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Understanding Psychological Selfhood and Agency

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Preface

The discipline of psychology is primarily concerned with understanding human action and experience for the purpose of bettering the lives of persons both individually and collectively. However, for the most part, psychologists have given little attention to the question of what a person is. Rather, in the attempt to achieve the precision and control of the natural sciences, much mainstream psychology, perhaps somewhat unreflectively, has adopted a materialist perspective that considers all psychological phenomena to be reducible to underlying biological and neurophysical substrates and/or computational and psychometric models. The challenge to this view in recent years launched by social constructionist thinkers (e.g., Gergen, 1985; Shotter, 1993), who reject the notion of fixed, essential selves in favor of an interpretive self that derives meaning from the sociocultural and historical traditions and practices in which it is embedded, overcomes many of the difficulties associated with biophysical and computational forms of reductionism. Yet, this alternative may be no less problematic.

When one considers that the ability to make choices and act on these choices to impact one's own life and the lives of others is the most distinctive feature of personhood, it becomes clear that neither essentialist nor constructionist approaches provide an adequate account of psychological phenomena. From the essentialist view, our experience of selfhood and agency is illusory, reducible to biological foundations. From the constructionist view, our experience of selfhood and agency is merely a fiction, determined by cultural scripts that might have easily been otherwise. Either way, the reality of psychological phenomena is dismissed as reducible to underlying biological or sociocultural determinants. Consequently, it becomes questionable just what, if any, role psychology has to play in furthering understanding about the human condition.

This volume represents the efforts of theoretical and philosophical psychologists Jack Martin and Jeff Sugarman to resuscitate a psychology of personhood. Martin and Sugarman retrieve ontological questions from obscurity with the aim of formulating a viable conception of persons that retains their most distinctive features, and explore the implications of their account for disciplinary psychology and other domains that call for adequate conceptions of personhood and selfhood. Persons, Martin and Sugarman argue, arise from, but are irreducible to, their biological and sociocultural constituents. To support this argument, Martin and Sugarman provide

a unique synthesis of philosophy and psychology in the form of a developmental account of a self with biological capacities for prereflective thought and action that is thrown into the world and, as it develops, appropriates the linguistic and relational practices of the pre-existing sociocultural context to structure thought and transform its mode of being from prereflective actor to reflective, intentional agent. Such genuine psychological beings require a biophysical body, but are not reducible to it. They are shaped by the sociocultural practices in which they are embedded, but they are not fully determined by them. Perhaps more importantly, such psychological agents are real in that they exert influence on their own lives and the lives of others and can contribute to and change the sociocultural traditions and practices within which they emerge.

The work is structured in three parts that reflect the progression of Martin and Sugarman's thoughts. Part I, *A Theory of Persons and Selves for Psychology*, introduces the problem that instigated this corpus of work and provides the reader with a detailed account of Martin and Sugarman's developmental ontology of psychological phenomena, as well as an exploration of the implications of this perspective for political thought. Part II, *Human Agency and the Irreducibility of Persons*, offers a sustained examination of two aspects of Martin and Sugarman's theory. First, drawing on philosopher Charles Taylor's claim that personhood consists in relation to moral goods and commitments, the ways in which Martin and Sugarman's theory can clarify this relation and its implications for understanding moral agency are explored. The question of irreducibility is then tackled through systematic examination of theories of emergence and the proposal of a "levels of reality" approach that demonstrates persons are both substantively and relationally emergent within a biological and sociocultural world. Following the articulation of these two aspects of Martin and Sugarman's theory, the section is brought to conclusion with a review of the work of Scottish philosopher John Macmurray. This alternative, yet compatible, developmental conception of persons as irreducible agents emphasizes the importance of action, rather than reflection, as the appropriate starting point for psychological theorizing. Such a position is shown to challenge nativist psychological theories that view human relations as secondary to biology, developmental stages, psychological capacities, or social categories. In Part III, *Perspectives, Selves, and Persons*, the examination of the ways in which psychological theory and inquiry may be informed by philosophy is extended through reviewing theoretical accounts of perspective taking (e.g., those contained in the work of George Herbert Mead, William James, and others). It is suggested that the construal of self as perspectival has implications for the training of psychologists, understanding moral deliberation and moral problem solving, education, and developmental inquiry.

For those familiar with Heidegger's ontology of being, Vygotsky's developmental theory, Macmurray's philosophy of the personal, Mead's fallible perspectivism, or philosopher Charles Taylor's claims about the moral nature of selfhood, these ideas will cover some familiar territory. What will be unique is the coherent synthesis of these disparate views into a viable ontological account for psychology. It is an argument that is at once philosophical and psychological. Moreover, it is

a perspective that demonstrates the rich possibilities that arise for psychological inquiry when theory is philosophically informed. The way in which this is done can breathe new life into a discipline that has become overly focused on technique, method, and formulaic accounts of human action and experience. The psychology endorsed here is an interpretive psychology that is cognizant of the emergent, yet irreducible, nature of persons, selves, and agency. Following the hermeneutic tradition, such a psychology accepts the perspectival nature of understanding but rejects the strongly relativistic conclusions that some have drawn from such acceptance. Thus, this approach will be of interest to those concerned about ethnocentrism in psychology and the need to develop approaches that are more appropriate to our increasingly globalized world. Such a psychology also involves a radical reconceptualization of theories of mind, behavior, morality, politics, and education. While readers may not agree with every aspect of this view, they are certain to come away from this volume with a fresh perspective on psychological research and theory, and the unique contributions psychology can make in attempts to better understand the human condition.

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Contents

Part I
A Theory of Persons and Selves for Psychology

Chapter 1
Introduction: The Problem of Selves and Persons in Psychology

> It must be some one impression that gives rise to every real idea. But self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same through the whole course of our lives, since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. . . . It cannot, therefore, be from any impression. . . that the idea of self is derived, and consequently there is no such idea. (David Hume, *A treatise of human nature*, 1963, p. 173)

Most of us have a somewhat inconsistent attitude toward our being selves and persons. On the one hand, we frequently act as if there is nothing that is more real or true about our lives than the seemingly obvious fact that we exist as thinking, feeling individuals. Indeed, so powerful does this idea seem that René Descartes (1960) established an entire philosophical tradition based on it. On the other hand, most of us experience at least occasional difficulties in determining exactly who we are, what we want, and what makes for a meaningful life, and not infrequently describe such difficulties as stemming from problems of knowing our true selves or the kind of person we really are. To complicate matters, what we mean by "self" or "person" is not at all straightforward, and most of us would experience considerable difficulty in giving a clear and consistent definition of these terms. Nonetheless, we mostly believe that it is important to understand and feel good about who and what we are as selves and persons as a prerequisite to doing and living well. And, despite difficulties of definition and accessibility to what we might regard as our true selves or the kind of person we are, the possibility that we might not have selves at all or exist as persons would seem more than passing strange to most of us.

Compounding the problem of self and personal knowledge, it increasingly has become apparent that the configuring of persons and selves is far from universal. Mounting interpretations of the historical record (e.g., MacIntyre, 1981; Reiss, 2003; Seigel, 2005; Taylor, 1989) and anthropological evidence (e.g., Harris, 1989; Skinner, Pach III, & Holland, 1998; Shweder & Bourne, 1984; White, 1992) reveal that persons and the ways in which they have understood, articulated, and expressed their subjectivity vary widely throughout history and across cultures. In fact, the term "self" did not enter the English language until the fourteenth century, and the distinctively modern notion of an inner self as an autonomous center of experience,

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capable of retreating from its own immediate activity through reason and reflection to arrive at knowledge of itself and the world, is much more recent.

For the ancient Greeks and right up until the late middle ages, society, family, the material world, and the divine were not seen as conditions external to individual persons. They were not optional, accidental, or matters of one's own choosing, but rather aspects of existence central to human life. These were the substance of a person's constitution—what he/she was. Reasoning and knowing were not self-initiated processes, but rather meant identifying oneself among the reasons and knowledge already and ever present in the universe. The Socratic injunction to "Know thyself" is best interpreted as advice to know one's place in the scheme of things. For Socrates and Plato, self-knowledge was a matter of understanding one's role in a cosmological order, in part by attempting to interpret the ideals for human functioning believed inherent in that order. It was not a matter of turning inward so as to be one's self, but of comprehending one's place and function within preordained contexts. In a somewhat similar vein, what the comic figure of Polonius is really telling us in the context of Shakespeare's Hamlet is that we should be true to ourselves so that we might be true to others. There is no suggestion that being true to one's self is possible in inner isolation or desirable as an end in itself.

History is populated by a variety of personhoods and selfhoods. However, over the past 50 years, anthropologists and other cross-cultural researchers have encountered notable cases of contemporary peoples whose versions of person and self are composed much differently from those of Western modernity. For instance, Mageo (1998) describes the Samoans as showing muted interest in the subtleties of individuals' thoughts, feelings, and volitions, which they subsume under a single term, *loto*. Not only do they eschew distinctions among mental functions and processes, but moreover, they tend to dismiss even the possibility of subjective knowledge. Their actions are not interpreted as expressions of an individual private self, but rather as manifesting the state of a person's relationships with others. For the Samoans, the substance of all things, including people, is characterized by their *aga*, which translated means "nature" in the sense of essential character. However, *aga* also means "personal," which, for them, refers to a social mask or role. According to the Samoans, it is the performance of roles—positioning in a social order and relations with others—and not an inner subjective life that defines a person's nature.

The Newar of Kathmandu also interpret personhood as the enactment of culturally prescribed roles. Parish (1994) describes how for the Newar, one is a person by virtue of fulfilling ritual obligations stipulated by one's position in a moral order. While the Newar have no equivalent for the English "self," what accounts for the elements of subjective experience is believed to reside in the heart. The heart is the source of thoughts, memories, emotions, and the impetus for action. However, these functions of the heart are considered transcendent. They are linked to Hindu religious beliefs and hold sacred and moral significance. According to the Newar, gods not only inhabit the world, but also reside in the human heart. However, Narayana or Bhagaban, the heart god, is not simply the Newar's positing of the source for an individual's subjectivity. It embodies and conjures the divine moral order within

and commands moral duty. The Newar believe that fulfilling one's moral duty, or dharma, is that which makes us distinctively human.

Clearly there is an argument to be made that those such as the Samoans and Newar are no less individual actors than persons of Western cultures and that it is misleading to characterize them as simply conforming passively with expected roles. An equally plausible account is that their constitution and orientation as persons is no more social or less individual than that of Westerners, and, as agents, all individuals actively attempt to create a coherent autobiography within the constraints of cultural scripts (Sökefeld, 1999). Nonetheless, what these various examples are intended to show is that an historically and cross-culturally informed approach to the study of persons draws attention to the importance of historical, cultural, social, spiritual, political, and physical contexts in which persons and their subjectivities are located and produced. Further, it cautions against attributing a universal form of self to all persons.

In both evolutionary and historical terms, the story of the self is a surprisingly recent one. The species *Homo* first appeared approximately 2 million years ago, with our particular subspecies, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, arriving on the scene some 125,000 years ago. Sapient humans displayed significant biophysical changes from their ancestors, especially in the brain and vocal tract, which helped make them uniquely "culture capable" (Donald, 2001). From primitive cultural beginnings, they invented important tools and crafted objects, including weapons, boats, complex dwellings, simple musical instruments, and several kinds of self-adornment. Spoken language and the oral culture that attended it were, of course, the most significant of the accomplishments of early *Homo sapiens*.

Approximately 40,000 years ago, human language and cognition began to be driven by culture and technology itself. Subsequently, and very recently, cultural storage devices such as books, museums, computing and measuring tools, clocks, and calendars developed as external aids to our thinking, remembering, and organized acting. Such devices gradually provided cultural liberation from more biological consciousness and memory and provided new options for thinking and acting. But there is little evidence that such a culturally supported, linguistically aided consciousness quickly manifested in contemporary Western forms of self-consciousness per se.

As recently as the time of the Homeric epic works, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, in the eighth or ninth century B.C.E., there is little to suggest the self as a center of experiencing, reflecting, and acting. For example, early in the *Iliad*, when Achilles addresses the Greek army that has been besieging Troy for 9 years, and is ravaged by death from fighting and plague, it is the goddess Hera who puts into his mind the words he speaks. Nonetheless, by the sixth century B.C.E., Buddha had begun to attribute human thoughts to our experiences, and Confucius was stressing the power of thought and choice that lay within each person (e.g., "A man can command his principles: principles do not master the man"). Shortly thereafter, the Greek philosophers initiated the idea central to Western thought that human beings could examine, comprehend, and ultimately control their own thoughts, emotions, and actions.

From the time of Plato and Socrates, the Western intellectual tradition has claimed a unique personal existence for each human being. However, the modern idea that the self can be known empirically (in the manner assumed by contemporary social science) appears much later, typically being attributed to John Locke in his seminal, *Essay concerning human understanding*, which first appeared in 1690. Here, Locke treats the core of the individual human being as an observable natural phenomenon. In this work, Locke asks the question, how do I know that I am the same person I was in the past? His answer, in terms of a continuity of consciousness accessible through one's experiential memory, is in many ways a typically modern psychological response and one that we shall examine in greater detail in the fifth chapter of this book.

So, the kind of self that now is taken for granted by most modern individuals proves to be a very recent invention indeed. It seems almost impossible to imagine that the vast majority of persons who have lived on earth have not been consumed by those questions of self-worth, self-awareness, self-fulfillment, and self-control that have come to dominate contemporary life. However, this simple historical fact also points to the possibility of living our lives without such heightened self-concern. Today, we sometimes seem to have taken the Socratic and Quixotic injunction to know ourselves all too literally. The media-hyped "me" generation may have come and gone, but popular culture seems fixated on issues of self and personal identity. Socially and politically, we demand recognition for our apparently unique perspectives and ways of life, both as individuals and as groups. Consequently, self-studies have become a major cinematic, scholarly, therapeutic, publishing, and commercial enterprise, even as some intellectuals (including many postmodernists, philosophers, and scientists) declare the alleged death of the self to a growing market of the self-absorbed.

In challenging the existence of the self, such contemporaries give new voice to concerns that frequently have attended the Western tradition of selfhood. For example, in the eighteenth century, the Scottish skeptical philosopher, David Hume (1963), not only disagreed with the idea of the self as an agent capable of exercising radically free will, but went so far as to challenge the very existence of the self. In his famous *Treatise of Human Nature* (from which the opening citation of this introduction is taken), Hume acknowledged that we have experiences, memories, imagination, and an idea of personal identity. However, he denied that our manifestation of any of these capabilities or our holding of this idea warranted the postulation of an entity lying behind them, in the manner supposed by John Locke (1995) and others. Through our experiences, memories, and imagination, we create a sense of identity that does not exist in any of these impressions themselves. Thus, we have experience, but no coherent idea of the experiencer of these experiences. The self or person as experiencer is an illusion that is to be resisted if we are to fashion a straightforward account of the world and our place within it. Today, Hume's skepticism has attracted a wide variety of adherents, including many scientifically inclined analytic philosophers, cognitive scientists, and some, more generally skeptical, postmodern social constructionists. Although not typically aligned in their views, and for quite different reasons, they share a deep skepticism concerning the reality of

selves and persons. At its most basic, this book is a reaction to this skepticism and, more specifically, its various manifestations in psychology.

Personhood and related terms, such as "being" and "agency," have not commonly been employed in mainstream disciplinary psychology. However, terms like "self" and "identity" saturate much of the past and contemporary literature. Of these latter terms, "self" is especially salient. Just how salient is evidenced by the results of a recent (2008) search of the PsycINFO database. According to this search, 81,779 articles containing the word "self" in their titles were published in psychology between 1909 and 2008. Of these, 30,432 appeared between 1999 and 2008 and more than 10,000 appeared in each of the 1970s and 1980s. The 1960s, as might be expected, ushered in the accelerating growth in "self" publications (with 2,964 such articles) that has continued ever since.

With all of this publishing on the topic, it might be supposed that psychologists have come to an agreed understanding of what the self is or, at the very least, have given considerable attention to conceptual issues of this kind. Unfortunately, for the most part, nothing could be further from the truth. For much of the twentieth century, the most influential theoretical work on the self within psychology was the single chapter, "The Consciousness of Self," published by William James (1890) in his *Principles of psychology*. Only more recently have psychologists like Baumeister (1986), Cushman (1995), Danziger (1997a), Freeman (1993), Gergen (1991), Harter (1999), Markus and Nurius (1986), McAdams (1997), Neisser and Fivush (1994), Neisser and Jopling (1998), Paranjpe (1998), Schiebe (1998), and Singer and Salovey (1993) returned to the task of seriously theorizing the self. This task had been mostly abandoned during the reign of behaviorism in the early to middle part of the twentieth century in American psychology, despite several notable attempts by some analytically (e.g., Kohut, 1977) and humanistically inclined psychologists (e.g., Rogers, 1959, 1961) among a few others (e.g., Goffman, 1959; Lecky, 1945; Mead, 1934) to attend carefully to such matters.

Despite this upsurge, however, the vast majority of psychological inquiries purporting to be concerned with the self remain startlingly atheoretical. In lieu of rigorous conceptual investigations aimed at clarifying what the self might be, one is confronted by empirical study after empirical study employing operational indicators of self-concept, self-esteem, self-regulation, and self-efficacy with little apparent concern for the ontological status of the "self" in these hyphenated expressions. Indeed, outside of the informative work of a relatively few contemporary theorists of the psychological self, such as those just referenced, the student of psychology who wishes to know what a self, let alone a person, might be finds little assistance in the psychological literature.

Like many other theoretical and philosophical psychologists (e.g., Danziger, 1997a; Paranjpe, 1998; Richardson, Fowers, & Guignon, 1999), we suspect that mainstream psychologists have overlooked the important task of theorizing central concepts such as "persons" and "selves" because they are not considered properly scientific. Since the latter half of the twentieth century, scientific naturalism has been understood as the doctrine that explanations appropriate to natural science should explain all phenomena. In effect, this strong naturalism identifies the physical

world with the real world and treats what cannot be expressed in physical scientific terms as illusory. Scientific naturalism concerns the study of things in the world, but "person" and "self," by definition, designate those features of human beings that distinguish them from mere things. Consequently, many psychologists view concepts such as "person" and "self" as beyond the ken of legitimate psychological study, falling instead to the province of philosophical speculation or humanistic consideration. For this reason, the task of sustained conceptualization of personhood, selfhood, and other psychological phenomena (in contrast to the provision of narrow operational definitions) is mostly neglected.

We believe that the widespread failure of psychologists to attend conceptually and ontologically to what they attempt to study is problematic in at least two respects. First, as many philosophers of social science (e.g., Gadamer, 1960/1995; Taylor, 1989) have pointed out, when we attempt to study humans in the manner prescribed by the kind of naturalism that has come to pervade much scientific thinking in the modern era, we shrink the vocabulary and reach of psychological discourse in ways that exclude significant and unique features of persons. While there is widespread agreement that humans ought to be considered part of nature, there is something distinctive about persons. We describe and comprehend ourselves with terms not applied to other things. Persons bear certain rights and responsibilities. They are capable of making choices, of reason and reflection, of originating their own purposes, and of acting in light of their choices and reasons. As authors of their actions, they are held morally accountable for what they do and are justly deserving of praise or blame. There are features of persons that separate them from other kinds of things, and it would be difficult to make our lives intelligible in the absence of such a distinction. "Person" and "self" name a particular kind of existence, one that is assumed unique to beings like us. By reducing persons to their physical or biological constituents in an attempt to meet the demands of a naturalist paradigm, psychologists strip humans of what matters to them most and render explanations of human action and experience that are distorted and malformed, if not wholly alien.

Second, in the absence of sustained conceptual and ontological inquiry regarding the appropriate domains of psychological inquiry, psychologists often fail to grasp the broader sociopolitical implications of their work (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008). Critical psychologists (e.g., Prilleltensky, 1994; Sloan, 2000), psychological historians (e.g., Cushman, 1995; Danziger, 1997a, 1997b; Herman, 1995), and others charting psychology's influence (e.g., Hacking, 1995; Pfister, 1999; Rose, 1996) have detailed ways in which disciplinary psychology, in its practice and research, has enormous social impact. It is clearly evident that since the beginning of the twentieth century, contemporary Westerners increasingly have come to understand themselves through the discursive lenses of psychology. It is in psychological terms that we now understand our wants and desires, assess our capabilities, address our deficiencies, shape our lifestyles, choose our partners, conduct our relationships, and parent and educate our children. The flood of psychological manuals shows few, if any, matters of personal life left untouched by psychological expertise and discussed and explained in psychological vocabulary. Moreover, given that Western systems of liberal and social democracy are animated by conceptions of the individual person

and his/her rights and responsibilities, the way in which disciplinary psychology conceives of and understands personhood has important implications beyond the confines of individual psychology (Fairfield, 2000; Rose, 1996).

The general purpose of the chapters comprising this volume is to recover ground that has been lost in psychology as the result of a failure to conceptualize adequately the appropriate domain of psychological study. The significance of such a project resides in the fact that unless it can be demonstrated that at least some features of human psychology are ontologically unique (i.e., irreducible, solely or in combination, to physical, biological, or sociocultural properties), psychology has no distinctive subject matter of its own and can readily be absorbed by fields of inquiry judged more fundamental to the constitution of psychological subject matter (e.g., neurophysiology, evolutionary biology, computational science, and cultural studies). It is our view that personhood is the ontologically distinctive subject matter of psychology and that an account of personhood of the kind advanced in this volume is necessary to reclaiming a properly psychological discipline.

In the account we set forth, person, self, and agency become interrelated aspects of a theoretical reconfiguring of human psychology. We understand persons to be embodied, reasoning, and moral agents with self-consciousness and self-understanding, as well as social and psychological identity, who have unique capabilities of language use and are distinctively culture capable. As will become apparent, the psychology of personhood developed herein emphasizes worldly activity and interactivity that seeds the emergence of unique forms of intersubjectivity and self-reflexivity that constitute the self-understanding, moral and rational agency, and social and psychological identity of persons. In contrast to currently dominant cognitive and biological approaches to psychological theory, research, and practice, attention to the worldly activity and interactivity of situated human agents focuses attention on relations and coordinated activity rather than individual cognitive and/or neurophysiological processes. When such relations and coordinated agentive interactivity are recognized as crucial and indispensible constituents of personhood, the emergence of persons as unique ontological entities within evolutionary, historical, and developmental contexts and trajectories can be identified and interpreted.

An account of this kind is a radical departure from most extant cognitive and neurophysiological theorizing about human nature, psychological capabilities, and possibilities. By granting priority to action and interaction over reflection, and coordination over biophysical imposition, the relations, coordinations, and interactivity of agentive persons acting in the world are revealed as the fundamental condition of human psychological life. We take the widespread neglect in psychology of these features of personal existence as a particularly problematic consequence of specious divisions between mind and body, persons and world, and biophysical and sociocultural aspects of our psychology that, in turn, have resulted from dualistic and naturalistic assumptions implicit in much Western and psychological thought.

In this introductory chapter, we now wish to turn to a brief and selective historical overview of personhood, selfhood, and human agency in order to assist the reader

in locating the roots of the many tacit, unquestioned assumptions about persons and selves that pervade contemporary psychology.

A Brief, Selective History of Persons and Selves

Plato to Locke

A common concern for the Greek philosophers, from the pre-Socratics to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, was how *nous* (which they considered to be soul or mind or both) could be so seemingly intangible, an entity yet be connected to the body. Some pre-Socratics, like Protagoras, viewed perception as the sole source of knowledge and held highly solipsistic views to the effect that truth was specific to individual perceivers (man is the measure of all things). Democritus (c.460–c.370 B.C.E.) attempted to explain perception by an early and erroneous atomic theory by claiming that every object implants images of itself on the atoms of the air that travel to the eye, and thus to the soul, of the beholder.

Such early theories of perception were denied by Socrates (469–399 B.C.E.) and Plato (427–347 B.C.E.), who claimed the soul itself, not perception, as the source of all knowledge because of its access to abstracted, idealized, and universal forms. Knowledge of such forms (from perfect triangles to ideals of beauty and truth) was not a matter of experiencing but of reasoning that allows discovery of the knowledge of forms that exists within our souls. Soul and mind are one with the world of forms that the Gods share with man. It is this idealized world that possesses a reality far surpassing that of our everyday experience, in which we live the existence of cave dwellers who confuse their shadowy world with the real world of ideas. With such thoughts, divisions of the world into matter and mind, appearance and reality, and reason and sense perception were initiated—all of which subsequently have exercised enormous influence on our search for self-understanding.

Interestingly, Plato also introduced a tripartite conception of the embodied soul that in many ways predates the later, highly influential theories of Freud. In the *Phaedrus*, he says that the three levels of the soul (reason, spirit, and appetite) must achieve a kind of harmony if the good is to be attained. Here, Plato uses the metaphor of a team of two steeds and a driver to represent the soul. One horse that is lively but obedient (spirit) and another that is unruly (appetite) are yoked and driven by a charioteer (reason) who succeeds, with effort, in assisting them to cooperate.

Plato's most famous pupil, Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) eventually came to contradict much of what he had learned from Plato and, in so doing, returned to the pre-Socratic thesis of perception as the source of knowledge and mind, but with several new twists. For Aristotle, the soul is the form of a natural body that possesses life potentiality. It is the directing force of a living organism that fulfills the body's potential for life. Unlike Plato, Aristotle considered sense perceptions not as illusory but as essential raw material that yielded knowledge when entered into thought. In opposition to the strongly dualistic thinking of Plato, Aristotle promoted a more

integrated view in which a sense of personal existence and knowledge emerge from the interaction of human bodies and souls with a material and social world. While not denying the Gods, Aristotle gave much greater force to our everyday, worldly involvement as the primary source of our knowledge and experience.

Further, because the soul consists of both rational and emotional parts, the virtuous person must learn to align the emotions with reason in order to determine what is right with respect to conduct. Through practice and habit, it is possible to feel emotions appropriately, so that virtue consists in experiencing the right emotion to the right degree in any given situation. The interesting fact about Aristotle's virtue ethics is that appropriate conduct is not a matter of searching self-reflection but of habituation that requires no modern psychological self in constant observance of one's conduct from behind the scenes.

It was Aristotle's student, Alexander the Great, whose quest for a universal empire spread Greek thought throughout the world. Alexander's death initiated a period of intense and disturbing social change that stretched to Octavian's (the future Emperor Augustus') final conquest of Egypt in 30 B.C. E. and marked the initiation of the *pax Romana*. This was a time during which the peoples of the Mediterranean sought to escape disturbance by separating themselves from the world and attending to those immediate matters that seemed more within their control, including the tending of their own souls (Nussbaum, 1994). Epicurus (341–270 B.C.E.) advocated a withdrawal from the world to a life of friendship and philosophical reflection. Epicureans sought the simple life, devoid of strong passions, and attempted to limit their dependence on others and institutions beyond their immediate circle. The Stoics like Epictetus (50–130) went several steps further, joining their counsel of abstinence and acceptance to a doctrine of foreordained destiny, in which the only control available to human beings was a mental one. "Do not seek to have events happen as you want them to, but instead want them to happen as they do happen" (Epictetus, c.92/1983, p. 13). The Stoics calmly endured the inconveniences and pains of the world because of their belief in a living, divine universe in the process of working through an ultimately rational and good plan.

In many ways, with their emphases on everyday life and personal devotion, the Epicureans and Stoics paved the way for early Christian thought. Eventually, Christianity began to attract more and more followers during the time of the Roman Empire and gradually replaced older pagan religions as well as competitor religions from the New East. With respect to personal existence, an intriguing problem that confronted early Christians was how to come to terms with classical philosophy. It is in this context that the writings and teachings of St. Augustine take on particular importance. Augustine (354–430) can be understood as one of the last classical philosophers and one of the first Christian, early Medieval scholars.

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, incorporated many Platonic ideas, sometimes through the ascetic and mystical interpretations of the neoplatonist, Plotinus, into Christian doctrine. Augustine equated mind with soul in a living person and believed in the immortality of the soul when it leaves the body at death. His arguments in support of his position foreshadow similar arguments of Descartes and are just one indication of his influence. According to Augustine, it is the mind's ability to

conceive of the eternal, an impossibility if reason were governed by the senses alone, that supplies the necessary proof of the immortality of the soul. For just as thinking implies existence, thought of higher spheres of existence implies existence in those terms. Given his Platonic leanings, it is not surprising that Augustine relied heavily on introspection as the path to truth and knowledge. In his *Confessions* (Augustine, 1955), Augustine's own introspective account of his life, he provides us with not only the first literary work of autobiography, but also numerous ideas that would be influential to later scholars, including Rousseau and Freud (Hunt, 1993). Augustine's mix of religious, psychological, and philosophical writings also emphasized what he regarded as the most important faculty of mind, the will. Augustine reasoned that if human beings are to be good, they must choose to be so, and it is for this reason that God endowed humans with free will.

Augustine's self-reflections and ideas about the mind, soul, and will helped to preserve many classical ideas about personal existence at a time when social, political, and religious factors were conspiring to diminish the importance of individuals. Few people in the centuries following Augustine's death gave much thought to individual matters. Rome was repeatedly sacked, libraries were destroyed, and much of past science and art was lost. Medieval political theory promoted feudal fiefdoms and kingdoms in which the state was seen as organic, with individual existence treated primarily as a kind of contractual relationship. The ever-present power of the Christian church further eroded individuality by treating it as part of the great chain of being and of relatively little consequence in and of itself. Some few, like Boethius (480–524) in his famous essay, *The consolation of philosophy* (1998), continued Augustine's struggle to locate individual freedom and reason within Providence. However, for the most part, writings concerning the mind, other than as part of a soul-like substance linked to God and heaven, were limited to a small number of monastic clerics, toiling within restrictive, church-approved libraries.

In turning away from an observable world of human activity replete with pain and turmoil, Medieval authorities sought a grand synthesis of all knowledge, tradition, and faith. Even Augustinian-style arguments in support of Christian doctrines were frowned upon by powerful religious leaders like St. Bernard (1091–1153) who rejected the classical philosophers and decried any curiosity about Christian beliefs. Neoplatonism was reflected in all aspects of Medieval thought. God's will and invisible world were symbolized everywhere. The sociopolitical hierarchy of king, vassal, subvassal, and surf mirrored the heavenly one of God, angels, man, and animals. People looked inward to their own souls as a way to God, in search of guidance for living.

However, such inward looking was in no way akin to psychological introspection. Although there was no shortage of distinctive strong men and women in the Middle Ages, there was no conception of individuals as focal objects of study for themselves or for others. Knowing oneself and others was dictated by the understanding of universals derived from religion (e.g., souls) or social organization (e.g., serfs). For the most part, individuals were not defined by characteristics that made them unique.

Individualism, as we know it, did not reappear until toward the end of the Middle Ages, around 1250–1300. And then, it was mostly in art and popular culture (e.g.,

in the writings of Dante, Shakespeare, and others) where the charge of a renewed individualism was most pronounced. Interestingly, this same time witnessed an upswing in the writing of biographies and autobiographies, and in portraiture. Perhaps not coincidentally, it was also a time when transparent glass that could be incorporated in good-quality mirrors became widely accessible. Such self-reflection, literal and metaphorical, was simply unavailable to most people throughout much of the Middle Ages. Even what classical Greek and Roman culture had accomplished in the way of dramatic and other art forms that expressed vivid individual characters was mostly inaccessible to Medieval people. Nor could romantic love, which was imbued with such importance in later times, based as it is on relationships formed through personal feeling rather than appointed status, stoke the fires of individualism given the rigidly stratified social system that prevailed during most of the Middle Ages.

Eventually, however, change began to overtake the feudal order. The crusades resulted in contact with Muslim and oriental commerce, industry, books, and ideas. As larger cities began to develop, so too did a small number of universities housed within them. Philosophy revived in a scholastic form consisting of the logical examination of important questions of faith. In time, such scholarship became infused with the ideas and writings of Aristotle that had been preserved by Arab, Greek, and Jewish scholars in the Middle East where learning had maintained itself. Thus, by the thirteenth century, scholastics (or Schoolmen) such as Abélard, Peter Lombard, and Tomas Aquinas, after years of bitter internal struggles between mystic Platonists and more intellectually attuned Aristotelians, began once again to reconcile Aristotelianism with Christianity. For example, Aquinas (1225–1273) advocated a separation of philosophy and religion, restricting the former to human reason in the service of acquiring knowledge of the world of nature, as distinct from God and eternity. Of course, as a theologian, Aquinas himself, adopting the ideas of Aristotle and his Islamic interpreters, combined philosophy and theology, at least in practice. Nonetheless, his theoretical separation of the two would pave the way for future, more secular scholars.

Schools and universities attached to large city cathedrals began to push for a separation between reason and faith, which gradually opened the way for those like William of Ockham (c.1285–1347) who pursued only the former. For Ockham and a new breed of empiricists, religious beliefs constituted unnecessary, extra baggage in a quest to understand how persons develop and learn from their experience. This further separation of faith and reason greatly weakened theology and metaphysics, but it hastened the beginnings of Renaissance science. By the fourteenth century, Renaissance science, art, education, material prosperity, and social mobility reflected a broad mutation of values that were increasingly humanistic. In all of these spheres, people's thoughts became more human centered.

Even though God was far from abandoned (witness the sixteenth-century Reformation), writers, painters, and scientists turned to the establishment of the proper place of humans within nature and society. By the end of the Middle Ages, and the beginning of the Renaissance, humans were positioned at the exact midpoint of the universe, mediating between rational soul and worldly body, through

the exercise of thought, choice, imagination, and common sense. Despite a rather steady diet of war, plague, and famine (White, 1974), this new humanism carried forward into the Enlightenment works of Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, and others, all of which are of extreme importance to any history of personhood and selfhood.

By 1600, most, for better or for worse, could resonate to Shakespeare's sentiment, "What a piece of work is man" (Hamlet, II, ii, 300)—a far cry from the earliest uses of the noun, "self," recorded in the Oxford English Dictionary and appearing around 1300 (1989, vol. 14, p. 906), which all carried decidedly self-effacing connotations (e.g., "Oure awn self we sal deny, And folow oure lord god al-myghty"). The opposition between a wicked, secular self and self-effacing Godly virtues survived for many centuries, as another O.E.D. example from 1680 attests—"Self is the great Anti-Christ and Anti-God in the world" (1989, vol. 14, p. 907).

It was at this time that René Descartes (1596–1650), considered by some to be the founder of modern psychology, laid part of the philosophical background against which Locke would formulate his influential ideas concerning a hidden, but nonetheless empirically accessible, self-consciousness. Although Descartes did much to establish the radical subjectivism that has become so much a part of the modern worldview, his methods were distinctly nonempirical. In seeking a foundation for science, Descartes questioned everything except the fact of his own thought, from which he inferred his own existence—the famous, *cogito, ergo sum* (I am thinking, I exist; I think, therefore I am). In Descartes' view, there are two very different substances: worldly things that exist as extended substances and occupy physical space and thinking things without such extension. With this ontological foundation in place, Descartes attempted to ensure that he would not antagonize the Church in his scientific pursuits.

As pure thought, the Cartesian self is without affect or relationships and requires no development. Both its existence and its veridical perception of the external world are guaranteed by God. This disembodied, disconnected, and solitary self viewing the world from the inside out left a powerful, influential legacy to subsequent generations and finds a contemporary home in much disciplinary psychology. With Descartes' inner self, an important part of Locke's pivotal conceptualization of personal identity became available. However, Cartesian theological rationalism was not at all the method of inquiry that Locke adopted. Locke's psychological empiricism owed much more to materialists like his older contemporary Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) than to the ontological dualism of Descartes.

Hobbes' interests were predominately political. However, in a desire to ground his politics in human nature, he developed an elaborate theory of the origins of civil society in an imagined natural condition of human individuals. For Hobbes, the dominant appetite that governs all human conduct is found in the desire for power. Prior to the formation of civil society, human individuals existed in a warring condition of all against all. This was a constant struggle in which individual contestants attempted to subordinate others to their will. This being so, the most fundamental law for human beings is to seek peace. However, this first law is subject to a second that declares that individuals will use all available means to defend themselves against others seeking power over them. The solution that

Hobbes advances presents the human being as a rational animal who, on the basis of deliberation, chooses strategies to maximize chances for individual survival among other individuals. In seeking peace and personal security, the rational person submits to a Leviathan (Hobbes, 1962) who governs a polity contracted with similarly self-interested others.

For Hobbes, the person is an appetitive machine whose behaviors are automated responses toward or away from things that feed or impede its appetites, the most fundamental being power. Human agency involves the calculation of probabilities that particular actions will satisfy human appetites. According to Hobbes' materialism, all human deliberation, choice, and action are reducible to basic matter in motion that possesses the capacity for self-direction (at the most basic level, understood as a continuation of its own motion). Like many contemporary psychological materialists, Hobbes' attempt to reduce all things human to simple matter in motion seems to exclude the meaning and significance that pervade everyday human experience. Nonetheless, in proposing that man is nothing more than the sum of basic physiological components, Hobbes implies that such components can be approached and studied empirically in ways that are reasonably straightforward, without getting bogged down in the attempted pursuit of more inaccessible psychic elements. John Locke's psychological empiricism rejected Hobbes' reductionism, but stopped well short of Descartes' reification of the psyche.

For Locke (1632–1704), personal identity is understood in terms of a continuity of consciousness provided by memory (backward looking) and imagination (forward looking). The self, thus conceptualized, appropriates actions undertaken in the past and contemplated in the future, for which the individual accepts responsibility. As a continuity of consciousness that accompanies all thinking and acting, the Lockean self is differentiated from one's inner and outer actions and experiences. It lies behind the scenes, reflecting on and directing one's activity in the world. Just as individuals own property and other possessions, they also own their actions and experiences. They are rational proprietors in economic, sociopolitical, and psychological senses. As owner and collector of its actions, the Lockean self is engaged in a relentless process of self-objectification. As such, the self is understood as "composed of empirical phenomena that can be observed, analyzed, and known, just like other worldly phenomena" (Danziger, 1997b, p. 142).

In this way, Locke launched an empiricist psychology that viewed the self as a term that describes the observable phenomena making up individual identity and unity. However, for Locke, the appropriate vantage point for the relevant observations was private and introspective. For future empirically minded philosopher-psychologists, Locke left a rich legacy of the self as the private possession of individuals that could be discovered and introspectively observed as an object of concern and knowledge. It was this general conception of the self that eventually found its way into the highly influential work of Sigmund Freud and William James at the end of the nineteenth century and helped initiate many of the "self projects" of modern disciplinary psychology. While Descartes might be regarded as a founding father of modern psychology, it really was John Locke who gave psychology the empirical self as both cause and observable consequence of experience and action.

To summarize, prior to the seventeenth century, there is little evidence to indicate that people understood themselves in the psychological manner theorized by John Locke. Despite the occasional hint, there is no distinctly Lockean empirical self-consciousness lurking in the idealism of Plato, the rational empiricism of Aristotle, the Stoics' pre-existential acceptance and self-denial, the theological ruminations of the Schoolmen, the Renaissance rationalism of Descartes, or the early mechanistic reductionism of Thomas Hobbes. There is little to suggest that medievals engaged in introspection or experienced inner struggles. However, in the sixteenth century, Western societies, especially in their popular culture, returned to classical Greek themes of distinguishing between appearances and the realities that lay behind them (Trilling, 1971). The idea of an abstract, hidden self somehow lying behind experience probably was generally known by the time of John Locke's meditations on human understanding. However, it remained for Locke and his followers to suggest means of empirically knowing our inner selves. Succeeding centuries were to witness many interesting attempts to move beyond Locke by reconciling his empiricism with new forms of rationalism, by differentiating between the self as knower and the self as known, and by devising more formal and objective means for accessing our selves. It is to these and other conceptual and methodological innovations that we now turn.

After Locke

Following Locke, several eighteenth-century British moralists built further on his views of the self as a locus of experiences such as pleasure and pain, and a worthy object of personal knowledge. Bishop Butler (1692–1752), departing from the traditional theological mistrust of the self, advocated a principle of self-love, wherein the self was conceptualized as a reflective, monitoring agent that could be enlisted to assist individuals to police their conduct for longer-term interests of both themselves and their societies. Around the same time, Thomas Reid (1710–1796) also advocated the self as an active moral agent responsible for monitoring individual actions to ensure one's overall good in ways that link to what was both normal and expected of humankind. However, the agentic selves of Locke, Butler, Reid, and others did not carry the day without protest.

As we already have discussed, the Scottish skeptical philosopher, David Hume (1711–1776), not only disagreed with the self as an agent capable of exercising radically free will, but went so far as to challenge the very existence of the self. Hume denied that our experiences, memories, imaginings, and identifications required a self lying behind them. For Hume, the self as experiencer is an illusion that unnecessarily complicates accounts of human experience and action, thus violating scientific principles of parsimony and objectivity. However, although Hume's skepticism concerning the self eventually was to attract many adherents in the twentieth century, including both analytic philosophers and postmodern social constructionists, it was mostly swept aside in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Rousseau, Kant, and others.

Rousseau (1712–1778) held that before civilization, humans existed as noble savages with perfect natural freedom and complete asociality. With the evolution of social organizations and arrangements, the rule of law replaced individual freedom. Atomistic individuality gave way to a socialized individuality that linked self and moral identity with the social collective. In civilized society, individuality finds expression in various forms of mutuality and belonging. All of this is simultaneously a corruption and transformation of the individual natural being into a moral agent who self-determines and legislates rules for the collective good. Increasingly, the self is constituted as a social artifact, with society understood as an organic whole that determines its members. Surrender to the state becomes the accepted norm. Later utilitarians resonated to the social contracting proposed by Rousseau, while romantics became enamored of the idea of a natural human condition unaffected by the restriction and routine of everyday civil existence.

Kant's (1724–1804) contributions to conceptualizing the modern self also related to what he perceived as a necessary resolution of tensions between individuals and society—a resolution of the unsocial sociability of humans. In general, Kant rejected Hobbes' reductive materialism and championed the will as an originating cause of human action. However, in a complex effort to keep his theses concerning human agents consistent with his ideas concerning the possibility of knowledge (especially in mathematics and the sciences), Kant claimed that we humans have a dual nature. On the one hand, we belong to a phenomenal order of sensing, in which the self is empirical and subject to causal forces outside of itself. On the other hand, we belong to a noumenal order of intelligibility in which the self is capable of rational free will through the exercise of its own causal capabilities that are original to it. It is this noumenal nature of the self that elevates humans above nature and on which Kant grounds an ethics in which persons are never to be treated as means but only as ends. In everyday affairs, this requires that we always strive to do our duty by acting in ways that we would find acceptable if everyone were to act similarly.

If Rousseau might be viewed as inspiring eighteenth-century utilitarians and romantics in a generally positive way, Kant's legacy met with a much more oppositional reaction. Kant's attempt to alert us to our duties as part of an intelligible world governed by reason was perceived by both utilitarians and romantics as a much too cold, cognitive, and distant expression of human existence in its worldly context. What these eighteenth-century thinkers wanted were persons and selves inextricably caught up in the natural and social world, but in ways that recognized human affective experiences, such as happiness and passion, and the uniqueness of each person's destiny and potential.

Eighteenth-century utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) rejected the radical naturalism and contractarianism of Hobbes and Rousseau, as well as the transcendentalism of Kant. Mill was especially insistent that ethical and political standards be recovered from an empirical, phenomenal world of sensation and practice, not from some transcendental vantage point. Both Mill and Bentham favored a view of individuals as maximizers of personal utilities, especially when it came to pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain. Where Bentham was somewhat unclear about why the pursuit of self-interest should

further the collective good, Mill proposed that true happiness necessarily involved rational reflection that included the general welfare of all members of a society. For Mill, the self was a rational agent in the sense of a utility maximizer who is both subjectively and intersubjectively formed and attuned.

Mill's emphasis on intersubjectivity with respect to the formation of selves as moral agents was picked up by influential new liberals like Thomas Hill Green (1836–1882) and Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse (1864–1929) who strongly renounced materialist, atomistic conceptions of the self. For these new liberals, the self can develop only within a social condition. And it is precisely because the self is social that self-choice, in accordance with a self-selected conception of the good, will necessarily contribute to the general welfare. For Hobhouse, society is an organic whole in which individuals are thoroughly interdependent, such that the good of one is inseparable from the good of all. Somewhat idealistically, Hobhouse held that for such individuals, collective harmony is the highest moral standard. Consequently, it could be expected that all persons would work positively to eradicate inequalities and disharmonies in community and civic life.

Thus, while some utilitarians and most new liberals placed great emphasis on persons as rational pursuers of both personal and collective happiness, they (unlike Hobbes, Rousseau, and other earlier contributors to liberal individualism) tended to understand persons and their selves as socially formed and accountable. The social constitution of selfhood found here anticipates many similar and more radical developments in the twentieth century. However, not all eighteenth-century commentators favored a social turn with respect to understanding the self. In opposition to this generally positive, nurturing view of society with respect to selfhood, many romantically inclined thinkers preferred a view of society as much less benign and championed an inward contemplation of an essential, natural, and spiritual self.

The romantic turn in literature, art, and music during the nineteenth century emphasized the uniqueness of individuals and their potentials and promoted the idea that all persons were obligated by a kind of cosmic duty to discover and fulfill those destinies that attached uniquely to them. Many romantics attempted to replace the Christian quest for salvation with secular ideas concerning human fulfillment during earthly life. To this end, they turned to creativity in work and art, to intimacy and love, and to a heightened sense of spiritual connection with nature. Such themes are especially evident in the works and lives of romantic poets, especially in England (e.g., Keats, Shelley, and Byron), Germany (Goethe and Schiller), and America (Emerson and Thoreau).

However, another feature of the romantic self was to have a powerful impact on the formal psychological theorizing of Freud, James, and other founding fathers of modern psychology, for it was during the romantic period that the realm of the hidden self expanded significantly. During this time, heightened interest in personal uniqueness and destiny led to a cult of personality, in which psychological lives of individual artists, writers, and other creators were as much of interest as were their works. Biographical writing began to emphasize personal material, and when caught up in the pervasiveness of Victorian repressiveness, scandal became

the order of the day. A consequence for everyday life was a general upswing in deceptiveness directed at both others and one's self. Indeed, it often is said of Freud that his great accomplishment was, as an exceptionally insightful individual, to be on stage at just such a time. As Baumeister (1997) points out, many Victorians worried that their inner selves would be involuntarily revealed and that others somehow would be able to fathom their innermost thoughts and secrets. Obsession with the involuntary disclosure of personality was reflected in much Victorian literature and lifestyle.

In many ways, the romantic conceptions of human fulfillment in a complex and deep inner life, enriched by creative work and passionate love, continue to animate our present self-concerns. However, the liberal and utilitarian concern for optimal balance between the search for personal happiness and contentment and the broader good of our communities and societies also lies at the heart of many contemporary self-struggles. Both the difficulty and desirability of self-knowledge were well established in the Victorian mind by the beginning of the twentieth century. The seemingly impossible task of reconciling self-fulfillment and self-responsibility, together with the angst of sorting through the pros and cons of self-understanding, both of which play such challenging roles in contemporary life, was firmly in place by the end of the 1800s. It was into this mix of liberalism and romanticism, repression and expression, augmented by scientifically enabled and socially transforming advances in industry, medicine, and governance, that disciplinary psychology emerged at the end of the nineteenth century.

Psychology's Hobbesian Legacy

Most historians of psychology (e.g., Danziger, 1997a; Harré, 1998; Toulmin, 1977) have associated the initiation of contemporary Western conceptions of the self with the rise of empiricism and its accompanying brand of mental philosophy during the Enlightenment. For the most part, John Locke's (1693/1995) *Essay concerning human understanding* is taken as the point of departure in this regard because it offers the first thorough examination of personal identity in entirely secular terms. Some historians (e.g., Danziger, 1997a) have even gone so far as to imply that until the publication of William James' (1890) "The Consciousness of the Self," Locke's essay determined the entire direction of English-language discussions of personhood. Overlooked in this standard history is the work of Locke's immediate predecessor, Hobbes. Like Locke, Hobbes emphasized what has come to be accepted as the ontological priority of personhood—the idea that human nature is essentially fixed prior to society in the history of humankind and, by implication, prior to socialization in the development of any individual human being.

We take Hobbes as the progenitor of many of the ideas that have influenced the contemporary psychological treatment of personhood. Not only did Hobbes (1962) promote the idea of an ontologically prior person, but he also married this idea

to doctrines of a physiologically reductive determinism and, as will be discussed further below, a dissolutionist approach to a fundamental issue concerning conceptions of personhood: the question of human agency. Hobbes' version of agency dissolved the debate between strict determinism and free will by reducing deliberative choice and action to the internal motions of the physiologically constituted person.

Hobbes' Compatibilist View of Human Agency

Traditionally, at least at the extremes, philosophical arguments concerning agency are predicated on a strict contradiction between free choice and complete causal determinism. For this reason, these extreme positions are often understood as being incompatible. *Hard determinists*, including eighteenth-century thinkers like d'Holbach, some twentieth-century behaviorists, and a few contemporary philosophers like Honderich, view free choice and action as illusory, submit that all behavior is fully determined by environmental and genetic factors, and consequently deny the existence of conventional moral responsibility. In direct opposition, *libertarians*, including eighteenth-century figures like Thomas Reid and twentieth-century philosophers like Chisholm (1982), proclaim humans as both free and responsible, assert that past events and factors do not determine a unique future, and claim that in human affairs such indeterminism reflects authentic agent choice, not merely random events. At the most basic level, libertarians argue from the premises (a) that free choice exists, and (b) that free choice and complete causal determinism are the direct opposites of each other, to the conclusion that (by the law of contradiction) complete causal determinism is false. Hard determinists argue from the premises (a) that complete causal determinism is true and (b) that free choice and complete causal determinism are the direct opposites of each other, to the conclusion that (again, by the law of contradiction) free choice does not exist. At least two things should be clear from these basic statements of extreme incompatibilist arguments. First, both arguments essentially "beg the question" in that their premises contain a large part of their conclusions. Second, the resultant impasse asks us either to give up a crucial aspect of our everyday conception of ourselves (of the kind that is necessary for therapeutic psychological practice) or to reject a scientific account of ourselves (of the kind that is necessary for an empirical science of psychology).

In contrast, the Hobbesian vision of agency is often referred to as a *dissolutionist approach*, in that it aims to dissolve the debate between strict determinism and free will by reducing deliberative choice and action to the internal motions of the physiologically constituted person. Like many ancient (e.g., the Stoics), enlightenment (e.g., Locke, Spinoza, and Hume), and modern (e.g., Schopenhauer, Mill, and Strawson) philosophers, Hobbes employed dissolutionist strategies that claim the freedoms we embrace in everyday life are really not ruled out by hard determinism and that complete freedom of the will is unintelligible. These *compatibilist* arguments typically proceed by denying the second premises in the basic libertarian and

deterministic arguments.[1] In the manner of Hobbes' (1962) famous seventeenth-century debate with Bishop Bramwell, traditional compatibilist arguments point out that our ordinary sense of freedom, as an absence of coercion or compulsion or constraint, is not at all incompatible with determinism. This is because we are free when we are self-determining and we are self-determining when nothing prevents us from doing what we will. Consequently, we can be free in the sense of intending and doing what we will even if our intentions and actions are necessitated by antecedent circumstances. Moreover, Hobbes declared that determinism actually is required to make sense of the idea of freedom as self-determination. The conditions of chaos that would result in the absence of determination, Hobbes argued, hardly could be viewed as an adequate context for purposeful self-determination. Therefore, to Hobbes, any kind of mysterious freedom that might be incompatible with determinism was simply unintelligible, a point of view reiterated ever since by various compatibilists in response to a succession of allegedly mysterious libertarian conceptions such as noumenal selves, nonoccurrent causes, and transempirical egos.

Problematic Aspects of Psychology's Hobbesian Legacy

In Thomas Hobbes, we find the essentialism, naturalism, reductive determinism, and certitude that form the classic portrait of ontologically prior personhood conceived in the interests of a Baconian science of the individual. For Hobbes, basic human needs, capabilities, desires, and motivations are formed within each individual independently of social interactions and historical traditions. He states,

> . . . [The] causes of the social compound reside in men as if but even now sprung out of the earth and suddenly, like mushrooms, come to full maturity without all kinds of engagement to each other. (Hobbes, 1962, Vol. 1, p. 109)

Anyone familiar with the reductive functionalism currently favored in contemporary cognitive science and neuroscience will recognize the persistence of the Hobbesian legacy in much contemporary, mainstream psychology.

At the same time, Hobbes provides psychology with a dissolutionist view of agency that ensures the freedom of choice required for therapeutic change is not

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[1] For example, Peter Strawson (1959) has argued that reactive attitudes, such as gratitude, that assume the possibility of morally praiseworthy freedom of action are so deeply embedded in our form of life that it would be impossible for us to abandon them even if determinism were true. Such dissolutionist stratagems certainly qualify as compatibilist (in opposition to the incompatibilist positions of libertarianism and hard determinism). However, some more contemporary compatibilists (e.g., the philosopher, Frankfurt, 1971, and the psychologist, Rychlak, 1988) have not so much treated incompatibilism as a pseudo-problem that should be dissolved, but have attempted to provide alternative conceptions of freedom that do not deny, although they do "soften," determinism. Thus, Frankfurt talks about the uniquely human capacity to form "higher-order desires," and Rychlak speaks about a kind of "transpredication" rooted in the use of language that allows humans to respond antithetically to their determination.

ruled out by virtue of a decision being causally determined. While the notion of a deterministic science of psychology seems decidedly at odds with the therapeutic conception of a human agent capable of choice and action that can make a difference in its life and the lives of others, the law of contradiction is not seen to apply. For Hobbes, and for many psychologists, freedom of choice is not negated by determinism, but rather it is itself a kind of causally determined sequence of events.

Nonetheless, neither Hobbes' conception of an ontologically prior person nor his compatibilist view of agency has gone unopposed. Beginning with the former, it is important to note that since neoliberals like Thomas Hill Green and Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse first renounced atomistic conceptions of the person during the latter part of the nineteenth century, a wide variety of scholars (including many Marxists, sociologists, cultural anthropologists, hermeneuts, feminists, narrativists, poststructuralists, and postmodernists) have eschewed the ontologically prior self. In its place, they have offered various versions of a socioculturally contingent self wherein both the conception and actuality of personhood are understood as being constituted by sociocultural (especially relational and linguistic) practices. A prototypical statement of socioculturally contingent personhood is Tiryakian's (1962) summary of Durkheim's view that

> . . . instead of collective life arising from the individual, the individual personality is a product of society. If there is nothing in social life which is not found in the minds of individuals, it is because almost everything found in the latter has its source in social life. Collective beliefs are manifestations of an underlying reality which transcends and yet is immanent in the individual. It transcends him because society does not depend on any particular individual for reality, and because its temporal span is greater than that of any individual. At the same time, society is immanent because it is the individual who is the ultimate vehicle of social life. (p. 22–23)

Many scholars who have forsaken the ontologically prior person have also jettisoned commitments to fixed, natural, and essential components of human nature. The socioculturally spawned person is held to be highly mutable, artifactual, and lacking a recognizable center that remains stable across societies and cultural traditions. Interestingly, while adamantly refusing reductions of socioculturally contingent personhood to biology, neurophysiology, or other natural kinds, several of these more recent perspectives (e.g., some versions of Marxism and postmodern social constructionism) have come surprisingly close to eliminating individual personhood entirely by reducing it to supposed societal and cultural determinants and constituents.

Within psychology, the still dominant ontologically prior conceptions of personhood are increasingly challenged by narrative (e.g., Polkinghorne, 1988), rigorous humanistic (e.g., Rychlak, 1988), cultural (e.g., Marsella, DeVos, & Hsu, 1985), feminist (e.g., Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990), critical (Tolman, 1994), pragmatic (e.g., Barone, Maddux, & Snyder, 1997), and discursive (e.g., Harré & Gillet, 1994) approaches that champion different versions of the socioculturally contingent person. Some of these psychological perspectives appear to have little room for psychological agency reflective of an individual's own authentic deliberations, choices, and intentional acts. For example, as Kenneth Gergen (1991)

says, "Under postmodernism, processes of individual reason, intention, moral decision making, and the like—all central to the ideology of individualism—lose their status as realities" (p. 241). The same point is echoed by Lovlie (1992): "[T]aken at face value, it [postmodernism] seems to eliminate a basic presupposition of psychology and education: the idea of an autonomous and intentional agent" (p. 120).

The Hobbesian account of agency also holds a contentious, yet central, place in current scholarship regarding the nature of human action and experience. Like Hobbes, many contemporary compatibilists claim that a decision or choice can be causally determined by oneself (i.e., *self-determination*). But, as previously hinted, for this sort of contemporary compatibilist, self-determination occurs when the factors that cause a choice are aspects (e.g., desires, beliefs, and reasons) of the person who makes it. For instance, Frankfurt (1971) asserts that for a choice to be self-determined, it must be in accord with, if not actually caused by, a person's higher-order desires (i.e., those uniquely human desires, born of our capacity for reflexivity, to mediate our more immediate, "lower-order" desires). Thus, one's first-order desire for a cigarette is governed by one's second-order desire not to give in to the first-order desire to smoke. For Frankfurt, a choice is free if the resulting action is in accord with the person's higher-order desires and the consequence of the person's own deliberations (with deliberation being necessary because in most situations more than a single higher-order desire is involved, and relevant higher-order desires may compete with each other).

While some compatibilists and most libertarians hold that freedom of choice requires alternative possibilities of action, such that were an agent's deliberations to differ, the resulting action would also differ, Frankfurt disagrees, or at least restricts the range of application of this kind of thinking. Through a series of so-called Frankfurt-style cases, he argues that even in situations where alternative courses of action are somehow blocked or otherwise made unavailable, a choice is agentive and responsible so long as the resulting action accords with the person's higher-order desires and context-specific deliberations. So long as we choose in relation to our higher-order desires, even if unbeknownst to us we could not have done otherwise, we are agents. Frankfurt wants to convince us that it is our happiness in such cases, not our total freedom, that is critical and makes us both agents and responsible. Frankfurt's account goes beyond the traditional Hobbesian strategy of dissolutionism, in that it attempts to make intelligible a limited kind of agency that seems compatible with determinism, but which is recognizable as a kind of capability that is uniquely human and worth having. However, it still leaves intact a view of agency as mere voluntarism, without any significant aspect of origination. (It should be noted that while Frankfurt himself avoids taking a position with respect to the compatibilist-incompatibilist debate, he most often has been interpreted as presenting a compatibilist argument and position.)

Rychlak's (1988, 1997) rigorous humanism offers a more psychological version of contemporary compatibilism. Rychlak's attempted compatibilism assumes a kind of self-determination that is not entirely determined by antecedent events, conditions, and factors. As such, it may be seen to probe the general kind of compatibilist

possibility that we seek and attempt to develop herein. For Rychlak, the agent is "an organism that behaves or believes in conformance with, in contradiction to, in addition to, or without regard for environmental or biological determinants" (1997, p. 7). In this construal, agency is the capacity to influence one's behavior intentionally, and such a capacity cannot be explained reductively in terms of material and efficient causation, but requires the admission of formal and telic causal processes appropriate to the study of human language, logic, and reason. The most important aspect of human language, reason, and logic is the process of predication that refers to the purposeful affirmation, denial, or qualification of patterns of meaning. To behave intentionally or agentively is to behave with the goal of affirming certain understandings rather than others. Free will is defined "as this capacity to frame the predication for the sake of which behavior will be intentionally carried out" (p. 61). "The very meaning of free will is to transpredicate, to reply to theses with antitheses, to negate and redirect the course of events according to purpose" (p. 279). An interesting and potentially important implication of Rychlak's construal of freedom as "transpredication" (which can be understood broadly as the framing of alternative possibilities) is that even if all of the contents of agentive deliberation are socioculturally and linguistically determined, the "attitude" taken to such contents (as a consequence of the ever-present possibility of transpredication) still may be self-determined. And, of course, this "taking of an attitude" (given that it might involve contradiction or negation, among other possibilities) can make a great deal of difference with respect to what is decided and done.

Despite an extremely lively period of recent debate in which compatibilists have demonstrated considerable ingenuity in attempting to fend off various criticisms (including claims that they have ignored freedom of choice or the need for truly open alternatives), compatibilism still appears to face at least three daunting difficulties (cf. Brook & Stainton, 2000; Kapitan, 1999). Indeed, it is for precisely these reasons that many prominent incompatibilists, including both Kant and James, have regarded compatibilism as a quagmire of evasion and subterfuge. First, despite various dissolutionist arguments, compatibilism still runs counter to our ordinary sense that we cannot be free if all of our choices and actions, including our self-determinations, are determined by conditions and factors outside of our authentic desires and purposes. It is for this reason that, even if the direct opposite of "being determined" is considered to be "being random" rather than "being free," random actions can in no way be held to be "free" in any genuine sense of being "self determined." Second, compatibilists have not provided nonquestion-begging arguments for agency as self-determination, or at least have not provided arguments of this kind that have been widely accepted as such. Finally, compatibilists have not provided an adequate theory of agency, especially in relation to its possible development, which fits their purposes.

Not surprisingly, the strong polarization between traditional atomistic individualism (which assumes ontologically prior personhood) and holistic socioculturalism (which assumes socioculturally contingent personhood) has encouraged a considerable amount of "middle-ground" theorizing. Some authors (e.g., Fairfield, 2000;

Martin & Sugarman, 1999a) have attempted to marry a sociocultural perspective of personhood with a kind of emergent agency that is constituted by sociocultural practices, conventions, and means, but not reducible to these constituents. It is our own version of such "middle-ground" theorizing that we elaborate in the next chapter.

Chapter 2
A Theory of Self and Personhood for Psychology

In the previous chapter, we argued that much contemporary psychology is grounded in tacit assumptions regarding the nature of the self and personhood rather than explicitly examined and articulated ontological conceptions. It was suggested that, for the most part, mainstream psychology retains implicitly commitments to a Hobbesian perspective. This particularly is the case in that it fails to recognize the sociocultural constituents of human action and experience and promotes a compatibilist version of agency that runs afoul of the law of contradiction.

In this chapter, we offer a theory of self and personhood for psychology that attempts to overcome these problems. Our perspective is heavily indebted to the hermeneutic ontologies of being and understanding furnished in the twentieth century by Heidegger (1962) and Gadamer (1995), as well as insights borrowed from Mead's (1934) symbolic interactionism and the sociocultural psychology of Vygotsky (1978, 1986). Yet, it is not our intention to offer an account that is entirely consistent with the work of any particular prior theorist. We hope that what we offer herein will constitute a sufficient basis for seriously and critically entertaining the possibility that persons are constituted by both biological, chemical, and neurophysiological substrates and sociocultural practices, conventions, and means, but irreducible to these constituents. We begin by sketching out a broad developmental theory of situated, agentive personhood. But first, so as to assist the reader, we offer a brief conceptualization of personhood and its various aspects connoted herein.

A Brief Conceptualization of Personhood

Our conception of a person (or psychological person) is an identifiable, embodied individual human with being, self-understanding (self), and agentive capability. The adjective identifiable references the physical characteristics and social identity of a person. Social identity refers to those socially constructed and socially meaningful categories that are appropriated and internalized by individuals as descriptive of themselves and/or various groups to which they belong (e.g., female, African-American, soccer player, attorney, mother, and community leader). The adjective embodied captures the sense of a physical, biological body in constant contact with

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the physical and sociocultural lifeworld. Being refers to the existence in such a lifeworld of a single human being (an individual). Importantly, the manner of such being is historically and socioculturally effected within traditions of living. Self, for us, is *not* a substantive entity, but a particular kind of understanding that discloses and extends a person's being and activity in the world. It is that compelling comprehension of one's unique existence that imbues individual experience and action in the world with significance and provides a phenomenal sense of being present.

Finally, agency, in our conception of personhood, has two aspects, the latter of which conforms to standard philosophical conceptions of the reflective, deliberative agent capable of intentional action in accordance with his/her own authentic desires and choices (e.g., Frankfurt, 1971). More generally, however, we consider agency to refer to the activity of a person in the world and claim that the philosopher's (and our own) reflective, deliberative agency emerges from prereflective activity as part of the developmental unfolding of an individual life within a collective lifeworld. It is to this developmental emergence of reflective, deliberative agency and self that we now turn.

A Developmental Theory of Situated, Agentive Personhood

Our developmental theory of situated, agentive personhood rests upon three neo-ontological perspectives. We use the term "neo-ontological" because none of these views assumes the kind of fixed, prior essences typical of traditional attempts to posit the existence of entities such as "reality" or "person." Thus, our theory is contingent, not prior. However, it does ascribe a real, irreducible agency to the psychological person who is not commonly found in other contemporary, contingent theories of personhood. The three neo-ontological perspectives in question concern (1) our assumptions concerning "levels of reality," (2) our "underdetermination" argument for agency, and (3) our construal of self as a particular kind of understanding that discloses and extends a person's being and activity in the world. In what follows, we discuss each of these perspectives, before turning to a brief sketch of our developmental theory of situated, agentive personhood.

1. *Levels of reality*
   A common philosophical understanding of reality is rendered in terms of existence independent of human perception and conception. In such terms, the physical and biological world may be taken as unquestionably real, the reality of psychological phenomena is highly debatable, and sociocultural practices fall somewhere in between. Another commonplace view in much scholarly work in the more empirical of the social sciences is that physical and psychological (mental) phenomena are arranged along a continuum of some sort that makes it possible to reduce mental phenomena back to the physical kinds from which they spring (phylogenetically and ontogenetically).

   In Martin and Sugarman (1999b), we offered an alternative conceptualization of relations between what we termed physical, biological, sociocultural, and

psychological levels of reality. In this alternative understanding, psychological phenomena such as reasons and intentions are held to be real, not by virtue of being mind-independent, but by virtue of the influence they exert on actions in the world that may affect self and others. Second, physical, biological, sociocultural, and psychological phenomena are not understood as arrayed along a single continuum privileged by the physical, but are assumed to be levels of reality that are nested within each other in accordance with a general historical unfolding. In particular, psychological phenomena are understood to be nested within sociocultural practices from which the former are constituted, while both psychological and sociocultural phenomena are nested within biological and physical levels of reality.

While biological and physical levels of reality, including human bodies, are necessary requirements for psychological phenomena and constrain what is psychologically possible, psychological phenomena cannot be reduced to these levels of reality. This is because psychological phenomena also require sociocultural practices for their more specific constitution within particular historical traditions and forms of life.

2. *The underdetermination of human agency*

The underdetermination of human agency is the first of our two defining aspects of personhood. In response to the three problems common to traditional compatibilist views detailed in the previous chapter (i.e., compatibilism generally contradicts common sense, results in question-begging arguments, and fails to provide an adequate theory of agency), we want to: (1) attempt a nonquestion-begging argument for agency as self-determination; (2) sketch a theory of agency that fits our kind of compatibilism; and (3) indicate on the basis of (1) and (2) how human agency can be both determined and free (in our compatibilist sense of self-determination). Our compatibilism, it will become clear, is not a compatibilism of dissolutionism and/or voluntariness alone. Moreover, it issues in a kind of soft determinism that is not entailed by either of these more traditional compatibilisms. First, we offer a more detailed definition of agency. For us, *human agency is the deliberative, reflective activity of a human being in framing, choosing, and executing his/her actions in a way that is not fully determined by factors and conditions other than his/her own understanding and reasoning*. (Such other factors and conditions include external constraints and coercions, as well as internal constraints over which the person has no conscious control.) As such, agency is a kind of self-determination.

Note several things about this definition of agency. First, agency need not be unaffected by factors and conditions other than an agent's own authentic, reflective understanding and reasoning. It only must not be determined fully by such other factors, a state of affairs we refer to as *underdetermination*. Second, even if a given motive or desire may initially have been established by factors such as social conditioning or genetics, the actor (following Frankfurt, 1971) remains an agent so long as he/she has assimilated such motives or desires so as to make them objects of his/her own deliberation. Third, in saying that agency is underdetermined by "other factors," we do not mean that agency is necessarily

undetermined, only that it must itself figure in its own determination. This is what we mean by self-determination.

We especially wish to emphasize the distinction we draw between *undetermined* and *underdetermined*, because in our view the traditional Hobbesian framing of compatibilism is inadequate precisely because it fails to make this distinction. In the absence of the possibility of underdetermination, only two choices present themselves, these being strict determinism or randomness, either of which may be argued effectively to rule out a coherent sense of self-determination. The problem we see with the traditional Hobbesian dissolutionist argument is that, as Bishop Bramwell and many others have sensed, it reduces self-determination too radically to nothing more than a link in a chain of antecedent events, factors, and conditions. It leaves no room for the deliberation (reflective understanding and reasoning) of an agent that is not entirely determined by other factors and conditions—in other words, it rules out even a limited origination. From this, it should be obvious that our position is not intended to be compatibilist in the traditional sense of dissolving agency to determinism. Rather, it is intended to be compatibilist in the more radical sense of demonstrating how an agentive capability in deliberation and action is compatible with a deterministic, nonmysterious, and nonreductive account of the development of human agency within biological/physical, historical, and sociocultural contexts.

Finally, by avoiding the word "cause," in our definition of agency, we do not restrict determination to efficient causation. Given well-known difficulties with the concept of cause (e.g., problems of infinite regress, the question of reasons as causes, the difficulty in selecting specific causes from other conditions and factors in open systems, and the satisfactory formulation of conditions of necessity and sufficiency), we feel justified in avoiding its use. Nonetheless, our conception of determinism is broadly consistent with the folk psychological idea of antecedent events, factors, and conditions influencing subsequent events with varying degrees of completeness, such that when such influence is complete, full determinism results.

The only factors or conditions, other than agency (understood as self-determination) that might determine human choice and action, aside from explicit coercion that does not always exist are: (a) physical/biological (e.g., neurophysiological) states and processes; (b) sociocultural rules and practices; (c) unconscious processes over which an agent has no control; or (d) random (chance) events. (We omit theological speculation because in our opinion invoking an omniscient being or beings removes any rationale for human argument with respect to agency.) Assuming that these options exhaust plausible possibilities for explaining human choice and action (other than the positing of human agency understood as self-determination in the manner we have specified in our definition of agency), elimination of each and all of these options as fully determinate of human choice and action will establish the underdetermination of human agency by factors and conditions other than agency (in our sense of self-determination) itself.

Our argument against full physical/biological determinism starts with the observation that human actions are meaningful and meaning requires a context. Meaning refers to the conventional, common, or standard sense of an expression, construction, or sentence in a given language, or of a nonlinguistic signal or symbol or practice in a particular sociocultural setting. Therefore, the meaningfulness of human actions requires sociocultural rules and practices, the most important of which are linguistic or language related. Consequently, the only way in which human choice and action could be determined entirely by biological/neurophysiological states and processes is if the sociocultural rules, practices, and conventions are determined by or reducible to such states and processes. Such a full reduction of society and cultures to physical biology seems highly implausible, given that we currently do not possess, nor we would argue, ever are likely to possess adequate physical descriptions of sociocultural, linguistic practices. Without such descriptions, attempting to explain agency in solely physical terms is rather like attempting to explain the activity of baseball players without reference to the rules and regulations of the game of baseball. Note that this argument against full biological/physical determinism does not rule out human biology and neurophysiology as requirements for human action. However, requirement alone is not determination.

To see why full sociocultural determinism of agency also fails, it is important to note that socioculturally governed meanings change over historical time. Such change could not occur if past sociocultural rules, conventions, and practices were fully determinate of meaning, and therefore of meaningful human action. Therefore, past sociocultural rules, conventions, and practices cannot be fully determinate of meaningful human action, but must be at least partially open-ended. Further, it seems highly likely that the partially open-ended nature of whatever conventional sociocultural meanings are operative at any given time allows for the development of personal understanding and possibilities for action that may contribute significantly to sociocultural change. However, allowance of this kind is not determination.

Moreover, despite ongoing sociocultural change, a good deal of order is discernible in sociocultural conventions, rules, and practices. Because randomness cannot account for order, the sociocultural meaning that is required for human action cannot be random. Finally, humans are at least partially aware of many of their choices and actions in ways that converge and coordinate with the observations, accounts, and activities of others. Unconscious processes alone cannot account for such awareness and coordination of human choice and action. We accept that change in sociocultural practices, conventions, and rules that guide human choice and action may, and probably often does, reflect human activity that is nondeliberative in the sense of being tacit or inarticulate. However, we submit that our phenomenal experience of ourselves as intentional agents, in combination with our ability to coordinate our actions with those of others to achieve commonly judged, orderly social ends, provides sufficient reason to forego a commitment to fully random or unconscious determination.

Having eliminated full biological and cultural determination of human action, and argued against random chance and unconscious processes alone, we are left with the possibility that human choice and action, at least in part and sometimes, result from the authentic (irreducible) understanding and reasoning of human agents. The underdetermination of human agency by these other conditions and factors does not mean that human agency is undetermined, only that it figures in its own determination. Such self-determination means that human agency is not reducible to physical, biological, sociocultural, and/or random/unconscious processes, even though all of these may be required for, and/or help to constitute it.

Of course, it might be argued that some combination of physical/biological, sociocultural, chance, and/or unconscious factors and conditions might provide a fully deterministic account that does not require self-determination. Indeed, this may be a logical possibility if one assumes some kind of generative (not strictly additive) interactivity among these various conditions and factors. However, without an exacting empirical demonstration of precisely such a generative effect (preferably one displayed at the level of everyday events, not one based speculatively on microparticulate chaos, as has been proposed by Kane, 1998), such possibilities amount to little more than gestures of faith that assume a determinism that is complete without self-determination. Consequently to us they seem only to beg the question.

Thus concludes our argument for the underdetermination of human agency. The reason that this argument by elimination is important for our current purposes is because we believe that any viable theory of psychological personhood must offer an explanation of human agency in nonreductive terms. This is, of course, precisely what our developmental theory of emergent, agentive personhood attempts to do. However, before turning directly to such theorizing, a few words will help to clarify further our conception of self as a kind of understanding.

3. *Self as understanding*

The second of our two defining aspects of personhood is self-understanding, or more specifically, our conception of self as the understanding of particular being. In our view, understanding is a process through which the physical, sociocultural, and eventually the psychological world is revealed, both tacitly and explicitly. That part of a person's understanding that uncovers aspects of her/his particular being in the world is self-understanding (self). Self is an ever changing, dynamic process of understanding particular being. This said, self, as a core, necessary aspect of personhood, is related to particular identity, embodied being, and deliberative, reflective agency in ways that give it an existential and experiential grounding. This grounding ensures some necessary degree of stability within an overall pattern of processural change. As related to these other aspects of personhood, self is recognizable to itself, even as it shifts and evolves. As such, self as an understanding of particular being is capable of taking aspects of itself (e.g., beliefs, desires, reasons, and values) as intentional objects. When such second-order, self-reflective capability

emerges within the contextualized, developmental trajectory of an individual life, full-fledged psychological personhood is attained (cf. both Merleau-Ponty, 1962 and Taylor, 1985a). Such persons are potentially capable of influencing, to some extent, those sociocultural contexts that are indispensable to their own development as persons.

We realize that the foregoing introductions to our conceptions of levels of reality, the underdetermination of agency, and self as understanding may be difficult to grasp on an initial reading. However, in the following brief description of our developmental theory of emergent personhood (Martin & Sugarman, 1999a), we believe that these three neo-ontological perspectives, and their interrelations, will be clarified.

Our Developmental Theory

At the beginning of individual human life, the infant is equipped with an evolved homo sapien sapien body and brain capable of supporting uniquely human forms of orienting to and learning from others, but with little in the way of developed capabilities other than basic, biologically given capabilities of limited motion and sensation (e.g., nonreflective movements and sensations associated with feeding and physical discomfort), orientation (especially to movement and others), and the prereflective ability to remember, in a very limited physical manner, something of what is encountered and sensed. However, the human biological infant both matures and develops within its inescapable historical and sociocultural contexts. This sociocultural world of linguistic and other relational practices comes increasingly to constitute the emergent understanding of the developing infant. Within this lifeworld, nested within the ever-present biological and physical world, caregivers and others interact with the infant in ways that furnish the developing infant with the various practices, forms, and means of personhood and identity extant within the particular society and culture within which the infant exists. Psychological development now proceeds as the internalization and appropriation of sociocultural practices as psychological tools—that is, vehicles for language and thought, much in the manner envisioned by Vygotsky (1978, 1986) (also see Harré's, 1984, neo-Vygotskian account). In this way, developing psychological persons come to talk and relate to themselves in much the same way as others have talked and related to them. In so doing, they become engaged in both the ongoing, always present sociocultural practices in which they are embedded, and those appropriated, internalized linguistic and relational practices they now employ as means for thinking and understanding.

With such appropriation and internalization, and the thinking and understanding thus enabled, the individual's mode of being is transformed from one of prereflective activity to one in which reflective, intentional agency is possible. The psychological person is a biological individual who becomes capable of understanding some of what the lifeworld (in its history, culture, and social relations and practices) and his/her being in it consists. Open to the lifeworld, the psychological person gradually becomes capable of increasingly sophisticated feats of recollection and imagination.

Concomitant with these capabilities of projecting backward and forward in time is the gradual understanding of one's embodied being in the world as a center of experiencing, understanding, intending, and acting. In this way, "self" understanding emerges, and continues to develop, within the historical, sociocultural contexts into which humans are born as biological individuals, but come to exist as psychological persons.

Such psychological persons are capable of reflective, intentional thought and action directed outward and inward. The self now has emerged as a particular kind of interpreted, reflexive understanding of an embodied, "in-the-world" human being—an understanding that discloses and extends particular, individual existence. When this occurs, thought and action are no longer entirely determined by the sociocultural practices from which they initially were constituted, and within which they continue to unfold. Given the inevitably unique history of individual experience within a lifeworld, and the capacity for self as reflexive, interpretive understanding of experience in that world, psychological persons are underdetermined by their constitutive, sociocultural, and biological origins. This does not mean that psychological persons are undetermined, only that together with biological, cultural, and situational determinants, the "self" understanding and deliberations of such persons may, and frequently do, enter into their determination. Even as psychological persons continue to be formed by the relational and discursive practices in which they are embedded, they also come to contribute to those practices in innovative ways that reflect a self-interpreting agency. As Rychlak (1988, 1997) might say, as agents, we are capable of framing "transpredications" (alternative possibilities) that draw upon but purposefully transform what we have experienced and learned as participants in sociocultural and linguistic practices and forms of understanding.

In a manner similar to that described by some symbolic interactionists (cf. Blumer, 1969), psychological persons are able to contribute to the very sociocultural contexts that shaped them. Once emergent as psychological persons with "self" understanding, human individuals no longer can be reduced to their sociocultural constituents and contexts, let alone to their physical and biological requirements. There is nothing mysterious about any of this. It just is the case that with the developmentally emergent capabilities of reflective thought and intentional action, human psychological persons can react to their sociocultural contexts and categories in ways that alter and change them. This is simply what is true of human beings, and is not true of inanimate objects, or of animals that are not self-interpreting, and therefore do not participate in the developmental trajectory just described.

For us, both understanding and agency have reflective, deliberative, and prereflective tacit forms and aspects. Prior to the developmental emergence of the reflective forms of understanding and agency that enable psychological personhood, humans are nonreflectively active and observant within their lifeworld. Such prereflective activity produces, and is in receipt of, various direct and vicarious consequences that gradually equip prereflective individuals with tacit understanding and basic psychological tools. Through the exercise of such primitive understanding and tools (cf. Vygotsky, 1978, 1986), more reflective forms of understanding and agency eventually emerge. Vehicles for such appropriation and transformation

probably include a wide variety of contingent processes that psychologists have labeled as reinforcement, observational learning, and so forth. (As Degrandpre (2000) recently has pointed out, these processes have been studied within both behavioral and cognitive psychology outside of a clear, coherent theory of human agency, and consequently their relevance to the kind of theorizing attempted herein has mostly gone unnoticed. It is thus important to emphasize that in mentioning them here, we nonetheless reject those mostly reductive frameworks within which they have been understood in mainstream psychology.) Through such processes, sociocultural meanings, rules and regulations, conventions, and practices gradually become understood by human individuals embedded and active within them, at first tacitly, but eventually, as individual human activity and its likely effects become more patterned, regularized, and predictable, with greater explicitness and intentional possibility. Of course, the transition from prereflective to reflective forms of understanding and agency is significantly advanced through the symbolic manipulations and transformations afforded by a society's linguistic and other relational practices, as these are taken up as psychological tools by developing persons.

Having made mention of the capability of human psychological agents to influence their historical, sociocultural contexts, even as they always are constrained and continually formed by them, it is important not to become overly enamored of human psychological possibility. For such possibility always is constrained by the limits of human reflective agency. The explicit understanding enabled by deliberative agency always is partial and incomplete when considered against the always-present background of historical, sociocultural practice from which it is constituted and within which it continues to unfold. Most of what we perceive, think, and do in everyday life escapes our conscious reflection. Our immersion in those linguistic, relational, and discursive practices of which we as psychological persons are part is so complete that we typically take for granted the assumptions and conceptions buried in this background to all of our explicit understanding. This may be especially true of that reflexive, interpretive understanding that discloses and constitutes us as selves. Most of what we understand is tacit and unexamined. As the old saying goes, if you want to know about water, don't ask a fish. It is only when our everyday routines are interrupted or disrupted in some way that requires our conscious attention that we may notice certain things about our taken-for-granted world of practices and means, things that previously escaped our reflective consciousness. When this occurs, an opening or possibility is created for extending our explicit, conscious understanding of things already present, but of which we are unaware. In this sense, much of our conscious understanding as psychological persons involves not only attempts to go beyond our sociocultural contexts, but also (even mostly) to penetrate the assumptions, conventions, and meanings implicit and hidden in those contexts and practices of which we are a part. (Note that we are not concerned here with what might be termed the problematics of socialization. We recognize that considerable variation in the assimilation of sociocultural practices and conventions exists across individuals and settings. Nonetheless, for our current purposes, what matters is that such practices and conventions are indispensable to the development of any kind of "self" understanding.)

Once emergent, within the developmental context, as psychological persons with "self" understanding, our further psychological development consists mostly of attempting to understand more and more of our context, even as this context itself shifts in interaction with our actions as psychological persons. In this way, the psychological and the sociocultural exist in a dynamic dance of mutually constitutive interaction. Of course, sociocultural evolution and change typically occur over somewhat longer periods of time, and reflect the historical and contemporary activity of many individuals and collectives, while psychological development and change are more time limited within an individual lifeline. Nonetheless, neither psychological agents nor societies could exist without the other, a consideration also emphasized by symbolic interactions like Blumer (1969). It is their dynamic interaction that constitutes the human world nested within the natural world of physical and biological reality.

Self as a Kind of Understanding that Discloses and Extends Particular Being Within Traditions of Living

Having briefly described the developmental context within which psychological agents emerge and exist (for a more extended discussion, see Martin & Sugarman, 1999a), it now is possible to clarify further our ontological claims concerning self as a particular kind of understanding. Of great importance in this regard is to note that human subjectivity, whatever its contingent historical, sociocultural character, exhibits care, in the sense of concern for itself. As revealed by Heidegger's (1962) phenomenological and ontological hermeneutics of being, psychological persons are ontologically unique in that they care about their own existence. They are self-aware and concerned.

The primary way in which the care of psychological persons manifests is in understanding. Understanding opens possibilities for psychological persons to develop and extend themselves. Because both being and understanding require a background of historical, sociocultural practices, care must be situated within both the individual and collective projects of humans within a tradition or way of life. For psychological persons, understanding always includes a kind of valuing—a finding of significance and personal meaning in the lifeworld. The interpretation of personal meaning and significance in lived experience is thus a necessary, ongoing aspect for the understanding and care of psychological persons. It is what takes human psychological development forward at both collective and individual levels. (Of course, personal meaning and significance would be impossible were it not for the existence of historical, sociocultural meaning as manifest in social, linguistic rules, regulations, conventions, and practices.)

To care for itself in a mostly physical and biological world, a nonhuman animal must get by as best it can with a nonreflective, relatively primitive consciousness and activity in the world. However, to care for itself within an historical, sociocultural lifeworld of discursive and relational practices, the human psychological

person must understand. As already hinted, human understanding is both tacit and explicit. Tacit understanding is the kind of "know how" that comes from acting with others in general accord with, but without explicit recognition and articulation of, the conventions, norms, and shared assumptions of the sociocultural context. Explicit understanding is achieved through a more purposefully engaged interpretation of the lifeworld in relation to particular concerns of a psychological person, concerns that reflect the care of such a person for his/her own being. Tacit understanding may become explicit, particularly when the concerns of a psychological person are thwarted in some way that requires the individual to penetrate the tacit, taken-for-granted background of historical, sociocultural practices that yields meaning and potential intelligibility. Such penetration requires interpretation, and not infrequently is assisted by consideration of the articulated, shared understandings of others within a particular tradition of living.

All understanding opens up possibilities for the extension of psychological being within a lifeworld. However, given that tacit understanding typically is sufficient for the execution of everyday routines, it is the opening of possibilities through reflexive agency and interpretive activity that enables a psychological person to develop beyond whatever set of tacit understandings currently constitutes that individual's way of being in the lifeworld. This is especially true of the self—that understanding that discloses and extends one's particular being in the world. Interpretive understanding begins with a concern related to a psychological person's care for his/her particular being and involves some kind of inquiry into the world of lived experience. The concern may be relatively minor (e.g., locating an alternative route to work during heavy traffic) or major (e.g., attempting to discover what has gone wrong in an intimate relationship). Concerns may lead to other and further inquiries and to possible reorganizations of relatively small or large areas of understanding, experience, and activity.

As the opening of possibilities for living and self, reflexive, interpretive understanding always is ongoing, mutable, and incomplete. It ebbs and flows, as concerns arise in the course of living and acting. Explicit, interpretive understanding is possible only because of the set of tacit and potential understandings available in the background of practices and assumptions that form a tradition of living. Interpretation involves an attempt at openness to one's own and others' understanding and the historical, sociocultural tradition or traditions within which any understanding takes place. It also involves attempts to apply what is understood within this necessarily dialogical activity to the concerns and questions that motivated the interpretive inquiry. All understanding has this general form, whether it relates to our everyday attempts to understand ourselves, others, and events, or whether it relates to more formalized, collective disciplinary practices such as psychology. It is the fact that any interpretation always is nested within traditions of living (which consist of shared and potentially sharable practices, conventions, meanings, and assumptions) that makes it possible for psychological persons to discern and judge the understanding it yields.

"Self" understanding thus does not discover facts about the properties of an inner substance or entity but expresses how psychological persons have dealt with and are

dealing with questions of their own existence or being. Such understanding is not only about relations among interpretations and ascriptions concerning any particular, embodied being, but also concerned with the background or lifeworld within which all particular being unfolds. "Self" understanding connects particular being to the lifeworld in ways that respond to the cares and concerns of embodied agents. Self emerges developmentally as an understanding capable of reflectively taking both sociocultural practices and meanings, and aspects of itself (desires, reasons, and deliberations extracted from immersion in requisite sociocultural practices and meanings) as intentional objects. As a consequence, possibilities resident in the lifeworld are made available to human agents in the world. It is in this sense that selves are understandings that disclose and extend particular being within traditions of living.

Possible Challenges to Conceptualizing the Self as an Understanding

We have presented a developmental context and conception of self as a developmentally emergent, embodied understanding of psychological persons that discloses and extends their particular being (and related activity) in the world. How viable, coherent, and potentially fruitful is this perspective on the self? While we are unable to predict all possible challenges to our position, three seem quite obvious. First, if the self is nothing more than a particular kind of understanding, what is it that understands? Second, what distinguishes our use of the terms person, being, agency, and self? And finally, what advantages does this perspective have over other contenders?

With respect to the first of these challenges, in our view it is a Cartesian fallacy to hold that thinking and understanding are so entirely and solely mental activities that their very perception demands a private self conceived as a homunculus within. From the perspective we have articulated, it is the embodied person, active within the lifeworld, who understands. There is no need to posit a solitary inner self as a separate, distinct component of such an irreducible entity.

This position leads directly to a response to the second challenge. The irreducible psychological unit in our view is the embodied person who comes to understand something of his/her particular being in the world. Being, for us, refers to the existence in the lifeworld of a human individual. Prior to the developmental emergence of "self" understanding, humans exist mostly as biological individuals. The emergence of understanding that discloses and extends forms of being and activity in the world is what we call self (or "self as understanding" or "self" understanding). Agency, in our account, refers to the activity of a person in the world and may be either prereflective (when such activity occurs in the absence of "self" understanding) or reflective (when the activity of a genuinely psychological person reflects that individual's "self" understanding). We use the verb "extends" to mean that with the emergence of "self" understanding, a human psychological person is able to engage in purposeful interpretation of his/her being, and is able reflexively to control and

intervene in the lifeworld, through the exercise of reason, choice, and action. Of course, it is precisely such reflexive agency that most analytic philosophers consider to be authentic agency.

We realize that neither our ideas about personhood and self nor our developmental theory of their emergence succeed entirely in resolving important, time-honored questions concerning the exact constitution of agency understood as intentional action that is at least partially self-determined, or the precise relationships that might exist among the various kinds of understanding with which we have been concerned. While falling short of such comprehensive, definitive results, we nonetheless believe that our approach to such matters contains particular advantages that we hope others might build upon.

In particular, we believe that our developmental, sociocultural perspective on self as understanding shares several advantages that we also perceive in certain social constructionist accounts (e.g., Harré, 1989). It does away with the Cartesian homunculur regress and with the troublesome dualisms that attend a radical separation of mind and body, and mind and world. It also appears to handle the possible contradiction of positing both a unitary and multiple selves, in that "self" understanding may contain certain core or central ideas and propositions, while displaying considerable temporal and contextual shifting in what might be considered to be its more peripheral components. Moreover, unlike much social constructionist theorizing, our approach manages these advantages while retaining the possibility of a socioculturally enabled and constrained agency. Such agency is nonetheless authentic in that it is not entirely determined by sociocultural and/or biological factors, but (once emergent) always is capable of free choice and action, to the extent that the lifeworld allows. Thus, the overall position we offer has all of the advantages of social constructionism, but also retains a viable conception of irreducible agency that many theorists require of theories of self (e.g., James, 1890), without dissolving into Romantic, humanistic fantasy. Finally, while our self as understanding is undeniably relational, it is not conceived as any sort of entity (either substantive or relational). Rather, as an understanding that discloses and extends particular being and enables related activity in the world, our "self" understanding is capable of coherently explaining those imaginative, projected possibilities for selfhood with which "entity" conceptions of self invariably struggle.

If self is construed as the kind of understanding we have attempted to describe herein, the age-old problem of knowing oneself is at least partially dissolved. "Self" understanding is not a matter of hurdling a Cartesian barrier to confront an unsituated subject standing apart from its own being. Rather, it is a matter of finding ways to articulate a disclosing and extending understanding that is always already present, at least potentially. The problem of knowing oneself is not one of objectivity, but concerns the limits of one's ability to penetrate the background of the lifeworld, and to be open to, and able to grasp and apply, possibilities for being.

Self and other psychological kinds cannot be conceived apart from interpretations and descriptions given to them within historical, sociocultural traditions of living. Only in the light of cultural history can psychologists' conceptions of psychological phenomena be seen as embedded in the larger ongoing project of humanity

attempting to understand itself. The discipline of psychology belongs to the history of ways human beings have developed for interpreting themselves psychologically. It is precisely this history that has constituted self and other psychological kinds. As Danziger (1997b) argues,

> Before there could be anything for the discipline of psychology to study, people had to develop a psychological way of understanding themselves, their conduct, and their experiences. They had to develop specific psychological concepts and categories for making themselves intelligible to themselves. (p. 139)

The idea of self as a kind of understanding, while perhaps somewhat radical, really is quite consistent with much twentieth-century theorizing about the self from pragmatic, hermeneutic, social constructionist, and postmodern perspectives. All of these perspectives have succeeded in challenging the Cartesian and Romantic views of the self as a substantive, privileged epistemic entity and have insisted on its situated, relational, and embodied character. It really is not going much further to suggest that self is nothing more than understanding that both discloses and extends the being and activity of a particular embodied agent in the lifeworld. We are in the world and only in the world do we know ourselves (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

Implications for Understanding Human Agency

One way to understand the implications of our approach to agency as self-determination is to contrast it with an influential conceptualization of self-determination that has been advanced by the libertarian Robert Kane (1998).

> To say that persons self determine. . . is to say that they perform. . . acts and that they have plural voluntary control over their doing so and doing otherwise [right up to the very point of acting]. Agents have plural voluntary control when they are able to do what they will to do, when they will to do it, on purpose rather than by accident or mistake, without being coerced or compelled in doing, or willing to do, it, or otherwise controlled by other agents or mechanisms. (p. 191)

Kane, unlike many other contemporary libertarians, insists that such self-determination need not invoke a mysteriously unique kind of nonoccurrent agent causation. (Nonoccurrent causation is the causation of an action or other occurrence by something other than other occurrences.) His tactic here is to take seriously the possibility that a kind of self-network exists that somehow can be mapped onto neural occurrences and that all of this (both the conscious experience of agency and the intervening self-network) is somehow related to the quantum character of reality. Here, it is interesting to note just how closely Kane seems to come to the kind of functionalism currently favored by many hard determinists who employ computational, supervenient models in an attempt indirectly to link agentive kinds to an underlying physical level of strict causation (e.g., Kim, 1996).

While sometimes seen as alternatives to contemporary hard determinist, materialist accounts of agency, functionalist accounts that employ supervenience seem to us mostly to beg the reductive question by purposing an intermediate level of

rather mysterious "computational," "connectionist," or "schematic network" kinds that somehow are supposed to mediate between psychological, agentive, and physical kinds. In our view, such efforts experience the same kinds of difficulty as earlier, more directly and obviously reductive, central state materialist and computational models in accounting for important features of our psychological states such as intentionality, rationality, normativity, and first-person perspective (cf. McDowell, 1994; Searle, 1992). Moreover, they frequently seem to conflate requirement with identity relations in apparently assuming that because human agents require biological bodies, they are nothing more than biological bodies, albeit "computerized" and/or "schematized" ones. In all such approaches, sociocultural meanings, rules, conventions, and practices, which for us play critically important background, contextual, and constitutive roles in the development of human self-understanding and agency receive extremely short shrift.

In contrast to Kane's version of contemporary libertarianism, our own treatment of agentive self-determination is more modest in requiring only that self-determination be an irreducible part of the determination of at least some of the actions and experiences of psychological persons. For us, all self-determination emerges developmentally, as a kind of reflective self-understanding linked to deliberate action, within the constraints and influences of both biology and culture, but not reducible to either. We thus attempt to avoid both a reduction of agency to neurophysiology and a speculative appeal to microparticulate theorizing that seems ultimately to substitute quantum uncertainty and "indeterminacy" for agentive reason, intention, and perspective. To us, such moves seem to sacrifice precisely what we hope to maintain and try to explain. Interestingly, more recently Kane (2002) also seems to recognize a need to balance the neurophysiological aspect of his theorizing with a kind of emergence, perhaps not totally dissimilar to that discussed herein.

Traditional libertarian and hard determinist approaches to agency tend to ignore the historical, sociocultural constitution of agency. In the case of libertarianism, this tendency manifests in question-begging assertions of radical freedom emanating from a metaphysically isolated agent somehow disconnected to the physical, biological, and sociocultural world. In the case of hard determinism, this tendency often manifests in implausible attempts to reduce agency to nothing more than physical kinds and causes. By bringing agency "into the world," we hope to have moved some small way toward addressing the three problems associated with compatibilist theories that we posed earlier. In particular, we have attempted a nonquestion-begging argument for agency as self-determination and indicated, through a brief elaboration of our theory of agentive development, how this conception of agency may be held coherently as being both determined and determining.

What we claim is that agency arises from the prereflective activity of biological humans embedded inextricably within a real physical and sociocultural world. It is this activity and its consequences that make available sociocultural practices, conventions, and meanings to the increasingly reflective understanding of human persons. That part of such understanding that reveals aspects of the particular being of a human individual is constitutive of the self of that person. With the onset

of reflective, "self" understanding capable of memorial recollection, imaginative projection, and reason, a kind of situated, deliberative agency becomes possible. This is an agency that is of nonmysterious origin, being constituted and determined by relevant physical, biological conditions and requirements, and sociocultural practices and meanings. Yet because of the reflective self-understanding and reason upon which it rests, such an agency also consists in a kind of self-determination that never acts outside of historical and sociocultural situatedness, but which can aspire beyond, and cannot be reduced to such situatedness alone, nor to its other biological and physical requirements. Moreover, the resultant agency is not only voluntary, but has an aspect of origination, not in any radically free sense, but in the capability of self-interpreting, self-determining agents to selectively take up, modify, and employ available sociocultural practices and conventions as bases for psychologically significant activity. *It is in this sense that the situated, deliberative agency we argue for, and theorize about, is both determined and determining*.

Our approach is compatibilist in the sense that it relies centrally on an idea of self-determination, but it is not dissolutionist, nor restricted to voluntariness alone. With respect to psychology, we are of the opinion that the kind of compatibilist theorizing we have attempted herein eventually may contribute to an understanding of psychology as a rigorous, but nonreductive study of the experiences and actions of human agents in historical, sociocultural, and developmental contexts. Such a psychology would carry implications for a form of psychological practice that approaches concerns of living within relevant traditions and practices, without forgetting, but also without elevating inappropriately, necessary physical and biological factors and considerations. It is this nesting of the psychological within the historical and sociocultural, which in turn are nested within biological and physical reality, that we regard as a proper "metaphysics" of the human condition. This is not a traditional metaphysics of transcendental or first principles, certainty, and essentials, but a "neo-metaphysics" consisting in historical, situational, and developmental contingencies that are inseparable from, the "acting-in-the-world" of embodied, biologically evolved human beings who seem uniquely "culture-capable."

Concluding Remarks

For us, self as understanding and agency as self-determination are the hallmarks of psychological personhood. Together, they give rise to what we regard as a uniquely human capability—deliberative, reflective activity in framing, choosing, and executing actions. While there is some limited origination in this, it is important not to overstate it. Psychological persons never can stand outside of the determining influence of relevant physical, biological, and sociocultural (especially relational and linguistic) factors and conditions. Nonetheless, their self-understanding is underdetermined by such other factors and conditions, and capable of entering into the framing, choosing, and execution of actions, both routine and mildly innovative.

The approach to personhood that we have described in this chapter is sociocul-turally contingent, yet claims genuine agency and self-understanding that cannot be reduced to their sociocultural origins or to any pregiven physical/biological properties, processes, or structures of the human body or brain. It is a personhood nested within physical, biological, and sociocultural reality, both historically and ontogenetically. As such, it refuses extreme forms of both atomism and holism, and charts a middle course between physical/biological reductionism and sociocultural determinism. In this sense, it fits within a view of psychological phenomena as irreducibly situated within traditions of living that have unfolded socially and culturally within the physical and biological world. It thus preserves a unique disciplinary ground for psychological studies, assuming the kind of reconfiguration of such studies envisioned by theoretical psychologists such as Richardson et al. (1999) (also see Martin, Sugarman, & Thompson, 2003b).

Our account of personhood, with its closely related conceptions of agency and self-understanding, does not view human action as purely procedural and rule-governed instrumental activity that somehow is given antecedently to sociocultural and historical contexts. In light of the developmental framework we have described, our reasons for judging and acting come largely from our having been initiated into a lifeworld comprised not only of means and practices for reflection, but also of goods and ends that contribute substance and direction to our deliberations. This sociocultural and historical lifeworld, replete with meanings, identifications, and significances, is an ever-present tacit background to all our attempts to deliberate and understand.

In contrast to a view of deliberation that hinges on instrumental rationality, we pose our conceptions of understanding and self-understanding. Individuals deliberate and exercise choice not simply for the instrumental gratification of desires, but to create possibilities for an existence that is both meaningfully connected to the lifeworld and something of their own agentive making. The development of a capacity for reflective, explicit understanding makes it possible for us to achieve some measure of critical distance from tradition and from our own niches and ascribed identifications, and, in so doing, critique and revise our practices, ends, and, inevitably, ourselves. From this perspective, the political individual is not a transcendent, rational chooser, but rather an enculturated, yet emergent agent capable of individually and collectively pursuing possibilities that might go somewhat beyond those already enacted in public and civic life. To demonstrate, in the next chapter we explore the ways in which our conceptualization of the self as a kind of understanding along with our thesis of underdetermination bear important implications that might inform political thought with respect to understanding historical and contemporary debates between liberals and communitarians.

Chapter 3
The Political Disposition of Self as a Kind of Understanding

Since the seventeenth century, political theorists have been divided by two competing ontological commitments. On one side, political legitimacy is understood to issue from the separateness and independent agency of individuals. Under this construal, individuals constitute the most fundamental level of social and political analysis. The self is conceived as a rational being capable of fashioning itself and shaping its existence through autonomous acts of reflection. Societies and cultures are aggregates of individuals competitively or cooperatively pursuing their self-determined ends. The politics of individuality, as it has found expression in varieties of liberalism and libertarianism, is concerned largely with assuring the freedom in which individuals can exercise choice over their beliefs, values, and actions, and do so unencumbered by obligations not of their own choosing. To this end, adherents typically advocate for individual rights, limits on the authority of government, and the equality of all persons before the law.

On the other side of the political divide, the social and cultural is regarded as ontologically prior to the individual. The self is conceived fundamentally as a social and historical inheritance rather than as an object of autonomous self-determination. Societies and cultures are not simply the contingent arrangements of independent presocial atoms, but rather are the enactment of relational practices that exert a constitutive force in the formation of selves. In turn, the kinds of persons and selves that societies and cultures create act in ways that sustain the particular sociocultural practices and institutions by which they are created. In political philosophies such as communitarianism, socialism, Marxism, nationalism, and feminism, individuals are understood to be bound ineluctably to one another by language, belief, values, and obligations inherited from sociocultural traditions. Individuals are conceived as expressions of collective identity, shared moral goods, and public practices. In the politics of collectivity, bonds of association and responsibility take precedence over individual pursuits.

As the history of ideas attests, from the self-certain ratiocinator of Descartes to the fragmented, nonessentialized postmodern self, ontological presuppositions concerning the constitution of selfhood undergird the sociopolitical conditions advocated by different political philosophies. While there is an important distinction to be made between ontology and advocacy, there appears to be no way of remaining

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ontologically agnostic about the self or its disposition in the realm of political theory. The way in which the self is construed licenses certain sociopolitical possibilities over others. As Taylor (1995) explains, "(t)aking an ontological position does not amount to advocating something, but at the same time the ontological does help to define the options which it is meaningful to support by advocacy" (p. 183).

In weighing the merits of ontological perspectives, it is difficult to dismiss as epiphenomenal the experiential reality in which we understand ourselves as individual agents. Clearly there is little to deny the separateness that is an ostensive condition of human embodiment and the phenomenology of individual subjective experience. However, it equally is difficult not to be persuaded by hermeneutic and social constructionist accounts of the last several decades arguing that the self has no pregiven, fixed essence, that it is not constituted naturally, but historically and socioculturally, and, thus, that it cannot be understood apart from the interpretations and descriptions given it.

Thus far, we have presented an ontology of selfhood that acknowledges the role of sociocultural practices and institutions in shaping human actions and experience, while retaining our sense of human agency. Below, we examine the specific implications our conception of the self has for political thought. But first, so as to assist the reader, we provide a brief examination of contemporary dispositions of self as contained in liberal and communitarian political theories.

Liberal and Communitarian Dispositions of Self

From its inception, liberal thought has been directed at two fundamental problems. One concerns abuses of state power and encroachment of the state on individual liberty and self-determination. In ancient and medieval doctrines, persons were conceived as essentially social beings who inherited obligations and roles from tradition, frequently including a duty of strict obedience to the authority of an absolute monarch and the church. Individuals' rights and obligations were enjoined by their particular position in a social hierarchy in relation to powers deemed absolute in authority. Early liberal thinkers disdained the servility, intolerance, civil and religious strife, corruption, and oppression that appeared to follow from the wide discretionary powers assumed and all too readily exercised by church and state. Contemporary liberals retain concerns about the reach of political power in individual life.

The second problem with which liberals are occupied stems from increasing recognition, developed over at least the last four centuries, of differences among persons with respect to their conceptions of the good life. It now is acknowledged that there exists a plurality of goods and ways of life that individuals may esteem and pursue and that they reasonably may disagree over the relative merits of such goods and lifestyles. In this context, the problem becomes how to specify the terms and conditions of political association that permit peaceful coexistence.

The remedy liberals prescribe for the first problem is to wrest authority for individual self-determination from the state and delegate it to individuals themselves. In order to limit potential for political coercion, liberals argue that the state must remain neutral with respect to notions of the good life. A liberal polity does not presuppose or promote any particular ends or goods, but rather grants as much latitude as possible to individuals to formulate and pursue their own conceptions. Connectedly, the remedy to the second problem is to provide terms of association that as many people as possible can abide, despite inevitable differences concerning the worth of goods and ways of life. To this end, liberals have attempted to articulate neutral, impersonal principles that are intended to avoid countenancing any particular goods or ways of life over others. Tolerance, fairness, and pluralism are advanced as neutral principles from which procedures can be derived for minimizing conflict and maximizing individual freedom.

The framework of justice advanced by contemporary liberals asserts priority of the right over the good. In principle, no one individual's rights may be subordinated to a state-imposed common good. Although there are notable and nuanced contrasts among contemporary liberal theorists, especially in the emphasis accorded particular principles,[1] they are united in championing state neutrality and a procedural republic committed to rights while, at the same time, remaining purposefully uncommitted to any specific goods. However, liberals also are joined by another common thread, namely, their convictions about the constitution of selves.

Liberal politics seem to follow from an ontological view of humans as radically autonomous individual selves. Behind a liberal polity is a being that can take charge of its own life by virtue of its abilities to deliberate, make choices, and execute actions according to its own self-chosen reasons and values. The liberal self is an independent agent capable of self-legislation. State neutrality and a procedural republic seem to accommodate such selves. These kinds of conditions correspond with a conception of selves as essentially autonomous, unencumbered by traditions, and capable of independently seeking their own goods and authoring their lives as they see fit.

Central to liberal doctrine is the ontological claim that the self is not constituted by any of the particular identifications, ends, or attachments it chooses, but rather by its fundamental capacity to make choices. This is the import of Rawls' (1971) oft-cited formulation that "the self is prior to the ends which are affirmed by it" (p. 560). Our various identifications, ends, values, and attachments issue from a self that comes already equipped to choose. For liberals, the just political order is one that secures conditions for the possibility of individuality in a manner that accords with this ontology of individual being. The liberal political order supports the notion of a self that manifests its essential nature through choice. But there is something

[1] For example, some theorists, such as Dworkin (1977), emphasize rights as "trumps" that individuals hold against state power, while others, such as Nozick (1974), assert that market mechanisms and property rights can be used to prevent intrusion by the state.

else at stake here. Liberalism presents a possibility for being—a certain conception of ourselves as human agents—such that we endorse liberal political arrangements and voluntary associations as consistent with a liberal "self" understanding. This is why one of the foremost communitarian critics of liberalism, Michael Sandel (1984) states that liberalism "has a deep and powerful appeal" in contemporary society and that "it is our vision, the theory most thoroughly embodied in the practices and institutions most central to our public life" (p. 82).

The communitarian movement in political theory has arisen as an effort to redress what many regard as deficiencies of modern liberalism.[2] The main thrust of the communitarian critique is that the individualism on which liberal theory is founded provides an illusory and untenable conception of the self. Liberal preoccupation with exalting individual liberty comes at the sacrifice of values and bonds that are intrinsic to, and constitutive of, both individual and collective life. Communitarians object to the liberal notion of selves as socially independent atoms who enter into relationships and entertain obligations only if and when it suits them.

According to communitarians, the liberal interpretation of selves not only obfuscates deep and important communal ties and relations, but also works invidiously to undermine and dissolve them. The ideal liberal self is completely unencumbered by any reliance on, or attachment to, others. It is a radically autonomous, rational chooser. Such a vision demands an idea of self that is abstracted from the vicissitudes of history, culture, language, and experience. It is to suggest that human beings can be understood without knowing anything whatsoever about their goods, aims, values, terms of expression, and those of their forebears. Communitarians ask, in the absence of these features, what is left to understand? They charge that it is fantasy to suggest that the multifarious values, ends, goods, and attachments with which selves identify, and which can be attributed to the character of their sociocultural and communal involvements, are entirely contingent and can be shed through rational reflection. Consequently, Sandel (1982) characterizes the liberal attempt to bracket substantive moral concerns and sociocultural commitments and involvements as a "thin" rendering of selfhood.

In the communitarian view, individual selfhood cannot be understood as prior to, or apart from, the social, cultural, historical, and communal bonds that preexist us and into which we are born. Communitarians argue that the values, ends, and goods sustained by communal practices and adopted by individuals are constitutive. They constitute the individual's understanding of him- or herself. The moral goods and ends by which we live define us as the persons and selves we are. We depend on our communal attachments for the very ways in which we think, including the ways in which we think of ourselves as individuals. In contrast to the liberal self, the communitarian self is thickly constituted and considers not only what it wants, but also who it is. Communitarians claim that our choices always are

[2] See Mulhall and Swift (1996) and Avineri and De-Shalit (1992) for overviews of the debates between communitarians and liberals and works of the major contributors.

contextualized by a sense of identity, and our identities, in turn, are interwoven with obligations and allegiances that are part of a sociocultural inheritance. In this light, an understanding of oneself only can be achieved by reference to a community of others.

Communitarians, of course, do more than subscribe to an account of the self that stands in contradistinction to liberal individualism. Their idea of community also departs from the liberal view. From the communitarian perspective, community is not an aggregate of instrumental associations among autonomous individuals. Rather, it is a unity to which individuals belong. Drawing on Rousseau and Hegel, communitarians frequently make use of the organic metaphor in understanding community. For many communitarians, community is a collective body that manifests a unified will and coheres in a shared moral orientation and set of intrinsic values. Communitarians grant that individuals are likely to differ with respect to particular judgments. Nonetheless, even in disagreement, members of a community retain a basic commitment to terms of reference, norms, values, and the moral framework that undergirds and organizes communal life. The fact that disagreements can be articulated, understood, and occasionally resolved by disputing parties depends on shared traditions of language and argumentation.

Some communitarians, notably Walzer (1983), contend that the specific features of cultural traditions are vital to any claims concerning the way in which a community should order itself. Communitarians insist that because selves are constituted by their sociality and facticity, any proposals about justice or political right can make sense only in the context of shared understandings and practices that comprise a particular way of life. Communitarians assert that the major implication of a socioculturally and historically informed ontology of self is a politics that affirms the values of community over the values of individuality. They argue that if community has ontological priority, then it also must have moral priority. While communitarianism comprises a broad spectrum of thought, communitarians tend to advocate a politics in which the common good supercedes individual rights—a politics that advocates commitment to, and participation in, community life.

Liberals respond to communitarian critics on a number of fronts (Etzioni, 1996a). They allege that communitarianism opens the door to a majoritarian politics and that majoritarianism is simply an expression of mass opinion concerning values. Liberals admonish communitarians for underestimating the extent of disagreements and conflicts of interest and belief and warn that communitarian appeals to consensus and tradition could be used for purposes of coercion and the subjugation of individuals to state interests (Fairfield, 2000). Further, while communitarians have provided much criticism regarding liberals' adherence to ontological individualism, they have not been forthcoming with a clear account of what is meant by "community," nor have they articulated specifically what the common good or goods of the contemporary sociopolitical context ought to be. For instance, Sandel (1982) concludes *Liberalism and the limits of justice* with the cryptic remark: "When politics goes well, we can know a good in common that we cannot know alone" (p. 183).

The Political Disposition of Self as a Kind of Understanding

In what remains, we wish to highlight some features of our account of self as a kind of understanding that might be used to cast light on the disposition of such a self with respect to a collective politics. It is not our intention to venture deeply into the domain of political advocacy, but rather to mention some potential contributions our conception of a situated, developmentally emergent, and underdetermined "self" understanding might make to liberal and communitarian conversations.

To begin, the notion of self as a kind of understanding can be used as a corrective to the abstracted, unencumbered, radically independent self on which liberalism has been fashioned. The interests of individuals never are simply individual interests. They always are embedded and emerge from within an inescapable background of normative, sociocultural, and historical perspectives. Nor are our interests, and ability to choose from among them, simply given. They develop and change as our capacity to reflect and understand develops and changes. So long as the developmental context is ignored, and the self is conceived as an ontologically prior, rational chooser with fixed boundaries and an autonomous essence, liberalism will be susceptible to communitarian challenges that it falters on ontological grounds.

We believe our account of self as a kind of developmentally emergent understanding that discloses and extends particular being provides a plausible alternative to the ahistorical, asocial, essentialist, and individualist ontological interpretation of the self. Our notion of self as a kind of understanding is predicated on assumptions that are existential, not essential. The actual forms and content of the self are historically contingent and socioculturally constituted. As a result, selves are not pregiven and static, but emergent and continuously dynamic in their realization within communal traditions of living.

At the same time, assuming that humans only acquire their goods, ends, and identities from appropriating traditions can entail a kind of sociocultural reductionism that narrows the self and human agency in ways that also are mistaken. As a corrective, our account of selfhood achieves a viable conception of an irreducible human agency. As we have elaborated, with the development of reflexivity, the nature of human experience and activity shifts from unmediated and prereflective to mediated and reflective. Human agents are underdetermined in that they can reflect on their lives and circumstances in ways that enable them, at least potentially and partially, to transcend extant traditions. Our thesis of underdetermination holds that while selves have their origins in their sociocultural embeddedness, once emergent in the manner we have described, they no longer can be reduced to their biological and sociocultural origins, even though they continue to be affected by their biological bodies and the sociocultural contexts in which they live and act.

Claims similar to our thesis of underdetermination recently have been made by Fairfield (2000) in his attempt to resuscitate liberal theory. According to Fairfield, the task facing contemporary liberals is to recognize the historical and sociocultural constitution of selfhood while preserving the liberal tradition's commitment to instituting conditions that facilitate and protect individual liberty and self-determination. Fairfield accepts much of the communitarian critique but argues that liberals can

shed the "metaphysical embarrassment" of ontological individualism without jettisoning the principles of liberal politics. Crucial to Fairfield's argument is his "revisability thesis," which also underscores the underdetermination of the self:

> . . . moral agents, while situated beings with situated capacities, are nonetheless capable of revising their moral ends, questioning convention, reasoning about norms, reflecting on practices, refashioning their identity, reconstituting traditions, and unseating consensus. It supposes that each of these capacities, like all human capacities, is finite yet sufficiently robust as to make it possible for individuals to revise the ends that they inherit from tradition. . . . Persons are social yet separate beings. They are factitical selves, yet their facticity underdetermines their being. (p. 129)

Fairfield argues that what is needed to rehabilitate liberalism is a conception of rational deliberation that situates the human ability for critical reflection within both an underdetermined agency and the modes and traditions of understanding with which critical reflection is accomplished. Our account of self as a kind of understanding asserts that the sort of reasoning of which humans are capable is not a purely procedural and rule-governed instrumental activity that somehow is given antecedently to sociocultural and historical contexts. In light of the developmental framework we have described, our reasons for judging and acting come largely from our having been initiated into a lifeworld comprised not only of means and practices for reflection, but also of goods and ends that contribute substance and direction to our deliberations. This sociocultural and historical lifeworld, replete with meanings and significances, is an ever-present tacit background to all our attempts to deliberate and understand.

At the center of human deliberations is care, or concern for self. Without constitutive concerns, it is difficult to comprehend the position from which any deliberation could take place, let alone any purpose for the developmental emergence of human capacities for mediated, reflective deliberation. In contrast to a view of deliberation that hinges on instrumental rationality, we pose our conception of understanding. Individuals deliberate and exercise choice not simply for the instrumental gratification of desires, but to create possibilities for an existence that is both meaningfully connected to the lifeworld and something of their own agentive making. The development of a capacity for reflective, explicit understanding makes it possible for us to achieve some measure of critical distance from tradition and, in so doing, critique and revise our practices, ends, and, inevitably, ourselves. From this perspective, it indeed may not be necessary for liberals to abandon completely their political agenda if at the root of liberal politics is not the ideal of a transcendent, rational chooser, but rather self as a possibility rendered by the developmental emergence of a psychologically capable human agency. While such a detailed critical re-examination of liberal doctrine seems merited, it is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Communitarians rightly criticize liberals for an account of deliberation that, ideally conceived, is sanitized of all personal and collective goods. However, this criticism rebounds as a problem for communitarians in the absence of explicit formulations of common goods for contemporary sociopolitical arrangements that could supplant those based on individualism. Our conception of self as a kind of

developmentally emergent understanding may help to illuminate the kinds of goods that meaningfully connect individuals to their communities and provide impetus for the sorts of communal involvements and commitments to social and cultural institutions that communitarians seek to encourage. Perhaps understanding, conceived as an opening of possibilities, not only constitutes the disposition of self, but functions as a constitutive common good that implicitly binds individuals to their communities.

As an example, nowhere may this way of thinking have more applicability than with respect to education. If it is to operate optimally as a situated, agentive understanding that opens possibilities for particular being, self (as formulated herein) must not be unduly restricted by cultural narrowness or enforced ignorance that may stem from highly dysfunctional or impoverished interpersonal and/or economic niches within a given society. If unduly shackled in such ways, "self" understanding cannot achieve those feats of socially spawned, yet potentially transforming, imagination and projection so essential for a satisfying personal life and a progressive, collective polity. Given the central importance of relational practices, especially dialog, to such a self, conversational virtues and principles such as freedom of expression, tolerance, civility, open-minded critique, and plurality must be allowed purchase as political, educational conditions for peaceful communal accommodation and personal agency. Only in this way can a desired balance be achieved between self-development and self-restraint in relation to a common welfare.

Clearly, the sort of communal participation and commitment that communitarians have in mind is not undertaken purely in the interests of private gain. Placing the good of the community before that of the individual entails a certain measure of good will in decisions and actions that affect not only one's own life, but also the lives and futures of others, as well as that of the community as a whole. This particularly is the case if one is concerned with creating conditions directed at enhancing developmental and educational opportunities for increasingly sophisticated capacities for language and thought and expanding possibilities for understanding.

In such a context, deliberation takes place not instrumentally from static principles and procedures, but within a mutable, dynamic sphere of perspectives that encompasses each issue, within which participants, through dialog, may genuinely attempt to understand each other's perspectives. This kind of communal participation and commitment provides possibilities for interpreting and considering other perspectives and ways of life that may be unfamiliar and for incorporating them into one's own worldview and self-understanding. The good becomes the engagement of others as a way of opening and expanding one's own understanding, thereby transforming oneself and potentially transforming the community. In turn, the development of a more differentiated and sophisticated outlook joined with the broader concerns not only of one's own community, but of other cultures and the past, engenders more and varied opportunities for continued and sustained development. We are convinced that the disposition and goods to which we are alluding are matters for ongoing interpretation and negotiation as described in the work of some

contemporary hermeneuts (Cushman, 1995; Kögler, 1996; Martin & Sugarman, 2001; Richardson et al., 1999; Sugarman & Martin, 2005; Woolfolk, 1998).

Any notion of political order inevitably embodies certain ontological assumptions about human possibility. We submit that possibilities for individual and collective being are rooted in understanding.[3] It is in understanding and its instantiation in individual and collective projects that the interests of self and community may converge. Admittedly, this faint gesture toward understanding as a constitutive good leaves much unexplored. Nonetheless, it does hint at a possible bridging of liberal and communitarian politics in which the cultivation of certain conditions and requirements basic to the common good also may further a certain kind of self-development.

[3] It is important to emphasize that the kind of understanding advocated here goes well beyond instrumental rationality to include a deep appreciation and critical consideration of a plurality of perspectives that illuminate focal concerns.

Part II
Human Agency and the Irreducibility of Persons

Chapter 4
Persons and Moral Agency

While psychologists lavish their attentions on the study of personality, they devote surprisingly little to the question of what is a person. Apart from the work of a few notable theorists (e.g., Baldwin, 1897; the early work of James, 1890; Mead, 1934; and others; and more recent theorizing by scholars like Harré, 1998; McAdams, 1988; and Woolfolk, 1998), the student of psychology wishing to know what a person is finds little guidance in the vast expanse of psychological literature. It might safely be presumed that we all know what it is to be a person. However, as the history of philosophy shows, it takes more to know one than being one. It is more likely the case that "person" is not considered a proper scientific concept, and so is beyond the ken of legitimate psychological inquiry. Scientific naturalism concerns study of the nature of things in the world. But a person, by definition, designates those features of human beings that make them more than mere things. Consequently, if persons are beings bearing certain rights, or having interests and recognizing what is and what is not in their interest, or capable of rational choice, or originating genuine purposes, or conceiving themselves autobiographically as persisting through time with a past and future, or justly deserving of praise or blame, then, in comprehending persons, we are forced to deal with what actually matters to human beings beyond their physical and biological constituents.

As discussed in the introductory chapter, if we try to study persons in the manner prescribed by naturalism, we shrink the vocabulary and reach of psychological discourse in ways that exclude human values, and the extent to which what we value is constitutive of what we are. Emptying people of what matters to them is to reduce them in ways that render them distorted or malformed, if not wholly alien. Freedom of choice and action, for instance, is so pervasive a background assumption of value in modern societies, so integral to an understanding of ourselves as persons, that it is difficult to conceive of ourselves without it, unless we were first to undergo dramatic mutation of a magnitude found only in science fiction. But why do we find such values so compelling and vital to our notions of personhood? Why are moral demands so prevalent in individual and collective human existence?

Over the course of his scholarship, Charles Taylor has attempted to answer these questions. Not only has his response been impressive in its scope, but it also has generated a mountain of commentary, critique, and rebuttal. In this chapter, we want to

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revisit Taylor's claim that personhood consists in its relation to moral goods and commitments and that persons are agents who have concerns that are of a particularly moral nature. After summarizing Taylor's response to naturalism, his view of persons as moral agents, and his reading of the modern condition, we will mention some criticism his ideas have garnered. The chapter closes with a discussion of certain features of human psychology and its development that assist in clarifying the relation between persons and moral agency.

Taylor's Critique of Naturalism

Taylor's (1989, 1995) post-Heideggerian hermeneutics reveals assumptions about the nature of human life reflected in the doctrine of naturalism.[1] Naturalism is the belief that human beings are part of nature. Few, including Taylor, would disagree. However, in his critique of psychology and other human sciences, Taylor examines specifically what features of human life are accepted or rejected as being natural phenomena. According to naturalism, descriptions and explanations of phenomena are objective when they are given in "absolute" terms, that is, terms that do not reflect human experience of the things being studied. Our thoughts, motivations, feelings, needs, preferences, aversions, attitudes, and values are not considered part of nature, but rather projections of an ephemeral subjectivity onto a value-free world.

Phenomena that arise only as a consequence of our being subjects, what Taylor terms "subject-related" phenomena, are discounted as real and explained with vocabulary that makes no reference to human subjectivity. From the perspective of naturalism, human thoughts, feelings, needs, interests, and values are approached scientifically by reducing them to what are taken to be more basic physical, chemical, and biological (i.e., natural) processes. Consider, for example, past and current trends in psychology that attempt to reduce psychological phenomena (e.g., motivations, thoughts, feelings, and experiences) to neurophysiology, computational models, observable behavior, or evolution alone. Taylor insists that subject-related phenomena, particularly human meanings and values, are real and have an existence that should not be denied or reduced in ways that change what they are.

Taylor disputes the notion that meanings and values exist only "in our heads" and not "out there" in the world. The significance of the things we value often may not be tangible, but this should not cause us to conclude they are not real. For example, appreciating a piece of music is a subjective experience, but this does not mean that what we are listening to actually is just sound waves and that the music exists only in our subjective experience of them. Music is made and exists in the world, and it is only because of this that we are able to have subjective experience of it. Similarly,

[1] Throughout his various works, Taylor has been consistent in his critique of naturalism and claims regarding a moral ontology. His major opus, *Sources of the self* (1989), contains the most elaborated statement of his ideas.

the meanings and values we experience in everyday life are not simply in our heads. They are part of the world. Taylor asks, what normal person could witness a child being struck by a car and not believe that something bad had occurred right there on the street, that only his/her thinking made it so? The point Taylor seeks to make is that moral meanings are not merely projections of human sentiment onto what is a morally neutral, natural world. Rather, his claim is that moral meanings are part of what is a distinctively human world and are made manifest in human individual and collective life.

Experiences of emotion frequently are accompanied by awareness of a specific sort of situation. We recognize situations as humiliating, deplorable, agreeable, inspiring, and so forth. According to Taylor, descriptors such as these are "imports." An import is an evaluative property indicating something of significance for a person. The import of the situation grounds our evaluation and corresponding feeling. If a situation is one of humiliation, we have grounds for feeling ashamed. A transgression of our rights is grounds for indignation. Importantly, such evaluations and feelings never are simply a consequence of individual preference or subjective projection. Often, the evaluation and emotion called for by the situation are not at all what we would prefer to be experiencing. Imports exist as features of situations and we experience them as external to us.

The great problem for naturalism, Taylor submits, is that it fails to reconcile phenomenology and ontology. On one hand, many naturalists would agree that imports and values are experienced and that they may even be necessary for us to get on with one another, but, on the other hand, they insist this is not what the objective world is really like. According to Taylor, the naturalistic ideal that the world can be experienced and explained in absolute terms is peculiar, and excludes all that is critically unique to human life. Human beings simply could not think, act, and experience in the ways they do if meanings, interests, and values were not accepted as part of the world. We are part of the world. What happens to us, what matters to us, what we think and feel about it, and how we respond are as much a part of the world as anything else. The ways in which we think, act, and experience life depend on language and other shared cultural practices. As Heidegger (1927/1962) discerned, it is only by taking up these practices that we become the sort of beings we are. These practices are public. Our interactions and relationships are a space for public expression in which we articulate meanings and values. This public space of shared meanings and values is as important to our emergence and development as thinking beings as are physical and biological conditions. Taylor argues that only a greatly abstracted view of the world, of the kind promoted by naturalism, could cause us to doubt the reality of the significance we experience in everyday life.

Moral Ontology

Taylor contends further that naturalism and reductionism overlook human agency, particularly the crucial importance of the ways we come to understand ourselves as persons and selves. For Taylor (1985b), a person is a being who not only possesses

self-awareness and "who has an understanding of self as an agent" (p. 263), but, moreover, is "a special kind of agent" (p. 261), in that persons are agents for whom things have characteristically human significance.[2] Persons are agents for whom things matter. Taylor contrasts this conception of personhood with those that attempt to distinguish human agents from other animate and inanimate agentive entities on the basis of the human capacity to frame representations, particularly of themselves. It is not simply that persons can represent themselves as objects. Rather, it is that persons have a conception of self that is constituted of an array of concerns that have no analog with nonperson agents. The distinctive feature of persons is that they carry with them a sense of certain standards that relate only to human beings as self-aware agents. As we shall discuss, Taylor finds that it is in the application of these particularly human standards to our purposes, desires, actions, and experiences that the concept of person picks out what is morally significant about us.

Taylor develops the point, initially captured by Heidegger (1927/1962), that not only is the world imbued with human meanings and values, but also we care about the kind of beings we are. We are self-interpreting, and in our attempts to understand, we participate in the shaping of our own being and becoming. Taylor proposes that in order for our self-interpretations to get off the ground, however, it is necessary to see ourselves against a horizon of qualitative distinctions and standards of worth. According to Taylor, to interpret ourselves we require these distinctions and standards in order to judge our desires, feelings, and actions as right or wrong, good or bad, better or worse, more or less worthy, and so forth. He calls these standards "strong evaluations." We don't just have desires and feelings, we make judgments about them and affirm or deny them in light of beliefs about the kind of person one is or wishes to be.

Following Frankfurt's (1971) distinction, outlined in our discussion of agency in Chapter 2, Taylor claims that our initial impulses or "first-order" desires are subject to stronger or higher "second-order" desires. Second-order desires are concerned with standards of acceptability and moral goods by which we judge first-order desires. We might, for example, feel angered by a slight or insult, and first desire to exact revenge, but on reflection choose to forgive and forget, because we believe it is better to be that kind of person. Strong evaluation refers to our capacity to realize distinctions among our desires and feelings, and, through reflection on second-order desires, choose those feelings and desires with which we want to identify. But we do not simply apply standards to our desires dispassionately. Our feelings of respect or

[2] It should be noted that Taylor has been accused of being unclear in his use of the terms "agent," "person," and "self" (Olafson, 1994). For instance, Olafson (p. 191) observes that in the opening of *Sources of the self*, Taylor (1989) states that the book will be concerned with "our modern notion of what it is to be a human agent, a person or a self" (p. 3), as if these terms might be used interchangeably. However, in two previously published essays (see Taylor 1985a, 1985b), Taylor goes some distance in clarifying his notion of persons.

contempt, admiration, or outrage, are entwined in our understanding of evaluative standards.

According to Taylor, the practice of interpreting choices in terms of the moral goods of our cultures and communities inculcates our various purposes and commitments in being persons and selves. Our lives are given continuity through a sense of identity, and one's sense of identity largely is a matter of the extent to which we care about being a certain kind of person. What we tend to regard as our psychological identities are shaped by deliberating over what matters to us. And what matters is worked out through accepted interpretations of moral goods and standards. The moral goods of our cultures and communities provide a framework for individual identity by lending coherence to our purposes and commitments. They provide an orientation toward one's life as a whole. Our desires, feelings, and identities are actively shaped in a moral context, structured within frameworks of strong evaluations. In this light, deliberation is an act of self-interpretation and, moreover, self-determination.

According to Taylor, human beings exist in a space of moral questions concerning what gives human life meaning and value, and what it means to be a person. The practice of strong evaluation over the course of human history, of cleaving qualitative distinctions in the things that are significant in human life, articulates "constitutive goods." A constitutive good is an overarching moral ideal that orders our strong evaluations and frames our moral and ethical commitments within life as a whole. Constitutive goods express something about what it is to be a person, for example, that we are creatures of nature, that we are children of God, that we are autonomous and free by virtue of our capacity to reason, or that we are individuals unique unto ourselves, each with his/her own distinctive inner depth. In uncovering and detailing these theistic and secular descriptions, Taylor has shown not only the integral role they play in self-interpretation and self-constitution, but also how they have arisen and evolved to comprise the history of personhood. By attempting to capture a quintessential feature of personhood, constitutive goods provide a reference point for the integrity of self. We apply them in interpreting our lives as meaningful, gratifying, good, and so forth. Constitutive goods allow for interpreting and integrating one's purposes and experiences into a unified understanding of one's identity, giving it the continuity of a coherent narrative. A constitutive good is a principle of structural integrity that we effect in our lives by orienting ourselves by it. In deliberating over our various purposes and courses of action, there is always an eye toward maintaining this unity. It is part of our horizon of understanding, even if we are unable to articulate it.

When constitutive goods empower us to realize our values, they function as moral sources. As moral sources, they compel or motivate us, and by informing our deliberations, they become enshrined in our personal identities, edified in each strong evaluation, in each choice of better over worse or worse over better. In making such choices, one elaborates a moral ideal constitutive of the kind of person that one is, or thinks one ought to be. In other words, we are drawn or compelled to think and behave in certain ways by coming to understand that we are persons and selves of

a certain sort. A unified identity arises by affiliating with particular moral beliefs and descriptions regarding what it means to be a person. Being persons and selves is living an answer to the question of what is worthwhile in human life. According to Taylor, to be a fully human person is to become a self-interpreting agent, and a necessary condition to understand ourselves in this way is to exist in a moral space defined by distinctions of worth. The uniqueness of Taylor's contribution to discussions of personhood obtains in the explicitly moral perspective he brings to the hermeneutic thesis that humans are self-interpreting. This perspective is necessary, Taylor insists, because it is impossible to imagine a recognizably human life lived without some discernment of categoric worth. It captures a morally significant ontological distinction between life and life that is uniquely that of persons. Persons are moral agents. We are constituted by our self-interpretations, our self-interpretations are rooted in distinctions of worth, and these distinctions are incorporated into frameworks of strong evaluation that situate our agency noncontingently in a moral ontology. In Taylor's view, this is something genuinely inescapable about the human condition.

Taylor is a moral realist with strong theistic convictions.[3] He believes ultimately that some kind of spirituality may be the best candidate for a moral source adequate to sustaining the human moral horizon. However, he resists explicitly foisting the necessity of spirituality or any specific variant of it into his thesis of moral realism. Rather, he wishes more modestly to bring to light the ways in which human life requires moral sources, which are at least transcendent (i.e., insofar as they make claims on us from beyond our individual desires and feelings), if not ultimately divine. In other words, Taylor does not resolve explicitly that spirituality is, or ought to be, vital to moral understanding. Rather, he attempts to reveal how it could be.

Notwithstanding, Taylor's notion of a moral ontology is an attempt to capture the relation between human beings and a morally saturated lifeworld in a way that preserves rather than distorts it. He seeks to safeguard the irreducibility of moral life by identifying certain universal human constants, while not falsely universalizing their contingent cultural manifestations. Taylor argues that his account of the intrinsically moral features of human agents attempts to make sense of the variety of views of personhood and selfhood that have been held at various times in human history, how different views have become dominant during different eras, and how our own modern understanding of ourselves makes past understandings seem inconceivable. He has invested much of his scholarship in attempting to comprehend modernity, its history, and its influence. It is to his critique of the modern moral understanding and application of his ideas to our current moral condition to which we now turn.

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[3] In *Sources of the self*, Taylor provides only faint gestures of his theism and a "hunch" about the indispensability of transcendent moral sources. More recently, he has elaborated explicitly what he sees as the role of theism in moral life (see Taylor, 1994, 1999, 2004). Having said this, what we wish to take from Taylor's thought does not require his theism, let alone any commitment to it on our part.

Personhood in Question

According to Taylor, human agency demands articulation of the good, and moral sources are necessary to interpreting ourselves as persons. But what happens when traditional moral sources are no longer capable of supporting our strong evaluations and cherished ideals? Are we presently living beyond our moral means? Taylor takes up this question in his 1991 book, *The malaise of modernity*. He sees the modern predicament as a tension between the demands of modern individuals for authentic self-fulfillment and the necessity of commonly shared goods on which to found and give structure to social and political life. The task Taylor sets is to trace the origins and inspirations of traditional sources of authenticity and to contrast them with the debased forms by which he believes they have been replaced.[4]

Taylor links the contemporary version of the quest for authentic self-fulfillment to the late eighteenth-century Romantic reaction to the Enlightenment. The Romantic era gave birth to the idea that we each have our own original way of being human that derives from the natural endowment of a unique individuality. Further, this individual uniqueness elicits a moral obligation to live in a way that is true to oneself, and not in imitation of anyone else. We are to resist conformity and external demands at all costs.

Compliance of any sort thwarts the expression of a distinctive inner nature that is both our birthright and the key to authentic self-fulfillment. Authenticity only can be achieved by discovering and cultivating one's unique inner potential and by avoiding any and all external social and cultural influences by which one's originality might be compromised. In this view, persons are self-determining, free to live by their own judgment. Each individual is the center and foundation of his/her own moral world and a sovereign chooser capricious in relations with social reality. These are persons who have an essential existence prior to, and apart from, participation in language and tradition, cultural beliefs and practices, and commitments to others—all of the features of sociocultural and historical settings that make up ways of life.

A variant of the Romantic view is still widely present in modern society. Taylor illustrates by pointing to those who feel compelled to pursue their own path to authentic self-fulfillment (e.g., through their careers) even if it means sacrificing relationships and abdicating responsibilities and obligations to others (e.g., care of children). Such pursuits, Taylor notes, are abetted by a kind of solipsism regarding conceptions of acceptable conduct and the good life. Any

[4] Taylor pursues his exploration of modernity and its effects in a more recent book, *Modern social imaginaries* (2004). In this text, he deals less with the specific difficulties of the modern personal identity than with the historical conditions by which it has arisen. He describes how the innovations of modernity changed our understanding and envisioning of three dimensions of human life (i.e., the economy, the public sphere in which opinions are formed and expressed, and the sovereignty of people). This shift led to the overturning of the premodern grasp of humanity's place in the cosmos, in which the physical, human, and spiritual worlds were arranged in "hierarchical complementarity," and replaced it with a "direct access society" in which the individual is privileged over the collective in a way that is "immediate to the whole."

moral commitments we might take up ultimately are only an expression of our own self-interest and particularity. Significance becomes a matter of personal choice and self-expression. According to Taylor, this unquestioning acceptance of self-expression, which has proliferated across contemporary culture, reflects belief in a radical moral subjectivism in which everyone has his/her own values that, simply because one holds them, make them impervious to criticism. Taylor finds this moral subjectivism deeply problematic because it eschews any grounds, such as reason or the nature of things, by which we might warrant our moral convictions.

The upshot is that if there are no moral sources functioning beneath all our self-interests and particularities, then it is only in our self-interests and particularities that personal happiness and fulfillment are to be sought. If such is the case, Taylor alleges, we are left with a self-serving and narcissistic individualism that puts blind faith in the transparency of our own desires. Moreover, without any commonly held constitutive goods that demand our allegiance and protection by transcending the particularities of individual life, our identities cannot be contested by reference to any larger mutual goals, and neither can the desires and pursuits that issue from them. There is little to be said about lives worth living. Our lives become "flattened," Taylor says, because the choices we make aren't very meaningful in the absence of any crucial issues.

Unlike others who are severely critical and pessimistic about the narcissistic and self-serving nature of the current version of authenticity and self-fulfillment (e.g., Bloom 1987; Lasch, 1978), Taylor does not completely reject the ideal of authenticity despite his concerns about its degeneration. His aim is to recover the background of historical traditions against which our quest for authenticity makes deeper sense. Taylor's hope is that by contrasting these traditions with current practices, we might be encouraged to understand and seek authenticity in ways more compatible with shared notions of the common good. He argues that we are mistaken if we believe that the pursuit of authenticity can be meaningful without recognition and consideration of the demands of others or demands that originate from beyond our own desires. In Taylor's analysis, the ideal of authenticity is not diminished by such external demands. Rather, properly understood, it presupposes them. According to Taylor, the attempt to distance ourselves from these demands in fact suppresses and conceals the horizons of significance that are necessary conditions for realizing authenticity. Our lives take on importance and are made intelligible only against a background of traditions of beliefs and practices. If one is to define oneself in a significant way, such definition cannot ignore the very traditions and horizons of understanding that infuse things with significance, that locate us in a moral ontology, and which such definition requires.

Authenticity, in our secular modern age, demands that we make moral choices on the basis of our own experiences and judgments. However, our choices cannot be significant and, in fact, are trivialized without reference to the frameworks of standards and values that enable qualitative distinctions and that orient our decisions toward collectively defined goods. Further, self-fulfillment calls for social recognition of our identity by others, and this in turn insinuates the extent to which

self-fulfillment depends on our relations with others and immersion in sociocultural settings.

It is difficult to deny that the historical turn toward individualism has been accompanied by much moral and political gain, but, at the same time, it may be undermining our betterment. In paying so much attention to ourselves, we have promoted an escapist culture of narcissism, complaint, and false entitlement (Lasch, 1978), and a facile relativism in which everyone feels entitled to have his/her own values (Bloom, 1987); what is more, we have neglected the vital relation between us and the moral world of our making. Taylor surmises that many of us have lost sight of those aspects of human life that transcend our particularity and that connect us to the moral realm. He reminds us of demands that make a claim on us that are not necessarily of our choosing and that issue from beyond our own desires and narrow self-interests, be they from history, tradition, society, nature, or God. In sum, Taylor responds to the malaise of modernity with the claim that there is a moral order beyond the individual self that speaks profoundly to our sense of ourselves as persons. We are part of a moral ontology that transcends us as individuals and that we require in order to make individual life and notions of its fulfillment intelligible.

Taylor's Moral Ontology in Question

Despite Taylor's partiality to theism, he readily acknowledges that we live in times during which traditional metaphysical theistic and secular sources underpinning our moral ideals no longer carry the force they once did. In the absence of strong sources amidst the clamor of competing goods in diverse modern societies, our moral sensibilities and actions are fraught with uncertainty, skepticism, and diffidence. Case in point: there may be widespread agreement regarding goods such as justice and benevolence, but it is difficult to affirm and enact these ideals if our grounds for doing so are an ill-defined sense of guilt or the sort of altruism that serves as a pretext for impression management. Likewise, what is the impetus for moral action if self-responsible freedom is taken to be reducible to predetermined genetic or evolutionary scripts? A deficiency of moral sources not only weakens our ability to act, but diminishes responsibility for what we do and for the social, moral, political, and economic consequences that this failure of conscience has for others. Alternatively, in light of Taylor's account, to be empowered by goods and values in ways that oblige us to act courageously in the face of injustice or benevolently toward the suffering of others requires that we be moved by the strong sense that there is something about persons that genuinely makes them worthy of dignity and respect.

Some critics (e.g., Nussbaum, 1990) fault Taylor for a narrow reading of influences in Western culture and the absence of non-Western traditions in his version of the history of the modern "we." Others (e.g., Anderson, 1996) charge that while Taylor declares deep appreciation for tolerance of a diversity of goods and ways of life, his endorsement of value pluralism is not compatible with his privileging a theistic outlook. He passionately affirms the kind of fulfillment sought in religious

yearnings and alleges that rejection of the divine by secular humanists amounts to no less than a spiritual "mutilation" of personhood. Neo-Nietzscheans like Skinner (1994) and Connolly (2004) find neither compelling arguments nor any necessity for transcendent sources in support of Taylor's stance. They assert that the "death of God" frees us to embrace our humanity and measure the merit of our lives against the standards of the living.

There are also those, like Taylor, who are made uneasy by Nietzsche's nihilism, but who are made equally uneasy by Taylor's faith and the way in which his account of moral ontology rests inevitably on the transcendent. Redhead (2002), for example, is uncomfortable with the idea of a core set of values based on faith and thus beyond criticism. In response, he suggests a "nonontological" alternative that construes moral sources as partial, fallible, and contingent possibilities to which we might appeal when confronting social, moral, and political problems. In contrast to Taylor's exegesis of sources as omnipresent and inescapable structural features of the moral universe, Redhead presents the notion of a dynamic and malleable moral horizon that we are capable of creating through our interpretations and reinterpretations of the past and other cultures in light of present contingency.

Whereas Taylor sees us restricted to the moral sources inherited in modernity, and moral inquiry limited to developing better accounts of them, Redhead does not wish to forestall the prospect of finding new sources of meaning to inform our lives. He sees in the potential of radically strong evaluation a proliferation of alternatives among which Taylor's best account would be one. Redhead argues for a practical orientation toward moral sources; one that permits greater openness to values not within our current moral horizon and that holds out the ever-present possibility for us to effect transformations of personhood through dialogical engagement. As he explains, it is a standpoint that begins with recognition of the mutability of the moral horizon:

> Such subjects are open to the possibility that their values might not be the best ones available to them at a given point in their existences. This sense of the partiality and changeability of the moral horizon provides such a subject with grounds to question the viability of moral sources—the subject is open to the possibility that the contrasting moral sources of others might offer a better language of self-interpretation than those the subject presently relies upon. (Redhead, 2002, p. 216)

According to Redhead, even if Taylor is correct in asserting that our highest moral ideals require affirmation of a transcendent, and perhaps even divine, source, such affirmation only can be given by a human agent who interprets a need to do so in light of his/her circumstances and desires. The possibility of a transcendent moral source demands a self-interpreting human agent who is situated in the world and psychologically capable of posing such possibility. Likewise, in order to affirm a divine source, there must be believers. Redhead suggests that enacting goods of human flourishing or benevolence does not require necessarily that we affirm these goods as divinely inspired. Rather, we need only commit ourselves to their practical manifestations, that is, to understand in practical terms how holding commitments to human flourishing and benevolence can be self-fulfilling. According to

Redhead, a practical orientation is likely to garner broader appeal in diverse democracies, especially from those who elect secular modes of moral reasoning over those who demand faith.

Persons and Moral Agency: A Psychological Perspective

On one hand, it may be the case that personhood need not be anchored in an intrinsically specified, omnipresent and transcendent moral ontology. On the other hand, however, we need to be able to understand ourselves in ways that capture the gripping significance of moral demands and commitments and that do not reduce them to things they are not. Traditional conceptions of personhood deriving from the Enlightenment and its political counterpart, classic liberalism, have become difficult to sustain. In the wake of pragmatist, hermeneutic, existential-phenomenological, feminist, and post-structuralist approaches to self, agency, and personhood, little remains in defending the idea of an a priori human nature that stands apart from historical and sociocultural contingency. Similarly, with the ascendance of evolutionary theory in the social and biophysical sciences, the idea of a fixed and predetermined human nature has been supplanted by formulations of a highly contingent and continually unfolding human body and brain. Despite remnants of Enlightenment and Romantic thinking in current self-understandings, it would appear that there is remarkably little that is truly and universally given in human existence.

In the absence of a classic metaphysical grounding, personhood may be seen to take its possibilities from the historical and sociocultural lifeworld in which we exist. What we humans share in common is not a definable essence or discoverable nature, but rather the existential condition of "thrownness," our immersion from birth in societies and cultures that pre-exist us (Heidegger, 1927/1962). We would like to suggest that this is the starting point for construing the sources of our moral involvements. From this perspective, possibilities for personhood are drawn from the everyday contexts in which our actions and experiences are situated and from which they derive their meaning and significance. These contexts are saturated with social and cultural beliefs and practices constitutive of our forms of life with others. Human moral development issues from a comprehension of the traditions of societies and cultures that cultivate certain kinds of self-interpretations and self-understandings. Such understandings develop not just over the course of an individual's life span, but also, historically, in a living continuity with the past. Becoming a person entails the ongoing agentive interpretation and reinterpretation of traditions of meaning and significance that are continually shaping, and being shaped by, human life.

Personhood resides in human history, and it expresses both our individual and collective aspirations to be beings of a certain sort, as well as our efforts to achieve them. The history of personhood attests to how we have changed as a result of our own efforts and the choices we have made. Persons are dynamic, not static. They are moral agents and are capable of adopting new self-understandings and acting in ways that can make a difference in their lives. They develop and change over

time, both individually and collectively. Moral development, in this light, becomes understood as the gradual process whereby traditions are negotiated and renegotiated toward the end of fashioning selves that are expressive of those goods we take to be constitutive of personhood.

In what follows, we discuss some features of this development, with the aim of clarifying the relation between persons and moral agency, in terms of the account of personhood and its development detailed in Chapter 2. In contradistinction to both the a priori, self-contained individual of modernity and the socioculturally determined invention of some postmodern theories, this account holds that persons are the expressions of an agentive form of being, emerging, and developing through its embeddedness in sociocultural contexts. Under this construal, a person is an identifiable, embodied human individual with being and agentive capability who acquires an understanding of self (a conceptual self) developmentally that enables him/her to act as a self-reflective agent with a unique set of commitments and concerns (a personal identity).

To refresh, infants enter the world equipped with primitive, biologically given capabilities for motion and sensation and a limited prereflective ability to remember something of what is encountered and sensed. Psychological development ensues from the seeding of this embodied, prereflective agency in a sociocultural and historical lifeworld. In the manner described by Vygotsky (1934/1986), caregivers and others interact with the infant, and linguistic and relational aspects of interactions are appropriated, internalized, and subsequently transformed into various psychological forms for thinking and understanding. The gradual incorporation of sociocultural means as psychological tools furnishes increasingly sophisticated forms of thought, some of which, like memory and imagination, eventually enable thought that is liberated from immediate physical and sociocultural contexts.

Learning to marshal our thoughts and experiences psychologically consists not only in an expanding ability to use speech and language as forms for thought, but also in a growing sophistication for recognizing and interpreting significance and the imports of situations, the intricacies of which become available with increasing self-awareness. This use of psychological tools shifts our engagement and understanding from unmediated and prereflective to that of a mediated, reflective consciousness. By appropriating and internalizing interactions and the means by which they are enacted, developing individuals learn to talk and relate to themselves in much the same way as others have talked and related to them. The reflexivity thus made possible yields an intentional awareness of oneself as both subject and object and an understanding of one's embodied being in the world as a center of experiencing, intending, and acting. The psychologically capable person emerges in this way as a kind of interpreted, reflective understanding that reveals something of one's particular being in the world.

Our development as persons involves repeatedly reinterpreting the meanings and significance of our lives. It is in asking moral questions of ourselves that we become aware that we are moral agents and that we are not condemned only to re-creating cultural scripts. Rather, as moral agents, we are part of the scripting and constitution of our personhood. Our concern for what gives human life meaning and value, and

our attempts to express it, can change who we are by deepening our sense of what we believe to be good. This concern, our ability to revise our ends and ourselves through articulation, and our commonality with others are ingredients for generating new, meaningful possibilities for personhood.

Engagement with the question of what it is good to be can open us to other forms of life—different ways of conceiving personhood. If we are able to comprehend our moral agency as shaped, but not totally determined, by those sociocultural and practical forms of life in which we are situated, we become open not only to the conditions necessary for moral responsibility, but also to the possibility that others and their beliefs and actions may similarly be shaped by different sociocultural circumstances and ways of living. Understanding ourselves as contextualized, we begin to pay close attention to how social contingencies, particularities, relations of power, collective passions and fears, codes of conduct, and political and economic institutions situate our beliefs, emotions, decisions, and actions. These necessary "prejudices" (Gadamer, 1960/1995) become accessible to personal and collective examination. They can be put to scrutiny and shown as furnishing the assumptive background to our self-interpretations. Bringing one's own prejudices into view makes it possible to comprehend the context in which other perspectives are made meaningful, for it is with an awareness of one's own prejudices that one becomes capable of grasping and appreciating those of others. By recognizing the pervasiveness of this background and the possibility of its revision, there can be a critical openness both to ourselves and to others.

With a conception of ourselves as constituted, but not wholly determined, by our sociocultural embeddedness, we are more likely to challenge our own assumptions and beliefs, as well as treat seriously and be receptive to the possibilities presented by other cultural conceptions and practices of personhood. Requisite to the kind of genuine engagement and dialogical exchange that permits such a bridging of views are conversational virtues more likely espoused by those who have acute awareness and understanding of their sociocultural constitution and revisability (Martin, Sugarman, & Hickinbottom, 2003a). Conversational virtues, such as civility, respect, honesty, recognition, perseverance in understanding, fair-mindedness, and open-mindedness, can facilitate productive dialog with others who also may be struggling through self-critical questioning to rethink their moral commitments. These kinds of virtues are not absolute, neither are they detached universal abstractions. Rather, they have emerged concretely within particular societies and cultures for sustaining the relations among those sharing forms of life.

Further, the exercise of such virtues requires a certain strength of character and can be seen as empowering us to become better persons. Richardson (2003) remarks that such strength is desirable, if not necessary, given a diversity of competing views of the good life and that we may be called upon to defend those virtues and goods we believe ought to be most prized or to abandon them when they are shown to be deficient or dogmatic. For Richardson, dialogical virtues, and the strength of conviction required to hold them, enable us to adjudicate the merits and shortcomings of contrasting values without succumbing to untenable metaphysical assumptions or excessive relativism (of the sort of which Taylor also is highly critical). Richardson

borrows Etzioni's (1996b) phrase "dialogues of conviction" to denote this capacity. As Richardson describes:

> Through certain kinds of dialogue, we may be able to both maintain heartfelt convictions about important matters and yet subject them at times, when needed, to scrutiny of the most rigorous kind. In other words, we do not need either to be able to claim absolute objectivity for our beliefs or to affirm a radical relativism of all beliefs and values to defend us against the possibility of having our autonomy or judgment undermined by the claims or influence of others. We can acquire the skill and strength of character (i.e., virtues) needed to stand on our own two feet, duke it out in conversation or in the face [of] other pressures, and then learn something new, agree to disagree, or effect reasonable compromises. (p. 444)

In sum, it is suggested that comprehending the sources for personhood begins with the moral involvements of everyday individual and collective life. Personhood involves the mutual interrogation and exploration of individual and collective possibilities in various settings of conversation and interaction with others. Our attempts to affirm what we believe is important in human existence and to cultivate our lives accordingly involve interpreting and reinterpreting traditions, both our own and those of others. By taking up this project with the aforementioned kinds of understanding and comportment, moral development may be seen as a historical progression of human moral agents toward fashioning more virtuous persons.

Conclusion

If the mission of psychology is to advance an understanding of the human condition and promote its betterment both individually and collectively, then the question of personhood that underlies all psychological inquiry must at least be asked, not overlooked, ignored, or made to disappear by naturalism or some other reductive strategy. The subject matter of psychology is concerned with persons. The reclamation of personhood by psychology has far-reaching implications beyond the confines of the discipline itself. Increasingly, contemporary Westerners interpret themselves and others through the discursive lenses of psychology (Woolfolk, 1998). At the same time, however, the discipline of psychology belongs to the history of ways human beings have developed for interpreting themselves as persons (Danziger, 1997b). Psychology both permeates and is permeated by the broader background of social and cultural understanding in which persons are constituted and immersed.

Charles Taylor's work returns us to questions of the good, providing an opening for recovery of an understanding of persons as moral agents. Persons not only have an understanding of themselves as moral agents, but also are partially constituted by this understanding. We are persons and selves only by virtue of the fact that our lives matter to us. And the mattering of our lives is worked out through the accepted interpretations of personhood and selfhood given by social and cultural moral goods and standards. As moral agents, however, we are capable of effecting changes in our lives through enacting our notions of the good. Moreover, we have the capacity not only to adopt and wield social and cultural practices, but also to revise and transform them. Persons are not condemned to submit passively to what culture and history

bequeath us. As Taylor's work plainly demonstrates, radical reinterpretations are found throughout the history of personhood. Such an understanding of the transformative capacity of moral agency could be seen as vital if we seek to address the ills of modernity that Taylor and many psychologists (e.g., Cushman, 1995; Richardson et al., 1999; Woolfolk, 1998) discern. Psychologists would do well to rethink our aversions to discourse concerning personhood and morality. Not only are persons at the center of moral inquiry, but also, as Taylor's work reveals, moral inquiry is at the center of personhood.

Chapter 5
Emergent Persons

Contemporary psychology is concerned with the description and explanation of behavior, particularly the behavior of biological human beings resident in human societies and cultures. In the social sciences and humanities, such entities are most often understood as persons. As noted in the introductory chapter, since Locke's (1995) famous essay concerning human understanding initiated the modern history of the topic, persons have been understood in mostly psychological terms.[1] Indeed, most modern theories descendent from Locke's treat personhood as consisting of psychological continuity. The central idea is often expressed in terms of the notion of "person stage," defined as a momentary slice of time in the history of a person (e.g., Parfit, 1984). A series of person stages is psychologically continuous if the psychological states of later members of the series develop, in certain characteristic ways, from those of earlier members of the series. Such psychological continuity has been postulated to hold not only across Locke's preferred candidate of memory, but also across other human capabilities such as agency, reason, intentionality, self-consciousness, and reflection.

As we have expressed throughout the proceeding pages, given the widespread dependence of personhood on various criteria of psychological continuity, it is rather remarkable that so little of the literature of disciplinary psychology has been devoted to the topic of "persons." Although there exists a large corpus of psychological writings on self, identity, consciousness, and more recently on agency, persons have received relatively short shrift in the psychological canon. And yet, as already indicated, psychology (at least as practiced in contemporary Western societies) is about the behavior of persons. It is persons who exhibit self, agency, consciousness, and personal identity. Nonetheless, conceptions of personhood have seldom been formulated explicitly by psychologists.

Philosophers themselves continue to disagree about the various psychological criteria that have been proposed for personhood, and whether or not personhood

[1] Although, as noted in the previous chapter, psychologists typically have ignored or avoided explicit discussion of personhood, most philosophers (past and present) and many others have understood persons mostly in psychological terms. The paradox here highlights once again the difficulties that we believe disciplinary psychology has had in coming to grips with its subject matter.

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can be reduced to some sort of physical continuity (perhaps the identity of a human brain). Many have criticized Lockean and neo-Lockean conceptions of the person as fatally flawed because in such conceptions personal identity is treated almost solely as an intrapersonal concept, and one that seems to presuppose exactly the kind of psychological continuity it claims as a criterion. In proposed correction, Strawson (1959) claimed that persons are bearers of both physical and psychological properties and constitute a type of basic particular of the human world. For Strawson, concepts like identity, singularity, and uniqueness require the embodiment of a human being as a thing among other things in a physical and social world arrayed in time and space. Others have added historical, cultural, and moral requirements to the criteria of psychological continuity and embodiment. For example, as discussed in the previous chapter, Taylor (1989) considers persons to be unique embodied beings, rich in capabilities of various kinds, with distinctive histories, who may be called to moral account as responsible actors. Similarly, Harré (1998) defines persons as social and psychological, embodied beings with a sense of place among similar others and a sense of their own history and beliefs about at least some of their attributes.

Such extensions to psychological continuity as a central criterion for personhood make the prospects of achieving a viable reduction of personhood to entirely physical, material phenomena highly implausible. They introduce significant elements of rationality, normativity, intentionality, and perspectivity to the psychological makeup of persons and add historical, moral, and sociocultural dimensions that elude capture in purely physical terms. Yet, on another front, as cultural anthropologists and sociologists have entered the fray, a very different form of reductionism has surfaced, with social constructionists and some postmodernists insisting on the sociocultural origins of persons, and mostly ignoring their biophysical requirements (e.g., Gergen, 1991). During the last 20 years, while much mainstream disciplinary psychology has been increasingly "biologized," much of the rest of social science, including a considerable amount of work in theoretical psychology, has moved toward an increasingly strong "culturalism." In consequence, a major challenge for contemporary psychology is somehow to move beyond the seeming impasse of "culture versus biology." In reaction against the competing claims of biological physicalists and historical socioculturalists, some psychologists have begun to seek a new approach to personhood that assumes that persons are emergent from the embeddedness and activity of biological human organisms within the natural world and within historical, sociocultural traditions and contexts.

Like Taylor (1989) and Harré (1998), these theorists tend to embrace conceptions of personhood that acknowledge both the biophysical, embodied and socioculturally constituted nature of personhood. For example, Martin et al. (2003b) recently have defined persons as embodied beings with social and personal identity, self-understanding, and agency. As a composite of such aspects, persons are clearly more than their bodies, self-understandings, identities, and actions in the world. More precisely they are a complex combination of all these aspects. For emergentist theorists in psychology, during ontogenesis, persons emerge developmentally

from the placement at birth of biologically evolved human infants in historically established sociocultural contexts within a physical world.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine basic claims of psychological emergentism with respect to personhood and to propose an ontology of persons appropriate to these claims. As such, what is attempted here, as in much of the rest of this volume, represents a departure from the practice in disciplinary psychology of avoiding explicitly metaphysical theorizing with respect to persons and their aspects. Having said this, the work pursued here also should assist psychologists in conceptualizing a personhood that is simultaneously conducive to social scientific theory and inquiry and to professional psychological intervention. This is a view of persons as both producers and products of the biophysical and sociocultural world they inhabit.

Examples and Claims of Recent Emergentist Theorizing in Psychology

American pragmatist philosophers in the early part of the twentieth century viewed the emergence of both body and mind within the broad sweep of biological and social evolution. For example, Mead (1934) understood the human physiological capacity for developing intelligence, reflective consciousness, and other attributes of persons as in part the product of biological evolution. However, he also insisted that such capacity for personhood "must proceed in terms of social situations wherein it gets its expression and import; and hence it itself is a product of social evolution, the process of social experience and behavior" (p. 226).

More recently, a number of social-cognitive, developmental, and theoretical psychologists have articulated versions of emergence with respect to personhood in a variety of ways that converge around a number of shared assumptions and claims, but which also differ in important ways. For purposes of understanding these claims and the ideas they contain, the emergentist perspectives of Bandura (1997, 2001), Brandtstädter and Lerner (1999), Bickhard (1992, 1999), Martin et al. (2003b), and Martin and Sugarman (1999a) provide a good representation of both converging and competing claims. Before turning to a more formal elucidation of these claims, a few brief paraphrases and quotations from these various theorists are helpful in acquiring a general sense of contemporary emergentist thinking in the psychology of persons.

Bandura (2001) states that "social cognitive theory subscribes to a model of emergent interactive agency." Following the neurophysiologist Roger Sperry (1993), Bandura understands mental events as brain activities but claims that such physicality does not imply reductionism—"emergent brain activities are not ontologically reducible" (p. 4). Further, Bandura claims that mental processes, as emergent properties generated by brain processes, differ in novel respects from those elements that feature in their creation and that they are capable of exerting downward and same-level causation that is in no sense reducible to the causal activity of the organism's component parts. "Cognitive agents regulate their actions by

cognitive downward causation as well as undergo upward activation by sensory stimulation. People can designedly conceive unique events and different novel courses of action and choose to execute one of them" (pp. 4–5). The irreducibility of agency and other phenomena of psychological personhood to neurophysiology results from the previously stated claim that "people are both producers and products of social systems" (Bandura, 1997, p. 6) and that such systems are external to the organism and have no counterpart in neurobiological theory. Nonetheless,

> social structures do not arise by Immaculate Conception; they are created by human activity. Social structures, in turn, impose constraints and provide resources for personal development and everyday functioning. But neither structural constraints nor enabling resources foreordain what individuals become and do in given situations. (p. 6)

A second example of recent emergentist theorizing in psychology is Brandtstädter and Lerner's (1999) theory of intentional self-development. The core idea of intentional self-development is "the proposition that individuals are both the products and active producers of their ontogeny and personal development over the life span" (p. ix).

> Through action, and through experiencing the effects and limitations of goal-related activities, we construe representations of ourselves and of the physical, social, and symbolic environments in which we are situated. These guide and motivate activities through which we shape the further course of personal development. (p. ix)

Despite the strong cognitivism evident in this passage, Brandtstädter and Lerner envision a developmentally powerful relationship between developing person and social context in ontogenesis. "From early transactions with the environment, and by initiation into social networks of knowledge and practice, children form the primordial representations of self- and personal-development from which the processes of intentional self-development evolve" (p. xi). They continuously emphasize what they regard as "the great openness and plasticity" that characterize both human ontogenesis and phylogenesis. For example, in ontogenesis,

> biology does not impose rigid constraints on development, but rather establishes norms of reaction that involve a range of developmental outcomes over a range of environmental conditions. Epigenetic environmental influences, however, are structured and temporarily organized through interactions of the developing individual with his or her environment. (p. xiv)

By implication, "in this view, traditional splits between 'nature' and 'culture,' as well as attempts to establish a causal priority between these categories are rendered obsolete" (p. xv).

Bickhard's (1999) theory of interactivism is a third example of contemporary emergentist theorizing in the psychology of persons. In many ways, Bickhard's work follows the general pragmatist approach taken by Mead (1934), especially with respect to emphasizing the naturalness of the functional relations he assumes between persons and their environments. "Interactive representation emerges with complete naturalism out of certain sorts of functional organizations" (Bickhard, 1999, p. 450). Bickhard assumes an interactive system capable of indicating for itself possibilities of various interactions with the environment as a prelude to

selecting which interaction to initiate. What is represented is not objects, things, or entities in the world, but possibilities for acting. Such "functions" are always emerging and differentiate the environment in ways that open up interactive possibilities. With respect to persons and their societies, Bickhard understands both as constantly emergent and co-constitutive. The sociocultural environment is constitutive of personhood "in two senses: constructive and interactive. Constructively, learning to engage in the simpler social interactions of childhood provides the scaffolded resources for the eventual construction of the adult social person. Interactively, the person is being social insofar as he or she is interacting with or within those social realities. Personhood, in being a socially constituted constructive emergent, is itself a social and historical ontology" (Bickhard, 1992, p. 86).

A fourth and final example of emergentist theorizing with respect to psychological personhood can be found in the work of Martin et al. (2003b). These hermeneutically inclined theorists define the person as "an embodied, biological human individual who through existing and acting in the physical and sociocultural world comes to possess an understanding of her particular being in the world (a conceptual self) that enables her to act as a self-reflective agent with a unique set of commitments and concerns (a personal identity)" (pp. 112–113).

> On this view, the self, agency, and personal identity of a person require the in-the-world activity of a biological human equipped with rudimentary capacities to orient to, and remember (in a primitive, prelinguistic sense) some of what is encountered in the physical, sociocultural world. The sociocultural placement of such a biological infant gives her an initial social identity, and her early, biologically given, movements assist her to acquire a preconceptual sense of self. (p. 113)

Over time, much in the manner of appropriation suggested by Vygotsky (1986), immersion in linguistic, sociocultural practices moves the child from a preconceptual sense of self, and an unreflective agency associated with prelinguistic and early linguistic, practical activity, to a more conceptual understanding of self and world that enables a more self-reflective agency, at least some of the time. For Martin et al. "the psychological person is a biological individual who becomes capable of understanding some of what the life-world (in its history, culture, and social relations and practices) and her being in it consists" (p. 114). Moreover, "given the inevitably unique history of individual experience within a life-world, and the capacity for self as reflective, interpretive understanding of experience in that world, psychological persons are underdetermined by their constitutive sociocultural origins and biological requirements" (p. 114; also see previous chapters of this book for more recent elaborations of this perspective on persons and their development).

Shared and Disputed Claims

The foregoing theories of emergent personhood appear to hold three basic and quite general claims in common:

1. Persons emerge from immersion in biophysical and sociocultural reality.
2. Once emergent, persons are irreducibly back to their biophysical and sociocultural origins.
3. Persons are both determined and determining. They exert influence on their biophysical and sociocultural environments, even while they are determined by them.

However, with respect to how the foregoing, general emergentist claims are developed further, there are a few disagreements.

1. Brandtstädter and Lerner (1999) obviously subscribe to what has become in cognitive psychology, the standard encoding view of representation by which developing persons represent the world to themselves. Bickhard (1999) argues directly against such "encodingism," claiming that if our only access to the world is through our representations of it, we have no way of explaining how our knowledge of the world comes about or how our knowledge of the world can be corrected and improved. In short, we are locked into our encoded views of the world without any way of checking them and without any understanding of how we come to possess them. Bickhard's functional representations, on the other hand, are understood as possibilities for acting in the world, which arise from direct experience in the world, and which can be checked against the worldly consequences of activity.
2. Bickhard (1999) and Martin et al. (2003b) clearly understand the sociocultural context to go well beyond the immediate social situation to encompass a host of historically established traditions and conventions concerning assumptions, understandings, and practices of personhood. Moreover, they view this historical, sociocultural background as constitutive of much of the implicit understanding of existence and self of which personhood consists. The more conventional social-cognitive and developmental theorizing of Bandura (1997) and Brandtstädter and Lerner (1999) mostly focuses more exclusively on the immediate social, interpersonal contexts and interactions within which the actions and practices of personhood are learned.
3. Bandura (1997), Brandtstädter and Lerner (1999), and Martin et al. (2003b), at least in ontogenesis, seem to understand the biophysical and sociocultural as somewhat different determinants and sources of personhood. Although persons require both for their development, the natural laws and principles governing the biophysical world need to be supplemented by additional principles and relations at the sociocultural level, which are not natural in the same sense, but are (at least partially) the result of a distinctive sociocultural evolution. On the other hand, Bickhard (1992, 1999), while holding a strong form of social constitutivism (see the preceding point), often talks about the "complete naturalism" of the functional relations he posits as a basis for actions in both the physical and sociocultural world. In this, he appears to continue a classic line of pragmatist thought that includes Mead (1934) and Dewey (1925), both of whom emphasized the critical roles of human society and culture for the formation of

persons, but whose pervasive naturalism also caused them to see sociocultural evolution as a seamless part of a single, overall progressive and natural order.

An Emergent Ontology of Persons

Given the foregoing similarities and differences, the task of articulating an explicit ontology of emergent persons capable of housing the various forms of emergentist theorizing in the contemporary psychology of persons is formidable. Nonetheless, an attempt to frame such an ontology can make more readily apparent some of the arguments and positions that seem to be assumed, but may not always be stated explicitly or elaborated sufficiently in those texts that make up this relatively recent area of psychological theorizing.

Reductionism Versus Emergence

All theoretical formulations of emergentism in the philosophy of science have been in opposition to reductionistic proposals of various kinds. An ontological reduction maintains that phenomena of interest are nothing other than more fundamental phenomena. Strong ontological reductions that would eliminate, replace, or identify phenomena at more complex levels of systems with phenomena at simpler levels are theoretically controversial even in physical science (cf. Primas, 1983). Nonetheless, certain well-known examples, such as the reduction of certain properties in the theory of heat (such as temperature) to properties in the kinetic-molecular theory of matter (such as mean kinetic energy), are generally accepted as capturing the basic idea. A small number of such reductions have been specified in precise detail and demonstrated under certain assumptions and conditions. In contrast, the much proposed reduction of psychological (e.g., mind or mental events or processes) to biophysical (brain matter) phenomena, while available in numerous and varied forms, is entirely speculative (cf. Kukla, 2001).

Moreover, there are reasonable arguments against such a reduction. As discussed in Chapter 2, the most common (cf. Greenwood, 1991; Taylor, 1995) is that human actions are meaningful and value laden, and meaning (the conventional sense of an expression or signal) and values (the significance of things and events for persons) require a sociocultural, linguistic context of rules and practices. Since meanings, values, and the sociocultural rules and practices on which they depend are not composed of physical properties under any physical descriptions, the proposed reduction of psychological phenomena like human actions to nothing more than physical properties fails. Of course, such arguments in no way deny the absolute necessity of evolved and functioning biophysical bodies and brains with respect to the ontogenetic development of personhood. However, such a necessary and enabling requirement is not a sufficient basis for reducing persons to the biophysical alone. The rejection of this reduction is shared by all the theories of emergent personhood considered above.

In general, reductionistic proposals in both the philosophy of science and the philosophy of mind have fared rather poorly in recent years, a state of affairs that has prompted many theoreticians to turn to theories of emergence as possible alternatives. (See O'Connor & Wong (2002) and Van Gulick (2001) for more on this point and for more detailed discussions of various kinds of emergence.) In general, emergence is more or less the converse of reduction. The general idea is that emergent phenomena arise out of more fundamental phenomena, and yet are novel or irreducible with respect to them. Since Lewes (1875) first used the term in a philosophical sense, a variety of theories and conceptions of emergence have been advanced. It is especially important to distinguish between *ontological emergence* (of direct relevance here) and *epistemological emergence*. Ontological emergence is noted when properties or entities exist at complex levels of systems when they are absent at simpler levels.

Epistemological emergence is posited when laws of more complex levels in a system are not deducible by way of any bridge laws from the laws of simpler levels. It is generally assumed that emergent properties must not contradict fundamental laws at a basic level of description, even though such properties are not and cannot be uniquely determined or derived from the basic level in the absence of further conditions (cf. Atmanspacher & Kronz, 1999).

It seems reasonable to assume that all the psychological theories of emergent personhood considered here share the foregoing conception of ontological emergence and the further assumption that emergent persons, while capable of influencing their biophysical and sociocultural contexts, cannot override fundamental biophysical laws. Support for this conclusion is taken from the fact that those most frequently cited by the authors of these various psychological theories (e.g., Sperry, 1993) hold views of this kind. There are, however, three important assumptions made by emergentist theorists in the area of psychological personhood that do not fit easily into the foregoing, more or less standard account of mainstream emergentist theorizing in the physical sciences. In different ways, all three of these additional assumptions seem to arise from important differences between physical phenomena per se and the more socioculturally influenced or constituted phenomena of psychological personhood.

Additional Assumptions Concerning the Emergence of Psychological Persons

In some of the psychological perspectives examined earlier, obviously psychological aspects of personhood, such as Martin et al.'s (2003b) conceptions of self-understanding and reflective agency and Bickhard's (1999) interactive representations, are not substantive in the manner of physical phenomena. Instead, they are theorized primarily as relations of meaning that connect words, world, experience, beliefs, and actions. As such, these psychological, relational entities (to borrow a term used by Fay (1996) to differentiate such entities from substantive, physical

entities) do not fit easily into traditional distinctions between entities, properties, interactions, and relations as employed in emergentist theorizing in physical science and in much analytic philosophy. Indeed, standard emergentist theorizing frequently omits such predominately sociocultural–psychological relations altogether and considers only physics, chemistry, biology, and psychology (see O'Connor & Wong, 2002 for more on this point). With respect to psychological personhood, such omission seems to leave out crucially important aspects of our human experience, almost as if one were attempting to explain the behavior of athletes participating in team sports without any reference to the rules, regulations, practices, and traditions of these sports.

The only consideration of relations of meaning that occurs in emergentist theorizing in physical science concerns relations between scientific concepts, propositions, models, and theories. When such consideration occurs, it is treated not in the context of ontological emergence, but in the context of epistemological emergence. Such epistemological emergence might, for example, be posited when the principles of one theory cannot be explained or derived from any of the principles or features of relevant theories at a simpler level (Van Gulick, 2001). However, in psychological theories of personhood, meaningful relations are frequently understood as at least partially constitutive of social–psychological phenomena such as social practices and self-conceptions. Such practices and conceptions are treated as ontological both in the sense of their posited existence and in the sense of the deterministic influences they can exert (e.g., Bandura's (1997) claims concerning reciprocal determinism among personal beliefs such as judgments of self-efficacy, actions, and environments). Again, almost all conceptions of ontological emergence in physical science and analytic philosophy are silent with respect to the possibility of meaning-saturated, relational entities treated as real and influential ontological entities, as they are in emergentist theorizing about personhood.

There are two additional assumptions evident in psychological perspectives on emergent personhood, which are difficult to locate in extant emergentist theorizing in physical science. Related directly to the status of relational social–psychological entities is the assumption that emergent personhood requires sociocultural–psychological, relational forms of emergence in combination with biophysical–psychological, substantive forms of emergence. For example, Martin et al. (2003b) talk about the emergence of personhood (together with its key aspects of self-understanding, reflective agency, and identity) from constitutive sociocultural origins and biological requirements. However, the presumed dynamic interactions across such forms of emergence are not specified in any detail. Somewhat more specifically, Bandura (1997) suggests that "through their intentional acts, people shape the functional structure of their neurobiological systems" (p. 5). Such comments appear to reflect emergentist views about social–psychological, biological interactions in ontogenesis similar to those presented by Edelman (1987). However, as Elman, Bates, Johnson, Karmiloff-Smith, Parisi, and Plunkett (1996) remind us, in comparison with emergentist theorizing in physical science where, "the mathematical/physical properties that generate the emergent novelty are well

understood. . . In the case of human development. . . we still do not understand the biological/psychological principles involved" (p. 113).

Finally, a third assumption of much emergentist theorizing in the psychology of persons that constitutes a challenge to existing models of emergentism in natural science concerns the holistic nature of psychological personhood. For many purposes, it makes little sense to talk about self-efficacy, intentional self-influence, self-understanding, or personal identity as properties or aspects of personhood in the absence of persons per se. Such "parts" cannot exist on their own in the way that atoms can exist and/or be thought about separately from molecules. Whereas ontological emergence in physical science focuses on properties and powers that can be isolated from their social and psychological contexts, the phenomena of personhood require those contexts for their very existence.

In summary, the assumptions of relational entities, dual biophysical– psychological and sociocultural–psychological emergence, and emergent holism that typify much emergentist theorizing in the area of personhood present serious challenges to existing conceptions of emergence, as these have been developed in analytic philosophy of physical science.

Levels of Reality

With respect to framing an ontology of emergent personhood, the major gap in most contemporary emergentist theorizing is the failure to include or consider the sociocultural level of reality as a constitutive source of the phenomena of personhood. As O'Connor and Wong (2002) have noted, the sociocultural level of reality only rarely is added to the standard emergentist ontological framework of levels of reality that consists of the physical, chemical, biological, and psychological. However, when the sociocultural is considered in relation to these other levels of reality, it is possible to envision an ontological framework that might better serve the theoretical aspirations of emergentist theorists in the psychology of personhood.

Phylogenesis

In his seminal emergentist theorizing, Mead (1934) outlined a kind of dual emergence during phylogenesis. For Mead, human physiological requirements for mind, intelligence, and reflective consciousness were products of biological evolution, whereas the actual functioning of mind, intelligence, and reflective consciousness required a process of historical, social evolution focused on the collective activity of groups of human individuals with respect to the production of sociocultural organizations, practices, and tools. More recently, Donald (2001), although certainly not the first to do so, has developed Mead's basic idea further. Donald's emergentism with respect to consciousness and mind is placed firmly at the intersection of biological and social evolution. He argues that the evolution of the human brain,

especially with respect to its significantly greater size, represents no fundamental redesign of the basic modules of the primate brain. Instead, this relatively straightforward expansion of an existing primate brain design involving seemingly minor phylogenetic variation on the apes allowed humans to develop in close symbiosis with their cultural activities and accomplishments.

Donald argues that the anatomical regions of the primate brain that expanded most noticeably were those associated with consciousness and executive functioning, affording a superplasticity in overall brain functioning. This superplasticity developed in interaction with the activities of human beings in sociocultural contexts that evolved historically in ways that made escalating demands on exactly this kind of brain capability. In short, such a brain allowed human natural selection and evolution to become tethered to culture. "Our remarkable evolutionary drive was presumably sustained by the many advantages of having a collective mentality, and our brains went through a series of modifications that gave them this strong cultural orientation" (p. 259). "The human brain is the only brain in the biosphere whose potential cannot be realized on its own" (p. 324).

On Donald's (2001) neo-Meadean account, human persons emerge phylogenetically from dynamic, ongoing interactions over long periods of time between biologically evolving human beings and their sociocultural contexts, wherein lie embedded "layer upon layer of tacit or implicit knowledge in a cultural network" (p. 324). "Fate has given us this hybrid nature, by which we are joined to communities of our own invention" (p. 326). With such a general understanding in mind, an appropriate ontology of personhood in phylogenesis would seem to consist of a psychological/personal level of reality nested at the intersection of jointly evolving and interacting biological and sociocultural levels of reality, all housed within the physical and chemical world.

In such an ontological framework, it is also possible to hold that different processes of emergence may operate at different levels of the overall system. For example, Emmeche, Køppe, and Stjernfelt (1997, 2000) have proposed that:

> the processes involved in the first-time emergence of the biological level [from the physical/chemical] differ not only materially but also in a formal ontological way from the processes that constitute the psychological and the sociological level: for the latter two, involving the emergence of self-consciousness and institutions, these level-constituting processes are interwoven and depend on both intersubjectivity and language, while for the biological level, they depend upon specific conditions at one single level, the physical one (leading to the evolution of first cells). (p. 15)

However, as Donald (2001) claims, once both biological and sociocultural levels of reality are emergent, their dynamic interplay is the site of those emergent processes most critical to the formation and evolution of persons. Moreover, it is important to recognize that it is individual and collective human activity within the biophysical and sociocultural world that forces this dynamic interplay. What this seemingly obvious, but nonetheless profound, observation makes clear is that the locus of evolution of persons is human activity in the biophysical and sociocultural world. It is not in the evolving brain or in historically developing culture except as these are linked through human activity.

Ontogenesis

In ontogenesis, the ontological framework assumed by the psychological theories of emergent personhood considered here need not be concerned with the first time emergence of the human biological and cultural requirements and constituents of persons. In ontogenesis, human infants are born as members of a biologically evolved species of *Homo sapiens* into existing societies and cultures with historically established traditions, practices, and worldviews. Given this state of affairs, it is obvious that ontogeny cannot recapitulate phylogeny in any strict sense. Nonetheless, in terms of levels of reality and their assumed interactions and relations, there are some similarities across phylogenetic evolutionary patterns and ontogenetic developmental scenarios. Perhaps the most important is human activity in the world as the site of the emergence of personhood in both cases.

In ontogenesis, persons are developmentally emergent (both temporally and ontologically) from the practical activity of biological human beings in the physical and sociocultural world (cf. Archer, 2000; Martin et al., 2003b). Given such worldly activity, psychological personhood emerges both substantively and relationally. Infants actively explore their surroundings, observing and touching themselves, others, and things, and being observed and touched by others. Such prelinguistic, practical activity bestows a primitive, preconceptual sense of self (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Caregivers and others interact with developing infants in ways that provide relational practices, forms, and means of personhood and identity extant within particular societies and cultures. Psychological development proceeds as these appropriated sociocultural linguistic and relational practices are employed as bases for private language and eventually for thought and reflection (Vygotsky, 1986). This ongoing sociocultural, relational constitution of the psychological tools and understandings required for personhood is accompanied by enabling and more substantive processes of biophysical maturation and adaptation.

Over time, the individual's activity in the world is transformed from one of prereflection to one in which reflective, intentional agency emerges and fosters a self-understanding and personal identity linked to one's particular existence and personal history of activity. Such psychological continuity imbues an individual life with meaning and significance. Open to the lifeworld, the psychological person emerges as an embodied being with deliberative agency, self-understanding, and personal identity defined by commitments and concerns associated with his/her particular existence and activity in the world (Martin et al., 2003b). Such an emergentist scenario in ontogenesis seems generally consistent with the shared claims and additional assumptions noted above. With respect to those claims that are somewhat disputed, the functional, historical approaches of Bickhard (1992, 1999) and Martin et al. (2003b), minus the pervasive naturalism of Bickhard's position, are perhaps most thoroughly integrated into this scenario. However, there is little here that should be objectionable to either Bandura (1997, 2001) or Brandtstädter and Lerner (1999). The ontology of personhood in ontogenesis may be understood in terms of a psychological/personal level of reality nested at the intersection of dynamically interacting biological and sociocultural levels of reality within the physical

and chemical world. It is human activity in the biophysical and sociocultural world that creates the dynamic sites at and through which personhood emerges. Personal development in ontogenesis is not to be found in biologically developing and maturing human beings alone, nor is it located in their sociocultural settings and relations. Rather, it lies in the linkage of biophysical beings with their sociocultural settings, routines, and conventions through activity.

Concluding Comment

Recent psychological theorizing about the emergence of persons makes a number of ontological claims that are not always explicit. An examination and elaboration of such claims reveals both significant convergence and some points of disagreement across different psychological theories of emergent personhood. All such theories resist the reduction of persons to biophysical or sociocultural conditions and processes. However, they also make assumptions that render standard emergentist accounts in physical science and the philosophy of physical science somewhat incomplete as viable accounts of the ontological emergence of psychological persons. The key to understanding these emergentist proposals lies in the recognition of the sociocultural level of reality as nonreductionistically constitutive of important aspects of personhood, without denying the necessity of comparatively more substantive biophysical requirements of personhood. It is human activity in the biophysical and sociocultural world that enables both the substantive and relational emergence of persons within this worldly context, in both phylogenesis and ontogenesis. However, the theoretically dual nature of such emergence should not lead to the positing of strongly dualistic conceptions of persons. Rather, persons are simultaneously biophysical and sociocultural creations, who because of the meaningfulness, significance, and agency that attend human activity in the world are irreducible to their biophysical and sociocultural origins. Such irreducibility does not make psychological science or practice impossible, but does suggest that psychologists must not ignore the agency of persons active in sociocultural contexts of meaning and significance that cannot be reduced to enabling physical, chemical, and biological levels of reality.

Chapter 6
John Macmurray's Philosophy of the Personal and the Irreducibility of Persons

Much post-Enlightenment science and philosophy expresses the doubt that personhood has any distinctive ontological standing. No matter how profound our awareness and experience of ourselves as persons may seem, personhood is denied status as real and explained in terms of some aspect of reality taken to be more fundamental to existence. On this view, we humans are not qualitatively unique from other entities comprising the natural world. In the same way that water consists of molecules composed of hydrogen and oxygen atoms, our thoughts, actions, and experiences are said to reduce to underlying material states and processes of our brains and bodies. Personhood and the experience of agentive freedom and moral responsibility that accompany it are illusory and reducible to biology, neurophysiology, computational and other machine mechanisms, or even as the fabrication of disembodied systems of linguistic and social practice. Thus, while we might wish to preserve the convenience of describing ourselves as persons who make choices and who act on those choices based on a sense of what is good, appropriate, practical, or reasonable, and who can be called to moral account for the choices and actions they make, such descriptions bear no ontic implications whatsoever. They are little more than superstitions that inevitably will be dispelled by scientific advance.

As many detractors of this view have alleged, however, attempts to reduce agentive personhood in the foregoing ways disfigure human life such that it becomes unrecognizable. Freedom of choice and action, for instance, is so pervasive a background assumption in modern societies that it is difficult to imagine how human individual and collective life could function without it. One such critic, whose work almost entirely has escaped attention by disciplinary psychology, is twentieth-century Scottish philosopher, John Macmurray.[1] Macmurray's speculative philosophy, with its distinctively developmental account of personhood, stands in striking contrast to the analysis of logic and language that occupied much of British philosophy during the last century. Macmurray argued that human reality is not intelligible as a derivative from more fundamental material or organic categories and only can be understood properly in terms of personhood. He saw the pressing

[1] For notable exceptions where Macmurray's work has been applied to developmental psychology see Furth (1982), Reddy and Morris (2004), and Trevarthen (2002).

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task for philosophy as articulating "the form of the personal" or, more specifically, those aspects in which persons differ from other existents. This task seemed to him urgent both theoretically and practically. For without any clear conception of personhood, he feared that the psychological sciences were susceptible to developing deficient and potentially damaging accounts of human nature, while politics was likely to be misguided and possibly destructive.

Macmurray asserted the metaphysical and epistemological primacy of action over reflection and located the seeking and acquisition of knowledge in the active and differentiating engagement of persons with the world. While Macmurray claimed that thought is derivative of action, he also held that the human individual not only is an intentional agent who chooses and constructs experience through action, but also a person who exists, from birth, in dynamic interaction with other persons, and whose particular kind of self-consciousness arises as a consequence of embeddedness in human relations. It is important to note that by personal, Macmurray does not mean private. Personal existence, in Macmurray's interpretation, is a relational becoming, an ongoing agentive activity in which we are constituted mutually by and with each other as persons. Personhood is created in an ever-present and pervasive relational dynamic by which we become present to ourselves and to each other.

A mature expression of Macmurray's ideas is found in the publication of his 1953–1954 Gifford Lectures, delivered collectively under the title *The form of the personal*, and published as two volumes: *The self as agent* (1957) and *Persons in relation* (1961). As Macmurray summarizes his thesis: "Against the assumption that the Self is an isolated individual, I have set the view that the Self is a *person*, and that personal existence is *constituted* by the relation of persons" (1957, p. 12). In this chapter, Macmurray's ideas are summarized and examined with particular interest in his emphasis on persons as agents, the developmental aspects of his philosophy of the personal, his claim that our self-awareness as persons is acquired from the mutuality of personal relations, and his important contribution in placing personhood at the center of any inquiry into human existence. Subsequently, in light of Macmurray's ideas, it will be argued that the ontology of psychological personhood so construed is irreducible to physical, biological, or social categories frequently deemed by psychologists as more fundamental and, further, that psychological capacities and their development are best understood in terms of the personal.

Human Agency and the Form of the Personal

The innovation of Cartesian philosophy was to make one's own reflections, and human reason by which they are accomplished, the starting point for proof of existence. While recognizing Descartes' feat in overturning metaphysics and epistemology, Macmurray argues that unduly privileging thought over action misconstrues the relation between self and world. The self no longer is part of the world

it seeks to know, but rather stands over and against it as an independent knowing subject. Conceiving the self as the center of experience, capable of retreating from its own activity in order to arrive at a knowledge of itself and the world, renders thought inherently private and insinuates methodological individualism, while making mysterious relations between mind and body, mind and matter, and subjective and objective, as well as the existence of other minds. These problems are well known. According to Macmurray, the self is a person who by virtue of an embodied agency never can be extricated from his/her actions and the world in which they occur. Human existence, he insists, is foremost and always, action. Action is the condition of possibility for reflection. Thought depends on our being embodied agents, whose actions in the world are the origin of all our sensations, perceptions, feelings, and interests.

In Macmurray's formulation, human agency is a constitutive feature of all our worldly involvements and a distinguishing characteristic of personhood. However, human agency is not something that can be derived theoretically. Our agency only is accessible as the practical reality we experience in living. But while agency resists capture by theory, Macmurray does not see why this should cause us to grant epistemological priority to theoretical reflection. If we examine the phenomenology of immediate experience, knowledge of ourselves as active agents interacting dynamically with each other and with the world is at least as well founded as knowledge of ourselves as thinking subjects for whom the world is an object.

It is important to note that Macmurray does not wish to diminish the importance of thought. His point is that action is a more fundamental and inclusive concept. In acting, our sensations, perceptions, judgments, and physical movements are melded together in a functional unity. By contrast, thought excludes physical activity and, as it becomes increasingly abstract, tends to discount sensation and perception. The functional unity of human experience is not a unity of thought. It is a unity of personal activities of which thinking is one aspect. Consequently, Macmurray seeks to shift the center of philosophical gravity from the self-as-knower for whom the world is an object to the self-as-agent participating in the life of the world. The implication of transposing the basis for philosophical inquiry, is that to comprehend personhood, in Macmurray's words, "We should substitute the I do for the I think as our starting point and centre of reference, and do our thinking from the standpoint of action" (1957, p. 84).

Attempting to reveal conditions of possibility for action, Macmurray begins with the proposition that action requires a material world on which agents can act. In turn, for action to occur, the agent must also be a material entity. While a material world and agentive embodiment are conditions necessary for action, this does not mean, however, that human agentive action is reducible to material or organic events. Macmurray stipulates a distinction between events and acts. Unlike material or organic events, which have nonvolitional causes, acts are intentional and thus require agents as their source. What is more, the uniquely human capacity to act according to our intentions and choices makes our actions self-initiated in a way that material or organic events are not. Persons not only are capable of acting, but

also are capable of an awareness of their actions as having real causal force in the world, and of making choices and forming intentions accordingly.

In characterizing the intentionality of acts, Macmurray is concerned to make clear that intentions and choices are not antecedent mental events that cause actions, but are themselves features of action. He also aims to establish that from the standpoint of action, all thinking and psychological development is related to purposes that arise within the basic condition of human life as the embodied agentive activity of persons. Our psychological development as persons consists in expanding the reach of our agency by attempting to know the nature and value of what we encounter in the world. What becomes intelligible as knowledge issues from action. At the same time, however, action is informed by knowledge and as knowledge increases, there is a corresponding increase in the possibilities for intentional action.

It should be clear that Macmurray's philosophy is unabashedly realist. In thinking, the objects of thought are made determinate, but this determination makes no difference to the objects themselves. By contrast, our actions can affect the objects on which we act and ourselves in acting on them. Our actions are made possible and constrained by a real world and the real features of human agents as worldly existents. However, at the same time, if we truly are agents whose actions actually make a difference in the world, the world must not be predetermined, and the future, open-ended. As Macmurray explains:

> in action we presuppose that we determine the world by our actions. The correlative of this freedom is that the world which we determine in action must be indeterminate, capable of being given a structure that it does not already possess. We can only know a determinate world; we can only act in an indeterminate world. (1957, p. 55)

In Macmurray's metaphysics, the world in which we act is not fixed and universal, but rather mutable, particular, and contingent. Such a world is required for human freedom. Our ability to act intentionally is not a matter of logic, but one of freedom. Freedom is not a principle. It is a practical reality expressed in action by forming intentions and attempting to achieve them. However, because freedom is realized in action, it is subject to the particular possibilities and constraints imposed by our worldly circumstances.

Human Relations and the Form of the Personal

Reconceptualizing the self as agent is a crucial ingredient in Macmurray's philosophy of the personal. However, equally important are his claims "that the Self is constituted by its relation to the Other; that it has its being in its relationship; and that this relationship is necessarily personal" (1961, p. 17). Macmurray avers that it is only by virtue of our relations with others that the development of psychologically capable persons takes place. Personhood arises not solely because we are agents but, moreover, because we exist as agents among other agents. We are "persons in relation," inextricably embedded in a nexus of social relations with others,

and it only is through such relations that we come to know ourselves to exist and develop psychologically.

Macmurray rejects the Aristotelian influence in theories that presume human development can be comprehended by way of biological and organic metaphors. Aristotle held that we are born animal organisms who become rational and acquire character through the adaptive ordering and selective cultivation of natural impulses and potentialities. As in Macmurray's time, this view is still widely promulgated as evidenced by common descriptions of humans as animals and organisms, human action as adaptation, societies as organic structures, and the history of social advance as an evolutionary process. The error Macmurray attempts to repair is that by conceiving human existence as biological and organic, the Aristotelian view mistakenly disregards a social environment saturated with the intentional purposes and actions of others on whom our survival and development is entirely dependent. The environment into which we are born, "is not a natural habitat but a human creation, an institution providing in advance for human needs, biological and personal, through insight and artifice" (1961, p. 49). We survive and develop by learning to conform to an order created by the intentions of others. All developments that orient and give form to infantile life are instigated by the intentions of others who equip the infant to become not just a surviving organism but a member of a personal community. From birth, our caregivers understand and respond to us as persons, and by so doing initiate us into personhood.

Human existence depends on thought and action. However, infants can neither think nor act. They are born utterly helpless and quickly perish without care. For their lives they depend on the thoughts and actions of others. As Macmurray observes, it is not the infant's ability to adapt effectively to its circumstances that are key to its survival. Quite conversely, it is a complete absence of ability to do so that creates the relation of dependence essential to securing the infant's life. Our survival and development takes shape as a relation of dependence inscribed by individual and collective intentions. This relation of dependence is most evident in infancy and early childhood. Infants are dependent on a mother or other caregiver who creates a shared existence in the effort to sustain them. In Macmurray's description, the infant "lives a common life as one term in a personal relation" (1961, p. 50). We enter personhood not as already integral individuals, but as an aspect of personal relatedness and coexistence.

The life of the newborn takes shape largely through the intentions of the primary caregiver whose ministrations regulate feeding and sleeping. In contrast to animal offspring, which quickly and instinctively adapt to their environments, human infants develop more gradually by acquiring skills. As Macmurray delineates, skills are learned hierarchically. Lower-level skills are prerequisite for higher-level skills, and complexes of skills often need to form before the child's behavior becomes fully functional. For example, it takes considerable time before an infant learns to crawl and subsequently to walk. Further, the infant's new mobility is not immediately adaptive. On the contrary, it puts him/her at increased risk and heightens the need for parental supervision. Macmurray contends that even the most rudimentary of skills involving sensory perception and movement must be learned. The first

skills acquired are concerned with perception and the use of the senses, such as discriminating colors and shapes, distinguishing and making sounds, and correlating sight and touch. Once a particular skill is learned, the child's attention shifts to the acquisition of a new skill, which entails skills previously learned.

As development proceeds, what appears is an integrated assemblage of skills gained through conscious learning, many of which eventually become habitual and prereflective. Practical activity is mainly prereflective and occurs for the most part automatically. However, when our actions are impeded or interrupted, reflective activity arises, and this occasions the conscious acquisition of new skills. Most important among the skills we acquire is speech, which enhances not only our powers of expression, but also our capacity for understanding. However, the most salient aspect of speech, according to Macmurray, is that it permits us to enter into reciprocal communication that facilitates the sharing of experience and furthers the acquisition of skills. The unique capacities of persons found in the development of skills are not the manifestation of genetic endowment, but rather are forged in the commerce of human social and linguistic relations.

Macmurray disputes that skills, such as those involved in symbolic communicative activity, begin as instincts and become something else that continues to serve biology or evolution. All human activities belong to the form of personal reality. For example, an infant's expressions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, preceding speech, are more than indicators of biological adjustment to a caregiver. They exist, Macmurray defends, for their own sake. The point Macmurray is pressing is what he takes to be a significant difference between biological and personal development reflected in the ability to direct movement and skill for the sake of the personal as an end in itself. As Macmurray (1961) expounds:

> There is from the beginning an element of symbolic activity involved which has no organic or utilitarian purpose, and which makes the relationship, as it were, an end in itself. The relationship is enjoyed, both by mother and child, for its own sake. The mother not only does what is needful for the child: she fondles him, caresses him, rocks him in her arms, and croons to him; and the baby responds with expressions of delight in his mother's care which have no biological significance. These gestures symbolize a mutual delight in the relation which unites them in a common life: they are expressions of affection through which each communicates to the other their delight in the relationship, and they represent, for its own sake, a consciousness of communicating. (p. 63)

Knowledge is acquired by making discriminations. However, initially, knowledge of the Other is undiscriminated as a correlate of the infant's activity. As infants we are unable to act, and the caregiver who acts on our behalf is undifferentiated in the unity of infantile experience. In Macmurray's analysis, caregiver and infant bond in an "I-You" relation that unites them in a personal existence. The original reference of the act of existing is the Other, and our actions and experiences always carry in their structure this original reference. The Other first appears to us in the presence and absence of care, as "What responds to my cry" (1961, p. 76). The infant's first discrimination is that of the caregiver, whose intermittent tactual presence in response to the infant's cries, registers a very basic recognition of the caregiver's repetitive pattern of withdrawal and return. This seeds the development of memory

and expectation. As the infant's awareness expands, the presence of the caregiver becomes an expectation stirred by memory. In waiting, the past is imagined in order to recover the sense of security experienced previously in being touched and held.

In time, the Other is discriminated into the different persons who interact with the child and with each other. This array of persons takes on the character of a community to which the child senses himself/herself belonging. The differentiation of things from persons follows from the discrimination of persons, ensuing much later, and only when the child's capacities have been augmented significantly by speech and abstract thought. Macmurray is adamant that we do not arrive at knowledge of the personal from the personification of the nonpersonal. It is from knowledge of an originary personal world that we come to depersonalize and discriminate inanimate things. Initially, material objects are perceived as extensions or attributes of persons, and it is sometime before they are understood as having an existence of their own and indifferent to us.

All knowledge, according to Macmurray, begins with distinguishing the presence and absence of the Other. Development flows from the necessary and universal rhythm of withdrawal and return, which becomes incorporated inextricably into personal existence. Recognition of this pattern not only leads to early awareness of succession, expectancy, refusal, and reconciliation, but also eventually gives rise to distinctions such as those between fantasy and reality, true and false, right and wrong, and good and bad. Macmurray also traces two basic human motives of love and fear implicit in feelings of comfort and discomfort and associated with the rhythm of withdrawal and return. The sense of comfort while being soothed and cared for, expressed by the infant's delight, is the germinal form of love, while the sense of discomfort expressed in the cry for the caregiver is implicitly the fear of isolation and death. Macmurray further detects a third motive, hate, the frustration of love by fear that stems from feelings of abandonment and rejection directed toward the caregiver whose absence threatens the infant's existence. These motives orient the self toward others. It is important to note, however, that motives do not determine action. Action is intentional, and thus it is the actor who determines which motives to pursue. Nevertheless, Macmurray considers these three motives as original in that they are founded in our earliest formative mutual relation and are the root of all further intentional and relational action.

Macmurray details how in attempting to comprehend and cope with the dependency of motives and needs on a nurturant but resistant personal world, the child is compelled to make these intellectual and moral distinctions. It also is from within this tension that self-consciousness emerges. Self-awareness is realized by resisting, opposing, and contrasting ourselves with our caregivers who attempt to impose their intentions on us. We discover ourselves and recognize our agency in the resistance provided by others and the conflict of wills that ensues.

Macmurray dismisses the idea of an agent capable of generating self-awareness in cognitive isolation. Awareness of ourselves as agents is not given, nor do we arrive at it by logic, subsequently hypothesizing or deducing others also exist. We first become aware of the existence of others and that our existence depends on them; self-awareness follows. We come to know ourselves to exist through our dynamic

relation with the Other who both supports and limits us. The awareness of the Other begins with an experience of resistance. This resistance is felt tactually by touching and being touched, as well as in experiencing the presence of others who obstruct our movements. The world and other persons resist our actions and act on us, and in so doing create a relational context of possibility and constraint in which intentional personal agency can be made manifest and develop. Resistance to our actions supports and guides individual development. If not for this opposition, it is difficult to see how we ever would come to recognize ourselves in existence or apprehend our agentive purposes.

So vital is the personal interrelatedness of human life that without it, Macmurray remarks, any knowledge whatsoever would not be possible, including knowledge of our own existence. Our first knowledge is that of the Other, and this awareness is the presupposition for all successive development. Macmurray surmises that knowledge of the Other is an existential given, not an implication or conclusion that can be drawn theoretically by the analysis of an independent knowing subject. Macmurray states:

> If we did not know that there are other persons we could know literally nothing, not even that we ourselves existed. To be a person is to be in communication with the Other. The knowledge of the Other is the absolute presupposition of all knowledge, and as such is necessarily indemonstrable. (p. 77)

Macmurray maintains that self-consciousness is created in the ongoing and ever-present dynamic exchange by which we make ourselves present to each other. Self-consciousness emerges and develops as a kind of mutual self-revelation that transpires only within the context of relationship. By revealing and contrasting ourselves in relation, we convey our appreciation of the Other's unique significance to us and, in so doing, participate in their self-constitution. The child discovers himself/herself through the caregiver, who communicates the child's significance. The caregiver interacts with the child, not simply as a being requiring the fulfillment of needs, but as a being of value: a person. The child becomes present to himself/herself only by first becoming present to the caregiver who communicates the nature and significance of the child's presence back to the child. In this way, the child discovers herself as the object of the caregiver's intentional activity. At the same time, the child responds to the caregiver with love, and in the child's expressions, the caregiver is informed of his/her significance and value as caregiver. It is not simply that our personhood is constituted in relation with others. It is constituted in the mutuality of self-revelation. Personhood is mutual in its very being, and we remain forever embedded in the mutuality of the "I and You" relation of which we are part, but from which we strive to distinguish ourselves.

> The 'You and I' relation... constitutes the personal, and both the 'You' and the 'I' are constituted, as individual persons by the mutuality of their relation. Consequently, the development of the individual person is the development of his relation to the Other. Personal individuality is not an original given fact. It is achieved through the progressive differentiation of the original unity of the 'You and I'. (1961, p. 91)

The mutuality of self-revelation extends developmentally well beyond the caregiver-child dyad. Macmurray focuses on the caregiver-child relation because he sees it as the most obvious and transparent presentation of the form of personal development. The mutuality of self-revelation permeates individual development throughout the many and varied relations we encounter over the course of our lives. In addition, Macmurray interprets the caregiver as reflecting the historical expression of a personal community in a way that links the "You and I" relation across time. However, Macmurray is clear that, in his view, this linking exists and is realized only in the activities of agents. There is no social structure or system that has purposes or ontological standing apart from its manifestation in the activities of the persons of which it is comprised. Societies consist of persons, persons are agents, and personal agency exists and develops in relation.

Macmurray submits that the goal of personal development is not ultimately to dissolve our dependence on others. Rather, it is to achieve "a mutual interdependence of equals" (1961, p. 66). In Macmurray's view, not only does the form of the personal emerge as a mutuality for its own sake, but the mutual interdependence of equals found in friendship is the highest form of relation. The relation expressed in real friendship is heterocentric; that is, each person acts principally for the benefit of the other, rather than out of self-interest. Friendship is not founded on common purposes, but rather stems from genuine mutual concern and the enjoyment that friends take in being together. To consider what purpose a friendship serves is to put it into question and cast doubt on its authenticity.

Clearly, often it is the case that friendships have practical features and entail individual purposes. However, Macmurray's point is that such purposes grow out of the friendship; they do not define it. When such concerns and purposes are articulated and elaborated in the context of friendship, they are expressive of it and can elicit the kind of heterocentricity that deepens the bond.

In acting for the betterment of each other, both persons are enabled to see themselves as worthy of respect and concern and realize themselves as equals. Further, because their intention is born of a motive of love, not fear, each is extended the opportunity to express his/her agency and be authentically him- /herself. Macmurray interprets friendship and freedom not as opposites, but rather as complementary. In friendship, the flourishing of the relationship nurtures the enrichment of the individual, while, at the same time, the flourishing of individuals contributes to enriching the relationship. In Macmurray's heterocentric ethics, self-fulfillment is won by intending the fulfillment of others.

Human fulfillment only can be realized by persons in relation, and the degree of fulfillment each of us is capable of achieving is relative to that attained by others. We can only be ourselves to the extent that we are included as members of a community of others and the extent to which individual and collective significance is elaborated and communicated among its members. Macmurray advocates that the development and fulfillment of persons is the common good and poses the ideal of a personal community as one in which friendship, and the equality and freedom it permits, is offered unreservedly to each member. Only within a community of personal mutuality, in which all agents act with heterocentric intentions toward

creating a fellowship of humankind, can the fulfillment of all occur. As Macmurray encapsulates his philosophy of the personal: "All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action, and all meaningful action is for the sake of friendship" (1957, p. 15).

Implications for a Psychology of the Personal

Macmurray's philosophy of the personal implores psychologists to treat seriously the concept of personhood for, in his view, the human condition is founded on, and only can be understood in terms of, a distinctively personal reality. Macmurray asserts there just is no other ontological category that can be employed to comprehend human reality as it exists in personhood. In fact, according to Macmurray, it is the personal that lends intelligibility to all facets of human existence and experience. The personal is the source of all metaphors and categories of human understanding. All our modes of understanding are derivative from our constitution as persons within our worldly existence. We cannot grasp what it is to be human from some place beyond our own existence as persons because any description or explanation we are capable of rendering always is availed from the point of view of a participant in human life. Thus, the discipline of psychology does not supersede persons, but rather belongs to the history of personhood as one of the ways human beings have developed for interpreting themselves as persons (Danziger, 1997b). In this light, the subject matter of psychology and psychological development is concerned with personhood, and psychological inquiry must take personhood seriously in ways that preserve its form and do not reduce it to something it is not.

Macmurray's explication of the twin pillars of personhood—agency and relation—illuminates features of personal existence that need to be considered in any adequate psychological explanation. His emphatic appeal to regard agency as a vital feature of persons antedates and is supported by many contemporary proposals for its indispensability in psychological accounts (e.g., Bandura, 1997, 2001; Greenwood, 1991; Harré & Gillet, 1994; Howard, 1994; Jenkins, 1997; Martin et al., 2003b; Rychlak, 1999; Slife, 1994; Williams, 1992). Human agency is an ineluctable fact of the human condition. The belief that we are possessed of the freedom to make choices and to act intentionally in ways that make a difference in our lives is imperative to functioning with others in our everyday activity. In the absence of an understanding of ourselves as agents, it is difficult to conceive of ourselves as morally responsible for our actions and justly deserving of praise or blame, let alone actively influencing the course of our lives in any meaningful way. In sum, any understanding of what it means to be human seems to require the idea that we are capable of choice and of intentionally initiating actions in the context of a future that is open to us and not predetermined.

Attempts to reduce human agency in terms of biological, neurophysiological, or computational models are fated to fall short because such models are unable to account for themselves as the product of intentional agentive activities. Simply put, there is no way to explicate intentional human agency within these models because

they presume precisely what it is they set out to explain. Even if psychologists were to articulate a biophysical explanation of human individual and collective activity, the resources from which such an account would draw meaning are the very linguistic and other sociocultural relational activities it was attempting to explain. Further, as argued in Chapter 2, because the meanings and forms of sociocultural practices are not static but change over historical time, such meanings and forms cannot be fully determinate of human activity (also see Martin & Sugarman, 1999a, 1999b).

This is not to say that sociocultural relations and practices do not play a constitutive role in personal psychology. Both biophysical and sociocultural conditions are necessary for personhood. The psychological reality of persons (e.g., expectations, memories, intentions, and experiences) emerges as a consequence of the immersion and participation of embodied human agents in the societies and cultures into which they are born, and within which they develop. Macmurray demonstrates clearly how this is the case. He shows us not only the influence of human relationships, but also what is crucial about them. In Macmurray's depiction, the intentional nature of the sociocultural world is vital to our survival and development. Persons are defined by their relationality, and only come to survive and develop through intentional relations with others. We enter life through the intentions of others, and self-consciousness takes shape in relation as an individualized appropriation of the consciousness of other persons who convey not only what is significant about us as individuals, but also the socioculturally constituted forms of psychological being and understanding that make up personal existence (i.e., what Macmurray attempts to convey with the concept of skills). The sense of individual independence most of us inevitably achieve is a collaborative developmental accomplishment forever imbued with its relational origins and ensues only by appropriating the sociocultural practices and traditions maintained and taught us by others. Thus, the psychological reality of persons is both made possible and constrained by relations steeped in sociocultural beliefs and practices.

Macmurray argues that the presence and active involvement of others is necessary if we are to develop the uniquely relational and intentional agentive features of personhood. An impersonal biophysical environment is insufficient for such development to occur. There are no impersonal biophysical existents singly or in combination capable of exerting the kind of causal force that would engender those features (Martin et al., 2003b). This implies that the form of the personal, particularly given its relational and psychological characteristics, transcends the impersonal reality of the biophysical world. Further, if sociocultural forms and practices are not biological or physical entities, and can exist and be transformed only as a consequence of the actions of persons, then personhood cannot be reduced as an artifact of sociocultural practices and conventions. Given this irreducibility of personhood to its biophysical and sociocultural origins, it is reasonable to propose that personhood warrants distinctive ontological, not just phenomenological, status.

If we entertain Macmurray's proposals seriously, persons-acting-in-the-world is an irreducible reality, underdetermined by biophysical and sociocultural conditions. As stated earlier in this volume, this underdetermination of human agency does not mean that human intentional actions are undetermined, but that humans are

self-determining such that their choices and intentional actions may, and frequently do, enter into their own determination (Martin et al., 2003b). Persons can and do exercise their agency in ways that are self-determining and that potentially can alter their biophysical and sociocultural surroundings. This feature of self-determination is key to comprehending the unique ontological status of personal existence.

If we concur with Macmurray and are willing to grant unique ontological status to the personal, we must attend to the attributes of human relations by which this ontology is established. The ontology of the form of the personal consists in human agency and the influence of one human agent acting intentionally with another. It concerns the developmental influence of a psychologically capable person on one who is less, or only potentially, capable. What is unique about this relation is the way in which the instructive influence of one who is more psychologically capable enlarges the capacity for self-determination of the other. By contrast, as Shutte (1984) points out, in the realm of impersonal physical and biological causation, the extent to which something can be said to be a causal influence typically is concerned with the way in which it diminishes, not increases, the capacity for internal determination of the thing on which it acts. In impersonal causation, the existent acted on is divested at least partially of its own power of determination. In other words, there is a distinction to be drawn between an increase versus a diminishment of self-determining properties that comes of the intentional and instructive actions of other agents. In the absence of caregivers and the psychological capabilities furnished by their influence, we humans would be less, not more, equipped for self-determination.

While an account of personal ontology grounded in the relational nature of human influence differs greatly from the kinds of causal explanations conceived by the natural sciences, there is no reason why it should be dismissed. How can this reality sensibly be denied? It is difficult to imagine human life without love, admiration, compassion, commitment, respect, contempt, shame, guilt, and the host of other ways in which our lives are lived in and through our relations with others. Only a greatly abstracted and reductive view of the world such as that devised by natural science could cause us to doubt the reality of our relations with others and their profound influence on our actions and experiences. The upshot is that our agentive and relational existence as persons is a reality to which reductive forms of inquiry and explanation, such as those employed by the natural sciences, are poorly suited.

It should be mentioned that Macmurray is not without his critics. Trevarthen (2002) presents evidence suggesting an innate disposition for human companionship and a motive to share in the creation of meaning, alleging Macmurray underestimates the degree to which infants are born ready to engage others. Parsons (2002) finds inadequacy with Macmurray's understanding of gender differences and his neglect of the relation women have with infants prior to birth. Others suggest that in asserting the primacy of action, Macmurray fails to appreciate fully our ability to adopt the attitude of spectator and distance ourselves intellectually from acting and the objects of reflection (Munk, 1965), and that he disregards an inherent mystery that connects the sign with the signified (Harrison, 2002).

Notwithstanding the foregoing criticism, Macmurray's attempt to articulate the constitutive features of persons and rescue personhood from the shoals of scientific reductionism has received strikingly little treatment, especially given the scope and magnitude of his work. This lack of consideration, while striking, is perhaps not surprising given serious barriers both past and present to a widespread reception of his views. As one biographer has commented, Macmurray was a system builder at a time when "Oxford and Cambridge were the centers of philosophy, and they allowed no place for anything which smacked of metaphysics, system-building, or, for that matter, relevance to social issues" (Conford, 1996, p. 18). Further, the commitment to reductive strategies in scientific psychology has become extremely pervasive. Psychologists have been so persuaded by the methods of natural science and its reductionistic strategies that they seem to prefer to distrust and dismiss their everyday understanding of themselves as persons, rather than use it as a basis for their inquiries. This general temper is a major obstacle to appreciating Macmurray's contribution, though few other thinkers during his time argued more staunchly against it.

Whether or not Macmurray has successfully established a unique ontology for personhood, his thought seems to accord with the actual character of that domain of human existence that matters to us most—our understanding of ourselves as persons and the entire realm of activities and relations in which daily existence consists and against which we gauge the substance and merit of human life. If Macmurray has not captured accurately certain details of psychological development, there can be little doubt he provides a perceptive exploration of the broad contours of the developmental terrain. His thoroughly relational view is a strong counterpoint to highly influential theories of psychological development of the past century founded on nativism, such as those of Freud and Piaget,[2] which construe our relations with others as important, but nonetheless secondary to biology and the invariant developmental sequences it is supposed to generate. In conclusion, whether or not psychologists should follow Macmurray's lead in dramatically reorienting the focus of our discipline, his work legitimately warrants a call for greater attention to personhood and its implications for psychological study and practice.

[2] Here, we follow traditional interpretations of the main works of Freud and Piaget. However, it should be noted that at least some contemporary commentators on these theorists maintain that they both placed considerable emphasis on activity in the social world as an indispensable feature of psychological development (e.g., Chapman, 1999; Russel, 1996).

Part III
Perspectives, Selves, and Persons

Chapter 7
Real Perspectival Selves

Self-studies are important to psychology, understood as the study of human action and experience in the world. For, unlike other animals, humans are uniquely capable of a kind of personhood that, while evolved in a broad Darwinian sense, has proven adept at tethering itself historically to increasingly complex cultures (Donald, 2001). A necessary aspect of such an evolved, culturally sustained personhood has seemed to many to be the psychological self, understood both as a self-conscious first-person perspective (a psychological "I") and as a conceptual self-understanding (a psychological "me"), through which we humans perceive, understand, and act in the world. Since first theorized by William James (1890), some version of this dual-aspect psychological self has been a mainstay of much self-theory and research in the discipline of psychology (e.g., Harré, 1998; McAdams, 1997; Mead, 1934). If both first-person experiences and self-understandings are not to count as real in a way that matters to human life on this planet, psychology dissolves into either physics or sociology, or assumes the status of folk beliefs and practices of interest to historians and cultural anthropologists. Given the current prevalence of antirealist sentiments concerning the self, it is surprising that so few contemporary psychologists appear willing to defend its reality.

The aims of this chapter are to consider critically some contemporary threats to the psychological self and to offer a perspective on selfhood that confronts these challenges. First, strong versions are examined of both naturalist and constructionist positions that threaten the reality of selfhood, and arguments against them are presented. This critical consideration is followed by a conceptualization of selfhood that takes seriously telling aspects of both naturalist and constructionist positions, but in a way that preserves a real self that matters and is influential in human affairs. This self is termed the *perspectival self* because it is built upon a basic sense of first-person perspective that develops further during ontogenesis through appropriation of the perspectives of others and the larger society. A developmental scenario, informed by extant theory and research in social, cultural, and developmental psychology, is then offered in support of the perspectival self thus conceptualized. Finally, the reality of the perspectival self is examined further in the context of the arguments, conceptualizations, and developmental theorizing presented and discussed.

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Against Strong Naturalism and the Illusory Self

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the term "naturalism" was linked to attempts to explain worldly phenomena and events without supernatural assertion. As such, it was associated with liberation from the authoritarian ideologies and practices of the religious and social orders of the day. However, from the second half of the twentieth century to today, naturalism has become more specifically understood as the doctrine that explanations appropriate to natural science should explain all phenomena. In effect, this strong naturalism identifies the physical world with the real world and treats what cannot be expressed in physical, scientific terms as illusory. For example, Daniel Dennett (1991) states that "any such facts as there are about mental events are not among the data of science" (p. 71) and, with respect to phenomenal qualities, writes that "I am denying that there are any such properties" (p. 372). The basic idea is that "everything that exists objectively in the universe must be of a physical nature, and thus must have physical explanations" (Praetorius, 2003, p. 523). Within psychology, some of the consequences of naturalism are that "psychologists are starting to put considerable effort into making their theories and findings consistent with the rest of the natural sciences, including developmental biology, biochemistry, physics, genetics, ecology, and evolutionary biology: Psychology is finally becoming a genuine natural science" (Tooby & Cosmides, 1996, pp. xiv–xv).

Insofar as naturalism draws attention to our existence and status as biological beings under the aegis of physical and biological laws, there is nothing wrong with contemporary naturalism within psychology. The problem lies in the insistence of strong naturalism that we are nothing more than biological beings in a physical world. We are also rational beings capable of developing nonmysterious social and cultural means of interacting within the natural order. There is simply no reason, scientific or otherwise, for treating rational, sociocultural aspects of ourselves as illusory. We do not assume that democracy is illusory if we think of it as entailing social practices such as voting and legislating that go beyond physical descriptions of ballot boxes and senate chambers. Much of the sociocultural world is best thought of as a set of historically achieved social practices and relations. Yet, presumably no one thinks that things like democracy are not real in the sense of not mattering or not exerting significant influences on our everyday conduct.

Selfhood is inconceivable without an appropriately evolved brain and body, but it also is inconceivable without social and cultural embeddedness. We know ourselves not as Cartesian ghosts in machines of meat, but as evolved biological beings immersed in linguistic and other relational practices relevant to personhood. Science itself depends on the existence of selves understood as rational beings with agency that enables them to act on the world in ways that make a difference. If we are only physical objects like other physical objects, how would we know that such a physicalist postulate was true? Truth would have no meaning in a world of physical objects alone. Truth, like self, requires the nonphysical resources of social, cultural practices, including, but not limited to, language.

Psychological selves, as James and others have noted, are simultaneously subjects who think and the objects of some of those thoughts. To hold that this dual status of being both an "I" and a "me" is beyond the explanatory reach of strong naturalism is not to hold that it is beyond the reach of scientific explanation, so long as such explanation is not equated with physicalist explanation (especially of a reductive kind) alone. There is nothing in science that necessitates the treatment of the activities of the human brain and body as sufficient explanations for psychological selfhood. To say that the brain is necessary but not sufficient for selfhood can reasonably be interpreted as meaning that we could not be ourselves without brains, capable of interacting within a worldly context that is both social and physical, in ways determined by a complex of psychological, cultural, and genetic factors. In short, an adequate psychological science does not require that we adopt a strong naturalism that treats our selves as illusory.

In fairness, it should be recognized that many past proponents of strong forms of naturalism with respect to mind and selfhood more recently appear to have modified their positions in light of the now widespread recognition of the indispensability of cultural history and sociocultural practices to the evolution and development of the self. For example, recent works by Dennett (2003) and Pinker (2002) talk about the importance of cultural and social factors in the phylogeny and ontogeny of consciousness, agency, and selfhood. Yet they do so in ways that effectively preserve naturalism by extending its mantle to include the cultural and social factors and practices that they recognize as important to personhood. They then proceed to treat such factors and practices as determined entirely by natural, biophysical phenomena. The result of these moves is to suggest that both historical and contemporary sociocultural practices are somehow natural in the manner of our biophysically evolved bodies and brains. For example, Dennett (2003) attempts to package sociocultural practices as cultural symbionts called memes (Dawkins, 1976), which are then treated as if they are part of the natural world.

> Memes are analogous to genes. What is a meme made of? It is made of information, which can be carried in any physical medium. Genes, genetic recipes, are all written in the physical medium of DNA, using a single canonical language, the alphabet of C, G, A, and T, triplets of which code for amino acids. Memes, cultural recipes, similarly depend on one physical medium or another for their continued existence (they aren't magic), but they can leap around from medium to medium, being translated from language to language, just like. . . recipes! (Dawkins, 1976, p. 176)

Dennett (2003) suggests that human culture can be treated scientifically in much the same way as human biology is treated and also can be expected to yield to the practices of natural science. It also is clear that he intends similar treatment for the self, which is really nothing more than "an infected brain, host to millions of cultural symbionts" (p. 173). But cultures, societies, and selves are not entirely natural, exclusively physical, and fully explicable in these terms. There is nothing strictly natural about most of our cultural artifacts and practices, even though many of them certainly are constrained by what is biophysically possible. Even such possibility itself may be altered in the ongoing dance of evolution and

cultural history, as human actions in the world affect everything from climate to longevity.

Societies and cultures consist, in part, of beliefs, practices, and meanings that are indispensable to selfhood. Such sociocultural phenomena are real and influential in ways that do not depend on any strictly physical properties, processes, or instantiations. There are no adequate physical descriptions of the sociocultural, linguistic practices that are constitutive of our selfhood. To attempt to explain selfhood in purely natural terms is akin to trying to explain the activity of chess players with no consideration of the nonphysical rules and regulations of the game of chess. Moreover, social practices such as routines, conventions, games, and rituals are not exhausted by information alone, anymore than knowing the rules of chess, although absolutely necessary in order to play, equates with the game itself, or the information in a musical score equates with a musical performance.

Against Strong Constructionism and the Fictional Self

The fact that human selves are at least in part historically developed within sociocultural context can, like the fact that human selves require an evolved body and brain, be taken to an extreme. Such an extreme is represented in the views of some postmodern social constructionists to the effect that selves are fictitious products of our social, especially linguistic, practices and nothing more. Whereas strong naturalists regard the human subject as a physical illusion, strong constructionists understand it as an historical myth of European rationalism, one that has become unfortunately coupled with Westerners' conquest of both nature and other humans. Seen in this light, the reason and agency of selfhood can (because of their fictitious nature) and should (because of their sometimes destructive consequences) be given up. Thus, postmodern psychologists like Lovlie (1992, p. 124) talk about the "subject as text" and "the logocentric excesses of Enlightenment rationality," while envisioning a "hyperreality of self-referential signs" (Kvale, 1992, p. 2).

But selves are more than linguistic, sociocultural fictions. Narrative constructions concerning our selves, if they are to function in the way they quite obviously do, need to be about real people with real characteristics. Narrative does not necessarily mean fictional. Yes, we tell stories about our selves, but these stories, if they are to do the work that we require of them, must be anchored in a variety of constraints that keep our self-stories on target. They must be linked to particular bodies in particular life contexts, and these bodies and contexts have a reality that supports and constrains what is permissible in our self-narratives. There is an "in principle" history to particular existence that cannot be entirely eschewed, even if it is "in practice" most often impossible to verify its specific details. Both our physical bodies and historical, sociocultural existences are real and act as real enablers of and constraints on our self-understandings.

There are obviously objective components to the self, including a real embodied human being and a set of understandings concerning the details of the life of this

particular being. As a consequence, we are fully capable of distinguishing between fictitious characters in novels and our selves in real life. The understandings that we develop concerning our experience in the world as embodied beings who view the world from a unique first-person perspective constitute our sense of our selves. Such understandings obviously are made possible by our immersion in an historically established way of life consisting of all kinds of social practices that involve interacting with others. However, such historical, sociocultural constitution of our self-understandings does not mean that our selves thus understood are fictitious. Instead, it is our life experiences as particular embodied beings in specific contexts that enable certain understandings to emerge as central components of our selves. Moreover, such understandings are constrained by those same life experiences and contexts. The fact that much self-understanding is both socioculturally and historically constituted does not mean that it is so ephemeral as to escape conventional, everyday practices of inquiry and reflection, or that it is unconstrained by the reality of those very same sociocultural histories.

Nonetheless, the deconstruction of selfhood by some social constructionists (e.g., Gergen, 1991, 1994) might very well accept the reality of human bodies, brains, and lives, but still reject the reality of the self as a unified inner entity capable of exerting agentive influence that goes beyond relevant sociocultural determinants and practices. Although it is indeed difficult to defend a view of the self as an entirely unified, inner entity, the case for a multiplicity of self-possibilities, and even actualities, should not be overstated. After all, under normal sociocultural constraints, diversity in one's self-displays is not allowed to exceed connectedness in those same displays without raising serious questions concerning the mental health and stability of the person in question. A very considerable degree of multiplicity and diversity in any individual person is readily accommodated in most of our sociocultural practices of personhood, without necessitating a denial that the embodied individual in question is a single self.

It also is important that the self as agent not be denied, as by Gergen (1997) occasionally seems to do when he says things like "we can envision the elimination of psychological states and conditions as explanations of action, and the reconstitution of psychological predicates within the sphere of social processes" (p. 740). Such a denial might be warranted if the necessary historical, sociocultural constitution of selfhood is seen to be totally determining, thus leaving no room for any kind of self-determination by the self as agent. However, such full sociocultural determination is most unlikely. A useful line of argument in this regard is offered by both Greenwood (1991) and Martin et al. (2003b) and was articulated in the second chapter of the current volume. To review, socioculturally governed meanings change over historical time, and such change could not occur if past sociocultural rules, conventions, and practices were fully determining of meaning. Therefore, past sociocultural rules, conventions, and practices cannot be fully determinate of meaningful human action, but must be at least partially open-ended. Sociocultural constitution stops short of determinism. (Constitution, as employed here, also should not be confused with constructionism, even though sociocultural constitution might arise from a process of social construction. The distinction is

that constitution is a kind of relationship that pertains between constituents and that which is constituted by them, but not identical to them. Social construction, on the other hand, is a process whereby collective, social practices are appropriated, transformed, and used as personal, psychological operations and processes (e.g., Harré, 1984)).

If sociocultural rules and practices were fully determinate of meaning, there would be no possibility of changes in meaning to accommodate novel facts or features of reality. Yet, such changes are clearly in evidence, especially in the sociocultural world, which is modified and transformed through historical time. Sociocultural rules and practices do not specify how to proceed beyond structured, consensual situations, but "go on" we do. For example, the current acceptance in many jurisdictions of homosexual families and marriages would have been unthinkable short decades ago, and indicates a shift in the social practices and rules that govern meaningful human action.

If sociocultural rules and practices are not fully determinate of meaning, they cannot be fully determinate of meaningful human action, and therefore cannot exhaustively or solely determine agency. As Sigmund Koch (1999) noted:

> . . . though rules may be guides to action, they cannot be recipes for action.
>
> . . . If rules are determinants of actions, the causal distance is very great and the underdetermination immense. Rules, at best, are templates through which action is somehow squeezed, and in this process of squeezing, the templates themselves are continuously bent and twisted—sometimes in ways that make apparent the need for new ones. (p. 12)

The open-ended nature of conventional social practices and regulations provides for the development of social meaning in relation to novelty and change and also provides for the dynamic development of personal understanding that creates possibilities for action. But such provision is not determination. Somewhat analogous to the way in which scientific theories are underdetermined by evidence, human understandings and interpretations, and the actions they support, are underdetermined by sociocultural practices and regulations (Greenwood, 1991). There always exist different understandings and interpretations that are equivalent with respect to their sociocultural constitution, because such constitution is only partial. If full sociocultural determinism existed, societies and their individual members would be trapped in static systems of meanings, but they are not.

Both strong naturalism and strong constructionism contain important insights, but they push them too far. We humans are simultaneously biophysical and sociocultural creatures, and our psychological selfhood reflects both of these broad constituents. The self as agent is highly influential in the lives of persons within historically established societies and cultures. Such influence is real and significant in a way that cannot be captured by denying the reality of the self, at least as conceptualized and developed herein. Our selves are neither illusory nor fictitious, but real psychological achievements that exert ongoing determining influence in our lives as we go about the business and pleasure of living with others. The conceptual work and developmental theorizing that follow attempt to describe this reality and its attainment during ontogenesis.

The Perspectival Self

The psychological self as both subject ("I") and object ("me") received its earliest formulation from William James (1890) in the famous chapter in his *Principles of psychology* entitled "The Consciousness of the Self." James divided the self into a pure ego (an "I") capable of consciously knowing an empirical self (a "me") through direct observation, but unable to observe itself. Like James, George Herbert Mead (1934) believed that the "I" of the moment leaves a trail of "me's" in its wake. The self as knower only can know memories and acts of past "I's." It cannot know itself in the present, or exactly what it will do in the future. In this way, the self is constantly emergent, made possible by past memories and actions, yet not entirely determined by them. For Mead, the "I" is a unique first-person perspective, yet one that cannot develop outside of a social context. It is only through acting toward ourselves as others act toward us that we are able to become selves at all.

Two aspects of Mead's social psychological theory of the self (1934, 1977) are especially important with respect to the project pursued herein. One of these ideas, already mentioned, concerns the claim that the first-person perspective, often taken as a defining characteristic of selfhood, cannot arise other than through experience of the attitudes, actions, and perspectives of others. The second is that despite the social genesis of self as taking on the perspectives of others, each individual self is nonetheless unique, not only in body, but also in first-person perspective. This follows from the inevitable uniqueness of the totality of social involvements and interactions of a single person over time, but it also is a consequence of the emergent, intersubjective nature of both sociality and the self as a reflection of, and reaction to, that sociality. For Mead, all social situations and the various selves they engender are undetermined and unpredictable to some degree because of the multiple perspectives that social individuals can occupy and because of the necessary uncertainty of the I, as discussed above.

It is remarkable to note the degree of similarity that exists between the work of Mead in America and the currently influential theorizing of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky who lived at roughly the same time. Vygotsky (1978, 1934/1986) also advocated a view of the self as socially constructed through interactions with others. For Vygotsky, the crucial step in the social formation of the self involved the acquisition of capabilities of self-expression and self-reference. The discursive skills required for such capabilities develop in interaction with others already skilled in speaking and acting within the relevant social context. In this context, whenever the infant appears to attempt some intentional act, adults or older children supplement its efforts by interpreting and reacting to the child's actions in ways that initiate the child into the social, linguistic practices of the society. In this way, the unordered mental activity with which infants are neurophysiologically endowed evolves into the structured patterns of mature minds. As part of such socially sponsored development, the child acquires those discursive references to its own activity that permit it to experience and act in the world as an individual self. In this respect, nominal forms of self-reference (such as proper names or nicknames, and first-person pronouns) are thought to be particularly important, as they serve to index

one's experience and action as an embodied person in the socio-temporal space of everyday life. For Vygotsky, language acts as an important tool by means of which individuals interpret social symbols and come to make sense of their inner processes and existence as psychological beings.

More recently, McAdams (1997) has theorized the "I" as the process of being a self, a process that involves grasping what it is like to be a subject as a consequence of conceiving of oneself as a locus of agency and source of experience (cf. Loevinger, 1976). In striving to construct an objective self-conception (a "me"), the subjective self (the "I") looks for unity and purpose in life. This is especially true in contemporary Western societies. In such societies, a considerable premium is placed on expectations for meaningful lives filled with unity and purpose. It therefore is likely that the "me" will evolve as a self-narrative that captures major events in one's life and experience in broad harmony with the main story lines available in the broader society as constrained by the reality of one's unique experience in the world. Of course, the Meadian (Mead, 1934) and Vygotskian (Vygotsky, 1934/1986) idea that our self-understandings ("me's") are appropriated from sociocultural conceptions and practices of personhood is common to many contemporary theories of selfhood (e.g., Martin & Sugarman, 1999a). Yet, as Harré (1998) makes clear, such appropriations always are embodied in particular human beings and are transformed in the context of unique individual experiences in specific historical, sociocultural niches. Consequently, the "I" develops as a unique first-person perspective, and the "me" that it observes is an accumulation of societal practices and understandings of personhood filtered through a continuous lifeline of particular existence, first-person perspective, and experience.

Although there exist considerable differences among various theories of the psychological self that share the general conceptions and assumptions stated here, it is possible to extract from such theories a common view of what might be called the perspectival self. This is a self understood as *an embodied first-person perspective (an "I"), the worldly experiences of which enable a constantly evolving self-understanding (a "me") with sufficient stability and coherence to permit generally effective personal functioning in the biophysical and sociocultural world in which it develops*. (See Baker, 2000, and Hurley, 1998, for recent, related philosophical treatments of the self as an embodied first-person perspective.)

Although the "me" thus understood may fit with certain aspects of constructionism and the "I" with certain aspects of naturalism, both resist untenably strong versions of these doctrines. The understandings that comprise the "me" are mostly appropriated from sociocultural practices of personhood, yet are picked out and transformed by the "I" that is anchored uniquely in a particular biological body and brain, with a singular perspective as part of its worldly engagement and activity. Moreover, as soon will be apparent, this is an "I" that, although uniquely embodied, requires a social context for its development. Such a self (the "I" and the "me") is neither illusory nor fictitious, but has a real ontological status, being both biophysically and socioculturally constituted during ontogenesis in a manner that admits of no supernatural considerations. As such, it functions as a psychological reality

that is amenable to appropriate inquiry practices of psychologists and other social scientists.

The Developmental Emergence of the Perspectival Self

Human ontogenetic development can best be understood as a process in which human beings, through their activities and interactions in the sociocultural and biophysical world, take up the artifacts and practices of their culture. This appropriation eventually makes possible forms of collective and individual activity capable of transforming the very cultural artifacts and practices that are available for appropriation. Socioculturally engendered agentive selves are best thought of as "culture carriers" whose actions in the world serve both to perpetuate and to transform cultural traditions, practices, and ways of thinking, acting, and living (Giddens, 1984). At the same time, these agentive selves owe their very existence and ongoing constitution to the dynamically evolving sociocultural practices and traditions in which they are always embedded. These practices and traditions both constrain and enable the constantly emergent worldly activity of agentive selves throughout the course of individual lives (Bickhard, 1992; Harré, 1984; Martin et al., 2003b).

In ontogenesis, human infants are born as members of a biologically evolved species of *Homo sapiens sapiens* into existing societies and cultures with historically established traditions, practices, and worldviews. Initially, a first-person perspective emerges from the preconceptual worldly activity of a newborn that is biophysically evolved to orient to others. Human infants are social from the very beginning, showing an interest in the faces and behavior of other people (Stern, 1985), and engaging in rhythmic interactions with their caregivers (Trevarthen, 1979), all within minutes of birth. Neonatal mimicking and protoconversation (very initial and primitive forms of orienting and reacting to others) are uniquely human (when compared to the newly born of all other animals) and are also evident very early on. Such behavior, called primary intersubjectivity by Trevarthen (1993), is both preconscious and preconceptual. Within the first 9 months of life, infants actively explore their surroundings, observing and touching themselves, others, and things, and being observed and touched by others. Such prelinguistic, practical activity bestows a primitive, preconceptual sense of first-person perspective (Archer, 2000; Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

By approximately 9 months of age, human infants begin to behave with apparent growing awareness of others as psychological beings, looking where others look, observing how others approach objects and what they do with them, and directing communicative gestures to others, but not to inanimate objects (cf. Tomasello, 1993). In minimal ways, they begin to act toward themselves as others do and to attribute intentionality to others and themselves in early, preconceptual ways (Tomasello, 1999). From this point onward, human infants engage in learning that is not just interpersonal, but increasingly cultural. Of particular importance in this regard is the Meadian process of taking the perspective of others as a

necessary condition for self-consciousness and conceptual self-understanding. For Mead (1934), "self-consciousness involves the individual's becoming an object to himself by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within an organized setting of social relationships" (p. 225). Such developmental milestones can only be acquired in the context of ongoing interactions with others in social contexts. They open up more fully cultural forms of human ontogenetic development in which young children participate with others in joint attentional activities and begin to comprehend and reproduce the intentional actions of others with respect to various material and symbolic artifacts (Tomasello, 1999).

As has been explained already, a first-person perspective first appears in a prelinguistic, preconceptual sense. With the foregoing emergent, socially enabled capabilities in place, language acquisition commences and extends the cultural line of development more efficiently and completely. Mastery of this one special cultural artifact transforms the capabilities and actions of the child. With language, children are able to engage intersubjectively with others and to adopt the communicative conventions of their cultures. Because linguistic symbols are both subjective and perspectival, when children learn to use words and linguistic forms in the manner of adults, they understand that the same objects and events are construed variously in relation to different points of view and communicative purposes. The emergence of enhanced forms of self-consciousness and agentive understanding and capability owes much to the intersubjective, perspectival nature of language and to the communicative exchanges and constructions it makes possible. And, once again, all of this issues from participation with others within human societies and cultures (Kagan, 1984; Stern, 1985; Tomasello, 1999).

Psychological personhood (including selfhood, agency, and identity) emerges both materially and relationally during ontogenesis. Caregivers and others interact with developing children in ways that provide relational practices, forms, and means of personhood and identity extant within particular societies and cultures. Psychological development proceeds as these appropriated sociocultural, linguistic, and relational practices are employed as bases for private language, and eventually for thought and reflection (Vygotsky, 1934/1986). The acquisition of enhanced linguistic capability and social awareness facilitates more complex forms of self-consciousness and conceptual understanding of oneself and others as persons with perspectives of their own that differ from, yet with effort might be coordinated with one's own and the conventions of the broader society (Selman, 1980). This ongoing sociocultural, relational constitution of the psychological tools and understandings required for selfhood is accompanied by enabling and more substantive processes of biophysical maturation, adaptation, and learning (Edelman, 1987).

By their activity in the biophysical and sociocultural world, human beings, who very early in their development come to exercise a first-person perspective, create the dynamic sites at and through which full selfhood emerges. Personal development in ontogenesis is not to be found in biologically developing and maturing human beings alone, nor is it located in their sociocultural settings and relations. Rather, it lies in the linkage of biophysical beings with their sociocultural

settings, routines, and conventions through activity associated with a first-person perspective. Understood in this way, the ontogenetic development of the self moves from a basic, preconceptual form of first-person perspective, made possible by a primary intersubjectivity associated with a primitive social orientation, to a more self-conscious activity in the world. Associated with this more self-conscious activity is a more reflective first-person perspective, together with more conceptual forms of self-understanding. A basic sociality is thus prior to our first-person perspectives, which in turn precede more conceptual forms of self-consciousness and self-understanding.

When ontogenetic development advances into adolescence and beyond, our selfhood becomes increasingly perspectival as we engage in discursive interactions in school and other settings that are mediated by an ever more complex and diverse array of intersubjective and perspectival linguistic symbols, conceptions, and imaginative constructions. Through our participation in educational and other life contexts that provide us with more varied, complex, and multiperspectival "tools of thought and action," we are immersed in ever-widening horizons of sociocultural experience. Problems, perspectives, and ways of life that might be quite distant from what has been personally experienced bring with them a deeper and broader sense of our own situations and life experiences, even as they pull us toward alternative possibilities for our future existence. In all of this, particular perspectival selves acquire a wider view of the world and their place within it. This is an historical, cultural, and contemporary world populated by ideas, debates, problems, issues, and challenges that command attention, and which encourage and enable the cultivation of increasingly complex forms of understanding, acting, and being.

What is Real?

The self described herein is a developmentally emergent, embodied first-person perspective linked to an understanding of particular existence (self-understanding). The conditions for its developmental emergence are an evolved biophysical body/brain active in an historically established sociocultural context of linguistic and other relational practices. The self as a first-person perspective and understanding is a real psychological entity that emerges through the activity of a real biophysical human organism in a real sociocultural world.

But, in exactly what sense is such a psychological entity real? Earlier, arguments were provided against strong forms of both naturalism and constructionism that would dismiss the psychological self as either illusory or fictitious. However, to say that the psychological self as conceptualized herein is real, requires a more positive argument concerning what is meant by saying that something is real. Philosophers have been concerned with two distinct doctrines with respect to the question of ontological realism. The first, now somewhat out of fashion, holds that universals have a real, distinctive existence and is held in opposition to nominalism, which considers

generalizations, abstractions, and universals to be nothing more than names assigned to individual physical particulars. According to this kind of realism, contemporary naturalists who consider physical particulars to be the ultimate reality would not qualify as realists at all. However, the more currently fashionable doctrine of ontological realism is what is most immediately relevant to this discussion. This is the doctrine that objects of sense perception have an existence independent of acts of perception and the conceptions that may be associated with them. This kind of realism stands in opposition to idealism, which holds that what is real equates with thought and that the objects of perception consist of ideas. Unfortunately, the application of this latter realist doctrine to many psychological and sociocultural phenomena rules them out of objective existence as a matter of stipulative definition. Clearly, thoughts, experiences, and intentions cannot be independent of acts of perception or conception.

But nor can socially located political practices or many social artifacts. Inserting a piece of paper into a ballot box under the appropriate circumstances qualifies as voting, and handing over another piece of paper to a shopkeeper qualifies as payment exactly because of relevant social practices, artifacts, and rules, together with the perceptions and conceptions of the human actors involved. We clearly cannot sensibly consider such actions to be "unreal," nor can we interpret the reality they represent in the absence of social rules abstracted over appropriately circumscribed actions and contexts of voting or paying, respectively. Consequently, it is entirely reasonable to introduce a different criterion for determining what is real. Rather than something being real by virtue of it being entirely "mind-independent," events like social actions and the rules that support them may be understood as processes that exert determining influence, evidence of which can be interpreted from knowledge of relevant rules, together with some reliable record of related occurrences (e.g., Bhaskar, 1989). This is the kind of reality that philosophers of social psychology like John Greenwood (1991) have in mind when they argue that psychological phenomena that depend on social rules and records of conduct should sensibly be understood as real (also see Martin & Sugarman, 1999b; Martin et al., 2003b). For example, if individual A is insulted by individual B, and subsequently does physical harm to B as he/she reminds B of the earlier insult, we might reasonably conclude that a real act of vengeance has occurred. On the other hand, if individual A appears to ignore the insult and subsequent interactions with B are amicable, describing A's conduct toward B as vengeful would have a decidedly "unreal" ring to it. In short, it simply is much too restrictive and stipulatively arbitrary to reserve reality status to physical entities and particulars alone.

Many twentieth-century systems of ontology consider reality to be arrayed across a number of levels in a nonreductive manner that understands some higher levels to be emergent from (i.e., not reducible to) phenomena at more basic levels of reality (cf. O'Connor & Wong, 2002). As discussed in Chapter 5, such emergentist ontologies are particularly popular among scholars who have attempted to formulate psychological functioning as a hybrid of natural evolution and historical, cultural development (e.g., Donald, 2001) and recently have been applied to psychological

phenomena such as selfhood. However, it is important to remember that it is individual and collective human activity within the biophysical and sociocultural world that forces the dynamic interactions constitutive of selfhood (again, see Chapter 5 for an extended discussion of this point).

Selfhood is thus emergent in both phylogenesis and ontogenesis. Understood as a real, emergent psychological phenomenon, it is dually constituted, as a consequence of human activity in the world, by both an appropriately evolved biophysical organism and appropriated sociocultural practices and rules. Moreover, this is a self that is real in terms of the determining influence it is capable of exercising. This self-determination flows from the irreducibility of the perspectival self to its biophysical and sociocultural constituents and from its constant and inevitably unique emergence in that sociocultural, intersubjective matrix within which any particular human existence unfolds. In sum, this is a nonmysterious, real self that is dually constituted by biophysical and sociocultural constituents, yet capable of exerting a kind of self-determination that matters (cf. Martin et al., 2003b).[1]

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[1] A concern about compatibilist proposals such as the current one (i.e., proposals that attempt to reconcile agency with some form of determinism, including the kind of underdetermination theorized herein—see Chapter 2) that is shared by many analytic philosophers of science (e.g., Kapitan, 1999) rests on what might be referred to as the transitivity argument. Such scholars claim that if what occurs at time B is determined by what has occurred at time A, and what occurs at time C is determined by what has occurred at time B, then what occurs at time C is determined by what occurred at time A. Our counter claim is that agency issues from a kind of self-determination active at time B that, while determined by all that is in place at time A, nonetheless goes very modestly beyond all that is in place at time A, with the consequence that what determines what occurs at time C must include all that is at play at time A plus the self-determination that enters at time B. If this is so, then the transitivity condition does not hold, in that what occurs at time C is determined by all that is in place at time B (including the exercise of an agent's self-determination), but is not determined by all that is in place at time A because conditions at time A do not include the self-determination that enters at time B. In our approach to agency, such an intransitive state of affairs rests on the kind of perspectival emergence theorized by pragmatists like Mead and the kind of self-interpretation theorized by hermeneuts like Heidegger and Gadamer. Perspectival emergence refers to an agent's unpredictable reactivity to his/her location in two or more spatial-temporal perspectives (e.g., being simultaneously oriented to a determining past and to the particulars of an unfolding present, in anticipation of an immediate and more distant future—more of this in Chapter 8). Hermeneutic self-interpretation refers to an agent's interpretive reactivity to self-selected features of his/her situation in terms of both the background understandings and current life projects that provide both intelligibility and animation to his/her present undertakings (see Chapters 1–4). Both the perspectival emergence and hermeneutic self-interpretation constitutive of self-determination require the biophysical embodiment and sociocultural situatedness of self-interpreting beings, but are not reducible to these determinants. Self-determination, understood in these ways, is ultimately underdetermined by relevant biophysical and sociocultural constituents and determinants in the sense that, when and if actively deployed, such self-determination enters into the determination of an agent's actions and experiences in ways that depend on, but are not exhausted by, these other conditions. (For elaborations of our arguments concerning the roles of perspectival emergence and hermeneutic self-interpretation in agentive self-determination, see Martin (2007a) and Martin et al. (2003b), respectively.)

Conclusion

A strong naturalism that would deny selfhood as illusory is unwarranted because of the irreducibility of necessary sociocultural constituents of the self to physical particulars, in combination with the undeniable historical, sociological reality of these self-constituents. A strong constructionism that would deny selfhood as fictitious also is unwarranted because of this same historical, sociological reality and because of the necessary embodiment of the first-person perspective and related self-understanding that define selfhood. The perspectival self is acquired during ontogenesis through the activity of an evolved human organism, equipped with a basic sociality, in a sociocultural context in which the actions, attitudes, and perspectives of others gradually are appropriated and transformed into psychological processes. Such activity is the basis for a primitive first-person perspective, and eventually for a more self-consciously and conceptual first-person perspective and understanding. This developmentally emergent self is both real and influential. Consequently, it is in principle amenable to inquiry on the part of psychologists and others.

However, the forms of study appropriate to a self thus understood both include and surpass extant psychological practices of inquiry. Studies of the genetic and neurophysiological bases of sociality, together with the possible neural effects of social interactivity (e.g., Edelman, 1987), obviously require expertise in areas not typically addressed in the education of most psychologists. The same might be said for historical and sociological analyses of cultural and social rules and practices and for detailed philosophical consideration of claims and arguments concerning identity, agency, and personhood. The pursuit and, it is to be hoped, eventual integration of these various lines of inquiry suggests an interdisciplinary approach to the study of selves as advocated by psychologists like Danziger (1997b) and Koch (1993, 1999). If so, psychologists interested in investigations concerning the development, capabilities, and activities of real selves likely will need to familiarize themselves with inquiry practices and knowledge from a variety of other disciplines. However, the reality of the psychological self as emergent from, yet irreducible to, its biophysical and sociocultural constituents means that psychologists willing to expand their repertoires of knowledge and methods in appropriate ways will be rewarded by encounters with real selves that are neither illusory nor fictitious.

Chapter 8
Perspectival Selves in Interaction with Others: Re-reading G.H. Mead's Social Psychology

Perspectives may be understood broadly as perceptual and conceptual orientations to a situation with a view to acting within that situation. Taking the perspectives of others generally is held to be of considerable importance not only for the development and maintenance of good interpersonal and community relations, but also for the development of individuals as persons capable of entering into such relations. To explain perspective taking, the social sciences have posited many versions of empathic, intentional, and interpretive theories. Empathic approaches (e.g., Rogers, 1957) stress the importance of comprehending the actual and experiential situation of the other and imaginatively and affectively placing one's self in that situation. Intentional approaches (e.g., Collingwood, 1961) typically emphasize the development of accounts that attempt to uncover the thoughts that lie behind others' actions. Most empathic and intentional theorizing assumes that understanding the perspectives of others involves simulating how one would feel, think, and act in their situations, including their mental states. Typically, the simulation of others' perspectives is thought to issue from a general psychic similarity of human subjects that permits both empathic resonance and analogical inference between one's own experience and understanding, and those of another.

In opposition, interpretive approaches (e.g., Gadamer, 1995) decry simulation theories as too one-way and maintain that taking the perspectives of others, in the sense of empathizing with them or discovering their true intentions, is mistaken because interpreting the actions of others is a dyadic process that necessarily involves a critical consideration of one's own situation and assumptions, as much as an openness to those of others (cf. Kögler, 1996). Interpretive theorists reject the psychological similarity assumed in simulation explanations of perspective taking as a methodological fiction and focus instead on our common existence as interpretive beings within intersubjective contexts as a basis for discussing and understanding diverse perspectives.

In recent years, the psychologism and individualism evident in simulation explanations of perspective taking, and the discursive bias and social constructionism evident in interpretive explanations of perspective taking, have been subjected to much critical scrutiny, with the aim of moving toward a theory of perspective taking, selfhood, and mind that recognizes and celebrates both human agency and sociality

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(Archer, 2000; Falmagne, 2004; Kögler & Stueber, 2000; Martin et al., 2003b). Many such attempts have made contact with earlier, seminal contributions of past theorists who offered systems of thought applicable to this kind of integrative theorizing. Especially popular in this regard have been scholars who have emphasized that the mind and self, active in perspective taking, reside as much in the sociocultural world as they do within individuals (e.g., Bakhtin, 1986; Mead, 1934; Vygotsky, 1986). For these theorists, it is a consequence of engaging in joint activities and sociocultural practices with others that we are able to take up perspectives through which we orient toward worldly events and objects, including ourselves and other people. However, unlike some interpretive accounts that also stress our situatedness within public, social spheres of meaning and normative practice, these accounts place additional emphasis on our capabilities for societal transformation as self-interpreting and self-determining agents conditioned, but not determined entirely, by our worldly engagements.

One past theorist in particular, George Herbert Mead (1934, 1938, 2002), not only advanced a social, psychological theory of self-development that is based almost entirely on taking the perspectives of others, a fact that is commonly known among social theorists (e.g., Baldwin, 1986), but also developed a philosophical approach to the objective reality of perspectives that is essential to a full appreciation of the nature and impact of his work on interpersonal interactivity and self-development within the social process. Just as understanding Mead's theory of the social act is necessary for a full appreciation of his theory of consciousness (Gillespie, 2005), understanding his theory of perspectives is necessary for a deep appreciation of his conception of the self-other dialectic as the co-constitutive, emergent unfolding of agency within sociality. In this chapter, Mead's perspectivism is discussed as a basis for his theorizing about both self-development and social engagement. The relevance of Mead's perspectival realism for contemporary interpersonal and communal relations then is emphasized. Criticisms of Mead's approach, as incapable of informing contemporary debates concerning highly diversified and contested social and individual perspectives due to its overly idealized and conservative nature (e.g., Elliot, 2001; also see Cronk, 1973 for a review of earlier criticisms of this kind) may be somewhat assuaged by the resultant reading of Mead's potential contribution to collective engagement and problem solving across significant differences. This may be especially true when the hermeneutic theorizing of Gadamer (1995) and Taylor (2002) is used to elaborate Mead's approach.

The interpretation of Mead's work that is undertaken herein involves a rereading of much of his most widely known work (e.g., Mead, 1934) in terms of his lesser-known later writings that contain explicit discussions of his perspectivism (e.g., Mead, 2002). The fact that so much of Mead's work has appeared through the extensive note taking and editing of others (e.g., Charles Morris' editing of Mead, 1934 and 1938, and the unknown persons who transcribed his lecture notes that appear in Miller, 1982) and that Mead appears to have modified and/or altered many of his views over time (cf. Cook, 1993; Joas, 1997; Miller, 1982) make any definitive reading of Mead's oeuvre impossible. Consequently, there are many extant framings of Mead's work, appearing under rubrics such as social behaviorism (Morris

in Mead, 1934), symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1980), social pragmatism (Cook, 1993), semiotic neo-pragmatism (Wiley, 1995), symbolically mediated interactionism (Joas, 1997), social act theory (Gillespie, 2005), and others. Our own framing of Mead as a perspectival realist both shares with and departs from these others, but is most similar to previous readings of Mead offered by Miller (1973, 1982), Cook (1993), and Gillespie (2005). However, with respect to Mead's theorizing about perspectives, Gillespie primarily stresses perspective taking as it pertains to Mead's theory of consciousness, whereas Cook and Miller present general pictures of Mead's perspectivism as it pervades almost all of his more specific theorizing about language, selfhood, and the nature of the world in which we live. By emphasizing Mead's perspectival realism as it pertains specifically to the emergence of agency within sociality and to the nature of the self-societal dialectic, we hope to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of Mead's work to our relations with each other within social, cultural contexts marked by both diversity and contestation. In our opinion, Mead's contribution here may be interpreted as going productively beyond accounts of perspective taking extant in most forms of simulation and interpretive theorizing.

Mead's Theory of Perspectives: Sociality and Agentive Selfhood

The term "perspective" was not used by Mead until about 1920. Thereafter, he developed a philosophical position that may be called "perspectival realism," which opposes the traditional metaphysical position that to be objective or real, a thing cannot depend on another thing, but must stand on its own. As Miller (1982) notes, "In his later years, Mead often used 'being in the perspective of the other' instead of 'taking the role of the other'" (p. 17), a point echoed by Cook (1993), who also notes Mead's interchangeable use of "taking the attitude of the other," "taking the role of the other," and taking "the perspective of the other" (pp. 79–80). For Mead, our entire human psychological and sociocultural world is real but perspectival (i.e., dependent on us), and human reality is the sum total of all perspectives. Perspectives arise out of, and always are related to, human conduct in the world. However, once entered into, perspectives are both perceptual and conceptual and are not fixed to a particular present. Once experienced, they can be used imaginatively.

According to Mead (1938, 2002), reality is perspectival in that all phenomena (objects, events, selves, others, ideas, and theories) emerge in the relation of organisms to their environments. A perspective is an orientation to an environment that is associated with acting within that environment. Perspectives both emerge out of activity and enable increasingly complex forms of activity. All perspectives reflect relationships between individuals and the world. Because the human world is a social world, all perspectives arise and are employed within interpersonal interactivity. This is not to say that there is no biophysical world that constrains and also enables human interactivity, but to recognize that biophysical conditions, although necessary, are in no way sufficient for perspectivity of the kind that enables

the development and functioning of social–psychological phenomena like mind and self.

Reality is a field of perspectives "characterized by the relation of an organic individual to his environment or world. The world, things and the individual are what they are because of this relation" (Mead, 1938, p. 215). "The perspective is the world in its relationship to the individual and the individual in his relationship to the world" (Mead, 1938, p. 115). The reality that matters to human beings is not simply "out there," independent of individual actions, nor is it something "in" the individual. Rather, it consists of the dynamic, ongoing interrelation of individual and environment that yields perspectives. Perspectives emerge out of "the relationship between the individual and his environment, and this relationship is that of conduct [i.e., action]" (Mead, 1938, p. 218). Social acts are collective acts that involve two or more participating individuals, and social objects are collective objects with a meaning shared by each participating individual. Social objects are what they are by virtue of their embeddedness within the matrix of social acts that makes up the life of a society. For example, bones of animals become weapons in the experience of early human individuals engaged in social acts of conflict, and balloons become toys when bounced back and forth between a mother and her child. At a more abstract level, minds and selves also arise out of human interactive activity, especially communicative activity supported by the significant symbols of language.

Mead (1934) maintains that communication in humans begins, both phylogenetically and ontogenetically, as a conversation of gestures that gradually becomes transformed into a conversation of significant symbols (i.e., language). A significant symbol most typically is a vocal gesture that "calls out" in the individual making the gesture, a functionally similar response to what it calls out in others to whom the gesture is directed. For example, if a preoccupied friend does not respond to my request to share a newspaper, I might help myself to a section of the newspaper that he currently is not reading. Importantly, Mead considers communication through significant symbols to be identical to meaning comprehension. In other words, the functional reaction to a significant symbol in the context of interactive conduct is the meaning of that symbol. Moreover, it is consciousness of meaning that permits an individual to respond to his/her own symbolic gestures as others who understand them are likely to respond. The entire system of symbolic gestures and meanings in a given society forms an ongoing social process. It is our active participation in this social process that constitutes both our minds and our selves.

Mind is a form of participation in the ongoing interactional process in which the use of significant symbols enables individuals to take the attitudes and perspectives of others toward their own gestures. Mind thus emerges from the interactions of highly evolved biophysical human organisms caught up in an inescapable social, interactional matrix. For Mead, action with others in social contexts has phylogenetic/historical and ontogenetic/developmental primacy over isolated reflection of the kind privileged by Descartes, Kant, and many other Enlightenment and Modern theorists. As Gillespie (2005) makes clear, many social acts are highly institutionalized, with established positions such as parent/child, teacher/student, and buyer/seller.

> Although the perspectives of self and other within any ongoing social act are necessarily divergent, if one takes into account time and a stable social structure, then it is possible that at some previous point in time, the positions of self and other were reversed. (Gillespie, 2005, p. 27)

During ontogenesis, it is through the child's active, repetitive participation in such routine action sequences with others, wherein which he/she may take different positions and the roles that accompany them (actually and/or imaginatively switching places with others and acting in accordance to social conventions and rules that attend the different positions occupied), that he/she is able to take the perspectives of others. In this way, taking the perspectives of others is not so much a matter of simulating their psychological states and attitudes through a combination of empathic resonance and/or analogical reasoning, as it is a matter of positioning, experiencing, and recalling previous positions and experiences within different phases of action nested within interactive, communicative sequences of exchange. To take the perspectives of others, it is necessary to engage in interactivity with others within socioculturally sanctioned practices of acting together. According to Mead, such intersubjective engagement offers a way of understanding the emergence of mind, consciousness, and self from basic social conduct that (unlike mentalistic theories of imitation, introspection, and empathy) does not presuppose exactly those qualities of mind and selfhood that it is intended to explain.

Like consciousness and mind, selfhood is a social emergent. "The self is something which has a development; it is not there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process" (Mead, 1934, p. 135). What distinguishes the forms of consciousness that can be experienced by the normal, adult human being from the more basic forms of sensitivity to the environment likely experienced by other animals and infants is the reflexivity of the self, a reflexivity that only can arise through interactions with others within an ongoing social process. Prereflective consciousness refers to a world that is there, but reflective consciousness or reflexivity refers to a world as experienced by a self that is capable of being both a subject and an object to itself. The individual becomes "an object to himself by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within an organized setting of social relationships" (Mead, 1934, p. 225). Even when a child makes no attempt to adopt the social role of another, he/she cannot help (because he/she is embedded within the ongoing social, linguistic process of interactivity that defines his/her community) but respond to his/her own verbalizations in much the same way as others are likely to respond. When he/she hears himself/herself asking for something, he/she attains an objective perception of his/her own behavior and understands what response will satisfy his/her request. In this basic sense, he/she takes the role of the other to whom his/her communicative action is directed, almost as if he/she were hearing his/her own words and meanings from the other's perspective. In this way, with our very first utterances, "We are unconsciously putting ourselves in the place of others and acting as others act... We are, especially through the use of the vocal gestures, continually arousing in ourselves those responses which we call out in other persons, so that

we are taking the attitudes of the other persons into our own conduct" (Mead, 1934, p. 69). Thus, for Mead, subjectivity has its sources in objective social interaction and always is both enabled and constrained by such objectivity.

As children develop, especially after they are able to employ linguistic symbols in the conventional ways sanctioned through their participation in routine forms of social conduct, they are able to take the attitudes and perspectives of an increasingly abstract other "which is an organization of the attitudes of those involved in the same process... The attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the whole community" (Mead, 1934, p. 154). Thus, the Meadian self acts "not only in his own perspective but also in the perspective of others, especially in the common perspective of a group" (Mead, 2002, p. 174).

Although Mead often talks as if the social process or community in which the child develops is ideally consensual in its sharing of all symbols and meanings, there is good reason not to interpret Mead as assuming a too uncontested, harmonious process of social organization. One reason for guarding against the assumption of an ideally integrative social, developmental process concerns the diversity of perspectives inevitably present in any larger social group or community as individuals move beyond the childhood confines of their immediate families. There are many indications in Mead's writings of his recognition of the difficulties that might be experienced in engaging perspectives markedly different from those with which one previously has interacted. Human beings do not share worldviews that are harmonious or always reconcilable. "We are indefinitely different from each other, but our differences make interaction possible" (Mead in Reck, 1964, p. 359). Nonetheless, it is true that Mead often writes in a way that appears to downplay such differences, a style of presentation that seems intended to convey an ideal for self-community interchange rather than a description of actual states of affairs. Mead's conception of the generalized other probably is best interpreted as a societal ideal that in actual experience manifests more as a plurality of generalized others reflecting the diversity readily discernable in any community (Cronk, 1973).

What allows Mead's perspectival realism to function as a constraint on human conduct is Mead's theory of the objective existence (already mentioned) and organization of perspectives within a biophysical and sociocultural world. Through active experience in this world, it is possible for individuals, collectively and individually, to subject their perspectives to appropriate forms of test. For example, just as a thirsty desert wanderer who perceives water at a distance may subsequently discover only sand, someone who provides an overly idiosyncratic recollection of past events may find himself/herself struggling for credibility among others who also participated in them.

Mead explicitly addresses the organization and objectivity of perspectives, both of which are essential for understanding the relevance of his perspectival realism to issues of agentive selfhood and collective engagement with others, in the first part of a chapter entitled "Miscellaneous Fragments" in *The philosophy of the act* (Mead, 1938) and an essay entitled "The Objective Reality of Perspectives," recently republished as a supplementary essay in *The philosophy of the present* (Mead, 2002,

pp. 171–182). Here, Mead makes it clear that "the organization of perspectives takes place in rational experience" (Mead, 1938, p. 612).

> Organization is being in a number of things at the same time. We attain this through participating in organized reactions of groups [in which] a common content makes it possible to take the different attitudes and keep their relations. The organization is that of the act. (Mead, 1938, p. 613)

The organization of perspectives described here is based on social conduct within which the individual takes the perspective of another in a cooperative process. If a number of others are involved, the individual is able to take the perspectives of all of them, both as individuals and as a collective, by understanding what it is they wish to accomplish—in other words, by comprehending the problematic situation they all confront and inferring a sense of what would constitute a resolution for all concerned. At the beginning of interactions with others in problematic circumstances, such a common element in the perspectives of all participants might be framed as nothing more than the removal of the difficulty that confronts them all. However, over time, and with accumulated interactions in the problem context through which different actions with respect to the problem are discussed and attempted, the individual is able to enter into the perspectives of others and into an emerging, more detailed common perspective as a consequence of his/her participation in this overall process of problem solving, a process which in turn is nested in the overall social process.

What ultimately organizes these various perspectives is the extent to which they achieve collective support within the problem context and the social process in general. Since all perspectives are initially, at least to some extent, hypothetical, it is the development and application of perspectives within their contexts that organizes them. Perspectives that are unsuccessful in moving the group toward a resolution of the problem confronting them are discarded in favor of those that yield more success. In this way, perspectives are organized in terms of their utility and viability across problem situations and distributed among those individuals interactive within them, yielding societal perspectives attributable to various generalized others, depending on the diversity of the social group and community in question.

To the extent that all emergent, hypothetical perspectives have the potential to become realized in social conduct, especially in problem situations, they are objectively in the real world that is the sum total of all perspectives. In Mead's words,

> the emergent value which the individual organism confers upon the common world belongs to that world in so far as it leads to its creative reconstruction. In so far as the world is passing into a future, there is an opportunity for that which is not objective to become objective. (1938, p. 613)

For Mead, sociality consists of the ability to occupy two or more different perspectives at the same time. The relation of an organism and an environment is continuously dynamic. The natural and social world consists of a multiplicity of perspectives, any one of which may enter into an organism's field of activity. It is by virtue of the organism's ability to be several things simultaneously, in the sense

of taking up (acting within) two or more different perspectives, that the organism is able to deal with emergent events or novel, unexpected occurrences. Because persons are themselves social, their perspective taking may be enhanced greatly by communication with others through significant symbols.

It is because human individuals are able to take the attitudes of others within the social process that they may acquire selves that are constituted by the perspectives available in their ongoing social encounters. Because social life is dynamically unfolding, the perspectival self is continuously emergent, yet achieves sufficient stability within the larger social process of organized and potentially objective perspectives so that it can function with some success within the problem contexts that it necessarily will face in the course of living. As a "Me," the self is a repository of perspectival understandings. As an "I," the self is an active agent simultaneously occupying situations that have been in one sense determined by the past, but which (because of the ever-present emergence of novel circumstances) in another sense are open to determination by the momentary activity of the "I" in the fleeting present. By being simultaneously present in both of these temporal perspectives, the self is a source of both the achieved wisdom of the past and the agentive cultivation of the future.

For Mead, the immediate moment of action brings together a concern of the present with both recollections of relevant past activity and anticipations of a future in which the concern or problem to which the action of the present is directed is resolved or somehow made manageable. Such concerns typically are emergent in the field of activity, within the ongoing dynamic interplay of social, interpersonal, and personal perspectives described above. They arise in the immediate context of novel, unpredictable occurrences that constitute a change in past action sequences and perspectives. If such emergent change were not common, our minds and selves would be determined entirely by our past interactions in our biophysical and sociocultural world, and our worldly conduct would not be punctuated and experienced in temporal terms. It is precisely because of the emergence of change that our temporal experience and agency also arise. Psychological time requires markers, and change supplies them.

To understand this rather abstract set of claims, it is helpful to think of the "I" as not only reacting to a "Me" that is determined by past activity and the perspectives acquired through such activity, but also to an immediate present in which circumstances and conduct are not unfolding exactly in accordance with past activity and existing perspectives. For example, a new mother finds herself confronted with novel childcare situations in which she reacts to herself through emergent first-person, parental perspectives that reflect, in part, what she previously had experienced only as second-person perspectives in interaction with her own and other mothers (perhaps supplemented with some actual and/or imaginative role-playing of these maternal perspectives), all configured within a broader set of societal third-person perspectives concerning parenting. In such situations, the "I" cannot cease all activity, but acts on the basis of a complex of perception, remembrance, and anticipation that cannot be predicted at the exact moment of acting, even though all of the remembrances and anticipations involved may be determined

on the basis of past activity and existing perspectives. At such moments, Mead claims that the self is simultaneously in two temporal/psychological perspectives at once. On one hand, the "Me" to which the "I" is reacting is determined within a knowable past. On the other hand, the "I" of the moment must act in circumstances that are not entirely predictable from the past, and which are in part explicable in terms of an imagined future state in which the concern or problem of the moment somehow has been ameliorated. In these instances, the self occupies two distinct temporal perspectives, one in which the "Me" as object is determined (e.g., seeing one's self in the role of mother through previously experienced second- and third-person perspectives) and another in which the "I" as agent is not so determined (e.g., the emergently unfolding, newly experienced first-person "mother" perspective of the immediate moment). Of course, once the action in question takes place, it, together with whatever perspective or perspectival transformation it might occasion, is part of a "new" knowable past, which can be used to anticipate a newly emergent concern of the moment and a "new" future (e.g., one in which the new mother gradually enters into her own first-person maternal perspective). And so it goes. (Note that Mead himself did not use the terms first-, second-, or third-person perspective, but cf. Habermas, 1992 for a somewhat related, but nonetheless different, interpretation.)

Our activity in the world (which, with our entry into symbolic means of communication is always a social world, even in those instances in which we may only be conversing with our selves) is constantly unfolding, and within it, so too are our minds and selves. Because activity in the world always may be framed from a variety of social, interpersonal, and personal perspectives, and from overlapping temporal perspectives that locate the present in both the past and the future, our selfhood has both sociocultural/interpersonal and temporal/psychological aspects that permit a kind of agency that is both determined and determining. (See Emirbayer & Mishe, 1998; and Martin et al., 2003b for related accounts of sociality and agency that combine aspects of Mead's account with recent work in philosophical hermeneutics and poststructural theory within theoretical psychology and empirical and theoretical work within contemporary developmental psychology.)

Mead's Dialectic of Self and Other

The societal generalized other (or, more likely, generalized others), whose perspectives concerning one's self as a social person constitute the "me," serves as an instrument of social control, through which the community establishes constraints on the conduct of its individual members. Thus, for Mead, "social control is the expression of the 'me' over against the expression of the 'I'" (Mead, 1934, p. 210). The development of the self within the social process is accomplished when an individual takes and reacts to the perspectives available within that process. In Mead's social psychology, socialization and self-development are tied inextricably together. Socially defined reality (social perspectives that reflect social orientations, goals, and values) is necessarily harmonized with individual will because the latter

is cut from the cloth of the former. To be a self at all requires the individual to "assume the attitudes of those in the group who are involved with him in his social activities" (Mead, 1938, p. 192). The "me" of the self, consisting as it does of social and interpersonal perspectives, is simultaneously an instrument of social control and self-development. In this sense, Mead's theory mandates harmony between community and individual perspectives and goals.

However, the Meadian self also is an agentive "I," which responds on an ongoing, moment-to-moment basis to the "me" (and to the social and interpersonal perspectives of which it consists), as well as to those constantly emergent circumstances within which particular social, interactive conduct unfolds. Moreover, with greater life experience, the individual "I" responds not only to those "concrete social classes or subgroups [within which] individuals are directly related to one another," but also to more

> . . . abstract social classes or subgroups [in which] individual members are related to one another only more or less indirectly, and which only more or less indirectly function as social units, but which afford or represent unlimited possibilities for the widening and ramifying and enriching of the social relations among all the individual members of the given society as an organized and unified whole. The given individual's membership in several of these abstract social classes or subgroups makes possible his entrance into definite social relations (however indirect) with an almost infinite number of other individuals who also belong to or are included within one or another of these abstract social classes or subgroups cutting across functional lines of demarcation which divide different human social communities from one another, and including individual members from several (in some cases from all) such communities. (Mead, 1934, p. 157)

Access to such abstract social groups and the perspectives they hold is a large part of what education consists. Through education, individuals are able to participate, at least vicariously, in perspectives that constitute ways and forms of life unavailable in their immediate experience. Education and broadening social experience expose individuals to a multiplicity of generalized others whose perspectives they come to share not only serially, but also simultaneously. Such abstract social groups provide possibilities for radically extending and/or altering individual perspectives available within more immediate, everyday routines and experience. Once again, self and social perspectives are tied together, but now with opportunities not only for social harmony, but also for social conflict as well. Moreover, without any absolute limit on any individual's capacity for encompassing new generalized others and perspectives into his/her dynamically unfolding self-structure, the possibility of strict social control over individual selves is greatly weakened. Conventional social control is weakened further by the unpredictable reactions of the agentive "I" to this more abstract, extended set of perspectives and the contexts within which they unfold and are taken up.

Needless to say, what has been said above carries significant implications for social consensus and conflict. First, it should now be clear that contra critics who consider Mead's social psychology to be necessarily conservative, in the sense of promoting modern ideologies of unity and harmony (e.g., Elliot, 2001), Mead's perspectival theorizing about societies and the selves they spawn assumes that both

consensus and conflict are significant and inevitable consequences of the social process. What Mead considers to be proper work for the social scientist is to describe as clearly as possible the functions of both consensus and conflict in collective and individual life (cf. Cronk, 1973).

> A highly developed and organized human society is one in which the individual members are interrelated in a multiplicity of different intricate and complicated ways whereby they all share a number of common social interests—interests in, or for the betterment of, the society—and yet, on the other hand, are more or less in conflict relative to numerous other interests which they possess only individually, or else share with one another only in small and limited groups. Conflicts among individuals in a highly developed and organized human society are not mere conflicts among their respective primitive impulses but are conflicts among their respective selves or personalities, each with its definite social structure—highly complex and organized and unified—and each with a number of different social facts or aspects, a number of different sets of social attitudes constituting it. Thus, within such a society, conflicts arise between different aspects or phases of the same individual self (conflicts leading to cases of split personality when they are extreme or violent enough to be psychopathological), as well as between different individual selves. And both these types of individual conflict are settled or terminated by reconstructions of the particular social situations, and modifications of the given framework of social relationships, wherein they arise or occur in the general human social life-process—these reconstructions and modifications being performed, as we have said, by the minds of the individuals in whose experience, or between whose selves these conflicts take place. (Mead, 1934, pp. 307–308)

Mead (1934) notes that many conflicts occur between groups whose members experience relative within-group consensus coupled with between-group difference. However, conflicts also may arise within groups when the group's consensus is threatened by individual members who react against the perspectives of their own group, usually because of agreement they experience with extra-group perspectives. Nonetheless, in whatever way conflict arises, the resolution of social conflict always requires reconstruction of both selves and societies as theorized in Mead's perspectival approach to self-development within the social process. Since the "I" always responds to the generalized other, as housed in the "me," the "I" has the capability of agentive critique. Moreover, because of the close relationship between the Meadian self and the social process, explicit social criticism always entails implicit self-criticism and vice versa. For Mead, "social reconstruction and self or personality reconstruction are the two sides of a single process—the process of human social evolution" (Mead, 1934, p. 309).

Engagement with Others: A Neo-Meadian Perspective

In a 1913 essay, entitled "The Social Self," Mead (in Reck, 1964, pp. 142–149) undertakes an elaboration of his idea that moral values arise within human conduct in the world, especially in situations that present moral problems in the form of conflicts of interests and meanings. What Mead then adds is the claim that moral problems concern competing tendencies in the social attitudes that constitute the self. This being so, moral consideration necessarily involves a kind of internal conversation among these conflicting attitudes and perspectives. In particular, values

apparent in the conduct of a previously employed self-perspective may be opposed to values and perspectives that arise in consideration of the problematic situation. In such a situation, appropriate moral deliberation consists of a concrete, inductive attempt to consider as many competing social interests as possible with respect to the problematic situation. The extent to which such moral deliberation remains wedded inextricably to selfhood is revealed in Mead's insistence that moral problem solving inevitably necessitates some degree of reconstruction of the problem situation in terms of the emergence of an enlarged and more adequate self-understanding and conduct. What this means is that moral problems are contexts that enable and require the self to develop greater perspectivity in its consideration, and perhaps coordination, of possible and alternative social concerns and interests. In this way, both moral, social situations and the self undergo reconstruction in interaction with moral problems.

For Mead, processes of moral reconstruction are analogous to processes of scientific intelligence and problem solving. Both require the creative seeking and formulation of alternative interpretations and/or novel syntheses that can be treated as hypotheses that may be subjected to rational and empirical consideration in a way that yields a more inclusive understanding. Such an analogy is in keeping with Mead's grand vision of the unfolding of a great secular adventure in which evolution interacts with cultural history by means of human conduct in the world. As part of this great unfolding, human animals become social selves whose moral development consists of repeatedly reinterpreting and coordinating perspectives, meanings, and interests in an ongoing effort to confront and overcome problems that arise in their worldly commerce.

Not surprisingly, Mead's moral considerations led him to challenge the Humean idea that moral conduct cannot be derived from empirical understanding—that is, that what one ought to do cannot be determined from what one is able to do and the circumstances in which one finds oneself. In his desire to avoid any supernatural sources for moral conduct, Mead insisted that our moral sense necessarily arises from our worldly interactions. In particular, attitudes and actions that are successful in advancing human survival at both species and individual levels are not normatively neutral, but seed more developed conceptions of rightness and appropriateness in conduct (see Bickhard, 2004 for a contemporary reformulation of Mead's ideas concerning normativity). Moreover, only when moral situations and problems are approached in ways that are open to perspectives and possibilities that emerge in the course of our engagement with them, is it possible to avoid various kinds of dogmatism associated with formal moral codes. Thus, for Mead, moral action never can be a matter of rule following as deontologists like Kant maintained, nor can it be any sort of hedonic calculus as suggested by utilitarians like Bentham. In particular, Mead emphasized that his ideas about moral deliberation as an inclusive consideration of interests and possibilities in the face of problematic situations could be applied to the determination of social ends or values as well as means (Mead, in Reck, 1964, pp. 248–266).

Against moral dogmatism, Mead (in Reck, 1964) maintained that all our moral judgments are open to reformulation and reconstruction through our engagement in

morally problematic situations. One special source of reformulation arises when the values, interests, and perspectives available for deliberation may be incommensurable in that they resist definition or appreciation in terms of other values, interests, and perspectives with which they are in competition. The obvious difficulty with incommensurable values is that they seem to prevent the formulation of emergent perspectives and courses of action that adequately capture competing values in the problem context. Nonetheless, Mead insisted that his approach to moral and social problems could succeed in reconstructing incommensurable values so that they could be compared, even coordinated, in the context of particular problem situations.

> There are no absolute values. There are only values which, on account of incomplete social organization, we cannot as yet estimate, and in face of these the first enterprise should be to complete the organization if only in thought so that some rough sort of estimate in terms of the other values involved becomes conceivable. (Mead, in Reck, 1964, p. 262)

Although Mead never provides a full account of exactly how incommensurable values might be overcome, he suggests that the key process lies in his earlier observation concerning the reconstitution of the self through its consideration of, and engagement with, alternative social interests and perspectives when confronted with problematic situations. Critical moral thinking only can arise through social intercourse. It is only because we speak to ourselves with the voices of others and the entire community that we ever are in a position to deliberate and make moral judgments. Our rationality and morality are possible only because we are social beings. But if this is so, and our very thoughts and actions arise from taking up the perspectives and actions of others, how can we ever come to adopt a critical stance with respect to the attitudes and perspectives that constitute us?

In *Mind, self, and society*, Mead (1934) explains how the self is socially constituted through taking the attitudes and perspectives of others. However, he simultaneously stresses that the self is more than a product of social construction. Not only is the self constantly unfolding in the context of different attitudes and values (no society is monolithic), it is also agentive in the manner discussed earlier. Mead's suggestion for resolving incommensurabilities in morally problematic situations is that the self as agent is capable of reconstructing itself in ways that allow a critical distance to open up between previously enacted moral solutions and the unique, and especially conflicting, aspects of a currently problematic situation. In particular, the creation of such a critical distance permits a consideration of seemingly incommensurable values in ways that suggest some means of rendering them at least partially commensurable. However, beyond making this suggestion, Mead fails to provide a detailed solution to the problem of incommensurable values in moral deliberation. All he says is that agents must conceive of themselves as representatives of moral orders that differ from the moral orders in which they are and have been resident, and that this imaginative conception is possible because there exist in every society fragments of alternative moral possibilities that are implied but not adequately expressed in that society and in the selves to which it has given rise (Mead, 1934).

It is at this juncture that Mead's thought might profitably be extended by the work and ideas of hermeneutic thinkers like Hans-Georg Gadamer (1995) and Charles Taylor (2002). Gadamer (1995) argues that all understanding, including scientific understanding, arises out of our preunderstanding and embeddedness in historical traditions. Our interpretations of ourselves and others are not chosen freely, but are so deeply embedded in historical traditions as to be largely invisible to us. All understanding requires what Gadamer refers to as a "horizon" of language and other shared practices that comprise tradition and provide a background of meaning and intelligibility. Horizon is a metaphor Gadamer uses to describe a context of meaning. It consists of meanings of which one is not presently aware and which must remain beyond awareness if there is to be a selective focus of attention. Nonetheless, one's horizon serves as the context in terms of which the object of attention is made meaningful. Not only do our lives develop with others in specific cultures, times, and places, but our capacities for knowledge and understanding, sustained by cultural practices, are carried forward from one generation to the next by historical tradition. The projections of meaning necessary to understanding are part of traditions that have developed over the course of human history. According to Gadamer, participating in tradition is both a principal condition for, and limit to, understanding.

The aim of interpretation, Gadamer asserts, is not to free ourselves from historical limitation, but to accept traditions and cultural prejudices as a necessary condition for understanding. Gadamer's use of the term "prejudice" does not carry the pejorative connotation ordinarily assumed in English usage. Prejudice, for Gadamer, refers to our particular cultural perspective, steeped in language and tradition and indispensable to all understanding. According to Gadamer, our prejudices do not prevent us from understanding, but are a gateway to it. Prejudices are not narrow-minded bias, but form the horizons of meaning that orient us and are brought to bear whenever we attempt to understand. There is never a point when we are totally free from the prejudices and prejudgments of tradition that constitute our horizons of meaning. Understanding cannot occur, Gadamer claims, outside the tradition in which it is meaningful. However, tradition never can be completely articulated and is never monolithic or static. It exists in the countless unarticulated prejudices we bring forward in dealing with the world and continuously unfolds as new problems and concerns are encountered. Tradition is the sum of all these prejudices and prejudgments, and each person manifests the historically constituted tradition of his/her culture in everyday conduct.

Although there is no scientific method by which we can completely overcome our prejudices and attain absolute objectivity, Gadamer suggests that we can revise our prejudices in dialogue with others and with texts, and thereby access knowledge. As already mentioned, this knowledge never can be final. It is always partial and always involves historical horizons, as the inquirer is immersed in a living history that can never be escaped. The present is only understood through the past, with which it has living continuity. As a hermeneutic circle, the past provides us with tradition that contributes possibilities for understanding the present, while our

present interpretations of those possibilities rebound against historical tradition by indicating how the past can make sense to us.

Gadamer (1995) asserts that in order to understand another person or a text, we must merge or fuse our horizon with that of the person or text being studied. It is these historical cultural horizons that steer and constitute our individual understandings and experiences. Understanding occurs when our horizon of historical meanings and assumptions fuses with the horizon of the other person or text we are attempting to interpret. The implication is that in any act of interpretation, there is mutual influence between the interpreter and the subject of interpretation as the horizons of each intermingle. When horizons fuse, it is because one's own prejudices have been brought into view, and this makes it possible to comprehend the context in which other perspectives are made meaningful. In revealing one's own prejudices, one becomes capable of grasping those of another. Further, when horizons of meaning are brought together, the outcome will be new meaning not entailed in either of the original perspectives. According to Gadamer, in such instances, we understand differently if we understand at all. The critical insight is that reaching an understanding of, or with, another is not a matter of observation through the application of an impartial method intended to ensure objectivity. Nor is it a matter of empathetically reconstructing the other's mental processes and private experiences. Instead, it involves being open to and integrating another's horizon of meaning in such a way that one's own perspective is altered in the process. Such integration, if it is to occur, must involve active engagement with the perspectives of others in a manner that encourages a critical re-examination of our own perspectives and attitudes.

Gadamer emphasized the importance of language and dialogue as definitive features of understanding. A valid meaning is one that has been constructed in language and is accepted by a community of interpreters. Meaning is expressed in language and the possible limits of something being made meaningful are stipulated by the limits of language. If a meaning is not articulated, according to Gadamer, it does not exist. When we come to understand something explicitly, it is because we have put into words some previously unexamined aspect of tradition. However, Gadamer asserts that when we understand something explicitly, its meaning is acquired not only from what is said, but also from what remains unsaid. Each event of understanding is furnished with meaning by a largely unexpressed context. As we bring one possibility of interpretation forward, others recede into the background. Nonetheless, the background or horizon remains significant in the production of meaning. In this way, understanding is as much a process of "concealment" as "revealment." Thus, Gadamer argues understanding something explicitly not only involves grasping what is said, but also comprehending the tradition sufficiently to grasp relations between what is said and what is not being said.

Gadamer's (1995) project in *Truth and method* is to challenge accepted notions of truth and method as they are applied in scientific approaches to understanding human life. Our capacity to discern truths about human life does not owe to a detached, neutral process of observing objective facts. Rather, Gadamer claims the truth of human life is not separate from us. According to Gadamer, understanding

ourselves requires recognizing that by existing we are already the truth of human life. The task is to articulate the significant features of our being. Gadamer opposed the idea of formal method. Our only avenue to understanding, Gadamer asserts, is to engage in genuine dialogue with others in ways that allow us to encounter and cast light on our prejudices and the effects of our historical traditions. This requires not detachment, but rather a genuine openness to hearing what others and texts have to say, a willingness to examine critically our own preconceptions, and a readiness to abandon those of our beliefs shown to be faulty or inadequate.

Although it may seem that Gadamer (1995) abandons the very scientific method that Mead (1934, 1938) holds so dear, and on which he models his approach to ethics and life with others, this conclusion must be tempered with two considerations. First, Mead does not understand scientific intelligence in general, or as applied to morally problematic situations, to consist primarily of method. Rather, it is an attitude of openness to alternative possibilities (hypotheses and perspectives associated with courses of conduct) and a willingness to experiment with their applications that Mead locates at the center of science. Second, Mead does not believe that science or moral advance consists in a closer and closer approximation to a fixed ideal of the way the world is or the way conduct should be. Both always involve dialectical processes in which creative, agentive selves repeatedly reformulate action syntheses in the face of problems. Moreover, Mead was not unaware of important differences between understanding ourselves and understanding nonsentient physical systems.

Nonetheless, it is clear that Mead did not explicitly emphasize the extent to which, according to Gadamer, our self-understanding and our understanding of others are possible only against a background of traditional assumptions, practices, and prejudices. This being so, understanding others is not just a matter of being appropriately open to them and their ways of life, but simultaneously must involve the critical penetration of our own prejudices and traditions of living. Indeed, it is precisely because Mead did not develop similar insights that he is unable to provide more convincing arguments and suggestions with respect to moving beyond the incommensurabilities that he recognized often arise in morally problematic situations. And yet, Mead's emphasis on interactive engagement with others in such situations, as a basis for a potentially fruitful consideration of alternative perspectives and possibilities for action, is at least as strong as, and arguably stronger than, related emphases in Gadamer's writings.

The manner in which Gadamer's ontology of understanding might be applied to contexts of moral impasse has been elaborated by Charles Taylor (1992, 2002). Taylor points out that Gadamer's account of the challenge of the other and the fusion of horizons can be applied directly to the question of how we might understand other societies and persons who appear to differ from us in radical, perhaps incommensurable, ways. Not only is this the issue that Mead recognized but did not successfully address in his ethics, but it is a topic of increasing importance in contemporary multicultural, global interactions. After reminding readers of Gadamer's insistence on the inescapable and implicit reliance of our identities and our understandings on those background traditions in which we are immersed, Taylor (2002) asks two questions. "If our own tacit sense of the human condition can block our

understanding of others, and yet we cannot neutralize it at the outset, then how can we come to know others? Are we utterly imprisoned in our unreflecting outlook?" (p. 285). Taylor then explains why Gadamer gives negative answers to both of these questions.

The crucial point in Taylor's (2002) Gadamerian exegesis is that "the road to understanding others passes through the patient identification and undoing of those facets of our implicit understanding that distort the reality of the other" (p. 285). This is especially true in relation to the issue of incommensurable values that lies at the heart of the current discussion. Taylor's first move is to extend Gadamer's conditions for understanding to situations in which one is confronted with other perspectives and ways of life highly divergent from one's own. For Taylor, two highly interrelated conditions are sufficient for grasping beliefs and opinions grounded in life forms other than our own in ways that are not completely distorted by assimilation to our own perspectives and ways of life. To set the stage for the enactment of these conditions, we must first allow ourselves to be challenged by what is different in the other.

> The crucial moment is when we allow ourselves to be interpolated by the other; where the difference escapes from its categorization as an error, a fault, or a lesser, undeveloped version of what we are, and challenges us to see it as a viable human alternative. (Taylor, 2002, p. 296)

Our acceptance of this challenge will allow us to see our own peculiarity against the background of our own forms of life, and not as a generalized feature of the human condition as such. At the same time, we will perceive corresponding features in the life forms of others without undue distortion.

These two processes are inextricably bound together and allow us to establish a small, yet significant, beachhead into the forms of life and background assumptions that animate the other and the alternative beliefs and perspectives we wish to understand. By repetitively responding to the challenge of the other in this way, we can achieve a succession of small, particular steps that eventually may cumulate to an adequate understanding of the other for the purposes guiding our engagement. No disengaged standpoint, free of our own prejudices, is available to expedite this protracted, painfully won process. On the contrary, only by bringing our own prejudices into full play is it possible to reveal them more completely to ourselves and to experience others' claims to truth that are associated with their own life forms and personhood.

The fusion of horizons that results from our acceptance of the challenge of the other, and our effortful engagement with others and their ways of life, differs from the pre-engagement backgrounds and horizons of all participants. This is an interactive and conversational "coming-to-an-understanding" model that bridges the ways of life of all parties to the engagement. The fusion occurs when at least one party to the enterprise of understanding undergoes a shift that makes room for some part of the other. It is in this way that one's horizon is extended by taking up a possible perspective that was previously unavailable. But fusion also goes beyond extension because it is not only the perspective that is gathered in, but some of the

background assumptions and language within which it is intelligible. This is why we must understand Gadamer's fusion of horizons as a fusion of ways of life and personhood. The newly forged horizon both combines and extends beyond any of the originals.

Importantly, Gadamer and Taylor do not understand the process of engagement described here as in any way relativistic. Relativism claims that affirmations only can be judged as valid from different points of view or conceptual frameworks. Taylor (2002) states that the interactive, conversational model of resolving incommensurable positions does not support the conclusion that what is true in any of the original positions is false in the others or in the resultant fusion. It is not truth that is at stake, but significance. Differences between positions or perspectives are not matters of recognizing the same propositions as having different truth value. Instead, such differences are located in the different issues that are raised, the different questions asked, and the different features that appear as remarkable. Further, it is not the case that all resultant fusions can be seen as having equal status. Achieved understandings can be considered in terms of their relative accuracy, comprehensiveness, nondistortion, and so on, especially when applied to particular purposes and courses of action. This point is especially important for viewing the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Taylor within a broadly Meadian framework. For Mead, the ultimate value of any understanding that emerges within our conduct with others in morally problematic situations lies in its relation to our acting together in such situations in a manner that somehow resolves or ameliorates the difficulties contained therein.

Finally, and of particular importance, with respect to the matter of moving beyond seeming incommensurabilities among various perspectives relevant to particular morally problematic situations, the fusions, conclusions, or accounts achieved will vary in another sense of comprehensiveness. This additional sense of comprehensiveness refers to the extent to which a newly achieved account or perspective can take in or make mutually comprehensible a wider variety of other relevant perspectives. "The more comprehensive account in this sense fuses more horizons" (Taylor, 2002, p. 289).

What this means is that the Meadian ideal of the possibility of achieving the most comprehensive perspective possible (an ideal basic to Mead's political, as well as to his moral, thought) is at least a theoretically viable aspiration. Of course, in practice this is a goal that never can be realized, for even if a perspective could be achieved that all persons and cultures might endorse, such an endorsement would not necessarily survive future cultural and personal changes. And with such changes, the process of fusion would need to commence yet again. Thus, in practice, comprehensiveness of perspectives is a moving goal toward which our engagements with others continually strive. Nonetheless, it is an important goal and "ideal both epistemically and humanly: epistemically, because the more comprehensive account would tell more about human beings and their possibilities; humanly, because the language would allow more human beings to understand each other and to come to undistorted understandings" (Taylor, 2002, p. 289).

For Mead and for Taylor, the key to moral life with others is the attainment of the most comprehensive perspective possible with respect to particular problematic situations. The kind of ethics that issues from such a position cannot be enshrined in rules that regulate duty or codify utilitarian calculations. Rather, this is an ethics that is constantly dynamic as new situations and perspectives emerge that demand our response. Both the perspectives at stake, and we who hold them, are constituted through our activity as biophysical and sociocultural persons in the sociocultural and biophysical world. Consequently, our status as selves is ethically saturated. The more comprehensive our perspectives, the wider the range of our selfhood. For persons and societies, such comprehensiveness is both a developmental and political ideal. "Nations, like individuals, can become objects to themselves only as they see themselves through the eyes of others. . . . The function of social organization is to build up and enlarge the personality of nations as truly as that of individuals" (Mead as cited in Petras, 1968, pp. 153–154).

Conclusions

For Mead, the moral worth of a society can be judged in terms of the degree to which members and institutions in the society are able to adopt and coordinate multiple perspectives. This, in turn, may be determined by the extent to which they are able to engage in problem solving and perspective taking in ways that are communicatively open and reflect a genuine concern for the well-being of others. The highest level of political organization is reached when the suffering of others ceases to be regarded as an object for love or help, but as the occasion for achieving a political remedy for that suffering. To Mead, this is the heart of democracy. A democratic society fosters the social conditions that enable the highest possible degrees of participation and expression by all members of the society. None of this assumes a social harmony of interests, but instead privileges democratic-experimental methods of collective problem solving, supported by communicative capabilities that permit the free and open exchange of perspectives. There is no guarantee of progress beyond the achievement and maintenance of this highly valued engagement and exchange with others.

At the heart of Mead's social psychology is activity with others in a biophysical and sociocultural world. We come to understand ourselves and others by taking perspectives that are embedded in the world in ways that go well beyond individual subjective views and judgments. It is through acting with others that such perspectives come to constitute us as understanding and agentive selves. The development of selves and societies is possible only through the ongoing, dynamic exchange and emergence of perspectives at social, interpersonal, and personal levels of reality. There is no personal development outside of social development, and the development of a society always coincides with the self-development of its members. Perspectives and their exchange do not come about by abstract imaginings of others' experiences, minds, or worlds that result from adopting particular sorts of introspective or empathic strategies, nor do we come biologically pre-equipped with selves

inclined to such strategic imaginings. Rather, it is primarily through our worldly activity with others that we come to know ourselves, others, and our world at all. We are caught up in action before we come to understand and reflect. Recognition of this basic fact of human existence carries considerable implication for our demeanor within that ongoing conduct with others through which our selfhood is continuously emergent.

In closing this chapter, it should be recognized that it remains arguable as to whether or not the neo-Meadian interpretations and syntheses offered herein might suffice as a framework for engaging with others across highly diverse and deeply contested social perspectives. One of the most challenging lines of criticism that might be directed at such a framework may be extracted from Habermas' criticisms of Gadamer's project (see Teigas, 1995; Warnke, 1987). Habermas' concern is that Gadamer's focus on the truth of perspectives comes at the expense of an adequate analysis of their ideological nature—that is, the ways in which certain perspectives function to maintain a repressive status quo and inequitable distribution of power. In an ideological sense, it is not just that perspectives may hide their assumptions in an implicit background, but that they may explicitly articulate them in ways that masquerade as uncontested, consensus reasons, grounds, and warrants when they are anything but. According to Habermas, the only way to counter such ideological functions is to theorize an adequate account of how economic, political, and social systems actually work, whatever the perspectives, prejudices, and self-understandings extant in those societies. As might be expected, Gadamer's response to Habermas was to argue that there is no disinterested, disengaged platform from which such an idealized theory of actual societal functioning, ideological or otherwise, might be formulated. Interestingly, Habermas attempts to counter Gadamer's riposte by saying something quite like that which Taylor has been interpreted as saying above. In effect, he argues that theoretical ideals such as equitable social power and unconstrained communicative practices are not unreal, but are implied as possibilities in any acts of perspective taking associated with validity claims of any sort, and thus may be employed as standards within the kinds of social theorizing he advocates. In many ways, this seems a very Meadian line to take. Perhaps this is one reason why Habermas' (1992) remarks on Mead have been so generally, although not uncritically, positive.

Chapter 9
Perspectives and Persons: Ontological, Constitutive Possibilities

In contemporary developmental psychology, perspective taking is understood as an important process or mechanism by which we come to know that others are people with minds of their own–intentional agents whose goals, strategies, commitments, and orientations bear both similarities to and differences from our own. In this chapter, we will argue that perspective taking is more than a powerful epistemic mechanism of this sort. It is also and more foundationally, ontologically constitutive of us as social, psychological persons and rational, moral agents. On this account, human persons are understood as interactive kinds (Hacking, 1999) who care about and react to the ways in which they are described and classified, and such uniquely human care and reactivity are consequences of our perspectivity. It is because we are able to occupy and take perspectives that we are persons at all. It is by means of perspective taking that we are constituted as selves and agents and that we simultaneously also come to differentiate and understand others.

Now, to assert that persons are constituted perspectivally is a huge claim, one that requires a great deal of argument, demonstration, and discussion, to which we only are able to offer a modest beginning here. Fortunately, however, we are not laboring alone, but are able to stand on the shoulders of several influential others who have made significant contributions to such a view of perspectives and persons. Consequently, in selectively recounting some of their positions, we are able to initiate a good deal of the argumentation and demonstration that our claim concerning the perspectival constitution of persons as selves and agents requires.

We begin with some conceptual matters pertaining to perspective taking, perspectives, and persons, and move on to a consideration of the perspectival theorizing of a selective subset of philosophers, psychologists, and others who have linked perspectives and/or perspective taking to selfhood, agency, and personhood in an ontological manner. We then offer a very brief developmental sketch of the ontological constitution of the perspectival person, some of which iterates (albeit with slightly different emphases) some of what already has been said in Chapter 7. Finally, we consider some developmental and educational implications of this particular approach to personhood and the development of persons. Although our emphasis in this chapter is on perspective taking, what we will say in the next section should make it clear that we do not interpret perspectives in a deeply psychological

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way. Instead, we treat perspectives and perspective taking in ways that are consistent with our overall claims in this book concerning a biophysically and socioculturally emergent, irreducible form of personhood that includes moral and rational agency, together with experiential and conceptual selfhood.

Perspective Taking, Perspectives, and Persons

In developmental psychology, perspectives typically enter into discussions of important aspects of personhood (such as selfhood, agency, and self-understanding) through theorizing and inquiry concerning perspective taking (sometimes equated with role taking, person perception, decentration, social cognition, or psychological mindedness). For the most part, conceptions of perspective taking in developmental psychology converge on the idea of perspective taking as a kind of guesswork by which individuals attempt to determine "the covert, psychological processes of other people. . . their abilities, knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, motives, [beliefs] and intentions with respect to this or that concrete situation" (Flavell, Botkin, Fry, Wright, & Jarvis, 1968, p. v). Such guesswork may be explicit or implicit, perceptual and/or conceptual, cognitive or affective, behaviorally linked or not, related to one's self-understanding or not, and involve differing degrees of coordination and organization of the perspectives considered. All of these variations depend not only on the conceptions and definitions held by different researchers and theorists, but also upon the kinds of tasks and procedures employed in relevant inquiries.

For example, Light (1979) relaxes the explicitness of the guesswork involved by focusing on "how far the child takes account of other people's perceptions, expectations or emotions in his dealings with them" (p. xi), with such "accounting" often inferred from the actions and words of very young children. As developmental research on perspective taking has focused on increasingly young children (especially in more recent years), such inferencing has become a matter of considerable conjecture and debate (e.g., Carpendale & Lewis, 2004; Hobson, 2002; Tomasello, Carpenter, Call, Behne, & Moll, 2005). In consideration of possible differences in the extent to which perspective taking is understood as perceptual or conceptual and cognitive or affective, Shantz (1975) has distinguished five categories of social inference that seem to be implicated to differing extents in developmental research on perspective taking. These include inferences about what another is seeing, feeling, thinking, or intending, and more generally what another is like.

Debate concerning the extent to which conceptions of perspective taking are linked to action and/or self-understanding is reflected in a comparison of views like those of Sarbin (1954) and Carpendale and Lewis (2004). Sarbin, despite emphasizing the social origins of role taking in general, draws a clear distinction between any given instance of role taking as a prelude to the possibility of action based on perspectival understanding and actual role enactment. On the other hand, Carpendale and Lewis (2004), following Chapman (1991, 1999), understand social understanding of the kind involved in perspective taking to unfold within actual

social activity with others and to thus be inseparable from social interaction. Yet another source of diversity in conceptions of perspective taking lies in the fact that some developmentalists link perspective taking directly to the development of self and self-understanding (e.g., Hobson, 2002; Selman, 1980), while others (e.g., Flavell, 1992), although not uninterested in self-development, tend to focus on the information processing and epistemic functions of perspective taking in a more instrumental navigation of life's challenges. Finally, for some theorists, perspective taking is not just a matter of inferring the psychological life of others, but of coordinating and organizing various perspectives of self and others in a way that enables progressively higher forms of self and other understanding and functioning. Such an emphasis on coordination and organization is clearly evident in the works of Werner (1948), Piaget (1926, 1928, 1976), Piaget and Inhelder 1963), and Selman (1980), among others. In fact, Selman (1980) defines social perspective taking as including:

> . . . a developing understanding of how human points of view are related and coordinated with one another and not simply what social or psychological information may appear to be like from an alternative individual's perspectives as in the construct of role-taking. (p. 22)

With respect to differing conceptions of perspective taking that flow from variations in the kind of inferential processes assumed in determining another's perspective, Chandler (2001) has painted a rather bleak picture.

> . . . many have found it perfectly natural to mix the properly perceptual subject of visual perspective taking with just about anything else having to do with the situatedness of social roles, or the ineluctably subjective nature of the knowing process. From there it has proved to be only a short step to the common confusion of making a single conceptual piece out of the otherwise disparate matters of visual perspective taking, social role taking, narcissism, self-absorption, empathy, and a hundred other things having to do with the fact that knowing, like seeing, lends itself to being discussed in the language of coordinated perspectives. The result has been a whole dog's breakfast of seriously incommensurable bits and pieces of theory and practice that. . . prove to be indigestible. (p. 49)

Of course, Chandler (2001) is correct to point to the common conceptual confusion of assuming that all instances labeled in a particular way are necessarily similar in more than their labeling. Nonetheless, perspective taking may be a kind of holistic, relational phenomenon with aspects that coherently may be seen to encompass many of the diverse properties and processes attributed to it by developmental psychologists and others. We believe that the envisioning of such a possibility requires a consideration of the ontological status of perspectives themselves. It also requires a shift away from the kind of inferential guesswork assumed in the majority of the developmental literature on perspective taking, and toward those routines and conventions of social interactivity that envelop the developing child.

Two features are common to most conventional definitions and uses of the term, perspective, when employed in its psychological sense to mean a mental view. One of these is an activity of seeing or viewing. The other concerns the private or mental character of this apparently perceptual activity. Both of these features hint at the dualisms of appearance versus reality and mental or psychological versus social, often implying a limited, personal, or biased access to those entities, events, and situations on which our perspectives are fixed. As expressed by Drummond of

Hawthornden in 1711 (OED Online, 1989), "All, that we can set our eyes on in these intricate mazes of life, is but vain perspective and deceiving shadows, appearing far otherwise afar off, than when... gazed upon at a near distance." The metaphoric extension of the fallible, perceptual gaze that is evident in Drummond's statement so consistently has attended everyday use of the term that perspectives commonly and broadly may be understood as orientations to situations. That perspectives change and develop is also readily evident—"time and experience... alter all perspectives" (Adams, 1995). Moreover, such orientations apparently serve particular functions of assisting our understanding of, and action within, those worldly situations in which we find ourselves, even if they may occasionally yield poor dividends as explanatory and/or anticipatory vehicles.

So perspectives may be understood, as we now know that they were by George Herbert Mead (see Chapter 8), as *orientations to situations (including things and events) that function to interpret and facilitate action within them*, with the understanding that such orientations are not fixed but dynamically unfolding as situations continuously emerge and are transformed. Such a definition and conceptualization leave open questions of the explicit/implicit, perceptual/conceptual, cognitive/affective, real/imaginary, private/public, or psychological/social status of perspectives. Theoretically, perspectives may range from the highly idiosyncratic and fantastical to the strictly conventional and concrete. They may be explicitly and deliberately conscious or tacit and unplanned. Nonetheless, it is clear that perspectives are *relations between human persons and their biophysical, sociocultural world, and that these relations anchor our being and knowing as psychological persons*. Not only does this conceptualization of perspectives fit everyday uses of the term (with respect to the senses discussed here), but it applies equally well to standard applications of the term within developmental psychology and to those more ontologically oriented positions that also will be discussed shortly.

To take a perspective then, may be understood as adopting an orientation to a particular situation, whether this is done knowingly or not. But, if this is the case, what becomes of the assumption that permeates, both explicitly and implicitly, so much of the scholarly literature on perspective taking to the effect that perspective taking is a uniquely human capability that is possibly responsible for much human communicative and sociocultural accomplishment? For example, Hobson (2002) ends his book, *The cradle of thought*, by stressing the centrality of perspective taking to the human condition:

> To understand that one has a subjective perspective is to open the door to a world of meanings... [to think] about other people as individuals with subjective perspectives of their own. At this point... the infant has been lifted out of the cradle of thought. Engagement with others has taught this soul to fly. (p. 274)

Nonetheless, there would seem to be little doubt that all living things orient in some way to their environments. If this is all that is meant by perspective taking, we are a long way from Hobson's image of humanity. Of course, adding the functional consequences of *interpretation and action* (see the first italicized expression two paragraphs above) possibly does much to restrict perspective taking, at least to the

higher primates. Such restriction would seem to flow from most conventional senses of these terms, especially the reflective connotations of *interpretation*. The codicil that perspectives are relations between human beings and their world that anchor their being and knowing as psychological persons (the second italicized expression two paragraphs above) obviously entails the restriction of perspective taking to persons, but seems to do so in an unduly, and perhaps unnecessarily stipulative manner. On the other hand, it may be that such a move can be defended with recourse to a consideration of the conceptual status of persons. If perspective taking is to be understood as something unique to persons, it clearly behooves us to consider what we mean by persons. Indeed, something similar might be said of all developmental studies. "To see human development aright one must already have an account of the product, the mature human being" (Harré, 2004, p. 241).

In the social sciences and humanities, such entities are understood as persons. As we already have seen (in Chapters 1 and 5), Locke's (1995) famous essay on human understanding initiated the modern history of the topic by arguing that mature human beings ought be understood in psychological terms. For Locke, this meant treating personhood as a kind of psychological continuity held together across time by memory and linked to the future through the imagination. Parfit (1984) and other analytic philosophers have used the notion of "person stage" to describe the momentary slices of time in the history of a person. A series of person stages is held to be psychological continuous if later members of the series develop in characteristic ways from earlier members of the series. In recent years, such psychological continuity has been given a more strategic twist in psychological theories that treat persons as active, reflective agents who care about their circumstances and act in self-regulated ways to improve them (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Carver & Scheier, 1998).

However, many twentieth-century philosophers and psychologists also have criticized Lockean and neo-Lockean conceptions of the person as too exclusively intrapersonal, the problem being that they seem to presuppose exactly the kind of psychological continuity that they claim as a criterion. Continuity, of whatever kind is on offer, presumably must be experienced, and what is it that performs such experiencing if not a person? Continuity cannot both constitute and require personhood simultaneously, at least not in widely accepted, analytic systems of logic. In response to such concerns, various attempts have been made to broaden the conception of persons beyond intrapersonal processes that seem to be essential for the experience of psychological continuity. In Chapter 5, we gave examples of such "broadening" in influential works by scholars like Peter Strawson (1959), Charles Taylor (1989), and Rom Harré (1998).

Strawson (1959) claimed that the concept of person assumes the embodiment of a human being as a thing among other things in a biophysical and sociocultural world. Taylor (1989), as we have seen, considers persons to be unique, embodied beings, with a rich repertoire of psychological capabilities and distinctive histories, who are morally responsible for their actions. And, also as previously noted, Harré (1998) defines persons as social and psychological, embodied beings with a sense of their own existence, history, beliefs, attributes, and place among similar others. These various extensions serve to distinguish human persons from merely

biological beings, thus resisting the reduction of personhood to entirely physical and material properties and processes. By adding historical, moral, and sociocultural dimensions to the concept of person, they introduce significant elements of rationality, normativity, intentionality, and perspectivity to the makeup of persons.

And yet, despite admitting sociocultural, historical, and moral criteria in the form of self-understanding and rational and moral agency, most philosophical and psychological conceptions of personhood also resist strong versions of sociocultural constructionism (e.g., Gergen, 1991) that would understand persons as constituted solely by and in historical, sociocultural terms. To reconcile biology and culture, most contemporary theorists of personhood understand persons as co-constituted phylogenetically and ontogenetically at the intersection of biophysical evolution and conditions and sociocultural history and context (e.g., Donald, 2001; Emmeche et al., 2000; Tomasello, 1999). Moreover, much as Piaget (1928, 1963, 1995) consistently claimed, it is human activity within the biophysical and sociocultural world that occasions personal development during ontogenesis. Indeed, as discussed in some of the earlier chapters in this book (particularly Chapters 5 and 7), the self-understanding (selfhood) and self-determination (agency) that are central to contemporary notions of persons in much contemporary psychology typically are understood as emergent products of embodied activity with others within organized sociocultural contexts (e.g., Bickhard, 2004; Tomasello, 1999).

Drawing together some of the central ideas in the preceding conceptualizations, we understand persons as *embodied selves and agents (both rational and moral) with social and psychological identities, and rights and duties, who care about and can understand something of their existence and circumstances*. The agentive selfhood, identity, and personal understanding assumed in this definition would clearly be impossible in the absence of biophysically evolved human bodies and brains (see Donald, 2001; Tomasello, 1999). However, such core criteria of personhood also would be impossible without ongoing interactions with others within historically established sociocultural contexts and practices during ontogenesis. It is only through interacting with other persons that we gradually come to orient to our life circumstances reflexively as persons capable of self-understanding and self-determination who care deeply about our existence, our selves, and others. Such orientation is itself a matter of perspective taking. It is for this reason that philosophers as different in their views as Buber and Dennett have defined persons in perspectival terms—as beings capable of distinguishing between the I–It relationships that hold between oneself and a mere object and the I–Thou relations that pertain between oneself and another person (Buber, 1970), or as beings capable of taking an intentional stance toward other persons, which means understanding their actions in terms of beliefs, desires, intentions, and so forth (i.e., perspectives) (Dennett, 1987).

It is through taking the perspectives of others, as nested within the social practices (especially relational and linguistic practices) of the larger society, that we come to interpret ourselves and act as persons. Moreover, this kind of personal development is not primarily an epistemic matter that consists in our coming to know about our selves and our world. Of course, it is that, but more primarily and importantly it is

an ontological matter of our coming to be persons at all. At least that is the view that has been advanced in various ways by a number of past and contemporary scholars, whose views we now wish to consider (admittedly, in a rather selective manner).

Perspectives and Persons: A Selection of Extant Formulations

As we previously have said, traditional forms of realist metaphysics in philosophy tend to grant reality status to entities and events if they do not depend on other things, but stand on their own and can be accessed objectively. In contrast, traditional idealist metaphysics holds that all entities and events consist of the ideas we have of them—that the appearances we experience are the very objects and happenings in question. Perspectivism arose in the eighteenth century as a response to such traditional metaphysical positions. Interestingly, from its very inception, perspectivism was closely associated with notions of selfhood and personhood. For example, Gutav Teichmüller, whose work probably exercised great influence on the philosophical reflections of Nietzsche (cf. Stack, 1999), held that the self available in one's immediate experience constituted, through its ongoing activity, the world as it affects the conceptions of any individual. At a metaphysical level, he held that each metaphysical system consisted of a perspective on a complex reality that contained partial truths.

Nietzsche (1967a, 1967b) stressed the perspectival nature of all thinking, and consequently the provisional nature of all knowledge. For Nietzsche, entities, events, and values can have no absolute existence in themselves, apart from their relations to persons. Such relations are the only reality available to us, but if viewed through a multiplicity of perspectives, they are sufficient to secure warrantable knowledge in relation to differing sorts of interest and practice. In particular, syntheses of perspectives may be adjudicated according to the extent to which they function as life preserving and life promoting (cf. Tanner, 2000). For Nietzsche, the ideal that animates all ways of life is a will to become what you are by taking "over the task of creating oneself as a work of art" (Guignon, 2004, p. 131). If all that exists is perspectival, including one's self, then it is best to get on with the creative crafting of perspectives that might prove most functional in relation to other life-enhancing perspectives encountered and considered in the course of one's worldly activity. In this way, as emphasized by a later perspectival philosopher, Ortega y Gasset, "the self is not an entity separate from what surrounds it; there is a dynamic interaction and interdependence of self and things. These and the self together constitute reality. . . every self has a unique perspective" (Garcia, 1999, p. 637).

Perhaps the most thoroughgoing philosophical perspectivism that has been developed to date was forged by American philosopher and social psychologist, George Herbert Mead. To review some of what we already have said in the previous chapter, Mead (1938, 2002) held that reality is perspectival in that all phenomena (objects, events, selves, others, ideas, and theories) emerge in the relation of persons and their contexts. For Mead, a perspective is an orientation to an environment that is associated with acting within that environment, actually and/or imaginatively. Perspectives

emerge out of activity, especially joint social, interpersonal activity with others, and enable increasingly complex, differentiated, abstracted, and coordinated forms of activity. They also provide the bases for selfhood. It is by taking perspectives that exist in the interpersonal and sociocultural world that, according to Mead, we come to exist as self-interpreting beings. An individual becomes "an object to himself by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within an organized setting of social relationships" (Mead, 1934, p. 255). Through repeated and graduated participation in routine, everyday interactions with others (including play and games), children take different positions, roles, and perspectives within these conventional interactions. Such experience enables them not only to take different perspectives in interaction with others, but eventually to be able to occupy different perspectives simultaneously in a way that allows the child to be other to himself/herself (Gillespie, 2005). He/she is then able to react to those very perspectives that now constitute him/her as an object or a "Me."

Importantly, for Mead, the activity of the self is conditioned, but not determined, by the social situations and processes within which it emerges developmentally. To become an object to itself, it is not enough for the self to take the perspectives of others and the broader society as experienced in one's own past and current history of interactivity. It also is necessary to react to the "Me" that appears in current action and imagination as a consequence of this past engagement with others. Consequently, Mead's self is constituted not only by a socially spawned perspectival "Me," but also by an ongoing, immediate reaction to the "Me." This fleeting, agentive "I" reacts to the "Me" in the immediate moment of action and (especially in novel and problematic situations) generates changes to the perspectival structure of the "Me," resulting in a reconstructed "Me" of the next moment to which an immediately future "I" will respond (see Chapter 8 for an extended discussion of this point). Such an ongoing, dynamic process of perspective taking and perspectival emergence constitutes our selfhood and only can occur in the context of our interactions with others during ontogenesis. Mead's perspectival self marks a true joining of selfhood with perspective taking and constitutes a major development in the history of perspectival personhood.

Another important contribution of Mead's perspectival theorizing is that unlike Drummond of Hawthornden (see above) and others who have emphasized the self-serving bias and deception that may attend personal perspectives, Mead maintains that perspectives are both real and correctable if they are too removed from relevant biophysical and sociocultural reality and practices. For example, orienting to ocean waves or chatty friends with imperious hauteur and commands that they cease and desist is unlikely to function in ways intended. For Mead (2002), all perspectives are potentially objective, but it is only those that achieve adequate degrees of functionality and agreement within the real world that operate effectively as constraints and affordances for our worldly activity. Like Nietzsche, Mead's perspectivism is a fallible realism capable of anchoring personal being and securing warrantable knowledge.

Much in the same manner as Mead understood mind and selfhood to arise through taking the perspectives of others and society, and making them one's own

by reacting to them, the early twentieth-century Russian literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin, calls attention to the dialogical character of our ordinary experience. For Bakhtin (1981, 1986), individual thought consists of a dialogue with real and imagined interlocutors. We always first experience the world through a "We," before we come to experience it as an "I." "According to Bakhtin's dialogical conception of human existence, we are at the deepest level *polyphonic* points of intersection with a social world rather than *monophonic* centers of self-talk and will" (Guignon, 2004, p. 121, italics in the original). All of our dialogical encounters with others add to the complex of other and self-perspectives through which we experience, understand, and act. Interactors in dialogical encounters always give something to each other. They are simultaneously caught up in both "I-for-the-other" and "other-for-me" perspectives (Bakhtin, 1993).

Bakhtin's dialogical conception of the self takes social interactions as foundational to our identity and personhood. For Bakhtin, as for Mead, our agency is wrapped up in our reactivity to those perspectives that we have taken from our social experiences with others that unfold within the larger sociocultural, linguistic process. It is by reacting with our emergent first-person perspectives to these second- and third-person perspectives that we come to exist as persons who care about our existence and entertain commitments and projects of self and other enhancement. (See Hermans (2001, 2002) for a theory of dialogical selfhood that incorporates many of Bakhtin's ideas.)

At least, this is the view of contemporary philosopher of mind and personhood, Lynne Rudder Baker (2000), who claims that a first-person perspective underlies all forms of self-consciousness that might conceivably serve as bases for agency and personhood and that such a first-person perspective is necessarily relational, and therefore a developmental achievement that requires interactions with others. According to Baker, there is no mysterious object that is oneself-as-oneself (i.e., no transcendental ego, no soul, and no inner homunculus). The referent of "I" is the embodied person acting in the world. When a person refers to himself/herself, what he/she refers to is no different from what someone who knows him/her refers to by using his/her proper name. What is different is that he/she can conceive of himself/herself in a way that no one else can—from the "inside" so to speak—because he/she has a first-person perspective. Acquisition of a first-person perspective carries with it a genuine conception of self and self-consciousness. Only persons have such perspectives.

On Baker's account, human bodies predate the selves that they partially constitute. A person is a developmental accomplishment beyond bodily, biological development alone. In support of her assertions, Baker offers a formal argument for the relational nature of any first-person perspective. Her three premises are that (1) one can have a first-person perspective if and only if one can think of oneself as oneself, (2) one can think of oneself as oneself only if one has concepts that can apply to things different from oneself, and (3) one can have concepts that apply to things different from oneself only if one has had interactions with such things. From these premises, she concludes that if one has a first-person perspective, then one has had interactions with things different from oneself. The kinds of interactions Baker

has in mind "are those in which the infant naturally develops various senses of 'self,' as described by developmental psychologists" (Baker, 2000, p. 96) "who routinely describe the acquisition of self-concepts in tandem with the acquisition of concepts of other things as different from oneself" (p. 66). Thus, for Baker, a first-person perspective is relational in that it would be impossible for a biological organism alone in the universe to develop a first-person perspective.

Unlike Mead or Bakhtin, who speculate about more specific interactionist and narrative mechanisms by which first-person perspectives might flow from reacting to second- and third-person perspectives experienced and appropriated from interactions with other persons, Baker leaves the details of the developmental account required to the theoretical and empirical inquiries of developmental psychologists. Although many developmental psychologists have toiled productively in these fields (e.g., Carpendale & Lewis, 2004; Chandler, 2001; Flavell, 1992; Piaget & Inhelder, 1963; Selman, 1980; Tomasello, 1999), Peter Hobson's (2002) thought is especially useful in furthering a perspectival ontology of persons during ontogenesis. The aim of Hobson's work is to "begin with the mental life of babies and to end up with a story of how thinking... emerges in the course of early development" (p. xiii). Hobson's account assumes a central role for perspective taking, in that "Thinking becomes possible because the child separates out one person's perspective from another's. More than this: thinking arises out of repeated experiences of moving from one psychological stance to another in relation to things and events" (p. 105). More specifically, according to Hobson (2002), the child

> ... first has to take a perspective on herself and her own attitudes. It is only by doing this, by taking a view on her own ways of construing the world, that she can begin to *think* in terms of her own and others' perspectives. This happens through a particular species of identification: the child identifies with others' attitudes towards the child's own attitudes and actions. Once more, the child is lifted out of her own stance and is drawn into adopting another perspective – this time a perspective on herself and what she is feeling and doing. She becomes self-aware through others.... The change comes about through the child grasping something – or rather a number of things. First, that there are such things as perspectives, and perspectives are what people have. Second, that she herself is a person with a perspective. It is a perspective that may differ from someone else's. Third, that she can choose to adopt the perspective of someone else. She can even do this while retaining her own perspective. She can hold in mind not just one but two perspectives at once.... It is for this reason that she becomes able to adjust her actions to the perspective of someone else... It is for this reason that she can adopt a perspective towards her own actions and attitudes... It is for this reason that, most wonderful of all, she can choose to apply new perspectives to things. When she does this with the kind of non-serious intent of which she has been capable for months, she is engaging in symbolic play. (pp. 106–107)

To make his thought more concretely accessible, Hobson (2002) employs a model consisting of a triangle of relations in which an infant relates to objects, persons, or events in the world; to himself/herself as the other relates to him/her; and to the other's relation to the world. (See Chapman, 1991, 1999 for a similar, although not identical, model of relations that he labeled "the epistemic triangle.") One of the theoretical purposes to which Hobson puts his relatedness triangle is to explain

how the infant becomes able to understand that there is not just one perspective (i.e., his/her own) but two perspectives (e.g., his/her own and his/her mother's) involved in his/her interactions with another concerning some aspect of the world (e.g., an object such as a toy). "What we need to explain is how the child comes to know that her movement into this position of the other amounts to her taking up a new perspective" (Hobson, 2002, pp. 108–109). Hobson's answer, making use of his relatedness triangle, is to claim that through triangulation a given object is experienced as in receipt of two different attitudes and meanings, and that

> it is this that prompts the infant to separate out her own attitude from that of the other. . . . Through this experience of having both her own and her mother's attitudes to the same things, the infant learns something about things on the one hand and attitudes on the other. In reading her mother's reaction to a toy, the infant learns something about the toy; but at the same time, the toy tells her something about her mother. What it tells her is that her mother is different from herself, in a particular way. It tells her that her mother has an attitude to the toy that is separate from her own attitude to the same toy. . . . Events such as these are usually considered in terms of the infant finding out about the world through another person. Fair enough. But at the same time the child is learning about the nature of persons-with-minds through relating to a common world. (p. 109)

As theoretically informative for our current purposes as is Hobson's work, we would be remiss were we were not to acknowledge that the contemporary developmental psychologist who has fashioned the most comprehensive account of how perspective taking relates to selfhood beyond infancy and early childhood, is Robert Selman (1980, 2003). For the past 40 years, Selman and his colleagues have been engaged in a program of theoretical and empirical inquiry that has resulted in a comprehensive model of the development of our ability to take and coordinate perspectives, and of the way in which this developmentally emergent and increasingly sophisticated capability fuels our development as self-conscious agents capable of interweaving our activities with others, understanding ourselves and others, and relating cooperatively and productively with other people. Of particular relevance to the theoretical frameworks we have employed in this book is the fact that Selman's work, in addition to being influenced by the work of Jean Piaget, also has been strongly influenced by the perspectival theorizing of George Herbert Mead (sometimes directly and sometimes through the interpretations of Mead advanced by Lawrence Kohlberg) (see Selman, 1980, 2003).

According to Selman (1980, 2003), preschool children's perspective taking is relatively undifferentiated and strongly linked to their immediate, concrete situations and to the physical characteristics of themselves and others. Gradually, as children age and experience a wider variety of social and educational situations, they are able to distinguish between physical and psychological characteristics of themselves and others, and recognize and differentiate their own perspectives from those of others, with a growing awareness and appreciation of possible and actual. As they continue to develop, their perspective taking and self–other relations become more thoroughly reciprocal, mutual, and coordinated within relevant, broader perspectives extant within their communities. Paralleling these, somewhat typically Meadian developmental shifts, children and adolescents gradually come

to understand themselves from an increasingly wide variety of perspectives that they can consider and coordinate simultaneously in cooperating with others in joint ventures that require interpersonal negotiation and problems solving.

Practices, Perspectives, and Persons

In Chapter 8, we attempted to articulate explicitly the relational ontology and developmental constitution of persons that emerges from perspectival theorizing such as that just reviewed. By combining this integrative theorizing with recent attempts to clarify exactly what a relational ontology of persons might entail (e.g., Slife, 2004) and with recent reformulations of Mead's perspectival theorizing (e.g., Gillespie, 2005, 2006; Martin, 2006), it is possible to sketch an ontogenetic, developmental scenario. This is a scenario that nests personhood ontologically within first-, second-, and third-person perspectives, as these are available in the interpersonal, societal, and cultural contexts in which human infants are embedded from birth and live out their lives. Such an account has much in common with the interactional approaches and developmental scenarios presented in several of the other chapters of the current volume. However, it is somewhat unique in its emphasis on the nature of perspective taking as an emergent developmental process. This is a process that itself follows a developmental trajectory, which moves from the occupation and exchange of different phases or positions in social interactions and sociocultural practices to the intentional and critical consideration of different practices and traditions of understanding and acting.

As Slife (2004) reminds us, "practices are more pre-theoretical than theoretical, more concrete than abstract" (p. 157). Moreover, "practices are probably [our] most important form of. . . relating, because practices require a relationship not only with our surroundings but also with our prior actions and the actions of others" (p. 159). The coordination of relations that practices entail is captured nicely in the triadic models of relationality provided by Hobson (2002) and Chapman (1991, 1999). However, Slife (2004) does more than point to the epistemic consequences of our relational practices as persons in interaction with other persons, things, and occurrences in the social and physical world. More fundamentally, he asserts the central ontological implications of our ongoing embeddedness, from birth, in such practices. "[I]n their fundamental realness (in their practical and concrete realities) all things are ontologically related to their context and can qualitatively change as their contexts change. . . All things. . . are concretely dependent upon, rather than independent of, their contexts" (Slife, 2004, p. 159).

That such a relational ontology not only applies to our selves, but also is the best way to conceive of selfhood, and its development has been the thesis of the ontological investigations of selfhood, agency, and personhood discussed throughout this book. To recap,

> in ontogenesis, persons are developmentally emergent (both temporally and ontologically) from the practical activity of biological human beings in the physical and sociocultural

> world... [Our] psychological personhood emerges both substantively and relationally. Infants actively explore their surroundings, observing and touching themselves, others, and things, and being observed and touched by others... Caregivers and others interact with developing infants [within] relational practices [that provide] forms and means of personhood and identity extant within particular societies and cultures. Psychological development proceeds as these... sociocultural, linguistic, and relational practices are employed as bases for language, and eventually for thought and reflection... Over time, the individual's activity in the world is transformed from one of prereflection to one in which reflective, intentional agency emerges and fosters a self-understanding and personal identity linked to one's particular existence and personal history of activity. Such psychological continuity imbues an individual life with meaning and significance. Open to the life-world, the psychological person emerges as an embodied being with deliberative agency, self-understanding, and personal identity defined by commitments and concerns associated with his her particular existence and activity in the world. (p. 84, this volume).

What we would like to do here is to focus more specifically on the ontological significance of perspective taking in the constitution of persons as selves and agents during ontogenesis. To do so, we turn once again to some recent reinterpretations of the developmental theorizing of George Herbert Mead, our own included, which understand perspective taking as both embedded in and emergent from our concrete relational practices of interactivity with others. Both Gillespie (2005, 2006) and Martin (2006) discuss the way in which Mead's social ontology of selfhood depends on the child's occupation of different social positions within routine social interactions and sociocultural practices. In effect, what these neo-Meadian accounts attempt to do is to clarify the exact manner in which Mead claimed that "We are in possession of selves just in so far as we can and do take the [perspectives] of others toward ourselves and respond to those [perspectives]" (Mead, 2002, p. 194). Despite some minor differences in relevant accounts, the main idea is that as young children accumulate experience in different phases of conventional social interactions, they gradually are able to differentiate, integrate, and coordinate the different perspectives associated with different phases and positions in such interactions. In doing so, they are able to take different perspectives on themselves and to react to those perspectives—a process that enables them to develop self-understanding and first-person experience of themselves.

The child's repeated occupation of different social positions in conventional interactions with others eventually enables remembrance of these positions and the experience of them. Thus, for example, repeated experiences of receiving a rolling ball from another and rolling it back, or of taking the different roles of hider and seeker in games of hide-and-seek, allow the child to remember the different social positions of receiver and passer or hider and seeker. It then becomes possible for the child to be in one social position while remembering and perhaps anticipating being in another. For example, the seeking child may recall a recent successful experience as a hider and seeker in that same place for his/her hiding playmate. In this way, the child is able effectively to occupy or take two or more perspectives simultaneously. Importantly, with this ability to enter simultaneously into different perspectives, the differentiation, integration, and coordination of perspectives

discussed by developmental psychologists, together with increasingly abstract forms of remembrance and imagination, become possible.

With respect to the differentiation and development of the self, the child's experience and remembrance of different social positions and perspectives includes the reactions of others to him/her. It is these reactions of others that, according to Mead, provide an initial means of reacting to himself/herself. Over time, and with increased social experience that includes the gradual mastery of a reflexive language, a greater and greater variety of reactive and reflexive possibilities becomes available. Importantly, the child's self-development is fueled by the child's reactivity not only to the reactions of particular others with whom he/she has interacted, but also to more abstracted and generalized others extracted from his/her broader experience of those social, cultural, and linguistic practices that subsume his/her overall social interactivity (also, see Selman, 1980, 2003).

Equally importantly, the child's reactions to himself/herself do not simply reflect the perspectives of others that he/she has experienced and recalled. The child also reacts to those perspectives and to salient features of his/her social situations. As his/her social experience and linguistic capabilities expand, additional resources for his/her self-development become available through his/her ongoing immersion in more diversified interactions that reflect broader sociocultural practices and perspectives of selfhood and personhood that he/she also can take up and react to. For example, the adolescent's reading of novels and viewing of films may provide narrative content that assists him/her to re-organize, elaborate, differentiate, and integrate perspectives and self-perspectives in ways that go well beyond his/her immediate, everyday experiences. Formal and informal educational experiences may themselves be interpreted as containing a wide variety of perspectives that hold significant possibilities for further self-development and realization.

Some Possibilities for the Study and Promotion of Perspective Taking

Both Mead (1934) and Gillespie (2006) have suggested that children's games are an excellent vehicle for the study of the development of perspective taking and selfhood. For example, Gillespie (2006) points out that the game of hide-and-seek is especially well suited to exploring Mead's theory. With two distinct positions of hider and seeker that entail different action orientations, and with a scripted position exchange following completion of each of its segments, this game (common to many cultures) incorporates the principal elements in the foregoing neo-Meadian account. It requires that a participant, in order to succeed in the game, must clearly differentiate the two social positions and the perspectives their occupation entails and also must integrate the two perspectives so that he/she can "regulate activity within one social position with respect to the complementary position" (Gillespie, 2006, p. 91). The necessity of coordinating positions and perspectives within any segment of the game, and across alternative segments when formal social positions shift, provides

clear practice in, and demonstration of, simultaneously occupying/considering two complimentary perspectives.

Moreover, as Gillespie (2006) points out, in many contemporary cultures, there is a clear longitudinal, developmental sequence that connects the game of hide-and-seek to obvious precursors such as "peek-a-boo," and successors, such as treasure hunts and more abstracted narratives that revolve around hiding/seeking and escaping/chasing (e.g., as evident in many cinematic and real-life dramas). At more advanced levels, actual position exchange and occupation gives way to vicariously engaged processes of narrative and personal imagination, elaboration, and coordination of the various perspectives involved. It is relatively easy to imagine a variety of longitudinal, "naturalistic" studies of positional exchange and perspective taking that might focus on games such as hide-and-seek, together with their logically connected antecedents and consequents. Such games, perhaps with theoretically driven variations, also might be incorporated into active interventions that might be offered to groups of children of different ages (and with numerous variations in relevant factors such as the age and developmental level of playing partners) and contrasted experimentally with control conditions or alternative forms of facilitating perspective taking and self-development (e.g., interventions based on "theory of mind" accounts that are more didactic and less relational, experiential).

More generally, early childhood and K-12 education provide many opportunities for the study of perspective taking and self-development. Indeed, several prominent educators have suggested that the entire process of education might best be understood in terms that relate directly to perspective taking. A recent example is available in the writings of Philippe Meirieu (2005). Meirieu maintains that school is a place where children learn to disengage from their own experiences, situations, and preoccupations through ongoing interaction with other children and the curriculum. "*L'École doit aider l'enfant à renoncer à être au centre du monde*" (p. 68). They learn that there are conventions and practices of correctness and truth that resist their own desires and that they must participate in such practices and judge themselves and others accordingly. For Meirieu, a critical aspect of this escape from their immediate desires is learning to respect and consider other perspectives. "*À l'École, on apprend à passer progressivement de son point de vue et de ses intérêts personnels à la researche du bien commun*" (p. 72). Indeed, a major goal of education is to help children take and evaluate different perspectives in cooperation with others within problem situations. For Meirieu, such perspective taking is an indispensable ingredient in the development of students as persons and citizens.

Consequently, it should not be surprising to discover that schooling provides many excellent venues for the study and facilitation of perspective taking and personal development. Taking and evaluating different perspectives encountered in formal curricula and informal classroom activities is an important part of the educational process in any society, but is especially critical for the preparation of citizens in democratic societies. What the neo-Meadian account offered herein makes clear is that the self-development of persons and citizens is not primarily a matter of turning inwards to discover one's authentic self, or of carefully cultivating a positive self-image, self-concept, or repertoire of self-regulatory strategies. As possibly

useful as any of these might be, they are of limited educational value unless they make contact with perspectives available in interpersonal and community activity, including those perspectives that constitute a representative sampling of what currently are considered to be our best theories and practices in subject areas as diverse as history, mathematics, biology, athletics, and the fine and performing arts. Developmental and educational psychologists interested in the study and development of perspective taking and personhood might form many useful partnerships with educators at all levels. (See Selman (2003) for an extended example of such partnerships, and see Martin (2007b) for a theoretical elaboration of these and other educational possibilities with respect to Mead's perspectival theorizing.)

Conclusion

The neo-Meadian account adopted herein holds that both perspectives and persons have a relational, processural ontology. Perspectives emerge during ontogenesis through the child's occupation of different social roles. The remembrance and anticipation of complementary social positions within frequently repeated sequences of interaction with others gradually permits the child to differentiate, integrate, and coordinate the various interpretive and action orientations (i.e., perspectives) that emerge out of his/her repeated experiences of position occupation and exchange. Because an important subset of such perspectives is directed at the child himself/herself in various social positions, in taking these perspectives and reacting to them, the child effectively constructs his/her own self-understanding and first-person experience. In this way, every self has a social ontology, but one that is mediated through its own activities of perspective taking and reflexivity. Such initial self-development ushers in a gradual, lifelong process of personal development. This is a process within which we creatively take and integrate multiple perspectives available to us through our sociocultural, interpersonal experiences. Not only our selves, but other aspects of our personhood, such as our rational and moral agency and sociopsychological identity, have a similarly perspectival ontology. It is through our social experience and activity with others that we come to care about and understand our own existence as human persons with rights and responsibilities, limitations and possibilities, and a full range of emotions and concerns that define us as individuals in communion with others.

Some readers may object that the heavy reliance on processes of emergence in the account offered herein obscures and blurs certain distinctions that ought to be made clearly if the theory offered is to be relevant and useful (see Chandler, 2001 for legitimate concerns of this kind). We agree that it is important to draw clear distinctions between processes such as the occupation of social positions and the taking of perspectives, or the more general distinction between what is social and what is psychological. However, we think such distinctions only can be made when, for example, perspectives have emerged from social experience and remembrance of social positions. To draw such distinctions prematurely prevents the consideration

of emergent possibilities in ontogenetic development. The danger here is that when such possibilities are unavailable, the only options remaining are to fall back into overly strong forms of innateness on the one hand or social determinism on the other.

By treating perspectives as real and constitutive of personhood, thinkers as diverse as Nietzsche, Mead, Bakhtin, and Baker have provided a theoretical framework within which developmental psychologists, educators, and others might seek more specific processes and mechanisms of perspective taking and personal development. Unlike more cognitively oriented theories of human development that tend to privilege reflection and thought over activity and action, this kind of perspectival theorizing takes as primary our activity with others in sociocultural context. Our personhood issues from our active participation, as embodied and situated beings, within interpersonal interactions and sociocultural practices, and the perspectives that such active participation makes available to us.

Chapter 10
The Psychology of Persons: An Idea Whose Time Has Come (Again)

A recurrent theme in the history of psychology has been the failure of psychologists to focus their inquiries on the activity of persons in worldly context. In introspective, cognitive, and biological psychologies, thoughts, cognitive processes and structures, and/or patterns of neurophysiological activation have commanded the attention of investigators. In functional and behavioral psychologies, the "stripped-down" behaviors and reactions of research subjects in highly structured, narrowly construed, and mostly acultural, ahistorical contexts have prevailed as focal phenomena of interest. Much psychoanalytic, humanistic, phenomenological, and existentialist work in psychology has tended to elevate the inner experiences, struggles, and tensions of persons over their activity in the everyday contexts and circumstances of their lives. Even evolutionary psychologists, who might be expected to place considerable emphasis on the worldly activity of persons, tend mostly to retreat to a combination of narrative speculation and mathematical modeling. In short, psychological inquiry and practice mostly have been dominated by some combination of interior focus and/or environmental restriction and simplification. Of equal significance is a strongly dualistic tendency evident in most psychological theory and research that treats persons as separate from, and more or less over and against, the world in which they reside and act.

The consistent (although, as we shall see, not universal) failure of psychologists to focus on the activity of persons in worldly context has bequeathed a somewhat predictable pattern of false starts and failed aspirations across many programs of psychological inquiry once regarded as highly promising. Thus, social, personality, developmental, industrial-organizational, and psychometric psychologists consistently have been brought up short by the frequent failures of actual persons to behave in quotidian situations as their self-reported responses to psychological instruments, questionnaires, tasks, and set scenarios indicate that they will. Clinical, counseling, and forensic psychologists have become content with relatively modest predictive success for their assessments and interventions. Cognitive scientists have struggled in the face of a variety of so-called frame problems that beset their computational creations when these are mechanically instantiated and turned loose to navigate even the most rudimentary terrains—a result anticipated by the failure of a previous generation of behavioral engineering in psychology to live up

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to its much heralded possibility in both war and peace. More generally, almost all psychologists consistently have failed to report findings that display even modest degrees of robustness across a variety of times and situations.

In this final chapter, we attempt to explain (conceptually, ontologically, and epistemologically) why it is so important that psychological inquiry focus on persons acting in worldly context. We begin by offering a conceptual framework for considering the worldly activity of persons. We then argue for a strongly constitutive, relational ontology of persons that understands them as embodied, embedded, and emergent within their worldly coordinations. Here, we offer both evolutionary and developmental scenarios that help to illustrate the theoretical advantages of adopting and pursuing a psychology of persons of the kind we advance. This is a psychology of personhood that emphasizes the coordinated activity and interactivity that enable the emergence of unique forms of intersubjectivity and self-reflexivity that constitute the self-understanding, moral and rational agency, and social and psychological identity of persons understood as situated, embodied, and embedded psychological beings in communion with others. Following a further highlighting of our agentive capability of self-determination, we consider several important ontological and epistemological features of such a psychology of persons. We then take a glance backward at the history of personhood in psychology through which we revisit a promising but aborted attempt to study persons in their worldly context by an earlier generation of pragmatic, cultural-historical, and sociogenetic psychologists. This is a tradition of psychological theory, research, and practice that has persisted, in extremely modest guise, to the present day, yet which has been mostly eclipsed by a combination of personality theory and self-studies in more mainstream psychology. All of this leads us to a consideration of features of the contemporary disciplinary and professional context of psychology that might be more felicitous for a renewed psychology of personhood of the sort we advocate. In closing, we briefly comment on the aims of the psychology of personhood we describe and contrast it with currently dominant cognitive and biological approaches within psychology.

Conceptualizing Persons

Given that in our view (e.g., Martin & Sugarman, 1999a; Martin et al., 2003b) many of the problems of mainstream psychology stem from a tendency to put methodological matters ahead of ontological and conceptual considerations, it is important if a renewed psychology of personhood is to succeed that its advocates are clear about what persons are. To this end, we summarize our definitions and conceptions of persons, drawing on both our own work in this area and recent conceptual analyses by Peter Hacker (2007).

Hacker (2007) regards persons as human beings (living organisms) who are social beings, and members of a moral community, with unique capabilities of language use, culture creation, and self-consciousness, with two-way volitional powers

to act and refrain from acting, to reason and act for reasons, and who have an autobiography, personality, and a sense of identity. Importantly, Hacker insists (also see, Bennett & Hacker, 2003) that it is persons who act in the world, not parts of persons such as their psychological capabilities, body parts, or neurophysiological systems (including their brains). Thus, talk of brains making decisions, self-systems defending against insult, or personality dispositions getting us into trouble all are mereological fallacies and result in propositions and claims that are without sense. Consequently, any psychology of personhood, if it is to be grammatically and theoretically viable, must focus on the kinds of things that persons are, how they act as integral human beings in the world, and what follows from their worldly activity and interactivity.

In this volume, we have drawn attention to the embodied, situated, and emergent features of integral personhood. We understand persons to be embodied, reasoning, and moral agents with self-consciousness and self-understanding, as well as social and psychological identity, who have unique capabilities of language use and are distinctively culture capable. Moreover, these various defining characteristics and capabilities of persons are emergent within the worldly activity of biological human beings embedded in, and interactively coordinating with others and objects in, the biophysical and sociocultural contexts that make up their life world. Thus, persons are always embodied, embedded, enactive, and emergent.

Since selfhood, identity, and agency all figure prominently in our conceptualization of persons, it is useful to discuss each of these constitutive concepts in turn. Selfhood is not some sort of substantive entity lurking in a deeply psychological interior. Instead, it is the first-person experience and understanding of one's particular existence that emerges within a person's active, relational being in the world. Identity is a person's recognition by others and, through others, by one's self as a unique individual, with a particular biography (autobiography) and personality.

The agentive capability of persons is most central to our conceptualization of them. In traditional metaphysics, an agent is something that does something or acts. Agent causation is substance causation (as opposed to event causation) produced by something that does something or acts. Agents can be nonsentient substances (e.g., acids), nonconscious entities (e.g., plants), experiencing creatures (e.g., many nonhuman animals), or persons. Since Thomas Reid's defense of a uniquely human form of agency (Lehrer & Beanblossom, 1975), human agents have, at least in many traditional philosophical circles, been taken as prototypic. Human agents are persons able to deliberate and act for reasons (including reasoned wants, goals, and purposes) and goods (including consideration of what is beneficial to human welfare and flourishing). Although Reid's traditional approach to human agency assumes overly strong separations of mind and body, thought and action, and self and others (all of which are radically reworked in our emergentist, relational approach), we believe that he was correct to regard the agency exercised by human persons as distinct from the agency of other animals and inanimate substances. Even though human agency has evolved and developed in ways that are clearly connected to other forms of agency, the coevolution of human agents as unique cultural-biological hybrids should not go unrecognized or be diminished.

Human agency is the deliberative, reflective activity of a human being in framing, choosing, and executing his/her actions in a way that is not fully determined by factors and conditions other than his/her own understanding, reasoning, and moral consideration (see Martin et al., 2003b for elaborated arguments in support of this definition of agency). Understood in this way, human agency is the willed (two-way, volitional) action of persons. Human agent causation, in its most celebrated and defining form, issues from the reasoned, considered action of persons as reasoning and moral agents. However, more "proto" (in the sense of developmentally and evolutionary prior) and common (with respect to our quotidian routines) forms of agency are evident in the worldly activity of persons and developing persons that is much less formally rational and considered. Infants and children are developing persons who must learn to deliberate and act intentionally, and much of the routine worldly activity of both developing and fully developed persons is not explicitly rational and deliberative. In both evolution and development, in both phylogenesis and ontogenesis, human agents and persons are constituted and constantly emergent within their biophysical and sociocultural world. Because persons (as agents) may and often do act for reasons and goals, their actions are not reducible to their biophysical and sociocultural determinants considered apart from their personal determination (Martin et al., 2003b). For this same reason, explanations of human action frequently require formal and telic forms of explanation in addition to efficient, causal explanation (Bishop, 2007).

To understand the foregoing conceptualization of persons more fully, it is useful to consider in somewhat greater detail the emergence of persons within both phylogenesis and ontogenesis. In both cases, it is the coordinating activity and interactivity of persons within a world of others, objects, and events that demands attention.

The Coordinating Activity and Interactivity of Embodied, Embedded, and Emergent Persons

Contrary to currently dominant cognitive and biological approaches to psychological theory, research, and practice, an emphasis on the worldly activity and interactivity of embodied and embedded human beings privileges relations and coordinations over individual cognitive and/or neurophysiological processes. It is such relations and coordinations that are considered the most basic constituents of personhood as conceptualized here. When the coordinating, relational activity and interactivity of human beings is taken as primary, the emergence of persons within evolutionary, historical, and developmental contexts and trajectories can be readily grasped. Such an approach discourages the positing of predispositions, innate modules and mechanisms, or pre-existent schemata to account for the unique capabilities of persons as self-understanding and interpreting, and capable of both rational and moral deliberation. This is not to deny that persons have evolved unique capacities for sociality, cooperation, language, and self-consciousness that require

uniquely evolved biological bodies and brains, or that a number of the psychological capabilities of persons might not require particular genetic patterns and configurations.[1] Rather, it is to say that recourse to such hypothetical "givens" ought be made only in the theoretical and empirical context of considering carefully what can be more readily evidenced through careful observation, reflection, and argument concerning our active coordinating within the biophysical and sociocultural world.

Phylogenesis

Perhaps the most striking feature of the phylogenetic accounts offered by evolutionary psychologists (e.g., Crawford & Krebs, 2008) is a pervasive privileging of natural selection operating at an individual level. In the bulk of this literature, primary emphasis is given to individual survival, procreation (albeit here, with the obvious need of a mate), and activity. Relatively little attention typically is given to the survival, procreative, and other interactivity of groups of conspecifics. Moreover, this tends to be the case even in the writings of those who, more recently, have begun to champion various forms of natural and cultural coevolution (e.g., Dennett, 2003; Richerson & Boyd, 2005). What is surprising about the absence of focus on coordinated interactivity among early and later humans is that a moment's reflection should tell us that coordinated activity must have been especially important in the evolutionary history of *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Given our limitations in physical strength and speed relative to members of other, predator species, and our comparatively lengthy gestation and infancy periods, cooperative interactivity is the most likely explanation for our species success. Indeed, Darwin (1874) himself recognized that selection must operate at group as well as individual levels and seemed to favor an account that would capitalize on the selection of cooperative, coordinating dispositions and mechanisms emergent through successful interactivity in relation to self, other, and group protection.[2] For example, it is highly likely that initially simple, unintended, and accidental forms of "cooperation," such as that between smaller, quicker members of an early human group and larger, stronger members of the same group would have served to fend off attackers, cope with natural disasters, and be of considerable value in securing food. It is relatively easy to imagine a wide variety of such scenarios being played out near the dawn of our species to the survival and

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[1] However, "rather than assuming that information is inherently present in genes and faithfully transmitted, information is understood as an exherent, emerging property of genes. It is the interactions between different genes (through the proteins they encode for) and the interactions between the genes and the environment that will result in the formation of certain structures" (Gontier, 2008, p. 177).

[2] "It must not be forgotten that although a higher standard of morality gives but a slight advantage to each individual man and his children over the other men of the same tribe, yet that an increase in the number of well endowed men and an advancement in the standard of morality will certainly give an immense advantage to one tribe over another" (Darwin, 1874, pp. 178–179).

procreative benefits of groups that very gradually were able to develop incrementally less accidental and more routinized forms of cooperative interactivity. Indeed, several scholars (e.g., Donald, 2001) have speculated that such events may have set in motion, within worldly contexts conducive to cooperation and coordination, the protracted processes of genetic alteration eventually responsible for our relatively large brain size and its remarkable plasticity.

At any rate, it is clearly the case that some of those characteristics that mark us as persons and distinguish us from members of other species, such as our culture capability and self/other understanding, are directly associated with our unique capabilities to coordinate interactively with others and with the world at large. What we believe makes the most sense from an evolutionary perspective is that distinguishing capabilities of human persons (including empathy and perspective taking) that clearly are basic to our unparalleled sociality and cultural accomplishment, most likely have their earliest seeds within the rudimentary forms of cooperative interactivity and coordination just sketched. Here, it is vital to keep in mind that activity and interactivity in the world are the engines that drive both natural and cultural evolution and coevolution. All too often, focus is given to our genetic makeup as the ultimate cause of our capacities and capabilities. However, such capacities and capabilities, and the genetic patterns and information that they may require, are inevitably consequences of our history of worldly activity. Without early humans existing in active and socially interactive ways within a biophysical world with others, there could be no survival differentials, and consequently no processes of natural selection.[3]

A final example will help to indicate the kind of phylogenetic theorizing that we believe is most likely to contribute to our understanding of ourselves as persons evolved and developed interactively within a biophysical and sociocultural world. One of the most puzzling of many enigmas in evolutionary psychology concerns how our uniquely human form of self-consciousness might have arisen. Given what was said earlier concerning the significant survival value of cooperative interactivity operating at both individual and group levels, it is reasonable to suppose that the prelinguistic gestures, expressions, and physical actions/responses of early humans served as important cues guiding coordination of interactivity. Of course, such cues only function as such if they are remarked by others. Consequently, orienting to the actions, expressions, and gestures of others probably carried clear survival value—for example, noting the startled reaction of a conspecific, following the gaze of that

[3] Donald proposes that social activity inspired the phylogenetic development of all our linguistic and psychological capabilities. He argues that relatively complex, group structures have an adaptive advantage over simple, unstructured groups such as herds. Coordinated, complex group activity that maximizes this cultural advantage favors enhanced intelligence, planning, memory, and refined emotions, all of which assist more advanced forms of coordination. Furthermore, these psychological capabilities require a biological substratum such as a larger brain and, especially, a larger neocortex. Consequently, for Donald and contrary to the general suspicion that attends group activity and selection in so much evolutionary psychology, interaction and coordination in groups are primary selective factors in increasing both psychological capabilities and brain development (Donald, 1991, pp. 137–138).

other, and preparing to flee from the danger thus indicated, or, noticing the facial movements and bodily reactions of a prospective mate, antagonist, or dominant male in reaction to one's own movements and actions. It is currently impossible to explain exactly why H*omo sapiens sapiens* were able to refine such "other orienting" to a much greater degree than members of any other species, but it certainly is easy to appreciate the tremendous advantages bequeathed by such capabilities with respect to the coordination of interactivity and consequent survival and flourishing of both individuals and groups. Moreover, such coordinating capabilities undoubtedly provided a necessary basis for the biological and cultural coevolution of more advanced forms of gestural, symbolic, and linguistic coordination that have emerged gradually throughout the history of our species and continue to unfold today through an ever-expanding array of communication technologies.

In our view, advanced abilities to orient to others probably are important prerequisites for attending to and differentiating one's self from others.[4] It thus seems plausible that the survival value of orienting to others, especially as part of cooperative coordinating with them for the accomplishment of important survival tasks, carried the seeds of self-awareness and self-consciousness in its wake. Genes encode for proteins that in complex and dynamic interaction with other genes and the environment result in the formation of biological structures and the organization of functions and dispositions. It thus seems very likely that, in addition to brain size, plasticity, and organization, some rudimentary capabilities such as "other orientation" have genomic prerequisites necessary for the developmental emergence of self-awareness, self-consciousness, and self-understanding through interactions with things and others during ontogenesis. Indeed, such an ontogenetic story will serve to advance further our advocacy of an approach to the study of persons acting and interacting within the biophysical and sociocultural world. However, before proceeding with such an account, we want to emphasize that our general approach to phylogenesis differs from much of what is found in evolutionary psychology and assumed in contemporary cognitive and biological psychology. Our account of persons grants pride of place to activity, interactivity, and coordinated action and understands our uniquely human cognitive, rational, and mental processes, structures, and capabilities as derivative from our coordinated comportment with others and objects within the physical and social world. Consequently, instead of thinking about personhood in terms of minds possessed of tendencies to construct representations, or prone to introspection and analogical extension of introspected objects and processes to others, our approach (while certainly not denying such mental capabilities) understands personhood and its characteristics and features as constituted not in our mental lives, but rather in our interactive coordinations with others, objects, and events in the world.

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[4] In the words of George Herbert Mead (1934), the most basic mechanism for the development of self-consciousness is "the individual's becoming an object to himself by taking the attitudes [perspectives] of other individuals toward himself within an organized setting of social relationships" (p. 225).

Ontogenesis

Our basic phylogenetically selected abilities and predispositions to orient to the world, especially to other persons, and to remember some of what we experience in the world serve us well in coordinating our worldly actions with others in ways that constitute our development from neonates to mature psychological persons. A brief description of a developmental theory of perspective taking recently developed by Martin, Sokol, and Elfers (2008) serves to illustrate the general pattern of ontogenetic development assumed in our relational, strongly constitutive ontology of persons.

In early infancy, the very young child experiences different kinds of resistance in a world of mostly undifferentiated objects and others. Gradually, the infant acquires the prereflective ability to alter perceptual inputs so as to recreate previous experience—for example, by re-orienting to a previously experienced location and object such as mother's breast or an animated crib mobile. With time and greater experience of the world, the infant's predisposition to orient, and acquired ability to re-orient, to the bodily and facial movements of caregivers allow the young child to follow the gazes of others, to look to others' reactions as guides to one's own reactions and experiences, and to act toward one's self as others do.

A part of the young child's early experience that has very important developmental consequences is the child's (initially assisted, but eventually unassisted) coordinated participation with others in simple, routine practices that may be repeated over and over again—for example, giving and receiving objects such as rolling a ball back and forth and participation in simply structured games with alternating positions or roles such as peek-a-boo, tag, and hide and seek. Such simple, socially sanctioned practices allow the young child to repetitively occupy different positions in different phases of the coordinated, interactive sequences that constitute the relevant practices—first as a hider, then as a seeker, etc. Following Mead (1934), we hold that such socially coordinated experiences gradually allow the young child to recall and anticipate being in one social position while actually occupying a related social position (e.g., recalling and imagining hiding in a particular location while searching for a playing partner).

The ability to be simultaneously in two (or more) different positions (some actually and some psychologically through recollection and imagination) constitutes an important advance in the child's psychological development. With this ability, the child is able, in a prelinguistic way, to react both to others and by extension to himself/herself, as individuals who are or have been in different locations and interactive positions. Such experiences constitute "proto" forms of perspective taking that allow the child to differentiate himself/herself from others, identify himself/herself in different social locations over time, and to begin to distinguish between actual and imagined experiences and events. With the developmental onset of these important psychological capabilities, the child experiences the world not only interactively, but also increasingly through intersubjective exchanges that serve

to "ratchet up" (Tomasello, 1999) the child's predispositions to orient to others through socially developed forms of interactivity within the conventional practices of the societies and cultures within which both child and caregivers exist and act.

The child's ability to differentiate and coordinate with others and their perspectives within routine sociocultural practices is both developmentally and logically foundational for the more abstracted, language-assisted levels of perspective taking described by Selman (1973, 1980). As the child's coordination with others is conducted both interactively and intersubjectively, the child learns how to act toward others and understand them as intentional agents with perspectives that might, and frequently do, differ from his/her own. Gradually, the older child's understanding of others and himself/herself is transformed through the ability to take and engage across perspectives that are increasingly abstracted, general, and unfamiliar. These more advanced levels of interpersonal differentiation and generalization allow him/her to take an increasingly reflective, even critical, stance toward his/her own and other perspectives, while simultaneously coordinating the perspectives he/she encounters and imagines within broader social practices and conventions. As adolescents and young adults engage with others within increasingly diversified systems of perspectives and possibilities, they encounter and recognize inevitable fallibilities and limits that attend interpersonal interaction and explore ways and means of coordinating with the world and others in it that evoke more critical forms of self–other understanding and reflective deliberation—for example, the giving and receiving of reasons, empathic interpretation, and more open-ended forms of problem solving and negotiation that go beyond conventional practices.

What this quick foray into the development of perspective taking during ontogenesis is intended to reveal is the way in which our development as persons with social and psychological capabilities of self-consciousness, self-understanding, rational and moral agency, and social and psychological identity unfolds in the wake of our coordinated activity and interactivity within the biophysical and sociocultural world. During ontogenesis, we emerge as persons through our worldly activity with others. This is a coordinated interactivity that brings to bear our inherited predispositions in ways that enable us to orient to and coordinate with others, on an experienced world of sociocultural meanings, practices, artifacts, institutions, conventions, roles, and traditions. Through our coordinated interactivity with others during ontogenesis, we emerge as persons with selfhood, identity, and moral and rational agency. Our ontology is relational and emergent within our biophysical evolution, cultural history, and social practices. We are entities that, given our natural and cultural evolution, cannot help but emerge ontogenetically as self-interpretive, morally concerned beings when active and interactive within our historically evolved societies and cultures. However, the exact form and manner of our selfhood, agency, and personhood depends greatly on the particular societies, cultures, and historical periods in which we live and act.

Agency as the Self-Determination of Persons

So long as one is not shackled to traditional forms of static-substance metaphysics hostile to the emergence of new species and forms with new kinds of capability, there is no good reason to doubt the phylogenetic and ontogenetic emergence of those unique capabilities of human persons that allow them to self-determine—that is, their language use, culture capability, self-consciousness, two-way volitional powers to act and refrain from acting for reasons and moral considerations, and so forth. These are capabilities that have been determined within the evolutionary and developmental trajectories of human beings constituted through their collective and individual activity within the biophysical and sociocultural world. With such a scenario in place, we can stop pursuing outmoded questions of free will and determinism premised on a fixed substance metaphysics that has been eclipsed by advances in evolutionary, historical, and developmental theory and research, and concentrate on understanding better the exact dynamics of the emergence of human self-determination as part of what it is to be a fully functioning person at this time in our evolution and history.

John Searle (2001, 2007) presents a transcendental argument for self-determination that establishes the practical reasoning of evolved and developed persons as a necessary aspect of their self-determination. Searle's argument makes it clear that the efficient causation seemingly adequate for explanation in the physical sciences will not suffice in the explanation of human thought and action. Very briefly, Searle argues that

> We have the first-person conscious experience of acting on reasons. We state these reasons for action in the form of explanations. The explanations are obviously quite adequate because we know in our own case that, in their ideal form, nothing further is required. But they cannot be adequate if they are treated as ordinary causal explanations because they do not pass the causal sufficiency test... They are not of the form A caused B. They are of the form, a rational self S performed act A, and in performing A, S acted on reason R... I am claiming that the condition of possibility of the adequacy of rational explanations is the existence of an irreducible self, a rational agent, capable of acting on reasons. (2007, p. 57)

If Searle had considered extant theory and data in developmental science (Bickhard, 2008; Martin, 2008; Müller, Carpendale, Budwig, & Sokol, 2008), he might have realized that his logical conclusion that an irreducible self, acting on reasons, needs to figure prominently in accounts of human agent causation is consistent with much contemporary developmental psychology that adopts an emergentist ontology of personhood. As already noted, what such work makes clear, consistent with the philosophical anthropology of Hacker (2007), is that rational agency and irreducible selfhood, which Searle logically asserts as necessary conditions of possibility for the rational explanation of human intentional action, are capabilities of persons as emergent within their biophysical and sociocultural worldly activity. To conclude, as Searle does, that his analysis requires the positing of an irreducible self-determining agent requires nothing mysterious or immaterial. It only requires that we take seriously the biophysical and sociocultural constitution of the psychological capabilities of persons—that is, their evolutionary and developmentally acquired

capabilities of acting according to the relational and linguistic practices, including practices of reasoning, extant in their worldly contexts and experiences.

Thus understood, self-determination is a capability of language using, psychological persons who have learned to act purposefully within the rational and moral orders in which they reside so as to achieve their goals. The ability to engage in purposeful, self-determined action is an undeniable part of human agent causation. Moreover, as Searle correctly recognizes, such agent causation is not adequately captured in terms of efficient causation alone. Human agent causation also requires our consideration of formal and final modes of explanation, modes of explanation that frequently are unnecessary in the physical sciences, but which cannot and ought not be avoided in the social and psychological sciences. In this regard, it is important to clarify that final causes (that explain why something happened or is the way it is by reference to its purpose) "are not deviant efficient causes that succeed their effects" (Hacker, 2007, p. 197). The common lament that teleological explanations are inadmissible to science because they attempt to explain a current event by reference to something that has yet to occur is misconstrued. "That for the sake of which something occurs or is done is not a kind of efficient cause, but a purpose" (Hacker, 2007, p. 197), and in human affairs, a purpose is nothing more than a goal or end that a self-determining person decides upon and acts to achieve. Moreover, there also is an important element of formal causation that helps to explain the agent causation of persons by reference to their nature. The decision making and intentionality that attend the activity of persons are part of what persons do—they are, if you like, part of their evolved and developed nature. Intentional decision making and acting are appropriate to the kinds of things that persons (human agents) are.

There should be no mystery about any of this, given currently available evolutionary and developmental theory and data. With conceptual clarity about the nature of persons and scientific theory and data concerning their emergence phylogenetically and ontogenetically, we are in a position to advance tentative explanations of human agent causation that explain the decisions and actions of persons in terms of their emergent ontological status as embodied, reasoning, and moral agents with self-consciousness and self-understanding and social and psychological identity, who have unique capabilities of language use and are uniquely culture capable. Such explanations will include efficient causal explanations appropriate to our evolved biophysical nature; final, purposive explanations appropriate to our emergence as culture-capable, self-determining persons; and formal explanations consistent with the kinds of things that persons are.

Further Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

Several additional, and particularly interesting ontological and epistemological features of persons issue from our status as moral and rational, self-interpreting agents constituted through our coordinating activity with objects and others. To recognize these uniquely human features, it is important to understand that persons never cease

developing and transforming throughout their lives. Because we are the kinds of being that we are, encounters and experiences within previously unknown and/or unavailable sociocultural practices (actually or vicariously) provide new ways of coordinating, interacting, and being. In consequence, personhood is, to borrow Ian Hacking's (2006) phrase, "a moving target." When we encounter what to us are new practices of personhood, we experience new possibilities and ways of being persons. Moreover, because we are self-interpreting and react interactively within whatever practices we inhabit, our ongoing coordinations within such practices serve to transform both ourselves and the practices within which we are engaged. Thus, contemporary persons may be and act as mechanics for hybrid automobiles, computer "gamers," radio "shock jocks," personal coaches, "goths," "metrosexuals," professional women basketball players, snowboarders, and directors of reality television shows—none of which would have been possible 50 years ago. Persons act and live their lives within historically evolving sociocultural practices that serve both to constitute and transform them. And, in return, the actions of persons within these practices continuously reshape and transform the practices.

In his historical ontology of multiple personality disorder, Hacking (1995) argues persuasively that, and illustrates the way in which, a variety of social conditions and practices emerged during the second half of the twentieth century to create a new way of being a person that consisted of being several (sometimes many) different people. Although dissociative disorders have been documented at least since the eighteenth century, the "multiples" that emerged in the later part of the twentieth century differed in many important ways from previous, dissociated persons—including the number of personalities displayed, personal narratives containing (sometimes extreme) sexual abuse, and the emphasis they placed on malfunctioning memories and the therapeutic value of recovering "source" memories. Interestingly, some of the practices that seem to have been most subscribed and evidenced among individuals with multiple personalities in the 1980s were practices of psychotherapy, such as therapeutic techniques of conversing among different personalities, revisiting of past experiences in search of source events, and speaking out (as a therapeutic activity) against the physical and sexual abuse of children.

The recognition that persons are moving targets that are interactive within and reactive to evolving sociocultural practices carries with it the recognition that our personhood is not pregiven or fixed. We are constituted and emergent as persons within our worldly interactivities and coordinations with the historically established and constantly evolving sociocultural practices in which we find ourselves. Of course, such interactive coordination requires dispositions (such as "other orientation") that have evolved throughout our natural and cultural history and capabilities (such as self-interpretation) that emerge fully within our ontogenetic existence. However, the specific kinds of person we become vary greatly across historical time and context, and sociocultural practices. Consequently, as persons we are defined by our embodied, embedded, and emergent capabilities to coordinate within our biophysical and sociocultural world, not by any particular manifestation of these coordinating capacities. We are self-interpreting beings capable of transforming both ourselves and our world through our interactions and coordinations.

A major epistemological implication of our status as ontological emergents and changelings is that there is no absolute, ahistorical, pregiven, or certain truth about persons, beyond those ontological features and capabilities we have described and discussed in this volume. Exactly how we will experience and act within different situations and times can be expected to display considerable variation as we act and react within different and constantly changing matrices of social practice. Our relationally constituted coordinations are constantly shifting in ways that prevent strong generalizations about what all or even most people will do in the same, let alone different circumstances. Clearly, it is important to achieve some functional degree of coordinated stability within our individual and collective patterns of active coordination. Otherwise, social practices would fail and cease to function for want of any coordinative consistency on the part of those operating within them—think of drivers of automobiles, pedestrians, and cyclists coordinating within conventions of traffic regulation. However, even in the most routinized forms of social practice, such as games like baseball, rules and strategies change quite dramatically over time and place (e.g., designated hitters, video coaches, strategic field positioning, etc.). The resultant impossibility of epistemological certainty with respect to the actions and experiences of persons ought to carry a particularly important lesson for psychologists for whom such actions and experiences constitute their disciplinary subject matter.

In particular, psychologists ought to be attentive to normative and moral aspects of our personhood that arise through our coordinated, worldly experience with others. Scientific explanations must make sense from within, and serve, particular purposes and descriptions, and the times and contexts in which these purposes and descriptions are manifested. Although this is true of theories in both natural and social science, it seems as if many theories in social science, and perhaps particularly in social and applied areas of psychological science, differ from the vast majority of theories in natural science in a way that Charles Taylor (1985a), correctly in our view, attempts to make clear by noting that most social, psychological theories introduce, albeit often tacitly, descriptions and standards of normativity by which societies and the persons within them may be said to be functioning well versus badly. In other words, theoretical frameworks in social psychology, such as social comparison theory or attribution theory, offer conceptions and descriptions of human flourishing and evaluative standards by which such flourishing might be judged. This aspect of social and psychological science is not commonly found, even implicitly, in the theories of natural science, which posit more technical standards for success, such as their capacity to predict, control, and manipulate their objects of study. It should be noted that some have argued that normative standards enter into physical explanation in ways similar to the way in which they enter into psychological explanation (Yalowitz, 1997). For instance, in order for an electron to be an electron, it must act in ways consistent with the set of physical laws that refer to electrons. However, as we already have indicated, in contrast to the reactivity of human beings, ascriptions of normativity do not promote self-interpretive activity on the part of electrons and other nonhuman entities (particularly with respect to their own flourishing).

If this is correct, then social, psychological theories, unlike natural theories, themselves provide us with orientations for choosing between them on the basis not only of their evidential fit or even their clarification of the meanings of common "texts," but (especially in limiting cases) on the basis of how our practices and descriptions of living fare when informed by particular theoretical frameworks. Moreover, because individual persons and social groups react to their theoretical classifications and other applications of social theorizing and framing, every application of social scientific theory and research offers us a test case that may be interpreted in terms of the extent and kind of human flourishing, even emancipation, that is enabled by the instantiation of that theoretical description in the life world of human individuals and groups. Applications of natural scientific inquiry also may have profound consequences for persons and their societies. However, such consequences tend not to be constitutive of persons and their valuations in the way that applications of social and, in particular, psychological theories are. Applications of research in nuclear physics or microbiology may have life and death consequences for us as biological beings, but they do not constitute our personhood and provide fodder for our reactivity in the way that research in personality or community psychology may do. Of course, applications of natural science may occasion strong reactions from any number of people, some of whom may alter their lives to combat or promote them, with consequences that may be profound for their psychological lives. However, such consequences are likely to flow directly from social, political, and ethical interactions that are associated with natural scientific applications and only indirectly from the scientific findings and descriptions per se. In contrast, results and descriptions of research on psychopathy, parenting, or social intelligence (like those of research on multiple personality) may interact more directly with (even constitute) our self-understanding, actions, and experiences.

Much of our personhood consists in taking up and acting in terms of the descriptions made available to us. Such descriptions are the result of our historical and sociocultural condition as persons in relation to and interaction with others. The developmental necessity of getting on with others carries with it strong implications for moral conduct, and the descriptions by which personhood is achieved are suffused with values and moral content. The examination and understanding of values and moral concerns, however, is not simply a matter of critical interpretation. Because such values and concerns become part of what we are as self-interpreting beings, ontological interpretation is required.

Another area in which our ontological psychology of personhood has strong implications for psychologists and psychology concerns the methods employed in psychological inquiry. Because we believe that ontological considerations should trump epistemological and methodological considerations, we think it of paramount importance to get clear about the nature of psychological phenomena such as mind, selfhood, agency, perspective taking, moral concern, and other psychological attributes, capabilities, and constituents of persons. All of these and many other psychological phenomena are meaningful, relational, interactive, and socioculturally and historically constituted phenomena with moral and political significance that have emerged within, and constantly transform processes of natural, cultural,

and historical evolution. Importantly, with respect to methodology, all attributes, capabilities, and constituents of psychological persons do not occur as clearly distinct, countable entities or events. This does not mean it is impossible, at least sometimes and for some purposes, to develop quantitative indicators and procedures to secure data concerning such phenomena. However, it does mean that any such indicators and procedures ought not be confused with focal psychological phenomena themselves. To avoid conflating psychological phenomena with their quantitative indicators, procedures, parts, and aspects, it is critically important to guard against the over simplification, nihilistic reductionism, and patina of mathematization that, at least in the history of psychology, so often seem to reflect a mere scientistic posturing.

Nothing we have said should be understood as denying that mathematical models can play an important role in schooling the intuitions of inquirers—although it is arguably the case that the broad-brush, statistical models and procedures employed in much psychological inquiry are not so much models or indicators of psychological phenomena and processes, as they are techniques evolved to make pseudoscientific virtues out of variability, imprecision, and error—hardly the stuff to warrant the predictive control advocated and prized by adherents. Nonetheless, leaving that as it may be, it never must be forgotten that all mathematical models potentially of use in psychology are deliberately shorn of all the rich detail that makes people themselves so interesting. Behind almost all mathematical modeling from that barely apparent in routine statistical analyses to more mathematically sophisticated, but still general, uses of structural equations, to the mathematics employed in quantifiable quandary ethics, game and decision theory, and connectionist architecture (and despite the apparent complexities that attend such work), there lurks a desire for theoretical minimalism, a devotion to parsimony in search of the elegant reduction. The miracle sought is to turn wine into water.

Kwame Appiah, in his most recent book *Experiments in ethics*, captures brilliantly what we are trying to convey, and it is instructive that he extends our point concerning our penchant for simplification not only to quantitative studies, but also to the mostly qualitative field of ethics. In critically commenting on what he regards as the overly simple stories told by virtue ethics, consequentialism, deontology, utilitarianism, and contractualism, Appiah (2008) comments:

> From any of these beginnings, things have to get complicated if you're to end with something plausible. It's like starting with Ockham's razor – just a sharp blade with a handle – and finding you need to add a beard brimmer, a nail clipper, and a whole host of Rube Goldbeg accessories, and then continuing to maintain that all you have is still just a razor. (p. 201)

> [For] it's precisely our recognition that each other person is engaged in the ethical project of making a life that reveals to us our obligations to them. . . . If my humanity matters, so does yours; if yours doesn't, neither does mine. We stand or fall together. To see each other person not just as someone with preferences, pleasures, and pains, but as a creature engaged in the project of making a life, striving to succeed on the basis of standards that are partly found and partly made, you will see why you should keep promises and respect property, why you should not gratuitously obstruct other people's ambitions or ignore their material,

> social or psychological needs. Morality derives from an understanding of what other people are up to; it's not a system of arbitrary demands. And the central thing that people are up to is the central ethical task: each of us is making a life. That is the human *telos*; to make a good life, to achieve *eudaimonia*. (p. 203)

What Appiah makes clear, although his purpose is both more general and more specific than ours, in these brief remarks, is that any psychology of persons, worthy of the name, must come to grips with what persons are, and cannot simplify, reduce, or minimalize the nature of our existence as psychological beings active and interactive within the biophysical and sociocultural world, living lives that have irreducibly moral and narrative dimensions. If this is our focal concern, then quantitative methods, as helpful as they can be, never will be enough. For many questions of interest to psychologists concern the quality of our lives—lives that are animated and informed by traditions, practices, ways, and narratives of living that both constitute us and are constantly transformed by us. Our worldly activity and experience as relationally constituted, self-interpreting, storied beings is not in itself a numbers' game. Nonetheless, quantification and mathematics, appropriately employed, still are among the psychologists' most valuable tools, and appropriate employment begins by counting things that lend themselves to counting, and not confusing such things with things that do not.

The Psychology of Persons: Today and Yesterday

Strongly relational, constitutive renderings of persons and their evolution and development are not new to psychology, nor is the general approach sketched here of persons as embodied, embedded, enactive, and emergent agents with rational capabilities and moral concern unique among contemporary theorizing about persons (see, e.g., Kirshner & Martin, in press). However, it also is decidedly not the case that such approaches have achieved widespread acceptance in the past or the present. Indeed, the emphasis on context, history, and social practice in psychological positions that emphasize relational coordination, and their interpretive and pragmatic epistemological implications, remain anathema to many mainstream psychologists (e.g., Held, 2007). These are psychologists who take the private, mental lives of human beings as their exclusive and defining disciplinary domain and who seek ahistorical, foundational truths about human experience and action that may be framed nomothetically without reference to time and place or in ways that assume an independent and neutral perspective on the worldly activity of persons.

Indeed, it is very likely the case that the early twentieth century, relational theorists mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (psychologists like Pierre Janet, James Mark Baldwin, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, Heinz Werner, and Lev Vygotsky) did not achieve greater success in establishing their holistic, activity-based approaches to the study of persons within the relatively new discipline of psychology because of perceptions that their theories and orientations were insufficiently scientific when judged against new standards of objectivity (Daston &

Galison, 2007). These were standards then associated with physical science as a value-free and neutral inquiry into what is enduringly true and real in the world, independent of the views of particular scientists. Thus, after a promising start during the early days of disciplinary psychology, the first generation of psychologists committed to the study of persons interacting holistically within the world was eclipsed during the 1930s to 1950s (especially in North America), and much of the time since then, by other programs of inquiry in psychology.

On the one hand, behavioral approaches that continued to study the activity of intact organisms, but under highly controlled and restricted conditions, fitted well with newly formulated doctrines of experimental manipulation and design (Winston, 1990). On the other hand, approaches to personality that made extensive use of recently developed self-report questionnaires and correlational, psychometric techniques (and which tended to ignore context completely) promised greater mathematical, scientific precision and generality (Nicholson, 2003). More recently, at both theoretical and empirical levels, psychologists of different orientations working in the various subdisciplines of psychology have tended to prefer a variety of "self" studies to studies of persons per se. Thus, research on self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-regulation tends to focus on the inner psychological functioning of private selves and displays little concern with aspects of personhood such as moral agency, biographical detail, or social relations (Martin, 2007c). Complimenting and furthering psychology's focus on interior selfhood has been a long-standing tradition of experimentation in social and developmental psychology that has restricted social influences on psychological subjects to independent variables that exert proximal, local, short-term, and decomposable effects (Danziger, 2000). Thus, both persons and their historical, sociocultural contexts have been simplified, reduced, and decomposed in much mainstream psychology.

However, since the 1960s, two new generations of relational, constitutive theorists[5] have championed approaches to persons and their study that seem to be gaining greater popularity and influence in the landscape of today's disciplinary psychology, despite the current dominance of cognitive and biological psychologies that are much more reductionistic, metalistic, and narrowly focused on individuals and their interior parts.

Partial explanations for the apparently greater, but still conditional, acceptance of relational, holistic theorizing this time around might include shifts in philosophy of science away from logical positivism, correspondence theory, and value neutrality; a greater receptivity within psychology to narrative, pragmatic, hermeneutic, critical, and qualitative approaches and methods; a greater concern within institutions of higher learning for the social and environmental consequences of science and

[5] For example, James Wertsch, Michael Cole, Jerome Bruner, Barbara Rogoff, Ivana Markova, Bernard Kaplan, Sergio Moscovici, Ernst Boesch, Rom Harré, Ken Gergen, Brent Slife, Frank Richardson, Blaine Fowers, Carl Ratner, Rachael Falmagne, Anna Stetsenko, Jan Valsiner, René Van der Veer, John Shotter, Mark Freeman, Hubert Hermans, Mark Bickhard, John Barresi, William Smythe, Henderikus Stam, Leendert Mos, James Lamiell, John Mills, John Greenwood, Cor Baerveldt, Svend Brinkmann, John Christopher, Michael Westerman, Alex Gillespie, and several others.

technology and increased attention to the ethics of inquiry and application; and a new world order in which questions of recognition, identity, social justice, world citizenship, and progress (or the lack thereof) have emerged that cross national borders and are being played out in increasingly diverse and interactive human communities with the aid and challenge of new communication technologies. However, it also is possible that such discernible movements are less causes than they are other facets of whatever it is that is driving contemporary interest in a renewed psychology of personhood. At any rate, to the extent that psychology is a history of ways in which humans have attempted to understand themselves and their conduct and experience, it is hardly surprising that persons acting in the world should figure prominently in psychological inquiry and theory. What is perhaps more difficult to explain is why a focus on persons in the world has failed to guide so much extant and earlier psychological thought and research.

Toward a Psychology of Coordination: The Emergence and Transformation of Persons

Having acknowledged some of the contributors and theories currently influential in the contemporary renewal of interest in the psychology of personhood, we would like to close our final chapter by emphasizing what we think is at least somewhat unique about our own approach to the topic. As will by now be apparent, our approach places the coordinating activity of persons acting in the world at the heart of human existence and experience. Such an emphasis and insistence marks a radically different starting point for psychological thought about our nature, capabilities, and possibilities. By granting primacy to interaction over reflection and coordination over imposition, we take our interactivity within the world to be the genesis of our psychological lives, lives that would be impossible were they not constituted within such interactivity. By placing psychological existence at the dynamically evolving intersection of biophysical and sociocultural reality, we understand our personal being and knowing as issuing within holistic coordinations we forge within the world. We take the widespread failure of psychology to develop as a psychology of such coordinations to be a particularly unfortunate consequence of the problematical severing of mind and body, persons and world, and biophysical and sociocultural facets of our existence that have been occasioned by the dualistic assumptions that have pervaded much Western thought, including psychological thought.

Against such dualistic thinking, we have conceptualized persons as contextually constituted rational and moral agents with self-consciousness, self-understanding, and social, psychological identity. We have tied these conceptions to our ontological status as embodied, embedded, enactive, and emergent entities in coordination with the world and attempted to indicate how our evolution and development as persons unfolds within our worldly coordinations. That we are constituted within these coordinations, and through them transform both ourselves and the world, means that we are constantly moving targets, targets that demand of those who would inquire

into our psychological existence and experience that we not be reduced to our biophysical, sociocultural constituents and parts. There obviously is much that remains to be worked out with respect to the conduct of psychological inquiry of a kind that is appropriate to the study of persons thus conceived and theorized. Consequently, we wish to be read as offering a thearetical framework for, and an encouragement and invitation to, a renewed psychology of personhood. The real work is still ahead.

Afterword

This volume addresses the general absence within disciplinary psychology of conceptual work concerning persons—what they are, how they are constituted, and how they relate to themselves, others, and the broader sociocultural and biophysical world of which they are part. Given that psychology endeavors to comprehend the experience and behavior of persons, failure to conceptualize and theorize them threatens the very status of psychology as a discipline and profession. For unless personhood and other psychological features can be shown to be ontologically exceptional, psychology has no subject matter genuinely of its own and must relinquish its status as a distinct discipline. In turn, stripped of its disciplinary capital, professional psychology loses all credibility.

The general absence of sustained conceptual work among different schools of psychology, past and present, has permitted the ascent of reductive approaches to the study of persons. Persons have been theorized as machines and biophysical and/or sociocultural systems and subsystems, all of which, however, lack the very features and capabilities that distinguish persons from other animate and inanimate entities (self-consciousness, self-understanding, rational and moral agency, and psychological identity and continuity). Consequently, we regularly find in the literature of psychology, talk of brains thinking, societies acting, and computational mechanisms deciding. But it is persons (not brains, social structures, or machines) who think and act in the world. It is misleading in the extreme to claim that brains or social institutions alone pose questions and hypotheses and respond to them. Such predicates are sensibly applied only to persons active in biophysical, social, and cultural contexts.

To say that brains, machines, or institutions (as distinct from the persons who possess, use, or act within them, respectively) have goals, preferences, and reactions is to forget that the welfare or good of brains, machines, and institutions cannot function in such ways because they have no purposes of their own. Brains, machines, and institutions embrace no goods from which the values and significances assumed in human goals, preferences, and reactions might issue. Only persons may properly be attached to such predicates. And only persons and their worldly activity are the proper focus for scientific and scholarly psychological projects aimed at enhancing our ability to lead lives that might prove productive to ourselves and others. To the extent that psychology as a scholarly discipline and profession is concerned to enhance our understanding and use of such life-enhancing capabilities for the

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betterment of human existence, individually and collectively, it is concerned with persons. But if psychology is to study and understand persons, it must know what persons are.

The foregoing point appears so obvious that it is difficult to imagine that the psychology of personhood is almost nonexistent when set against the well-established psychologies of learning, motivation, cognition, development, and so forth. The closest any of psychology's various subdisciplines comes to attempting any explicit theorizing of the concept of person may be located in personality psychology. However, even here, the overwhelming focus is on mental, behavioral, biological, and social components of mind, thought, and action, as if these components determine human accomplishments and undertakings without any attention to the persons whose components, accomplishments, and undertakings are being referenced. This circumventing of persons that has become one of the de facto calling cards of disciplinary psychology is so difficult to understand or explain precisely because it is so seldom acknowledged. Herein, we have suggested that a major reason for psychology's ignoring of persons is that persons, as opposed to their parts and determinants, do not lend themselves readily to explanation through the traditional methods of scientific psychology. It perhaps is believed both easier and more scientific to study behaviors, mental processes, patterns of cerebral activation, and physiological reactions than persons.

How much of psychology's reluctance to come to grips with persons as its proper subject matter may be attributed to its unique mixture of scientific aspirations and methods is difficult to determine. However, as has been defended here, if persons not only require biophysical bodies and brains, but are constituted within sociocultural traditions and practices, the complexities that such a picture presents to the psychologist easily might be said to eclipse the typical methodological arsenal they have readily at hand. Moreover, if persons also are reactive to such traditions and practices, and to their own participation in them, in ways that make both them (persons) and their societies and cultures moving targets (across historical times and worldly locations), any hope of capturing relatively enduring truths about human behavior and experience may be shaken even further. Nonetheless, such complexities and uncertainties seem necessarily to attend the conceptualization and theory of personhood that we have advanced. Criteria and warrants such as simplicity, certainty, and facile agreement cannot reign in the absence of a viable conceptualization and theory of what is central to an area of inquiry. It seems likely that overly narrow scientific ideals and practices arguably appropriate to some other branches of science have been assumed uncritically by disciplinary and professional psychology, with the consequence that conceptual and theoretical work that strikes at the heart of the discipline has been discouraged. If so, the importance of conducting such inquiry is difficult to exaggerate.

Our emergentist account of the ontogenetic development of persons (understood as experiencing and understanding selves with moral and rational agency and psychological identity) at the intersection of biophysical and sociocultural evolution and interaction may be seen to parallel the kind of uncertain and unpredictable contingency and lack of fixed foundations that typifies Darwinian natural selection and

its offshoots. Presumably, insofar as we understand the nature of science, most of us would not wish to deny the mantle of science to evolutionary theory. Notice also that contemporary evolutionary biology, despite the occasional reductive excesses of some of its practitioners, is possible precisely because it has achieved a corpus of conceptual and theoretical work that allows it to formulate and conduct programs of inquiry that recognize relevant activity at several different levels of reality, including that of entire organisms acting within the world. What we are adding to this naturalistic purview is an insistence on the reality of distinctively psychological features that define us as persons. When these features (experiential and conceptual selfhood, moral and rational agency, and psychological identity and continuity) are clearly conceived, it is plainly apparent that no adequate psychology can neglect the nature of psychological personhood as enabled by the activity of human beings in biophysical and sociocultural contexts. The end result is an account of persons as uniquely psychological creatures who owe their particular constitution to the hybridity of their biophysical and sociocultural origins.

In the first part of this book, we laid the groundwork for and presented the basic elements of our theory of personhood. In doing so, we adopted a "levels of reality" ontology that treated human self-understanding and agency as uniquely personal accomplishments that are developmentally emergent during ontogenesis. We then went further in arguing that the constitution of these core aspects of personhood is underdetermined by necessary and indispensable biophysical and sociocultural determinants. Finally, we highlighted the importance and centrality of self-understanding as our preferred characterization of selfhood (at least in a conceptual sense) and explored the political implications of such a conception for life in liberal, democratic societies.

In Part II, we elaborated moral and relational aspects of the conceptual treatment of personhood provided in Part I. In aid of this elaboration, we detailed the moral and relational theorizing about personhood and agency found in the works of Charles Taylor and John Macmurray. We subsequently adopted several important ideas and insights from Taylor and Macmurray, while declining the theism that serves as an important ground for their respective projects. As we stated in our preface and iterated elsewhere in this volume, our intention has been to fashion a nonreductive and nonmysterious compatibilist approach to human agency and personhood that has no room for determining structures and processes other than the biophysical and the sociocultural, together with those uniquely psychological, self-determining features of our personhood that are constituted within these other levels of reality.

Our thoroughgoing psychological realism is developed much more fully in Part III of our book. Here, we draw heavily from the writings and ideas of George Herbert Mead (and other perspectival realists), who himself strived for an integration of biophysical evolution and historical, sociocultural development that sets in place conditions for the emergence of persons during ontogenesis. Specifically, we strongly resist ways of thinking that would deny the reality status of those psychological aspects of persons (selves, agents, and identities) that we have been at pains to secure. In this final part of our volume, we offer additional arguments against both biophysical and sociocultural reductions of personhood and insist that an irreducible

personhood of the kind we advocate is not beyond the reach of psychology, even though the sort of psychology we envision requires a considerable stretching of existing ideational and methodological boundaries of the discipline.

A particularly important component of our theory of personhood, which we elucidate in this final section, concerns perspectives and perspective taking/coordination in the formation of persons and their unique ways of being. We experience our lives within first-person perspectives that emerge as a consequence of prereflective interactivity with others early in our developmental history. However, as socially constituted beings, we are not trapped within our immediate perspectives but come to understand others as similarly constituted and capable. As our development unfolds, we are able, in increasingly sophisticated ways albeit sometimes with considerable effort, to comprehend the perspectives of others and the broader society, and in so doing come to greater levels of self and social awareness. Indeed, it is this never-ending interplay of persons and their societies that constrains and enables all of our human aspirations and possibilities.

To Hegel, and to many contemporaries with transcendental inclinations, some of the personal transformations we have attempted to describe in our book might seem to insinuate some kind of animating spirit. For us, however, there is nothing in what we have said herein that would place an understanding of personhood beyond the reach of an appropriately envisioned and expanded psychological science. Hopefully, we will have succeeded in convincing at least some readers that this is the case. If so, we invite others to join in our project to theorize psychological personhood, even if it ultimately leads to rejecting some of what we have said or left underdeveloped here.

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