From a polycentric view of world history the very idea of one historical project of modernity in Europe may have to be given up. Peter Gran (1996) has strongly argued that substantially diverse forms of hegemony have emerged from the capitalist penetration of various parts of Europe. He distinguishes four basic forms of hegemony, among which the classic model of ‘British bourgeois democracy’ is but one. Examining, for instance, the correspondence of the Italian model with hegemony in India and Latin America, he aims to undermine the dominant historiographical paradigm of ‘Europe and the rest.’ His analysis of the organization of elite and popular culture, including chapters on the mode and social role of historiography, endorses the view “that people in different hegemonies are not likely to share the same ‘common sense’” (p. 348). Gran’s approach thus might offer a frame for renewed attempts at exploring the historicity of subjectivities in various parts of the world.

Certainly, a polycentric approach to the historicity of disciplines, hegemonies, subjectivities, and modernities can draw on rich resources of historical sophistication. The emphasis on ‘poly-centricity’ entails a notion of lived experience, views and voices from various centers as well as a notion of interrelations among centers. Thus the realization of a polycentric critical historiography will essentially depend

on the participation of scholars from Third World, indigenous, and diasporic academic spheres.

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