From psychologism to psychologization:
Beyond the boundaries of the discipline and practice of psychology

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Abstract

This thesis provides a descriptive account of three waves of critiques of psychologism and psychologization that appeared throughout the 20th century from philosophers and sociologists. I examine these arguments chronologically to show that psychology has repeatedly been criticized for going beyond its disciplinary boundaries and permeating other academic and cultural realms. Although the critiques focus on different forms of psychologism and psychologization, they all demonstrate how psychological approaches to subjectivity have precluded important knowledge about human mental life that can be gained from philosophy and sociology. By incorporating philosophical and sociological findings into psychological thinking, a more holistic understanding of human mental life can be achieved. Philosophers and sociologists illuminate the systemic roots of individual problems by highlighting the relation between individuals and social structures, and encourage the development of critical thinking and political engagement as a means to achieving the psychological aim of mental well-being.

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Introduction: A century of psychology

Psychologism and psychologization

Since its inception as an academic discipline in the late 19th century, psychology has repeatedly been the subject of a specific kind of critique - that of *psychologism* or *psychologization*. While these terms have been discussed in many different ways, broadly speaking they refer to the tendency for psychological discourse and practice to extend beyond the boundaries of the academic discipline, permeating other areas of study as well as the everyday terms by which we understand ourselves and the world. While psycholog*ism* refers to the narrower problem of reducing philosophy and other sciences to matters of empirical psychology, psycholog*ization* is a broader notion that refers to the spread of empirical psychological frameworks to areas outside of disciplinary knowledge.[1] Both terms and forms of critique denote the tendency for social scientists and the general population to adopt a psychological understanding of human experience. Moreover, the arguments about psychologization and psychologism are usually *critiques* in the sense that they target the "inappropriate" use of psychology in areas that require other types of analysis (De Vos, 2014, p. 1547).

Critiques of psychologism are contiguous with the birth of the discipline itself. With the initial establishment of psychology as a science that was separate from philosophy, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and other German philosophers were critical of the idea that psychology could replace logic as a foundation for all of the sciences. Although the popularity of this idea dissipated in the years leading up to World War I, psychology began to enter broader social domains in the interwar period, as it was utilized, for instance, to develop and perform standardized intelligence testing in immigration, the military, and education (see Rose, 1985).

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[1] For discussions of the nuanced definitions of psychologism and psychologization, see De Vos (2014), Herman (2003), and Gordo & De Vos (2010).

After World War II, psychology spread into popular culture, as individuals became increasingly interested in finding personal happiness and fulfilment, leading to what has become known as a "therapeutic culture" (Illouz, 2008; Lasch, 1991; Madsen, 2014). This proliferation of psychology into other academic domains and the larger cultural arena – a process that is sometimes referred to as a colonization or domination of knowledge of subjectivity – has led to further examinations of psychologization from a Foucauldian perspective of power relations. Rose (1998) and Hacking (1994), for instance, show how psychological discourse and practice have contributed to the creation of certain kinds of subjects, as people understand and conduct themselves in terms provided by psychology. Moreover, the kind of subjectivity produced by psychology has worked in the interest of the neoliberal socioeconomic structure, as values such as freedom, autonomy, and self-enhancement are fostered in individuals.[2]

This thesis will focus specifically on critiques of psychologism and psychologization that came from thinkers *outside* the discipline, rather than from psychologists themselves. While there are many critical and theoretical psychologists within the discipline who problematize psychology and argue over internal issues revolving around methodology, theory, and political relevance, the thinkers addressed here go a step beyond this, questioning the psychological project as a whole and its overarching goals and assumptions. Philosophers have questioned the idea that empirically derived quantitative knowledge can provide an adequate understanding of what it is to be human. Sociologists and critical theorists have argued that psychology investigates experience in individualistic terms and neglects the larger sociopolitical contexts that condition individual lives. Foucauldian scholars and theorists in the postmodern tradition have taken genealogical approach to understanding psychology, in which the notion of an

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[2] For examples of arguments concerning the relationship between psychology and neoliberalism, see Davies (2015), Madsen (2014), Madsen & Brinkmann (2010), Sugarman (2015).

essential subject is debunked, and instead subjectivity is shown to be sociohistorically constituted. The thinkers who critique psychology in these ways are concerned with the tendency for psychological thinking to dominate knowledge of what it is to be human, while social, historical, and philosophical dimensions of subjectivity are neglected.

Early 20th century critiques

To begin, I will examine Husserl's (1913/2001) argument against the expansion of psychology into philosophical territory, which was an attempt at migration that coincided with the beginning of psychology as a separate academic discipline. Husserl and other German thinkers of the time argued over whether or not the new psychology could provide the much sought-after foundation for philosophy and the sciences.[3] As it was thought to be a truly objective science of the subject, many thinkers were proponents of the idea that psychology could take on a special disciplinary status and function as the keystone epistemological foundation for the sciences. However, psychologism received much criticism, and Husserl (1913/2001) is credited for systematically refuting the idea on the grounds that psychology was merely an empirical discipline that dealt in uncertain probabilities and contingent mental acts, and therefore could not ground the transcendental truths of logic and the sciences. The first chapter will look at arguments from John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), who were accused by Husserl (1913/2001) of making psychologistic arguments. Although the search for a foundational science ultimately fell to the wayside and psychologism went out of favour, it is clear that, already from its very beginnings as a modern science, psychology was heralded as an all-encompassing field in which scientific and philosophical knowledge could be based.

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[3] Kusch (1995) provides an in depth sociological study of the psychologism debate as it unfolded among German thinkers at the turn of the 20th century.

Husserl's (1913/2001) critique of psychologism led him to develop the phenomenological system as his own proposal for a philosophical grounding for the sciences. Phenomenology, he argued, was to provide a method by which the human psyche could be investigated on an ideal, transcendental level, in order to move beyond the knowledge gained through empirical research. While it was no longer seen as a foundational science, modern psychology in its empirical, experimental form was nonetheless gaining foothold in Europe and North America as the science of subjectivity. Husserl's phenomenological system was, in part, a response to what he saw as the limitations of psychology as an empirical discipline. His critique ultimately shifted from psychologism in his earlier work, to an argument against the discipline of psychology itself (Husserl, 1936/1970). Subjectivity, Husserl thought, could not adequately be captured through empirical methods, as these did not provide information about the underlying meaning of human experience. Human meaning belonged to the domain of the "lifeworld" as Husserl (1936/1970) referred to it, and psychology failed to acknowledge this pre-scientific realm of experience. In spite of Husserl's attempts to provide a philosophical foundation for psychology through his phenomenological method, modern psychology in its natural scientific form continued to dominate mainstream knowledge of subjectivity in theory and practice, all the while failing to incorporate what could uniquely be gained from other philosophical approaches.

Even if Husserl's methodology had been taken up as a route to psychological knowledge, De Vos (2012b) argues that phenomenology would end up in the same theoretical deadlocks as those found by Husserl in his critique of psychologism. The final section of the first chapter will examine De Vos' (2012b) claim that in providing a systematic methodology by way of which subjectivity could be theoretically analyzed, Husserl failed to radicalize his critique and

politicize his methodology. Instead, he falls back into empirical descriptions of subjectivity, and opens the way for the coming century of psychologization.

Mid 20th century critiques

The second wave of critique I will examine is that which came from the sociologist Charles Wright Mills (1916-1962) and the critical theorist Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), who were both key proponents in the mid-century New Left political movement. These critiques address the individualism of psychology that was manifest both in the methodologies of the social sciences, as well as in the rise of therapeutic culture. In his book *The Sociological Imagination* Mills (1959/2000) criticized the tendency for the social sciences to focus on the individual while failing to take into consideration the larger social circumstances that are integral to individual lives. Mills (1959/2000) argued against the phenomenon he labelled "abstracted empiricism", in which researchers presupposed that their empirical methodology was the most appropriate way to study phenomena, without allowing the possibility for different lenses that would capture the context in which individual phenomena are embedded. Moreover, as an advocate of the New Left, Mills (1960) called for a greater integration of academic research with political activism. He wanted to politically radicalize the social sciences to make them directly pertinent to solving sociopolitical problems. By the mid-century, then, psychology's individualistic paradigm was expanding into the domain of sociology and impeding analyses that would take into account the significance of social structures that were crucial to understanding human life as more than an accumulation of individual psychological processes.

The tendency to study social problems from an individualistic lens was not only a problem for sociology on a methodological level, but in post-war US psychological discourse

and practice also began to spread itself outward into popular culture more generally, and a "psychological society" (Herman, 2003) emerged in which more and more people sought out clinical therapeutic help in the pursuit of self-actualization and happiness (see Cushman, 1995; Illouz, 2008; Lasch, 1977; Madsen, 2014; Rieff, 1987). Psychological suffering was understood as a personal problem, and the onus was on the individual to seek therapy and work on herself in order to get better, while the influence of social and political factors on mental well-being, as well as potential structural solutions to psychological problems, were ignored.

There were debates at this time concerning the political benefits and drawbacks of therapeutic culture. Some thinkers argued that psychotherapy could have liberatory effects that would allow people to better understand social oppression. Others, in contrast, thought that the focus on the authentic self that was integral to psychotherapy would deter from ideological awareness and sociopolitical engagement. Marcuse (1964/1991), for example, was a leading critical theorist who warned against the dangers of the "technological rationality" that he saw to be prevalent in modern industrial society. He argued that it was an ideology that impeded critical thinking about one's social structures and forms of systemic oppression. It was not therapy that would lead to happiness and autonomy, Marcuse argued, but rather reaching these ideals required the cultivation of ideology critique in individuals and the fostering of engagement with their sociopolitical environments.

Sociologists and critical theorists have thus shown how in the mid-twentieth century psychological discourse and practice began to dominate both social scientific research and broader cultural domains. The individualist paradigm of psychology led to a misrecognition of what were inherently, at least in part, social phenomena. In spite of the apparent success of psychology at this time, as well as some movements that sought to politicize the discipline, it

was arguable whether psychology could evade the deep-seated individualism that was at the heart of its paradigm. Sociologists and critical theorists have pointed out this limitation in psychological thinking, and have argued that a reductionist approach to human thought and behaviour has been complicit in propagating the oppressive ideologies of larger social structures.

Late 20th century critiques

The third chapter turns to critiques that demonstrate how psychology has not only permeated philosophical, sociological, and cultural domains, but it also contributes to the very ways in which we understand ourselves, and it shapes subjectivity in particular ways. These critiques of psychologization are grounded in Foucault's (1982) theories of power relations and subjectification – ideas which destabilize the modern conception of an essential subject that can be accessed through psychological, scientific, or philosophical modes of questioning. Instead, Foucault (1977) advocates for a genealogical approach to understanding subjectivity.[4] Nikolas Rose (1996) and Ian Hacking (1986) apply genealogy to psychology to see how the historical discourses and practices of the discipline have been involved in power relations that give way to particular forms of subjectivity.

In particular, the third chapter will examine Foucault's main concepts of the subject, power, and truth to see how they provide tools by way of which psychological discourse can be critically examined. Taking up Foucault's (1988) notion of "technologies of the self," Rose (1996) aims at a genealogy of subjectification in which psychology's role in cultivating self-governing subjects can be uncovered. Hacking (1995) also works with Foucault's genealogical framework to show how this process occurs through the "looping effects" of psychology, which

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[4] Foucault undertakes genealogies of penal systems in *Discipline and Punish* and of sexuality in *The History of Sexuality*.

occur when people incorporate psychological categories into their self-understandings, an interaction that in turn reinforces the reality of those categories. The relationship between psychological concepts and the individuals to which they are applied is thus a transformative one, and psychology is powerful in its ability shape peoples' experiences of themselves and the world in particular ways.

By adopting a genealogical approach to psychology, the contingency of psychological knowledge is revealed. Psychological categorizations, which are typically taken to be objective and value-neutral, are destabilized and shown to contain normative assumptions, as they are conditioned by particular sociohistorical configurations. By rendering visible the contingency of psychological discourse and practice, genealogies of subjectification are able to undo the influence these have on the formation of subjectivity. This approach opens the space for resistance to psychological understandings of the subject that can be oppressive or leave some individuals disenfranchised. The focus in this chapter thus moves from psychology's impingement on other academic disciplines and popular culture, to the political implications of psychology's power effects on the conduct of individuals.

Theoretical and political implications

The final chapter will draw on the Foucauldian notion that psychology makes us into certain kinds of subjects, in order to show that the kind of subjectivity promoted by psychology is one that is linked to the neoliberal socioeconomic structure. The chapter will follow Foucauldian scholarship to define neoliberalism and reveal the way in which this political rationality functions through psychology's propagation of self-governing subjects (Barry, Osborne, & Rose, 1996). With its individualistic paradigm that focuses on self-governmentality, psychology

contributes to the neoliberal free market rationality that places the onus on individuals for their successes or failures, while circumventing analyses of the influence of systemic factors on individual thought and conduct.

Part of the reason psychologization is such a prevalent phenomenon is because of its conformance to neoliberal ideology. It is in the interest of both psychology and the neoliberal state to maintain individualist assumptions that deflect people away from ideology critique. The final section of the chapter will examine the arguably insurmountable presence of psychologization in society today (De Vos, 2012a; Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010). Psychologization is such a pervasive phenomenon that there is a sense in which critiques of the process themselves cannot avoid psychologistic assumptions and language. However, the inescapability of psychologization does not mean that the search to get outside of its paradigm should be abandoned. On the contrary, it makes the need for critique even more pressing. The last chapter will examine some arguments about whether or not we are condemned to psychologization, and highlight the importance of philosophical and sociological critiques in revealing alternative ways of understanding subjectivity.

In drawing together these disparate yet related critiques of psychologism and psychologization, I aim to develop an understanding of different theories and perspectives on subjectivity that can be garnered from philosophical, social, and political analyses of human experience. Even though psychology lays claim to knowledge of subjectivity and attempts to capture human experience as a whole, it offers a particular kind of understanding – one that is positivist, naturalized, and individualistic. The critiques presented here highlight these limitations of psychology and promote more philosophical and politically-oriented understandings of subjectivity. While the

knowledge from mainstream psychology is undoubtedly important and beneficial, philosophical and sociological critiques of the discipline demonstrates its theoretical and political blindspots that can, ironically, contribute to human suffering. By incorporating knowledge from these disciplines into psychological research and practice, a more holistic, ethical, and critical science of subjectivity can be developed. What will emerge from the critiques of psychologism and psychologization are the different ways in which philosophical and sociological perspectives can broaden our notion of what it means to be human. By emphasizing the fundamental relation between individuals and the social world, and by cultivating critical and imaginative thought in both academic and everyday thinking, the influence of oppressive social structures on mental well-being can be recognized and resisted.

Chapter One: Psychologism and philosophy at the turn of the 20th century

Psychology's beginning as an academic discipline was rife with controversy. In Germany in the late 19th century many thinkers such as Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) and G.E. Müller (1850-1934) – two of the founders of the first psychological laboratories – argued that psychology should appropriate the experimental methods of the natural sciences, as these saw wide success in domains such as physiology, biology, physics, and chemistry. Others, notably Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) and his followers, argued that because the subject matter of psychology was fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences – being about mental phenomena rather than physical objects – it was to be classified as a human science and accordingly required a different methodology, specifically a descriptive, hermeneutic approach. Still others, such as Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and Franz Brentano (1838-1917) argued that psychology should remain embedded in philosophy, as the latter provided a certain depth and rigor that was not attainable through empirical natural scientific approaches, whether they be experimental or descriptive.[5]

One of the most notorious debates from this time concerned the problem of *psychologism*. Some thinkers argued that psychology should not only be an independent discipline that followed the experimental methods of the natural sciences, but that it should take on a special status among the sciences by providing an epistemological foundation for all knowledge. Others were critical of this idea that a strictly empirical discipline could be the foundational science. While taking on various forms, the basic psychologistic argument was that logic depended upon psychology because it studied the mental acts and conditions under which

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[5] See Kusch (1995) for a comprehensive discussion of the different views and debates concerning the new psychology.

logical judgements are made in philosophy and the sciences. Rather than investigating what would constitute true or probable judgments, psychological research focused on, for example, who makes judgements, how judgements are made, and the particular content of judgements (Husserl, 1913/2001). Psychologism was the view that the truth of logical or scientific claims was ultimately grounded in their concrete instantiations – in the real, empirical mental acts undergone in making judgements. Logic was seen as a subset of psychology, as the latter encompassed not only logical judgments but the entire realm of human mental acts (Kusch, 1995). This chapter will first lay out the problem of psychologism by illustrating arguments from two of the main thinkers who were accused of being psychologistic – J.S. Mill and Wundt – along with a sample of Husserl's (1913/2001) arguments against them. While Mill (1843/1974) and Wundt (1904/1969) thought that logic could be grounded in the psychological acts in which judgments were made, Husserl maintained that logic required a transcendental rather than empirical grounding and proposed his phenomenological system as the proper scientific foundation.

Having defined the theoretical problem using these case examples, I will then turn to Kusch's (1995) sociological analysis of the argument to see how psychologism was not just a battle of ideas, but of academic politics as well. As Kusch (1995) shows, the debate over psychologism was complex, involving almost every German philosopher at the turn of the century, and centering around several different theoretical and methodological issues. Under Kusch's (1995) view psychologism is such a loosely defined term that it loses its theoretical acumen and becomes a derisive accusation that is thrown about by all German thinkers in the attempt to maintain dominance of their views on psychology's place among the sciences. Almost no one *wanted* their arguments to be considered psychologistic, yet almost everyone was accused

of committing the error. Even Husserl, who was one of the main opponents of psychologism, was criticized for making psychologistic arguments. Moreover, it will be seen how Husserl's phenomenological system, which was meant to replace psychology as the foundational science of subjectivity, was accused by De Vos (2012b) of opening the way to psychologization.

It is not surprising that many thinkers hoped that the new experimental psychology could provide an epistemological foundation for the sciences; as the scientific discipline devoted to subjectivity it claimed a unique academic space. However, the psychological approach that became mainstream was hotly debated in its disciplinary beginnings, and Husserl was one among many thinkers to advocate for the importance of incorporating a philosophical component into empirical and experimental psychology. In spite of the struggle by many to maintain this philosophical aspect, the experimental method took hold in psychological research and incited the naturalized and positivized understanding of subjectivity that continues to inform our self-understandings today.

John Stuart Mill

Although Mill wrote his *System of Logic* in 1843 – more than a half century before psychologism became a widely discussed problem – his views of logic were deemed psychologistic by Husserl and others, although not without controversy (Kusch, 2015). Crucial to the relation between psychology and logic was the distinction between normative and descriptive logic – while normative logic involved the laws of how we *ought* to think, descriptive logic concerned the laws of how we think *in fact*; the latter fell under the domain of psychology, and the former under the study of logic proper. One of Mill's assumptions was that logical norms were derived from descriptive understandings of how we actually think, and as such logic was dependent upon psychology (Kusch, 2015).

Mill (1843/1974) argued that abstract thought and ideas were always tied to an empirical act that could be examined psychologically, and as such the abstract universals involved in logic did not have a separate epistemological status from the concrete instantiations in which they occurred. Under Mill's empiricist view, our notion of universals arises from our ability to turn our attention to certain features of objects. For example, if one is to imagine the redness of an apple, this cannot adequately be accomplished without imagining the apple itself. When we remain fixated on the redness of the apple, it is possible to be "temporarily unconscious" of all the other attributes (Mill, 1974, p. 259); I can focus so closely on the redness that I lose all awareness of the other features of the apple – its roundness, its contour, and its size. I can briefly lose sight of the fact that the redness is a part of an apple at all, and only see it as a redness in itself. Yet this is indeed a *temporary* ignorance of the other attributes, and Mill (1843/1974) says, "the moment the attention relaxes, if the same concrete idea continues to be contemplated, its other constituents come out into consciousness" (p. 259). One's focus on *only* the redness of the apple never lasts very long. Based on the nature of this experience of attention, Mill (1843/1974) argued that universal objects are not known in their own right, "but we may, while forming intuitive presentations of individual concrete things, devote exclusive attention or exclusive interest to various parts and sides of our object" (p. 258). We do not have ideas of general objects *per se*; "we only have complex ideas of objects in the concrete" (Mill, 1843/1974, p. 259).

Mill's approach to understanding universals was thus to analyze the psychological acts of attention by way of which universals are derived and contemplated. Husserl's (1913/2001) main criticism to this approach is that it focused *only* on the psychological act by way of which universals came to be. Mill failed to draw a distinction between the *ideal content* of the act and the act itself. In this way he ignored the distinct character of universals, as the ideal meaning that

is eternally true, and which is expressed in an empirical, contingent act of consciousness that is the focus of psychology. Husserl (1913/2001) demonstrated that there is a "peculiar consciousness" associated with our understanding of universals, one that goes beyond our psychological grasping of them in concrete, individual objects, and deserves a special kind of reflection to which phenomenology is devoted (p. 263).

Another accusation of psychologism lodged by Husserl against Mill can help to illustrate the difference between the ideal content of a judgment, and its empirical psychological occurrence. This psychologistic argument concerned the idea that what guaranteed the truth of a logical statement was a "feeling of necessity" – a subjective, psychological experience that occurs when a logical judgment appears as "inwardly evident" (Husserl, 1913/2001, p. 115). For psychologistic thinkers like Mill, the feeling of necessity is "a peculiar mental character, well-known to everyone through his inner experience … a peculiar feeling which guarantees the truth of the judgment to which it attaches" (Husserl, 1913/2001, p. 115). Husserl's antipsychologistic argument against the feeling of necessity relied on the discrepancy between judgments that are ideally possible, but psychologically impossible. For example, we are unable to make any actual judgments concerning "decimal numbers with trillions of places" – we cannot mentally perform any equations with such numbers, yet we know that "there are truths relating to them" (Husserl, 1913/2001, p. 118). If truth rests on the inner evidence and a feeling of necessity concerning judgments, then truths for which it is impossible to perform real acts of judgment on, and to see the inward evidence of, could not really be considered true.

For Husserl, truth is not dependent on the subjective feeling of necessity that occurs in real experience. Rather, "truth is an Idea, whose particular case is an actual experience in the inwardly evident judgment" (Husserl, 1913/2001, p. 121). While psychology has the task of

investigating the conditions in which the experience of inward evidence occurs, such as "a concentration of interest, a certain mental freshness, practice, etc.," these empirical conditions are merely "vague, empirical generalizations" that are inductively reached, and the truth of which always remains probable, unlike the "truly lawlike generalizations" of pure logic (Husserl, 1913/2001, p. 119). A psychologist observes the mechanics at work when a person performs a mathematical equation or makes a logical judgment, and makes observations about things like the speed at which judgments are performed, the influence of external stimuli on the performance of judgments, or the effects of different states of mind on how judgments are made. Pure logic, on the other hand, provides laws concerning the "specific form and matter of our judgment;" it has the ideal content of the psychological act as its object, such as the equation $2 + 2 = 4$, or the Pythagorean theorem " (Husserl, 1913/2001, p. 119). While psychological laws give conditions as to the particular psychical states under which the feeling of necessity occurs, the laws of pure logic "hold generally for every possible consciousness" (Husserl, 1913/2001, p. 119). The contingent and fleeting subjective feeling of necessity, Husserl argues, cannot provide the foundation for logic and the sciences. This illustration of the empiricist theory of abstraction and the feeling of necessity found in Mill is just one example of an antipsychologistic argument among many, yet it demonstrates the crux of the debate over the relationship between psychology, logic, and the search for an epistemological foundation for the sciences.

Wilhelm Wundt

As he is considered to be one of the pioneers of experimental psychology, it is not surprising that Wundt was also accused of psychologism. As Araujo (2016) explains, Wundt saw psychology and philosophy as fundamentally connected in a bidirectional manner. On the one hand, for Wundt, psychological approaches and subject matter contained certain philosophical

assumptions. On the other hand, the foundations of philosophical concepts resided in the empirical psychological acts in which they occurred (Araujo, 2016, p. 64). However, it is generally agreed upon that Wundt was a proponent of psychologism, as he wanted to "reconstruct philosophy on the basis of the empirical sciences" (Araujo, 2016, p. 59).[6]

Wundt gave psychology a special status among the domains of logic, as well as both the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften* (Kusch, 1995). Wundt considered logic to be dependent upon psychology insofar as he saw logic as a *normative* discipline that concerned how we ought to think, and thought logical laws were derived from *descriptive* empirical psychological accounts of how we think in fact (Kusch, 1995, p. 131).[7] In regard to the sciences, Kusch's (1995) argument about Wundt's prioritization of psychology over philosophy as the foundational science can be understood as having three crucial facets. First, Wundt thought that the development of philosophy depended upon the results of the empirical sciences (Kusch, 1995, p. 129). The function of philosophy was to amalgamate the results of disparate disciplines in order to provide theoretical support for scientific research. In other words, philosophy was not meant to predetermine from the outset the conditions of possibility for science, but to find these conditions inductively through scientific research itself. Second, Wundt thought that psychology played a primary role among the *Geisteswissenschaften* in particular. These sciences, he argued, were divided into the "'sciences of mental processes', 'the sciences of mental products' and 'the sciences of the development of mental products'" (Kusch, 1995, p. 132). The sciences of mental

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[6] See Araujo (2016) for a comprehensive argument about the complex relationship between philosophy and psychology in Wundt's work.

[7] However, as Araujo (2016) points out, it should be noted there was a sense in which logic did have a special ontological status for Wundt. He thought there were some a priori logical laws that shaped scientific thinking. These maxims were only ever unconscious and were unable to be traced to conscious psychological acts (Araujo, 2016, p. 63). While Araujo (2016) claims that Wundt's thought overall was psychologistic, this unconscious aspect of logical laws seemed to be an exception that escaped psychologism.

processes, where Wundt claimed psychology to be located, were the most fundamental of the human sciences, being prior to and the foundation of "mental products and their historical developments" (Kusch, 1995, p. 132). Third, in relation to its place as a *Geisteswissenschaft* as opposed to a *Naturwissenschaft*, Wundt claimed that since experimental psychology had a special role, as it was close to physics and physiology, it could form a bridge between the two broad domains of science (Kusch, 1995, p. 132). Moreover, psychology was privileged over the natural sciences in that it "studied 'the given' in its immediacy" (Kusch, 1995, p. 132). The natural sciences, in contrast, were merely a "system of signs," by way of which the real nature of objects or "the given" could only ever be hypothesized (Kusch, 1995, p. 132). In all of these ways, then, for Wundt, psychology held a primary and foundational role among logic, and both the natural and human sciences.

These arguments from Mill and Wundt provide a sample of the early 20th century debates around psychologism. Although he employed several nuanced and intricate arguments against psychologism, the overarching theme of Husserl's (1913/2001) polemic was that empirical, experimental psychology was not an adequate foundation for the logic and the sciences. Psychology required an examination of ideal meanings – a phenomenological analysis of the acts and content involved in human mental experience – that would complement its empirical findings. It is understandable that many thinkers of the time hoped that the new experimental psychology, in all of the excitement and intrigue surrounding its innovative approach to studying human mental life, would bridge the gap between the human and natural sciences and provide a rigorous account of experience that would encompass the phenomena dealt with in science, philosophy, and logic. Husserl's (1913/2001) hesitations were not unjustified, however, and his critique is arguably still relevant today. Although experimental psychology did not become a

foundation for all the sciences, it did come to dominate knowledge of human experience, to the neglect of theoretical and conceptual clarification that could be provided by other approaches such as phenomenology or hermeneutics.[8]

Kusch's sociological analysis of the psychologism debate

One of the main aspects of the psychologism debate brought out by Kusch (1995) is that arguments about psychologism were so omnipresent, that "practically every single German philosopher, dead or alive" was accused of psychologism (p. 115). Kusch (1995) meticulously lists dozens of criteria by way of which arguments were labelled psychologistic (pp. 119-121). The extent and detail of his list of ways in which people could be accused of psychologism makes it appear as such a loosely defined term, being applied to almost anyone, with such "interpretive flexibility" that the idea almost becomes meaningless (Kusch, 1995, p. 95). He depicts the different philosophical schools of thought involved in the debate, showing that many thinkers both accused others of psychologism and were themselves accused of psychologism by the same thinkers who they accused (Kusch, 1995, p. 99). Because "the criteria for attributing a psychologistic stance to another philosopher were extremely flexible," it is difficult to pin down precisely the problem of psychologism, other than "a mistaken grounding of philosophy in psychology" (Kusch, 1995, p. 115). The irony of this ubiquity of psychologism accusations is that most "German philosophers agreed that psychologism was a serious philosophical error and that it needed to be exorcised from philosophy once and for all" (Kusch, 1995, p. 93). Few thinkers desired to be labelled as psychologistic, yet simultaneously the term was applied to

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[8] There has been a recent resurgence in the psychologism movement in the vein of the early 20th century debate presented here, with several thinkers arguing that psychology should have a more prominent role in relation to philosophy and the sciences. See, for example, Crane (2014), Jacquette (2003), and Knobe & Nichols (2014).

almost everyone. Kusch's (1995) depiction of the varieties and complexities of the psychologism debate thus undermines psychologism as a theoretical problem, by showing how it was in fact inevitably found in almost all philosophical arguments. Kusch's (1995) sociological study of psychologism demonstrates that the problem was not just a battle of philosophical ideas, but importantly revolved around academic politics of the time concerning psychology's establishment as a separate discipline.

The debates in Germany over psychologism as well as the "philosophical status of experimental psychology" dissipated with the onset of First World War (Kusch, 1995, p. 211). According to Kusch (1995), this was because the war motivated intellectuals to put aside their opposing views on the hierarchies and divisions of the sciences and band together as a unified nation. Moreover, the onset of the war brought about a division of labour in which philosophy concentrated on "the ideological task of celebrating the German 'genius of war'" while the focus of experimental psychology was on the "training and testing of soldiers" (Kusch, 1995, p. 211). The application of psychological research to real world problems that occurred with this division of labour marks the beginning of psychology's spread into larger societal and cultural realms – a process which is the target of later arguments concerning *psychologization*. Kusch (1995) discusses how psychology began to be considered the "central 'auxiliary science' (*Hilfswissenschaft*) for natural science, medicine, linguistics, philology, literary studies, aesthetics, history, pedagogy, jurisprudence, economics and philosophy" (p. 152). Apart from the controversy over its role as a foundation for philosophy and the sciences, already in the early 20th century processes of psychologization were evident, as psychological discourse spread into other domains of study, a phenomenon which, as will be seen in the following chapters, became widely critiqued throughout the rest of the century.

Husserl's critique of psychology

Decades after the publication of *Logical Investigations*, came Husserl's *Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, in which he continued to critique psychologism, only his argument now reflected a different form and context of the problem, and was directed not at the foundationalist epistemological problem, but at the discipline of psychology itself, and its "wrongful naturalization and objectivation and hence misconceiving of human subjectivity" (De Vos, 2014, p. 1548). While in *Logical Investigations* and *Ideas*, Husserl propounds his phenomenology of intentionality and ideal essences in response to the psychologism problem, in *Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* his argument takes on two additional components. First, he incorporates history into his system and examines the development of Western philosophy, beginning with the pre-Socratics and continuing with "mathematization of nature" that is characteristic of the modern sciences (Husserl, 1970, p. 23). Second, Husserl (1970) introduces the notion of the *lifeworld* as the pre-scientific world of concrete, sensible qualities which is covered over and lost with the scientific viewpoint and its rationalization and systematization of nature. He refers to Galileo as the forerunner of this process in which the pre-scientific lifeworld is left behind and forgotten for a world of mathematical idealities. The rationalists and empiricists continued this systematization of the lifeworld and applied it to the human soul, which, according to Husserl gave way to a kind of psychologism.

The emergence of the natural sciences, Husserl (1970) argued, led to the "physicalistic rationalism" of René Descartes (1596-1650). With Descartes, philosophy became a "universal mathematics" that was applied not only to the natural world, but to the psyche as well: "a type of being is ascribed to the soul which is similar in principle to that of nature; and to psychology is

ascribed a progression from description to ultimate theoretical 'explanation' similar to that of biophysics" (Husserl, 1970, p. 73). While Descartes' system was dualistic – with the mind or soul (*res cogitans*) being distinct from the body (*res extensa*), he nevertheless attempted to develop a science of the soul, which Husserl claimed retained an affinity to naturalism. Descartes (1649/2000) treated the psyche within a naturalistic framework, arguing that the soul resided in the pineal gland and was connected to the body through animal spirits – a mechanistic process that he spelled out in detail. The naturalized approach to studying the soul, Husserl (1970) argued, was passed down through modern philosophy, and continued to inform the natural scientific understanding of psychology and the mind. Moreover, in performing his method of doubt Descartes found that the only thing he knew for certain was the existence of his own mind. As the only thing that can be known with certainty, Descartes took the pure ego to be the ultimate foundation for all knowledge.

While Husserl's phenomenology is also Cartesian in the sense that it is concerned with the *pure ego* as an epistemological foundation, he disagrees with Descartes' approach, which places the ego within the realm of the objective sciences and simultaneously holds it to be the subjective grounding of the sciences. Descartes "persists in pure objectivism in spite of its subjective grounding" in that he takes the mind to be "a legitimate subject matter *within* the sciences, i.e. in psychology" (Husserl, 1970, p. 81). Husserl's criticism of the understanding of the mind, from Descartes through to the new experimental psychology, was that it was relegated to the realm of the empirical sciences, and its intentional structure did not receive a proper philosophical analysis that is provided by phenomenology.

While in *Logical Investigations* Husserl was critical of the grounding of philosophy and the sciences in psychology, in *Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental*

Phenomenology his concern was that the knowledge provided by the natural sciences, including psychology, veils and distorts the underlying pre-scientific realm of the lifeworld, which can be accessed through phenomenological analysis of subjective experience. The lifeworld constitutes the everyday experience in which psychological knowledge is grounded. Yet psychology takes the lifeworld for granted and fails to adequately grasp the everyday, pre-scientific experience from which its knowledge emerges. Husserl argues that by aligning the study of the human mind with the natural sciences, psychology covers over the lifeworld and "misses the radical and genuine problem of subjectivity" (De Vos, 2014, p. 1548). As De Vos (2014) explains, the problem for Husserl thus shifts "from a critique of psychologism to a critique of psychology itself" (p. 1548).

Husserl accused of psychologization

De Vos (2012b) provides an analysis of Husserl's critique of psychologism in which he argues that his phenomenological system, which was intended to overcome psychologism, in fact leads to psychologization. De Vos' argument is complex as he problematizes various aspects of Husserl's phenomenological system and its relationship to psychology, but the main point he makes is that phenomenology, with the establishment of the vantage point of the pure ego, from which the psychological ego can receive its foundation, provides the model for psychologization. Husserl's system separates the pure ego, the "disinterested onlooker," from the psychological ego that is immersed in the lifeworld – from the "naïve interested subject" – and allows the former to investigate and ground the experience of the latter (De Vos, 2012b, p. 338). Psychology similarly takes up this vantage point by allowing subjects to cast the scientific gaze on their own selves, to say " *'look at me now, how my behavior is determined by psychology'* " –

a perspective that opens the way to psychologization as the modern subject is invited to "look upon himself as a psychologist" (De Vos, 2012b, p. 338).

According to De Vos (2012b), Husserl's project was intended to be political insofar as it was critical of the closing down of the lifeworld that began with science, as rationality and philosophy took hold of and dominated naïve everyday experience and pre-scientific forms of knowledge. Husserl's phenomenological reduction was meant to re-open the lifeworld by bracketing the theoretical gaze in order to investigate the essences of things as they appear in experience. While Husserl rightly showed how the scientific perspective closed down the lifeworld, De Vos (2012b) criticizes him for making a similar mistake and not taking the political aspect of his argument far enough. Rather than allowing the space for the lifeworld to open up, to exist in pure negativity as the undetermined counterpart to positivized, theoretical being, Husserl himself positivizes the lifeworld by accounting for it with phenomenological description that tends to fall back into empirical psychological discourse (De Vos, 2012b, p. 334). De Vos (2012b) claims that Husserl fails to radicalize his critique and politicize his methodology as he invokes a concrete and systematized procedure by way of which immediate experience can be theoretically captured. A truly political system, according to De Vos (2012b), would involve opening a plane on which subjectivity is not determined by empirical psychological concepts or a phenomenological analysis of essences. Instead, subjectivity must be cut loose from the psychological and phenomenological gaze that attempts to delineate its essential characteristics. If the scientific perspective can be avoided, subjectivity can be freely experienced and constructed without being beholden to fixed and rigid concepts that lay claim to knowledge over who we are. By revealing the standpoint of the pure ego from which subjectivity can be looked upon and known, De Vos' (2012b) argument is that Husserl inadvertently opens the way to

psychologization – to the tendency to look upon ourselves from an authoritative perspective that resides outside of everyday experience and from which we can see who we *really* are.

De Vos (2012b) points out that the very notion of a pre-theoretical, unmediated experience is nonsensical because experience is always already informed by the theoretical perspective. The world is infused throughout with scientific discourse and practice and it is untenable to think that there is a pre-given aspect of experience, which is the subject matter of theory, but which also somehow exists prior to theory and is uncontaminated by scientific knowledge. Both psychology and phenomenology claim to provide access to this naïve psychological subject, when in fact the subject is already constituted by psychological and theoretical discourse: as De Vos (2012b) claims, there is no "way back" from psychologization. Yet with Husserl's critique of psychologism and the phenomenological method, "the modern subject is characterized by the endeavor to re-find the naïve experience" of the lifeworld (De Vos, 2012b, p. 333). This is the task of phenomenology, as later thinkers in the tradition focus on direct experiences of the world as they occur through embodiment and perception. To find the essential subject is also the task of psychology as it provides the expertise on what it is to be human. Yet this naïve subjectivity cannot exist because, by Husserl's own argumentation, the lifeworld has already been closed down on by the sciences (De Vos, 2012b, p. 338). Thus, both phenomenology and psychology are not able to grant access to an essential underlying subject, but instead construct particular kinds of subjects according to their own positivizations and paradigms.

Although Husserl's entire body of work stemmed from a critique of psychologism, phenomenology ends up facing a similar problem, as it aims to be a transcendental science of the subject. While not doing experimental or strictly empirical analyses of subjectivity, Husserl

subscribed to the foundationalist notion that scientific knowledge needed to be unified by a systematic philosophy of subjectivity – only for him this was to be provided by phenomenology rather than empirical psychology. A more radical critique of psychology, which will be revisited in the third chapter, would come from the postmodern opposition against a foundationalist notion of truth and the possibility of a transcendental ego. The postmodern position attempts to avoid essentializing and dominating systems of knowledge by deconstructing subjectivity and acknowledging the possibilities for resistances to rigidifying categorizations, whether coming from the transcendental ego of phenomenology or the empirical findings of psychology (see, e.g., Brown & Stenner, 2009; Gergen, 2001).

While De Vos (2012b) rightly criticizes the idea of an unadulterated, naïve, pre-scientific experience of the lifeworld that can be returned to from the phenomenological vantage point, Husserl's positive contribution to the critique of psychology should not be disregarded. Phenomenology enables a rigorous analysis of subjectivity as it demands a more meaningful understanding of psychological concepts that lie behind their empirically oriented operational definitions. Moreover, the pre-scientific realm pointed to by Husserl is an important aspect of experience to acknowledge, even if it does not exist in a pure state, untouched by scientific discourse. Phenomenology has given way to the exploration of this aspect of human experience in novel and significant ways: Heidegger (1927/2008) addresses the thrownness of everyday experience in which being is always ahead of itself and cannot be intellectually encompassed; Sartre (1943/1992) discusses the experience of nothingness and the anxiety it entails; and Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) shows the significance of our embodied and perceptual experience that preconfigures our objective experience of the world.

Although De Vos (2012b) claims that phenomenology gave way to psychologization, it also opened up these important domains of subjectivity that are neglected in the natural scientific approach. While phenomenological arguments may be critiqued for hypostasizing an essential subjectivity, or for falling into empirical description, as far as a theory or science of the subject goes, phenomenology goes beyond the naturalized understanding of the subject and helps us understand the first-person experience in which we are directly engaged with a shared cultural world. This may indeed be a kind of psychologization, yet if as De Vos (2012a) claims, we are inevitably psychologized anyway (an argument that will be discussed in the final chapter), then phenomenology can be a fruitful way of grappling with psychology. Phenomenology offers a theory of subjectivity that, by tapping into existential and embodied aspects of human experience, can help us to understand ourselves as feeling, empathizing beings, connected to our environment and others – as more than objects in the world that can be scrutinized by the natural scientific approach. It provides us with the apparatus to intellectually address what is a pre-intellectual experience – an impressive feat given the paradoxes of this task that are highlighted by De Vos (2012a).

It is nonetheless important to remain critical of phenomenology as well, and De Vos' (2012b) arguments remind us that while the domain of the lifeworld is a valid aspect of subjectivity, it does not exist in a pure state, untouched by science, yet accessible through a phenomenological standpoint. However, rather than disregarding the lifeworld, a modified conception can be developed in which it is always in a relational state with science and objective thought. Phenomenology can remain political if we advance beyond Husserl's construction of it as a systematized analysis of the essential structures of subjectivity, and instead focus on what it reveals both about subjective resistances to objectification, and about the intersubjective nature

of experience. Moreover, phenomenology can be pragmatically valuable as a therapeutic tool for helping us grapple with the anxieties of existence, which for many people who suffer psychologically, is not always adequately dealt with by the methods of mainstream psychology. Phenomenology works as a resistance to the dominant psychological conception of human experience by promoting a rigorous theoretical engagement with human experience, avoiding the stasis of scientific categorizations, and encouraging critical reflection on subjectivity.

Conclusion

In its initial guise, psychologism was the criticism from philosophers that experimental psychology could not provide the theoretical rigor that was required to ground the sciences. Up until the establishment of psychology as a separate discipline, the study of the soul or psyche had belonged to the domain of philosophy. While philosophy still produces knowledge that can inform theories of subjectivity, psychology has come to dominate how the modern subject is conceived. Where philosophy can provide rigorous and nuanced ways of conceiving of subjectivity, which take into consideration dimensions of experience such as the social world, cultural differences, and the existential meaning found in life, psychology is limited in its reductionist and individualist paradigm. Philosophy can provide the theoretical and conceptual rigor demanded of a science of subjectivity that gets beyond the deficits of mainstream empirical psychology.

Psychologism has been a problem since the inception of the discipline of psychology and, as will be seen in the following chapters, it has reappeared in various forms throughout the 20th century up until today. Although foundationalism ceased to be a central epistemological concern in the philosophy of science, psychological thought and practice became extremely influential in academia and beyond. Not only was experimental psychology successful in becoming

established as a discipline and separating itself from philosophy, but psychological expertise and practice came to be in wide demand from various sectors – psychologists participated in research and practice in fields such as education, the military, and the legal system (e.g., see Rose, 1985). While the epistemological problem of psychologism was no longer an issue with the onset of the First World War, psychology's presence in these social realms and its increasing influence over individuals' lives marked the beginning of the process referred to as psychologization. Later thinkers, it will be seen, were similarly concerned with psychology's domination of knowledge of subjectivity, to the neglect of viewpoints that could be garnered from other philosophical, social, or political approaches to human experience. The next chapter will turn to the mid-century critiques of psychologism and psychologization that came from sociologists and critical theorists to see how psychology was going beyond its boundaries and was no longer permeating only philosophical realms but sociological and cultural domains as well.

Chapter Two: Psychologism in mid-century sociological critiques

One of the philosophers involved in the early psychologism debate, Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945), stated in 1927 that "psychologism … still cannot be regarded as defeated. For although its form and justification have changed since Husserl's sharp and trenchant criticism, we must note that psychologism has, to a high degree, the ability to appear in ever new guises" (as cited and translated in Kusch, 1995, p. 121). While Cassirer's statement remains vague as to what kinds of psychologism would appear, his prediction of the continuous, albeit transformed, presence of the term was correct. The initial critique of psychologism in the early 20th century was waged largely by German philosophers against the impingement of the new experimental psychology on what was considered to be philosophical territory. Although this once hotly debated topic became less of a contention among German intellectuals as the first decades of the 20th century progressed, a different critique of psychologism emerged in 1959 with the publication of C. Wright Mills' influential book, *The Sociological Imagination*. Unlike the earlier critique of psychologism, Mills' argument was not directed towards psychologists, but concerned the psychologistic tendencies he saw in the sociological methodology that had become dominant in his time.

This chapter will begin by examining Mills' (1959/2000) critique of psychologism that pertained to the "abstracted empiricism" of sociological research – the tendency for social scientists to let empirical methodology guide their research to the detriment of potentially innovative theorizing and analyses of sociohistorical structures. Mills was considered a radical sociologist, and not only did he contribute to methodological critique, but he was also a leading voice of the New Left political movement in the US (Geary, 2008; Gane & Back, 2012). The arguments put forth in his critique of psychologism in sociology extended to his diagnosis of societal afflictions that he delineated in his 1960 "Letter to the New Left". Mills' (1959/2000;

1960) main concern was with the failure for social scientists to connect the personal to the political, and this argument was echoed in debates – also largely situated within the New Left discourse – over the value of "therapeutic culture" that emerged in post-war US. While some thinkers argued that psychotherapy was harmful in that it individualized problems that were inherently social, others maintained that it had potential to be liberating, as it allowed people to better understand themselves and equipped them to fight against oppressive societal structures. The problem highlighted throughout these critiques of psychologism in sociology and therapeutic culture is with their individual bias that deterred from political interpretations and, arguably, left individuals unable to critically reflect upon the dominant socioeconomic ideology. Mills' (1959/2000) notion of the sociological imagination, along with critiques of therapeutic culture, and New Left sociopolitical analyses, demonstrate the need to think beyond the individualizing tendency of psychology by engaging with theoretical, social, and political forms of analyses.

C. Wright Mills

The Sociological Imagination

Mills' (1959/2000) argument targeted the dominant approach in the social sciences for too strictly following the model of the natural sciences and failing to address the larger sociopolitical structures in which social and individual problems were embedded. An adequate analysis of social problems would require that social scientists "consider the economic and political institutions of the society, and not merely the personal situation and character of a scatter of individuals" (Mills, 1959/2000, p. 9). Mills (1959/2000) was concerned that social science research relied too heavily on statistical techniques that focused on samples of individuals. Knowledge that was garnered from quantitative and empirical methodologies was deemed the

most valid and persuasive in the modern social sciences, while, Mills (1959/2000) argued, "other terms and other styles of reflection seem mere vehicles of escape and obscurity" (p. 14). The approach in the social sciences was largely psychological and individualistic: "Many great public issues as well as many private troubles are described in terms of 'the psychiatric' – often, it seems, in a pathetic attempt to avoid the large issues and problems of modern society" (Mills, 1959/2000, p. 12). In an intellectual atmosphere that valued the methods and approach of the natural sciences, Mills (1959/2000) marshalled the radical view that it was crucial for scientists to understand how overarching structural apparatuses contribute to social and individual problems.

As an alternative perspective that would get beyond mainstream scientific approaches to subjectivity, Mills (1959/2000) propounded the idea of the "sociological imagination," which would allow "us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society" (p. 6). Mills (1959/2000) distinguished between "the personal troubles of milieu" and "public issues of social structure" and the sociological imagination was meant to encourage sociologists to examine the relations between the two dimensions (p. 8). Mills' (1959/2000) book was a call for social scientists to break free from the individualistically biased mainstream methods, and exercise the "the capacity to shift from one perspective to another – from the political to the psychological" (p. 7). The sociological imagination refers to a transition between intellectual perspectives, as well as an expansion of self-consciousness, such that people can more fully understand the meaning of their social milieu in relation to overarching sociopolitical structures:

> those whose mentalities have swept only a series of limited orbits often come to feel as if
> suddenly awakened in a house with which they had only supposed themselves to be

familiar … they often come to feel that they can now provide themselves with adequate

summations, cohesive assessments, comprehensive orientations … they realize the

cultural meaning of the social sciences (Mills, 1959/2000, p. 7-8).

The sociological imagination thus encourages not only an expansion of perspective in research,

but in people's everyday understandings of their sociopolitical circumstances.

Abstracted empiricism and psychologism

One of the main points of critique for Mills (1959/2000) centred around what he referred to as

"abstracted empiricism," which was the tendency for sociology to be indiscriminately guided by

an allegiance to its methodology that was modelled on the natural scientific approach. This

"methodological inhibition" was a propensity that limited the kinds of problems that could be

analyzed to those which were amenable to sampling procedures and data collection, methods that

Mills (1959/2000) described as "self-imposed limitations" of an "arbitrary epistemology" (p. 55).

Abstracted empiricism was a kind of methodolatry in which the sociologists fetishized a

particular "small-scale" approach to studying phenomena, to the extent that other possible

fruitful approaches that could reveal varying dimensions of social issues, especially concerning

"comparative and historical social structures," were prematurely excluded (Mills, 1959/2000, p.

68).[9]

Mills (1959/2000) located the emergence of abstracted empiricism in the transition from

social philosophy to empirical social science. Sociology was "assigned the task of converting

philosophy into social sciences" – it was meant to provide the rigor of the scientific method that

would enhance the abstract knowledge derived from "social philosophy" (Mills, 1959/2000, pp.

60-1). The early proponent of modern empirical sociology, Paul Lazarsfeld (1901-1976), is

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[9] See Bakan (1967) for a discussion of methodolatry.

identified by Mills (1959/2000) as a prototypical sociologist who he criticized for being

complicit in the malfeasance of abstracted empiricism. According to Lazarsfeld, there were four

methodological themes that characterized the empirical science of sociology, as distinct from

social philosophy: phenomena were studied in isolation rather than in a relational context; events

that occurred repeatedly were the objects of study, rather than those which occurred only once;

the research was ahistorical; and there was a "shift of emphasis from the history of institutions

and ideas to the concrete behavior of peoples" (as cited in Mills, 1959/2000, pp. 61-2). It is this

last "choice" of the new sociological research which Mills (1959/2000) found to be

psychologistic as it marked "a persistent avoidance of problems of structure in favor of those of

milieu" (p. 61).

     Mills (1959/2000) defined psychologism as "the attempt to explain social phenomena in

terms of facts and theories about the make-up of individuals … it rests upon an explicit

metaphysical denial of the reality of social structure" and "upon the idea that if we study a series

of individuals and their milieu, the results of our studies in some way can be added up to

knowledge of social structure (p. 67). In order to get beyond psychologism in the social sciences,

and to account for the variety of social and psychological factors that constitute social problems,

Mills (1959/2000) called for greater attention to be placed on sociohistorical structures rather

than small-scale studies that look at social behaviours. Because the "problems of social science

are stated in terms of conceptions that usually relate to social-historical structures," it is "foolish"

to limit sociology to these small-scale studies without drawing any connections to their

"structural significance" (Mills, 1959/2000, p. 68). Mills' (1959/2000) concern was thus that

abstracted empiricism's application of natural scientific techniques was an approach that was

incongruous with the guiding sociological questions that it was meant to address – questions that aimed at the significance and impact of larger social structures on our lives.

Mills and Husserl on psychologism

Mills' (1959/2000) description of the kind of sociology that was championed by Lazarsfeld, in which social philosophy was disregarded in favour of positivist, quantitative research, is reminiscent of the late 19th century separation of psychology as a quantitative, experimental science from philosophy. In both cases there is a move away from history and philosophy towards experimental and statistical methods, which provided the empirical information that was deemed by many to be more valid and reliable than philosophical or sociohistorical analyses. Yet in both early 20th century psychology and mid-century sociology, arguments appeared that called into question the full-fledged adoption of the natural scientific method as an adequate approach to studying individual and social phenomena. Both Mills (1959/2000) and Husserl (1970) were concerned with the historical dimension of psychological and social phenomena that is neglected in the quantitative methods of sociology and psychology, and with the lack of conceptual and theoretical analyses found in empirical social research.

While Husserl (1913/2001) was concerned with psychologism as a brand of foundationalist *epistemology*, Mills' (1959/2000) critique of psychologism was *methodological*, as his argument focused on the failure of sociological research to connect the results generated from surveys, data collection, and statistical analyses with examinations of the larger social and institutional structures within which the phenomena were situated. Although focusing on different problems and arising from different disciplines, both critiques claimed that psychological thinking was inappropriately impinging upon areas that required, in Husserl's (1913/2001) case, a transcendental phenomenological foundation, and in Mills' (1959/2000), an

investigation into the relation between individual lives and social structures. The significant point brought out by both Husserl (1913/2001) and Mills (1959/2000) was that when psychology and the social sciences are delimited by an adherence to the natural scientific approach, important historical, philosophical, and sociopolitical dimensions of problems are neglected, as knowledge is restricted to the results of ahistorical, quantitative analyses of isolated phenomena.

In his critique of psychologism, Husserl (1913/2001) continued to subscribe to the foundationalist notion that truth requires some essential tenets from which all knowledge can be justified – for him this is to be found in phenomenology rather than psychology. Husserl's (1913/2001) project thus aligned with the modernist problem of foundationalism, a problem which was undermined by postmodern disruptions of notions of unified theories of truth in favour of pluralistic, deconstructive approaches to knowledge (e.g., Rorty, 1979). Mills' (1959/2000) methodological critique of psychologism, in contrast, aligned with some streams in the postmodern paradigm – not in terms of theories of truth, but insofar as it moved away from the idea of the individual subject as the centre of knowledge, towards the notion that subjectivity is constituted in relation to the sociopolitical structures in which individuals are embedded.[10] Indeed, the New Left movement with which Mills was associated was also comprised of prominent critical theorists such as Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) and Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), and was amenable to sociopolitical rather than individualistic understandings of subjectivity which were characteristic of postmodern thought. Mills' (1959/2000) critique of psychologism can thus be read in relation to the postmodern resistance against individualist and essentialist understandings of subjectivity and society, in which the subject is independent of the world, and acts autonomously and in isolation from extraneous relations – a view which had

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[10] For a discussion of postmodern notions of subjectivity and their relevance to psychology see Gergen (1991), Kvale (1992), and Martin & Sugarman (2000).

dominated Western philosophy up until the 20th century, and the spectre of which continues to prevail in neoliberal ideology and its influence on mainstream psychology (Sugarman, 2015). Mills (1959/2000) saw in sociological methods that quantifiable individual and psychological phenomena were privileged over analyses of sociopolitical structures, and *The Sociological Imagination* was a proclamation against this limited and reductionist way of understanding the relationship between the individual and society.

Mills' theoretical influence

Mills (1959/2000) called for research that involved "intellectual craftsmanship," which entailed thoughtful, critical work on the part of the researcher, as opposed to the methodolatry he implored in abstracted empiricism. In the Appendix, Mills (1959/2000) puts forth a guide directed towards social scientists, especially to those who are just beginning their work, on how to become an intellectual craftsperson and exercise the sociological imagination. Included is advice on the importance of integrating one's life and work, strategies for organizing research notes and ideas, and the advantages of avoiding overly technical writing and finding an academic and literary voice – all practical tips concerning theory and method to help social scientists develop and employ effective and innovative research skills. Worthwhile ideas will come, Mills (1959/2000) argued, by enacting the sociological imagination, and he sets out a list of ways in which this frame of mind can be stimulated. The sociological imagination "consists of the capacity to shift from one perspective to another, and in the process to build up an adequate view of a total society and its components" (Mills, 1959/2000, p. 210). It involves a "playfulness of mind", and the rearrangement of ideas through techniques such as a "cross-classification" of files and topics, and a consideration of extremes or thinking the opposite of one's ideas (Mills,

1959/2000, p. 212-3). Mills (1959/2000) sums up his advice on how to be an intellectual craftsperson with a list of imperatives; to be a "good craftsman," he claims, one must

> avoid any rigid set of procedures. Above all, seek to develop and to use the sociological imagination. Avoid the fetishism of method and technique. Urge the rehabilitation of the unpretentious intellectual craftsman, and try to become such a craftsman yourself. Let every man be his own methodologist; let every man be his own theorist; let theory and method again become part of the practice of craft (p. 224).

Mills' (1959/2000) arguments against methodolatry in the social sciences did not persuade most mainstream sociologists, and many prominent thinkers of the time expressed negative reactions to his ideas (Gane & Back, 2012, pp. 400-1). Indeed, it could be argued that Mills' influence was limited in that psychologization still continues to be a pervasive process that appears in extraneous disciplinary domains, and psychological and sociological thinking continues to display an individualistic bias and lack of imagination (Madsen, 2014). The sociological imagination failed to manifest in the academic realm as the commitment to a quantitative, empirical methodology continued to guide the development of sociological and psychological knowledge. In any case, *The Sociological Imagination* is lauded as a seminal work in the field, and Mills' call for scientists to exercise a "critical sensibility" and an "attentive and imaginative craft" continues to resonate (Gane & Back, p. 418). The sociological imagination is valuable insofar as "it can promote a critical sensibility which seeks to link the most intimate personal experiences to wider social forces" – a task that is even more difficult and pressing in today's neoliberal society that "seeks to tear asunder the private troubles from public issues, and thereby turn social uncertainty into a personal failure that is divorced from any collective cause or remedy" (Gane & Back, 2012, p. 405).

Both phenomenology and the sociological imagination were attempts to get beyond psychologism in philosophy and the social sciences. They emerged out of critiques of dominating approaches in their respective fields and were schemata that promoted scientifically and philosophically robust understandings of subjectivity that are not limited to quantitative, empirical approaches. The sociological imagination was a call for scientists to be thoughtful and critical in their analyses, an insight that, as was seen in the previous chapter, can also be gained from the phenomenological critique of psychology. Brinkmann (2015) draws on Mills' (1959/2000) notion of intellectual craftsmanship in his argument about the important interrelationship between work and life that is often neglected in scientific research. Ideas and scientific theories are not isolated from everyday life, but arise from our experiences, and are "tools we employ" for the "purposes of living" (Brinkmann, 2015, p. 412). The imagination is more significant than is typically acknowledged, as it is the mechanism by which theories are developed and which then determine the kind of knowledge that is produced. The role of the imagination in the scientific process is to operate as a crafty playfulness that allows new and fruitful ideas to arise; it "involves the whole person" and allows for the generation of "insightful research" (Brinkmann, 2015, p. 412). What these critiques of psychologism indicate, then, is the importance of creativity, imagination, and theoretical rigor in social scientific research, which is often understated in the adherence to strict methodological limitations.

Mills' sociopolitical influence

Based on his radical vision of sociology, Mills was regarded as a highly political figure and was known as a prominent spokesperson of the New Left political movement (Geary, 2008; Kellner, 2007). The New Left refers to a grassroots, largely white, student-based movement that emerged in the 1960s – alongside hippie counterculture in the US – which was comprised of thinkers and

activists who were, broadly speaking, critical of capitalism and imperialism, advocated for human rights, and sought to replace "corporate liberalism" with "participatory democracy" (Lynd, 1969; McMillian Campbell & Buhle, 2008; Mills, 1960). The New Left movement was distinct from the "old left" insofar as it "had a more complex understanding of oppression" than that based on the traditional Marxist class distinction (Satter, 2015, p. 121). For the New Left, the revolution no longer needed to come from the working class, as those involved sought a new vanguard and promoted political change through direct action (Lynd, 1969; McMillian Campbell & Buhle, 2008).

In his influential "Letter to the New Left", Mills (1960) argued that the old "labour metaphysic" based on the working-class revolution was a "legacy from Victorian Marxism that is now quite unrealistic" – and saw "the cultural apparatus, the intellectuals – as a possible, immediate, radical agency of change" (p. 22). The radical student activism of his time, he maintained, should be assisted by intellectuals who can help activists to "work out with them the ideologies, the strategies, the theories that will help them consolidate their efforts; new theories of structural changes of and by human societies in our epoch" (Mills, 1960, p. 23). Mills (1960) thus emphasized that there was a political role for sociologists and other academics: his theoretical argument in *The Sociological Imagination,* about the need to relate individual biography to sociohistorical context and to foster the connection between work and life, was reflected in his "Letter to the New Left", as he emphasized the importance of academic research extending beyond the ivory tower and reaching the sociopolitical realm of everyday life.

Mills' (1959/2000) critique of sociological research for its assumption that individual lives could be isolated from their sociohistorical context was reiterated in his "Letter to the New Left", but this time his argument was directed not at sociologists, but towards the popular liberal

political sentiment. Mills' (1960) criticism in the letter was of the liberal "end of ideology" rhetoric that was waged against Marxism, socialism, and political systems that were totalizing and restrictive of the freedom of individuals. The device employed by the liberal end-of-ideology rhetoric was the use of *facts*, "set forth in a bright-faced or in a dead-pan manner … duly weighed, carefully balanced, always hedged" (Mills, 1960, p. 18). Empirical facts were transparent, straightforward, and objective; they were diametrically opposed to the theoretical pontificating and expressions of political utopias that people were wary of in the post-war years. Yet Mills (1960) was concerned that the obsession with facts was detrimental to the sociological imagination, and the power of facts to "outrage" and "truly enlighten in a political way" was stunted (p. 18). Mills (1960) stated that his problem with liberal rhetoric was that its

> refusal to relate isolated facts and fragmentary comment with the changing institutions of society makes it impossible to understand the structural realities which these facts might reveal; the longer-run trends of which they might be tokens. In brief, fact and idea are isolated, so the real questions are not even raised, analysis of the meanings of fact not even begun (p. 18).

Here Mills argued that the tendency in sociological methodology to examine data from a "scatter of individuals" in isolation from their sociohistorical context is a phenomenon that applied to the contemporary political backdrop as well: in both the academic and political realms there was a "fetishism of empiricism" which he claimed the New Left should fight against (Mills, 1960, p. 20).

This methodolatry was a simultaneous problem in both realms such that it prevented creative, critical thinking that could generate new ideals and possibilities for change, and instead worked in favour of the status quo reign of empirical, quantitative research in the social sciences,

and of liberalism in the political arena. The problem with liberalism and end-of-ideology rhetoric, according to Mills' New Left view, was that it masqueraded as a site for agency through its encouragement of individual freedom and its openness to criticism within the liberal capitalist system. Yet liberalism simultaneously deterred from *systemic* critique would call into question its own ideology, and it covered over the ways in which individuals were constrained by the tenets of advanced industrial society, consumerism, and technological rationality (Mills, 1960; Marcuse,1964/1991). Part of the reason liberalism was able to maintain its status as a dominant paradigm pitted against leftist and socialist ideals, was that it forestalled imaginative theorizing about alternative political systems and failed to question its own ideological role.

The New Left and the rise of therapeutic culture

Mills' (1959/2000) critique of psychologism in sociological methodology coincided with the post-war spread of psychology in the US not only in the academic realm, but into cultural domains as well, as what came to be known as a "therapeutic culture" began to emerge, in which individuals increasingly sought out clinical therapeutic help in the pursuit of self-actualization and happiness (Herman, 1995, 2003; Illouz, 2008; Madsen, 2014). The origins of the "therapeutic turn" have been traced to broader cultural trends such as individualism, capitalism and consumerism, and religious developments such as the Protestant ethic, secularism, and neo-religiosity – all of which rely on the notion of an autonomous self who strives to find meaning and self-fulfilment (Herman, 2003; Madsen, 2014). The therapeutic turn co-emerged with and contributed to these historical trends, as therapists worked with individuals to facilitate the difficult problem of finding fulfillment.

Therapeutic culture was so influential that it extended beyond the private room of the clinician and began to permeate various cultural realms, evidenced by, for instance, the ubiquity

of psychological self-help literature, the popularity of radio and television talk shows that deal with peoples' personal problems, the employment of psychologists by sports teams to train the mental focus of athletes, and in reality television's depiction of the psychological battles of characters as they get makeovers or cosmetic surgery (Madsen, 2014). Psychotherapeutic discourse has infiltrated popular culture to the extent that the search for happiness and for our "true selves" are unquestioningly taken for granted as desirable aims – and psychologists have the expertise to facilitate the individual's journey to this achievement.

For many thinkers associated with the New Left, therapeutic culture was considered a progressive development in that it allowed individuals to understand and express their emotions and desires – psychological work that could foster critical awareness and political engagement (Aubry & Travis, 2015; Satter, 2015). Whereas the old left had typically derided emotions as "childish" and a hindrance to clear and rational thinking, the New Left maintained that "emotional repression created irrational behaviour" (Satter, 2015, p. 119). The rise of the New Left is often considered to be indebted to the 1950s beat generation, which embodied emotional intuitiveness in order to overcome the "soul-killing conformity" that was prevalent in the "embrace of technological rationality" in US culture (Satter, 2015, p. 121). In reaction to the conservative and technological trends in the US, Rossinow (1998) states that "the search for authenticity lay at the heart of the new left" (p. 4) – it coincided with the 1960s hippie counterculture that valued sexual and personal freedom, and saw individuals seek personal meaning and fulfilment, along with social ideals such as justice, equality, and non-violence. Thus for the New Left, certain humanistic and politically-oriented psychotherapies could foster the self-development required for liberation from the effects of oppressive ideologies. Psychotherapy could stimulate critical thinking in individuals, allowing them to "solve the problems of

exploitation and injustice," and to become self-reflective of their own "racism, sexism, homophobia" and other "internalized bigotries" (Satter, 2015, p. 119; p. 121).

However, others thinkers of the New Left, such as Christopher Lasch (1979), maintained that therapeutic culture was detrimental to individuals insofar as the focus on the self deflected away from politics. In dealing with mental well-being, the therapeutic orientation typically did not address concerns about sociopolitical structures and how these were related to individual problems. Any suffering or unhappiness an individual experienced was attributed to a failure of the self, as opposed to problematic social circumstances. Not only did this individualization of problems divert awareness away from systemic issues, but under the therapeutic mindset the individual was also held responsible for the onerous task of finding meaning and fulfilment. Rather than alleviating suffering, then, psychologists could, paradoxically, worsen the problems they aimed to cure, as the burden of personal accountability was added to those who were already afflicted through systemic oppression (see, e.g., Aubry & Travis, 2015; Madsen, 2014).[11]

The problem of psychologism in abstracted empiricism that was diagnosed by Mills (1959/2000) was thus mirrored in therapeutic culture. Although the New Left recognized the importance of regaining individuality in the face of the social conformity required by the socioeconomic system, an increased focus on the self could also be detrimental insofar as it not only "formalizes and exacerbates unhappiness" (Aubry & Travis, 2015, p. 12), but it also diverted attention away from politics by personalizing what might have actually been social problems. Given that there were conflicting arguments among the New Left as to whether or not

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[11]Among radical feminists in the consciousness-raising movement that arose in the mid-century, it was also debated whether therapy could adequately connect the personal with the political, or whether therapy inherently personalized what were social problems and prevented women from understanding oppression. For more on this, see Herman (1995), Kim and Rutherford (2015), Rosenthal (1984), and Ruck (2015).

therapeutic culture was beneficial or detrimental to the creation of politically engaged individuals and a just society, the question arises as to what kind of reconciliation can be imagined between the views. Is there a kind of psychotherapy that can liberate individuals, and promote autonomy and personal well-being, while simultaneously creating sociopolitical awareness and an outwards, empathic focus on others? Or is psychology and therapeutic practice inherently limited by its individualistic paradigm to the exclusion of political thinking? The essays in Aubry and Travis' (2014) collection are attempts at exploring the complexity surrounding the critique of therapeutic culture, and the nuanced ways in which psychotherapy has affected our lives. Rather than falling on one side or the other of debates over therapeutic culture, the volume is an attempt to problematize and re-think therapeutic culture in a way gets beyond the commonly iterated arguments over whether it is inherently depoliticized or has political value. Many of the essays throughout the book provide examples of psychotherapies in the 20th century that have been forceful in the liberation of individuals, the creation of ideological awareness, and the promotion of social change (e.g., Mendes, 2015; Staub, 2015; Satter, 2015; Weine, 2015).

While there is certainly potential for innovative forms of psychotherapy that are politically-oriented, what must be called into question is the individualistic ideology that lies at the heart of attempts to better ourselves. Although the existential ideal, associated with the post-war beat and hippie movements, of finding one's authentic self, did have political potential in enabling individuals to find liberation from ideology and to become more self-aware and engaged with each other and the world, it also lent itself to consumer capitalist practices of finding oneself through mass culture, material commodities, and the entrepreneurial imperative. In order to have a psychotherapy that takes seriously systemic problems and sociopolitical structures, this individualistic aim must be replaced with one that is socially-oriented, and which

subverts the goals of autonomy, happiness, and authenticity. If these goals are to be maintained, they should be more fundamentally directed at a social good as opposed to individual well-being.

In order to further explore the tension in therapeutic culture between its individualistic paradigm and the possibility for political engagement, it can be fruitful to examine the thought of philosopher and sociologist Marcuse, another one of the leading voices of the New Left and a key critical theorist belonging to the Frankfurt School. Marcuse (1964/1991) was a staunch critic of the modern form of capitalism, which he referred to as "advanced industrial society." This system delimited subjectivity according to a "technological rationality" in which individuals must act in ways that are production-oriented, consumerist, and bureaucratically managed. Marcuse (1964/1991) was concerned that these modes of subjectification invaded our lives so pervasively that they effaced individuality, restricted autonomy, and the whittled at the capacity for "negative thinking" – creating what he called the "one-dimensional man." For Marcuse (1964/1991), negative thinking was a dialectical mechanism of reason that allowed individuals to both think against existing paradigms and structures, and to use reason to discover norms for envisioning better possibilities (Kellner, 1991, p. xv). It involved distinguishing between "existence and essence, fact and potentiality, and appearance and reality" in order to determine ideological barriers and find the way to freedom and happiness (Kellner, 1991, p. xv).

Marcuse (1964/1991) thus upheld the individualist values of freedom and happiness, and thought that these coincided with the political aim of creating a better society. However, the path to autonomy and self-fulfilment, for Marcuse (1964/1991), was not through the therapist's room, but by enacting a critical understanding of and engagement with one's sociopolitical context. In order to move beyond one-dimensional consciousness, he argued, individuals must use

philosophy and think dialectically about the conditions of their existence and possibilities for change:

> perceiving the possibility of self-determination and constructing one's own needs and values could enable individuals to break with the existing world of thought and behavior. Philosophy was thus to supply the norms for social criticism and the ideal of liberation which would guide social change and individual transformation (Kellner, 1991, p. xv).

Marcuse might be criticized for sharing psychology's individualist goals of autonomy and happiness – which also coincide with the dominant capitalist socioeconomic structure that he deplored. Yet Marcuse's (1964/1991; 1965) point was that in advanced industrial society, individuals are under the illusion of being autonomous through their participation in consumer culture and civil liberties. However, this only worked to maintain the status quo and to divert the attention away from the larger systemic issues (Madsen, 2014, p. 160). True freedom, for Marcuse, would involve the ability to think critically against ideology and see how one's desires are not really one's own, but are in conformance with the socioeconomic apparatus.

Marcuse thus demonstrates that autonomy and self-actualization require a philosophical ability to think dialectically about one's social circumstances. Psychotherapy is oriented towards these same goals, and many on the left thought that it had liberating potential. Yet psychotherapy simultaneously was problematic in focusing too closely on the self, and individualizing problems that were inherently connected to the individual's place in society and culture. While the achievement of social change does not exclude self-actualization, if the therapeutic orientation is to overcome its individualism, it must include an analysis of the individual's place within society. For Marcuse, individual happiness and social change were not achieved through traditional psychotherapeutic practice, but with the development of critical reasoning skills. In

order for psychologists to avoid impeding upon problems that require political analyses, they must move beyond the idea that the locus of psychological problems is in the individual and can be solved through a greater understanding of the self. Rather, the capacity for critical thinking must be developed so that people can both understand the ways in which their thought and action are regulated in accordance with a socioeconomic structure, and envision other ways of being, such that their needs and desires are cultivated in a way that avoids domination by ideologically superimposed structures.

Conclusion

The psychologism in sociological methodology that was diagnosed by Mills (1959/2000), as well as the increased focus on the self that was manifest in therapeutic culture, indicate a fundamental tension between the individual and the social that was made thematic in mid-20th century sociological and cultural critiques of psychological thinking. What is evident from these arguments is that individualism had taken hold in both intellectual and everyday paradigms, to the neglect of more holistic understandings of the relationship between individuals and society. Psychology was complicit in maintaining this individual bias in both research and practice – psychological experiments examined human thought and behaviour in isolation from its social context, and the dominant clinical methodologies individualized problems to the neglect of possible social diagnoses. Moreover, psychological thinking permeated realms beyond its designated purview, as sociological methods relied on analyses of "the personal situation and character of a scatter of individuals" (Mills, 1959/2000, p. 9), and the therapeutic orientation became omnipresent in popular culture and common self-understandings.

This individualistic mindset had deep-seated roots in modern philosophy – from Descartes' (1641/2000) mind-body dualism that prioritized the mind as the only thing that can be

known with certainty, to Kant's (1781/2003) notion of the "I" as the transcendental unity of apperception, which contains the a priori categories of the mind that hold experience together. While postmodern thinkers such as Foucault (1980), Derrida (1967/2001), and Deleuze and Guattari (1977/2009) reversed this conception of the individual as self-contained and world-constituting to show how subjectivity was constituted by sociohistorical discourse and practice, this socially-oriented conception of the individual has yet to take hold in modern psychology, both in its academic and clinical forms, as well as in our own psychological understandings of ourselves as autonomous individuals. Because individualism is so historically and ideologically engrained, the contemporary challenge is to alter this conception so that we understand ourselves not as separate from the world, but in terms of intersubjectivity and in a fundamental co-constitutive relationship with our social, political, and historical contexts.

Given the historical rootedness of this individualistic paradigm, it is not surprising that psychological thinking has proliferated into realms that require social or political forms of analysis. As the science of the individual, psychology lays claim to knowledge of subjectivity while delimiting what this entails by adhering to a strict methodological paradigm. Following the natural scientific approach, psychology rests on the assumption that individuals can be understood in isolation from their social context. Mills (1959/2000) and critics of therapeutic culture were concerned that this methodolatry and individualism, which was also found in sociological research, stunted the critical and imaginative potential for individuals to understand themselves in relation to their sociohistorical circumstances, thus preventing political engagement. In order to get beyond this individual bias and tendency towards psychologism in the social sciences and therapeutic culture, the boundaries and limitations of mainstream psychology must be acknowledged and reinforced. This will allow for the emergence of alternate

approaches that can provide more complex and nuanced understandings of subjectivity, particularly as a site of sociopolitical resistance.

While Husserl was concerned that psychology, as a natural scientific discipline, was obscuring more rigorous philosophical understandings of subjectivity, Mills was similarly troubled with this problem within the context of his own discipline. Psychological thinking was deflecting from the development of adequate sociological theories of subjectivity, and the spread of therapeutic culture was exacerbating the individualization of social problems. Although the critiques of psychologism presented thus far focus on disparate manifestations of psychological thinking in various realms, they all call into question the individualistic paradigm of psychology that prevents deeper philosophical and social understandings of subjectivity. If psychology is to get beyond the problems presented by these critiques while simultaneously maintaining its current manifestation that is modelled on the natural sciences, it must incorporate a critical reflexivity that opens the space to alter and improve its approach, and to include deeper and more political understandings of human mental life. What Husserl, Mills, and Marcuse have in common is that they demonstrated the importance of integrating theory and philosophy into sociology and psychology: Husserl demanded a more meaningful analysis of psychological concepts that connected science to the lifeworld; Mills advocated for the exercise of the imagination in going beyond empirical data and theorizing the relationship between the individual and her sociohistorical place in the world; and Marcuse argued that individuals must engage in critical dialectical thought that allows them to think beyond ideology if they are to be truly autonomous. An adequate theory of subjectivity thus cannot blindly adhere to a particular methodology – it must actively engage individuals in critical, theoretical, and reflexive thought, not only about the circumstances of their individual lives, but about their experience in the world

with others, as participants in a larger social, historical, and political context. Madsen (2014) fittingly references Mills' notion of the sociological imagination towards both the beginning and end of his analysis of therapeutic culture, referring to it as "the ability to shift back and forth between the political and the psychological" (p. 170). Mills' argument is now a half-century old, and it still resonates today, as psychologists need to focus on this interdependent relationship between individuals and society, in order to stop the malpractice of providing personalized solutions to societal problems.

Chapter Three: Foucauldian critiques of psychologization in the late 20th century

In the latter half of the 20th century, psychology's success in academia and beyond continued, and its discourse and practice became so widespread that it is now common in Western culture for individuals to understand themselves by way of psychological categories – we are introverts or extraverts, we are pathologized according to the DSM categories – diagnosed with disturbances such as depression, bipolar, or attention deficit disorder – and we internalize results reported by popular media of psychological research that tell us things about how the brain works or about the effectiveness of various treatments for our ailments. Psychological expertise is found not only in the laboratory and the therapist's room, but is increasingly present in various social and institutional domains, such as schools, hospitals, courtrooms, and the military (Rose, 1985; Ward, 2002). In these ways subjectivity is shaped, in part, by psychology, as individuals turn to psychological expertise to better understand themselves and learn how to live happy and fulfilled lives.

While the previous chapters looked at critiques of psychologism that showed how psychology went beyond its disciplinary boundaries and permeated philosophical and sociological domains, this chapter will examine the process of *psychologization* in which psychology has come to shape the very way in which we understand ourselves. Following Foucault's (1982) analysis of the ways in which knowledge, power, and subjectivity are intertwined, as well as his genealogical approach to studying subjectivity found in *The History of Sexuality* and *Discipline and Punish*, it will be seen that psychological discourse and practice contribute to the creation of particular forms of subjectification. Although Foucault did not analyze psychology in particular as a technology of subjectification, Nikolas Rose (1996) and Ian Hacking (1986; 1995) use Foucault's arguments to show how psychology is implicated in the

making of subjects. It will be seen how Foucault's configurations of genealogy, power, and

subjectivity destabilize the legitimacy of psychological knowledge, and open the space for

resistance to dominating psychological theories of subjectivity, allowing for new modes of

subjectification to appear.

Throughout his work Foucault (1961/1973; 1963/1994b; 1969/2002) was critical of the

whole project of the human sciences, including its assumptions and methodologies, and he aimed

to get at a more adequate understanding of subjectivity through his genealogical, critical

historical approach (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). The previous chapters saw how psychology

could be supplemented with philosophical and sociological approaches, while through Foucault

and thinkers following his thought, it will now be seen how a critical historical analysis of

subjectivity is also essential to understanding who we are. A genealogy of psychological

discourse and practice reveals the contingency of psychological knowledge and allows us to

break free from the limitations of mainstream psychological thinking.

The subject, power, and truth

Throughout his work, Foucault was concerned with the historical modes by way of which

"human beings are made subjects" (Foucault, 1982, p. 208). While modern philosophy – and

Foucault particularly singled out phenomenology and existentialism – tended to rely on a priori

theories of the subject, Foucault's advancement was to reject this notion of an essential,

universal, underlying humanity, in order to understand how subjectivity has been constituted in

particular ways through historical discursive and social practices. Although Foucault aimed to

move beyond modern philosophical and scientific understandings of the subject, he nevertheless

marked Kant's (1784/1990) essay "What is enlightenment?" as a landmark moment when

philosophy moved from "the Cartesian question: Who am I? I, as a unique but universal and unhistorical subject," to the question of "What are we? in a very precise moment of history" (Foucault, 1982, p. 216). A critical break thus occurred in which philosophical reflection turned from metaphysical and ontological conceptions of the subject that were ahistorical, to inquiries concerning our place in the present within our larger historical context. While "the other aspect of 'universal philosophy' didn't disappear" – as its spectre is found in subsequent thought from Hegel through to phenomenology – with Kant history now took on more significance as a crucial domain of philosophical inquiry (Foucault, 1982, p. 216).

Foucault's project thus sought to answer Kant's (1784/1990) question of what we are in this moment, not through the critique of reason, which was Kant's (1787/2003) own project, but by examining the concrete sociohistorical discourse and practices by way of which "the subject constituted itself, in one specific form or another" throughout the centuries (Foucault, 1984/2003c, p. 33). The subject, for Foucault, "is not a substance. It is a form, and this form is not primarily or always identical to itself … it is precisely the historical constitution of these various forms of the subject in relation to games of truth which interests me" (Foucault, 1984/2003c, p. 33). Foucault (1982) identified three distinct aspects of his work that examined various facets of the historical formation of subjectivity, or the "modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects" (p. 208). In the first case, Foucault (1966/1994b) looked at how certain "modes of inquiry … try to give themselves the status of sciences" – for example, linguistics attempts to objectivize the speaking subject, economics the labouring subject, and biology the living subject (Foucault, 1982, p. 208). The second component of Foucault's (1961/1973; 1975/1995) work looks at "dividing practices" in which certain actions are normalized to produce distinctions such as those between the mad and the sane, delinquents and

nondelinquents, or the sick and the healthy (Foucault, 1982; 1984/2003c). The third phenomenon

Foucault (1976/1990) was concerned with was how individuals governed their own actions and

related to themselves in certain ways through "technologies of the self."

Throughout these three dimensions of his work Foucault (1982) showed how subjects

were always involved in *power relations* that operated through disciplinary technologies and that

created certain kinds of classifications and behaviours. Foucault did *not* mean power in the way

it is often defined, as the domination of one group or person over another. While domination was

an aspect of power, it was "not the essence of power" (Dreyfus & Rainbow, 1982, p. 186). Power

was not simply applied in a top-down way by the dominating group to those in a lower position,

but rather it flowed in all directions, operating from above and below such that "we are all

enmeshed in it" – to take an example, "in the prison, both the guardians and the prisoner are

located within the same specific operations of discipline and surveillance, within the concrete

restrictions of the prison's architecture" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 186). If relations of

power were only seen as the domination of one group over another, then they were not

adequately being understood, they were not being "traced down to their actual material

functioning," and so they would "continue to operate with unquestioned autonomy" (Dreyfus &

Rabinow, 1982, p. 186).

Relatedly, power, for Foucault, was not a real, ideological entity that could be

definitively located and transmitted from one party to another in an intentionally orchestrated

process. While in the "micropractices" at smaller-scale local levels "there is often a high degree

of conscious decision making, planning, plotting and coordination of political activity," this

volition did not necessarily manifest on a larger political level, as though, for instance, the

bourgeoisie strategically imposed a certain organization of society onto the lower classes in a

way that could be linearly and objectively traced (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 187). Foucault wanted to avoid a reifying theory of power that was a "context-free, ahistorical, objective description," and instead focused on examining the *how* of power, tracing it through the specific practices by which it operated (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p.184). Just as it was not an ideology or theory, Foucault (1976/1990) claimed, "power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical relationship in a particular society" (p. 93).

Foucault's (1982) notion of power was thus that it was a *relation*, and, importantly, an action that was necessarily performed upon other actions (p. 220). For power to be what it was, the receiver of a particular power effect could not be a totally passive subject who was subordinated to a dominant force, but rather had to have freedom to act otherwise, a freedom that was somehow being delimited. Foucault (1982) identified two conditions for a power relationship: that the person upon whom power was enacted was recognized as an actor; and that power did not just dominate actions by shutting them down, but that it opened up possible modes of action within which a subject must conform. Freedom and possibility were thus essential aspects of power relations – in a way power relied on freedom, it was "the condition for the exercise of power" (Foucault, 1982, p. 221).

As power could not function without freedom, what became important for Foucault (1982) was that there was always a possibility for "escape" or "flight" – there were always "points of insubordination" which could provide the means for resistance (p. 226). Each position in a power relation functioned as "a kind of permanent limit, a point of possible reversal," meaning that the position of the dominant group or individual was always threatened to be taken over by those who were subordinated (Foucault, 1982, p. 225). If the dominant party was

victorious, then "stable mechanisms replace the free play of antagonistic reactions" and the conduct of the subordinate could then be directed "in a fairly constant manner and with reasonable certainty;" but as long as there were power relations, there were agonisms at play between two unstable and potentially reversible forces (Foucault, 1982, p. 225). Resistance thus played a significant role for Foucault, and he thought that it was through examining possibilities for resistance that power relations could best be understood. Instead of "analyzing power from the point of view of its internal rationality," Foucault (1982) argued that power relations should be exposed through looking at forms of resistance that attempt "to dissociate these relations" (p. 211).

The kind of power that Foucault (1982) identified with the modern state was what he referred to as "pastoral power." While it stemmed from Christianity and "ecclesiastical institutionalization that has ceased or at least lost its vitality," Foucault (1982) argued that pastoral power had transformed to become characteristic of the modern Western state. State pastoral power did not just operate on a community of people as a sovereign force, but it was attentive to the lives and well-being of each individual. For Foucault (1982), the modern state did not develop

> above individuals, ignoring what they are and even their very existence, but on the
> contrary as a very sophisticated structure, in which individuals can be integrated, under
> one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form, and submitted to a
> set of very specific patterns (p. 214).

Pastoral power concerned the inner lives of individuals. It guided their actions and directed their consciences in order to provide salvation, only not in the next world as was Christianity's goal, but in this one, through cultivating things like health, financial well-being, and security; it was a

power that operated through structures such as "family, medicine, psychiatry, education, and employers" (Foucault, 1982, p. 215). Pastoral power was "both an individualizing and a totalizing form of power" – it functioned to control populations, and to work on all aspects of individuals' lives in order to guide their conduct in accordance with the parameters amenable to the success of the modern state (Foucault, 1982, p. 213). Psychology's role in pastoral power thus becomes clear: as the 20th century saw an increase in officials endowed with pastoral power, psychologists, among others, would take on this position from which the direction over peoples' lives could be enacted.

One of the most significant themes of Foucault's understanding of power was that it was inherently connected to knowledge, an idea which went against the view that knowledge was external to power, as that which was objective and neutral. This latter understanding of power was referred to by Foucault (1976/1990) as the "repressive hypothesis" and was "the view that truth is intrinsically opposed to power and therefore inevitably plays a liberating role" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 127). In this view power was repressive insofar as it was a "constraint, negativity, and coercion" that barred individuals from gaining knowledge, preventing the liberation that would be achieved by seeing outside of false consciousness (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 129). For Foucault, there was no essential, objective, underlying truth that was suppressed by power in the aim of controlling individuals. Rather, what counted as truth and knowledge was intrinsically tied to particular sociohistorical discourses and practices that regulated what could be considered legitimate statements and actions. Knowledge did not have a transcendental status as something universal, which was independent of power and society, and could ideally be accessed in the same way by any individual. Rather, knowledge was fundamentally connected to power and bound up with social institutions and practices, as it was

always through technologies of power that knowledge was determined (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; Foucault, 1984/2003c).

Foucault referred to the process by which various forms of truth have emerged through power relations as "games" that involved subjects whose actions were governed by socially constituted rules. By "game" Foucault did not mean a kind of "amusement," but "a set of procedures that lead to a certain result, which, on the basis of its principles and rules of procedure, may be considered valid or invalid, winning or losing" (Foucault, 1984/2003c, p. 38). Power was thus not simply domination, but a play of strategic forces that occurred "between liberties – in which some try to control the conduct of others" (Foucault, 1984/2003c, p. 40). While Foucault discussed power at length, he was clear that his primary concern was not with power, but with how the subject was constituted through the games of truth in which power relations were enacted (Foucault, 1982, p. 209; 1984/2003c, p. 33). Moreover, Foucault was interested how subjects could participate in these games by way of resistance. Because power relations and games of truth were omnipresent for Foucault, it was resistance as opposed to liberation that was the goal – we could resist power structures, but never really be liberated from them. Foucault was wary of the notion of liberation as it assumed there to be an underlying, essential human nature that "has been concealed, alienated, or imprisoned in and by mechanisms of power" (Foucault, 1984/2003c, p. 26). Under this conception the subject could be released by breaking through the "repressive deadlocks" of power in order to be "reconciled with himself, rediscover his nature or regain contact with his origin, and re-establish a full and positive relationship with himself" (Foucault, 1984/2003c, p. 26). For Foucault power was not an ideology or a one-way domination to which a subject would ultimately be submitted, or from which they would be released. It did not "exist universally in a concentrated or diffused form,"

but it was a nexus of actions upon other actions that worked through social practices (Foucault, 1982, p. 219). The subject constituted herself according to the techniques of power involved in truth games; the formation of subjectivity was contingent upon these practices, and was not reducible to an underlying essence or universal theory. In light of these notions of the subject and power, the project taken on by Rose (1996), then, was to analyze psychology's role in this relationship between truth, power, and subjectivity. Psychology was an important site where intellectual and practical technologies had been enacted, and in Foucauldian critiques of psychology, the focus was on how psychological practices specifically participated in truth games and power relations that cultivated a specific kind of subjectivity.

Governmentality and technologies of the self

While in his earlier work, Foucault (1984/2003c) showed how subjectivity was formed by "coercive practices – such as those of psychiatry and the prison system – or of theoretical or scientific games – such as the analysis of wealth, of language, and of living beings," his later work turned to the way in which individuals governed not others but *themselves* through practices involving the care of the self (p. 25). Governmentality for Foucault (1988) did not refer necessarily to state domination, but to the programs and strategies that provided the rules for the conduct of conduct in relation to certain objectives or ideals, such as "national prosperity, harmony, virtue, productivity, social order, discipline, emancipation, self-realization and so forth" (Rose, 1996, p. 29; see Foucault, 1978/2003a). Under this conception, governmentality functioned through "technologies of the self," which Foucault (1988) defined as mechanisms that

permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being,

so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity,

wisdom, perfection, or immortality (p. 18).

Foucault (1988) traced technologies of the self to ancient Greece when the imperative to "care for oneself" was a condition for "knowing oneself," the latter of which became significant in the Western philosophical tradition, while the former was mostly forgotten (p. 18). Foucault (1988) showed that throughout Western history many different kinds of technologies of the self had been employed for the purposes of self-monitoring, such as letter-writing in ancient Greece that described the activities of everyday life, self-reflective diary-writing that began in the Christian era, and confessional booths that were a key component of Christian practice.

Techniques for monitoring and directing ourselves can be found in countless practices today, and psychology is one discipline that has provided instruments with which care of the self can be achieved. Rose (1996) argued that technologies of the self are always "embodied in technical practices," and "are always practiced under the actual or imagined authority of some system of truth and of some authoritative individual, whether this be theological and priestly, psychological and therapeutic, or disciplinary and tutelary" (p. 29). With the authority and therapeutic techniques of the psychological expert, individuals were guided towards specific kinds of self-governmentality based around their personal well-being, self-fulfilment, and happiness. In a society based on biopower – the specific kind of power of the modern state analyzed by Foucault (2007), which aims to maximize the productive potential of individuals in order to create a strong society and economy (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 8) – psychology plays a crucial role in the cultivation of healthy and productive individuals. The significance of technologies of the self is that they promote self-governance: individuals no longer need to be guided by an authority, but come to internalize the values that are beneficial to the state – for

instance, autonomy, entrepreneurship, and happiness – so that they are able to direct their own behaviour in line with its practices. Power is not just exercised on subjects from an entity without, but operates through the societal infrastructure in which individuals are embedded and trained to conduct their own conduct – always in accordance with a specific field of possibilities that has been sociohistorically determined. It is thus crucial to see how the discipline and practice of psychology foster this self-governance by promoting the care of the self through therapeutic and institutional technologies. Psychology is not a neutral and objective science, but is inherently tied to power relations that operate within individuals, as its discourse and practice encourage productivity, autonomy, and happiness – ideals that create citizens who can function in and contribute to the modern capitalist state.

Genealogy of subjectification

Foucault took a genealogical approach in his analyses of the relationship between power, the subject, and technologies of the self. In his earlier work, in contrast, Foucault (1994a/1963; 1994b/1966; 2002/1969) employed an archaeological method, in which he examined the formal structures of discourse, to see their rules of legitimation, independently of subjective interpretation and sociohistorical practices, which he did not take to have any inherent, underlying meaning. However, being influenced by Nietzsche, Foucault (1977) began to see the importance of real, historical practices, and in his later worked it was this social matrix to which he turned his focus, rejecting the earlier emphasis he had placed on discourse. Foucault had been interested in subjectivity and the human sciences since his early work, but while he had previously privileged discourse in his studies and looked at the formal, structural, linguistic rules that established meaning in human sciences, his turn to genealogy marked his acknowledgement

of the crucial role of sociohistorical practices in the constitution of subjectivity (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982).

Genealogy was an approach to historical analysis that differed from traditional methods in that it focused on discontinuities rather than progress, and did not aim to find deep meaning or an essential nature behind the development of history, but rather revealed the contingency of historical events by looking to the "surfaces of events, small details, minor shifts, and subtle contours" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p.106). For the genealogist, historical change could not be traced to the actions of individuals, as though there were psychological intentions that could be discovered to have given rise to a specific progression of events. Rather, "both scientific objectivity and subjective intentions emerge together in a space set up not by individuals but by social practices" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 108). Whereas Nietzsche grounded "morality and social institutions in the tactics of individual actors," Foucault moved beyond this version of genealogy insofar as he "totally depsychologizes this approach and sees all psychological motivation not as the sources but as the result of strategies without strategists" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 109). Just as Foucault wanted to avoid the notion of an underlying human essence, a reifying theory of power, and an ahistorical, objective realm of knowledge, he similarly wanted to avoid the idea that history was a matter of progress and development that could be neatly traced through certain pivotal figures and their intentions. Following Nietzsche, Foucault sees history not as "the progress of universal reason," but as a "play of rituals of power, of humanity advancing from one domination to another" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 110).

Foucault (1995/1975; 1990/1976) took a genealogical approach to understanding the historical constitution of subjectivity by looking at specific areas such as punitive incarceration practices, and sexuality as a technology of the self. Rose (1996) then argued for the need for a

genealogy of subjectification based on an analysis of the *psy-disciplines*, to see how the disciplinary and practical technologies employed in psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis have contributed to the formation of subjectivity in certain ways, and have provided the conditions for a particular kind of *relation* to ourselves. A genealogy of subjectification would focus upon psychological practices that have led to certain kinds of self-constitution, rather than a history of ideas or narratives. Rose (1996) identified the role of psychological practices and techniques in the creation and transformation of subjectivity as a process of "psychologization," as he claimed psychology has come to "infuse and even to dominate other ways of forming, organizing, disseminating, and implementing truths about persons" (Rose, 1996, p. 59). A genealogy of psychology would thus analyze how various social realms beyond psychology's disciplinary boundaries have been inflected with psychological thinking and practice; it would analyze "diverse sites that were psychologized - factories, courtrooms, prisons, schoolrooms, bedrooms, colonial administration, urban spaces," in order to see how they have provided particular practices and techniques by way of which subjects constitute themselves (Rose, 1996, p. 59). In relation to critiques of psychologization, Foucault's (1995/1975; 1990/1976) genealogical analyses of incarceration practices and sexuality showed how a greater understanding of human life could be achieved than that provided within the methodological framework of mainstream psychology. Moreover, a genealogy of the psy-disciplines, specifically, could reveal the way in which psychological research has not simply uncovered a human essence that was already in the world, but has actively contributed to the creation and transformation of subjects into certain kinds of selves.

A genealogy of subjectification was a type of "critical history" of psychology – and while there have been streams of critical psychology that have attempted to reveal the reliance of

psychological knowledge on particular socially constructed practices, Rose (1996) claimed that they too often fell back on a history of narratives, and saw subjectification as "a matter of the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves," which located the problem "in a universe of meaning or an interactional context of narratives" (Rose, 1996, p. 10). Rather than relying on meaning, narrative, and subjective interpretation, a Foucauldian critical history would be wary of presupposing there to be any underlying reality to be discovered through interpretation. Instead, genealogy would attend to the "complex of apparatuses, practices, machinations, and assemblages within which the human being has been fabricated, and which presuppose and enjoin particular relations with ourselves" (Rose, 1996, p.10).

The genealogical approach that Rose (1996) argued for was one that would reveal the historical conditions under which psychology emerged in the particular way that it did. Rather than tracing the progressive developments that led to current psychological knowledge, a critical history

> disturbs and fragments, it reveals the fragility of that which seems solid, the contingency of that which seems necessary, the mundane and quotidian roots of that which claims lofty nobility and disinterest. It enables us to think *against* the present, in the sense of exploring its horizons and its conditions of possibility (Rose, 1996, p. 18).

A critical history shows the *contingency* of our current ways of knowing and understanding ourselves and the world and opens up the space for different forms subjectivity and truth to emerge. Critical history would allow us to see that psychology is an instrument of power, as it does not merely describe reality in an objective and neutral manner, but creates a reality, simplifies it, and transforms the ways in which we relate to ourselves and the world. Foucault's work focused on the relationship between subjectivity, power, and truth. Rose's (1996)

contribution to this genealogical project was to highlight psychology's involvement in this relationship, and to see how power operated to enable the games of truth within which subjects constituted themselves according to particular psychological rules and practices.

Looping effects

Hacking (1995) was also immersed in Foucault's genealogical project and his aim was to examine the ways in which psychological categories and classifications transform subjectivity through a process that he termed "looping effects." While objects of the natural sciences presumably did not change form or behave in different ways when they were observed and classified, phenomena concerning human beings, in contrast, were involved in a transformative process that unfolded when they were defined by psychologists and internalized by individuals. When the terms "depression" or "autism" or "Multiple Personality Disorder" were given a categorical definition by psychologists, possible modes by which people could understand and define themselves were created. Once these concepts had been integrated into individuals' lives, they were re-defined and transformed by human interaction with the concept. The loop comes full circle when concepts change to fit the changing phenomena that they were initially meant to stabilize and categorize.

Two of the examples used by Hacking to demonstrate this phenomenon are Multiple Personality Disorder and autism. Dissociative disorders were first labeled by Pierre Janet in 1875. Hacking (1986) reported that "only one or two possible cases per generation had been recorded before that time, but a whole flock of them came after" (p. 162). The phenomenon was then forgotten until around 1970 when psychiatrists began to diagnose Multiple Personality Disorder, and the symptoms immediately started showing up in more and more people: "First a

person had two or three personalities. Within a decade the mean number was seventeen. This fed back into the diagnoses, and entered the standard set of symptoms" (Hacking, 2007, p. 296). In the case of autism, Hacking (2007) demonstrated how the looping effect occurred to produce people with autism who were "high functioning." Only once people started being diagnosed as autistic were they able to conceptualize their difficulties and develop ways of overcoming some of their challenges:

> They had to grow out of it, to acquire social skills, to be able to understand what other
> people are thinking and feeling, to overcome, or at any rate to live unproblematically with
> the obsessive need for literalness. This was a looping effect: a few of those diagnosed
> with autism developed in such a way to change the very concept of autism (Hacking,
> 2007, p. 304).

Then, once a 'recovered' or 'high functioning' autistic became a category, more and more people started identifying themselves as being autistic: "A wholly new way of experiencing oneself came into being" (Hacking, 2007, p. 304).

Hacking was thus concerned with the reactive, causal relationships that existed between human phenomena and psychological concepts. In marking their transformative character, Hacking (1995) distinguished psychological concepts from those of the natural sciences. While he did not make any arguments about the implication of this distinction for psychological research, some thinkers have used Hacking's notion of looping effects to argue that the concepts of the social sciences were of a different "kind" than those of the natural sciences, and thus required a different, interpretive methodology (see, e.g., Brinkmann, 2005; Martin & Sugarman, 2001; 2009; Taylor, 1985). In order to have an adequate understanding of the subject matter of the human sciences it was necessary to include an analysis of the subjective intentions, social

context, and background practices that allowed human phenomena to appear in a certain way for

the "objective" scientific gaze. The natural scientific method that was widely adopted in the

social sciences did not include an analysis of the historical, social, and subjective context in

which it was embedded and therefore did not reveal the contingency that was at the heart of its

knowledge and practices. Other thinkers, such as Bruno Latour (1999) and Thomas Kuhn (1991)

argued that the distinction between natural and human kinds was not significant in this regard,

insofar as the natural sciences also relied upon a background context involving commonly shared

languages, tools, and communities that made scientific knowledge possible.

Foucault (1966/1994b; 1969/2002) did see a difference between the role of the

background practices of the natural sciences compared with those of the social sciences (Dreyfus

& Rabinow, 1982). It is evident that in both the natural and human sciences, techniques had been

developed to isolate the objects of study from their context of human relevance and to fit them

into a framework of formal scientific laws. However, the difference was that in the natural

sciences, the background practices could be "taken for granted and ignored by the scientist,"

while in the human sciences, the background practices could not be excluded, as they were a type

of human activity and as such were inherently part of the subject matter of the human sciences

(Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 161-2). Foucault acknowledged the advances made through two

different attempts to find solutions to this problem – through interpretive, hermeneutic

methodologies that sought the deep meanings of the scientific practices to the actors; and with

attempts to "develop an objective theory of the historical background practices" (Dreyfus &

Rabinow, 1982, p. 181). Yet, for Foucault, both the hermeneutic and structuralist attempts have

fallen short. The subjective, interpretive approach failed because there were always meanings for

others beyond what was known by the actor. Attempts at a wholly objective approach, such as

Foucault's early structuralist foray into archaeology, have also failed to achieve an adequate grasp of background practices; objective accounts of human life, no matter how inclusive of their own context, always rely on an external background of legitimizing practices that allow for certain kinds of knowledge to emerge (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 181).

Although Foucault did not offer a straightforward solution to this dilemma by way of an explicit methodological framework, he did provide a wider interpretive understanding of human life, one that is not "based on deep meaning, a unified subject, signification rooted in nature, [or] privileged access of the interpreter" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 183). Foucault's genealogical analytics was meant to provide historical constructions of the power relations which "function to construct a nonexistent object … which they then proceed to discover" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 183). While genealogical analytics took seriously the problems and concepts of Western philosophy and human scientific research, it did so in a way that revealed "more about society and its practices than about ultimate reality" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 204). Foucault recognized the problem of having an objective human science, but for him this problem could not be reconciled through hermeneutics or more holistic objectifying theories. There was no deep meaning to be unmasked – the idea that there was an underlying objective reality was merely an illusion. For Foucault, objective knowledge of the subject did not exist in a realm outside of the power relations that were involved with social practices, but subjectivity was only ever constructed and legitimized through these practices; it was thus practices that had to be examined in order to understand the ways in which subjectivity has been constituted.

Resistance

Foucault's thought was significant insofar as it was a rejection of unifying theories of power and

subjectivity, along with a denial of the metaphysical presupposition that there was an underlying objective reality. Power, he claimed, was not an ideology or a stable dominating force, but was based in actions, in relations between actors in which freedom was always at play and in which there were always possibilities for resistance. Subjectivity could not adequately be grasped through interpretive methodologies that sought a deep meaning underlying scientific constructions. Nor was there an essential subject that could be accessed through phenomenological reflection. It was only through analyzing the contingent technologies of particular sociohistorical configurations in which power operated that it could be seen how subjectivity was constituted. The political and ethical significance of undermining the idea that history and science were progressing and developing toward something ever better, reaching higher states of objectivity, is that the space for resistance is opened, and the possibility emerges for imagining and enacting how things could be otherwise. Rather than being tied to particular understandings of ourselves, and being subordinated to certain institutional practices, once it is seen these modes of being are not absolute, the space in which to imagine new forms of subjectivity and social structures emerges. The human sciences do not merely tell us who we are, as though their investigative practices only find and describe what was already there, but they also construct specific forms of subjectivity that we internalize, but which, because they are not fixed or essential, we can also move beyond by seeking lines of resistance.

In decentering subjectivity to see how it is sociohistorically constituted, the modern philosophical notion of a free and autonomous subject is disrupted, which could seem to imply that subjects are merely passive objects of power (Heller, 1996). However, Foucault highlights the importance of freedom and resistance in power relations, and argues that power can never operate on a totally passive subject – freedom and the possibility to do otherwise are inherently

part of power relations. By avoiding the search for deep meaning and the presupposition of historical progress, and by focusing instead on the social practices that provide the conditions of possibility for knowledge, the genealogical approach reveals the contingency of what is taken to be true and valued. Indeed, Rose (1996) emphasized that the role of a critical history of psychology was to allow us to think beyond our present conditions – it could "work on the limits of what is thinkable, extend those limits, and hence enhance the contestability of what we take to be natural and inevitable about our current ways of relating to ourselves" (p. 2). Paradoxically, subjectivity is at once shaped and constrained by certain sociohistorical practices, but these practices are simultaneously contingent, leaving room for agency in a conception of subjectivity. Genealogy opens the space for resistance in which individuals and collectives can think and act outside of what is taken to be normal and transform that which appears natural, a task which is especially important for reinstating freedom and agency to those who are marginalized or oppressed by current power relations.

Conclusion

Whereas the previous chapters looked at how psychological thinking spread into the disciplines of philosophy and sociology, late 20th century Foucauldian critiques of psychology are concerned with the way in which psychological discourse and practice goes beyond academic disciplines and is implicated in the very formation of how we understand ourselves. Psychology divides individuals under normalizations of behaviours that are considered either sick or healthy, and provides categories that are meant to help us understand who we really are. The genealogy of subjectification reveals how these notions psychology employs are sociohistorically constituted and not based on an underlying reality or truth. The particular form that psychology has taken is

thus contingent, yet it has real repercussions on individual lives. The aim, then, is for psychology to be reflexively aware of its contingency and the power it has in the creation and transformation of subjectivity in order to see the limitations of the knowledge it produces.

By revealing the contingency of psychological thinking, a genealogy of subjectification opens the space for different approaches to understanding subjectivity. It allows us to think beyond the quantification of subjectivity that is characteristic of mainstream psychology, and to incorporate qualitative, philosophical, sociological, and historical analyses of human life. The previous chapters saw how philosophy and sociology could provide fruitful insights into subjectivity, and this chapter examined ideas that can be drawn from critical history. Philosophy and phenomenology allow for a deeper understanding of the existential meaning in our lives; sociology and critical theory disrupt the individualistic bias in psychological thinking and promote political engagement; and critical histories elucidate the sociohistorical practices that have given way to particular forms of subjectivity. By claiming to produce objective knowledge about human life, psychology forecloses on these important analyses of subjectivity. Yet if aim to obtain a truly comprehensive understanding of subjectivity, it is crucial to take a critical step outside of the objectifying gaze of psychology to see how the discipline and practice of psychology is itself a human activity that has been historically constituted, and to allow for other forms of analysis to contribute to knowledge of subjectivity as well. Given the contingency of current forms of psychological discourse and practice, the task going forward is to develop new concepts that are positive and generative and that can alleviate the suffering of those who are marginalized or oppressed by the status quo (Teo, 2015).

The kind of subjectivity that is fostered by psychology is largely individual-focused, and aims at helping people become more autonomous and self-fulfilled. The next chapter will

examine how these goals are conducive to the kind of subjectivity that is required by the neoliberal socioeconomic paradigm. Foucault reveals that knowledge is not neutral, but is bound up with power, and in relation to subjectification, psychological knowledge is especially influential. It is thus important to see how psychology functions alongside the dominant political and economic framework to allow it to maintain its sovereignty. If the illusion is upheld that psychology provides us with knowledge about *who we really are*, then the capacity for thinking critically about psychology, subjectivity, and society will not be developed. Genealogy is thus a step towards critical engagement with knowledge, power, and subjectivity as it unhinges psychology's place as the dominant authority on what it is to be human.

In the previous chapters it was seen how phenomenology allows us to see beyond the natural scientific depiction of subjectivity and to understand ourselves with more philosophical depth. It was also seen how the sociological imagination allows us to think beyond methodological constraints and individualistic ideological barriers. Foucauldian critiques of processes of psychologization are similarly generative insofar as they unmask the historical contingency at the heart of formations of subjectivity and allow us to imagine new kinds of selves. This process is invaluable especially for those who are marginalized by current psychological and societal discourse and practice, or who do not function aptly within the mechanisms of the neoliberal capitalist system. A genealogy of subjectification provides a starting point from which we can exercise the sociological imagination in order to resist oppressive social and scientific discourse and technologies and imagine new ways of understanding ourselves.

Chapter Four: Psychology, neoliberalism, and thinking beyond psychologization

The critiques of psychologism and psychologization presented here have been directed at different processes, yet they each address how psychological thinking came to dominate ways of understanding human life. Husserl's (1913/2001) critique was philosophical, and focused on the idea that the newly developed science of psychology could provide an epistemological foundation for philosophy and the sciences. Mills' (1959/2000) critique, in contrast, concerned social scientific practice, and specifically how psychological methodology had taken hold in the social sciences – a phenomenon that was also reflected outside of academia in the rise of therapeutic culture – and which prevented analyses of the relationship between the individual's life and their greater sociopolitical context. Rose's (1996b) project was political, and was aimed at providing a genealogy of subjectification that showed the role of the psy-disciplines in power relations and the creation of particular forms of subjectivity. While concerning different relations between psychology and external domains, what these critiques all show is how psychology, rather than remaining within its disciplinary boundaries as a scientific, empirical analysis of human thought and behaviour, has had an influence in both other academic disciplines, and our everyday understandings of ourselves and the world.

Along with the scientific credence that was lent to psychology when it adopted an experimental, naturalistic approach, its success and wide-ranging influence can also be attributed to its focus on *individuals*. Individualism was a cultural trend that took hold in the 19th and 20th centuries with the rise of capitalism, consumerism, secularization, and neo-religiosity (Madsen, 2014). These historical developments signaled an increased focus on individuals: capitalism relied on the notion of the autonomous individual who could create their own destiny; the decline of religious ideology rendered the individual alone in the world to find meaning and create their

own values; and the neo-religious view moved away from traditional rules and a purely transcendent God to a personal faith that was catered to the particularity of one's spiritual needs. Whereas in pre-modern times it had been up to a religious or state authority to provide guidance and direction to people, individuals now became responsible for finding meaning in their own lives. Psychology thus co-emerged with and contributed to these historical trends, as it provided scientific knowledge of individual mental and behavioural processes, and psychotherapists worked with individuals to facilitate the difficult practice of finding fulfillment.

Individualism is pervasive in intellectual, religious, and cultural trends, as well as in the dominant socioeconomic paradigm of neoliberalism. Part of the reason psychology has been so successful is that it operates according to the same goals and values of neoliberalism. This chapter examines the relationship between psychology and neoliberalism to show how the connections between the two contributed to the pervasiveness of psychologization. Any economic system will require individuals to think and behave in certain ways in order to adapt to that system – this phenomenon is referred to by Foucault (2003) as governmentality. After defining the neoliberal project, I will show how psychology nurtures a specific kind of subjectivity that adheres to neoliberal ideology, specifically insofar as psychology promotes self-governmentality and emphasizes personal characteristics such as autonomy, entrepreneurship, and choice (Sugarman, 2015).

De Vos (2012; 2013; 2014) has argued that psychologization is so prevalent that it is impossible to get beyond, and even critiques of psychologization themselves fall into the psychological discourse of which they are critical. This chapter will end with an examination of this theoretical dilemma put forth by De Vos and assess the possibilities for overcoming psychologization. It will be argued that part of the difficulty in getting outside of

psychologization is that psychology, along with neoliberalism, is an individualistic ideology that is pervasive throughout experience. The knowledge it produces is taken for granted as common sense and considered to be value-neutral and objective. Critiques of psychologism and psychologization reveal the ideological function of psychology and its hidden value assumptions, which in turn allows alternative and generative understandings of human life to emerge.

Psychology and its sociopolitical context

Neoliberal ideology

Although neoliberalism it is often spoken of derisively in criticisms of the detrimental global economic ramifications that have been brought on by the current form of capitalism, it continues to reign as the dominant socioeconomic system (Carlquist & Phelps, 2014; Dufour, 2008; Harvey, 2005; Thorson & Lie, 2006). Neoliberalism is typically identified with influential political and economic transformations that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s in various parts of the world. In Chile and Argentina the neoliberal turn occurred with a military coup in the 1970s that was "backed by the traditional upper classes (as well as by the US government), followed by the fierce repression of all solidarities created within the labour and urban social movements which had so threatened their power" (Harvey, 2005, p. 39). In the US the neoliberal turn occurred democratically under the presidency of Reagan, and in the UK under Thatcher, with their free market principles of total economic deregulation and minimal state intervention in markets and social governance (Harvey, 2005). According to Harvey (2005), neoliberalism is a "theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (p. 2).

Although the role of the state is strongly limited under neoliberalism, its basic function is to "preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices" (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). The reason for the minimal role of the state in neoliberal theory is that it "cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions … for their own benefit" (Harvey, 2005, p. 2).

In order to understand neoliberalism, it is crucial to see how it is different from classic liberalism. Liberalism, under the interpretation of Foucauldian scholarship, emerged in the early 19th century, not as a theory or set of policies, but rather as an ethos, or rationality of government, central to which was a concern for delimiting the power of state rule and opening the space for critique of state ideology and practice (Barry, Osborne & Rose, 1996, p. 8). Liberalism took human freedom to be essential and was meant to limit the control of government over the market and the lives of citizens. In spite of imposing limitations to its power, liberalism was not a hindrance to government, but rather was a mechanism by way of which governments could maintain stability and power by delimiting the space in which state critique could occur. Whereas 18th century Europe sought to render territories and their inhabitants "transparent to knowledge – all was to be known, noted, enumerated and documented," liberalism emerged as a rationality that abandoned "this megalomaniac and obsessive fantasy of a totally administered society" (Rose, 1996, p. 43). It was now recognized that the state was faced with external realities of the market and civil society that had "their own internal logics and densities, their own intrinsic mechanisms of self-regulation" (Rose, 1996, p. 43). The principle of liberalism was that the free market's successful functioning depended upon "the rationality of the free conduct of governed individuals themselves" (Burchell, 1996, p. 24). It was assumed that there was a

natural dynamic of society that would allow the free market to run optimally as individuals would make exchanges according to their own private interests.

The difference with neoliberalism was that, rather than allowing society to operate according to the natural rationality of the conduct of individuals, a rationality was now artificially constructed, one that was aimed towards the "free, entrepreneurial and competitive conduct of economic rational individuals" (Burchell, 1996, p. 24). The rationality of government was still "pegged to a form of rational self-conduct of the governed themselves, but a form that is not so much a given of human nature as a consciously contrived style of conduct" (Burchell, 1996, p. 24). Paradoxically, then, while neoliberalism is characterized by a free market that sought a minimal degree of state intervention, it simultaneously entails an active style of governing that facilitates the development of individuals as autonomous, entrepreneurial, responsible, and competitive. However, neoliberal governmentality does not function by way of the state acting directly on citizens. Rather, the locus of rule is dispersed from the state proper to various public authorities and forms of expertise that are removed from the state, yet indirectly operating in alignment with the state (Rose, 1996a). Under neoliberalism, then, "we are perhaps witnessing a 'degovernmentalization of the State' but surely not 'degovernmentalization' *per se*" (Barry, Osborne, & Rose, 1996, p. 11). Through technologies and devices from schools, prisons, and asylums, to mass media, opinion polls, advertising, marketing, and psychological expertise, the state has indirectly set up "links between authorities and subjects" (Rose, 1996, p. 58). These technologies do not originate in the state, but "have provided a plethora of indirect mechanisms that can translate the goals of political, social and economic authorities into the choices and commitments for individuals, locating them into actual or virtual networks of identification through which they may be governed" (Rose, 1996a, p. 58).

Under neoliberal governmentality, the state does not have direct authority over citizens, governing their actions through the order of rule, but rather requires that individuals *self-govern* and become well-adapted subjects who can participate successfully in the free market economy. Individuals must be come experts of themselves; they must become entrepreneurs and directors of their lives to achieve economic security and self-fulfilment. Individuals are deemed responsible for their own happiness or suffering, and those who are marginalized or excluded must seek guidance from experts and programmes that will help them to become "active citizens – training to equip them with the skills of self-promotion, counselling to restore their sense of self-worth and self-esteem, programmes of empowerment" (Rose, 1996a, p. 59). Rather than governing "through society," then, neoliberal governmentality aims "to govern through the regulated and accountable choices of autonomous agents" (Rose, 1996a, p. 60). While ostensibly advocating for minimal state intervention, neoliberalism insidiously works through the enforcement of self-governmentality in which we shape our lives in conformance with the ideology of free market capitalism.

Neoliberalism is so pervasive that it does not just pertain to our economic structure and practices, but it shapes our common sense understandings as well (Carlquist & Phelps, 2014; Harvey, 2005; Sugarman, 2015). Neoliberal rationality operates ideologically, invisibly, and constitutes "a part of the fabric of our thinking and acting upon one another and ourselves" (Barry, Osborne & Rose, 1996, p. 7). Along with the economic principles of a free market, deregulation, and privatization, neoliberalism carries the underlying ideologies of individualism and economic growth and profit, which are manifest in our everyday lives and understandings of ourselves (Carlquist & Phelps, 2014, p. 1232). It is taken for granted that we should become autonomous consumers and entrepreneurs: we market ourselves in a particular fashion through

the branding of material goods, and through the image of ourselves that we construct and portray in real life and on social media; we are deemed responsible for overcoming physical, psychological, and economic obstacles that hinder our capacity to be self-sufficient; and we must individually carve our own paths towards a career, finding what is unique about ourselves and using that to determine our economic niche within free market capitalism. These ways of self-fashioning are "presented as the 'natural' order of things, with no realistic alternatives to the status quo being offered" (Carlquist & Phelps, 2014, p. 1233).

Psychology's role in neoliberal ideology

Psychology promotes a particular kind of subjectivity that functions alongside neoliberalism, as its aim is to help people become more autonomous and self-reliant (Carlquist & Phelps, 2014; Madsen, 2014; Sugarman, 2015). Both psychology and neoliberalism rely on individualist assumptions that place the onus of responsibility for suffering or happiness on the individual person, rather than examining the influence of socioeconomic circumstances that determine one's quality of life and well-being. According to the self-governing rationality of neoliberalism, if individuals are free and entrepreneurial, if they are responsible for creating their own happiness and economic security, then the market economy will function optimally. This state of being can be difficult to attain for some people, and psychology's role – with expertise in the clinical setting, in education, and in reformative justice, for example – is to assist people to reach this state of self-reliance where they can be active participants in neoliberal society. Neoliberalism thus depends on psychology to cultivate subjects who are self-governing and autonomous, requiring minimal assistance from the state, and who can participate as active consumers contributing to the economy. Although psychology interacts with neoliberalism in

this way, psychologists are rarely concerned with the ways in which systemic forces determine subjectivity, nor do they focus on their own contribution to the sustainment of the neoliberal political rationality (Carlquist & Phelps, 2014; Sugarman, 2015). Both neoliberalism and psychology operate invisibly and disguise what is a particular and contingent way of being as something natural and desirable. This ideological role of psychology within neoliberalism is alarming insofar as it deters from critical assessment of our sociopolitical circumstances, and prevents any reimagination of more ideal or utopic ways of being.

It has been suggested that the reason psychology does not address its connection to neoliberalism, and to ideologies in general, is that "they are more difficult to operationalize and study from a traditional positivistic or empiricist point of view" (Carlquist & Phelps, 2014, p. 1233). If psychologists were to critique the sociopolitical structure, this would undermine psychology's claim to value neutrality (Sugarman, 2015, p. 13). Moreover, Carlquist and Phelps (2014) claim, psychology typically does not examine its relationship to neoliberal ideology because the very nature of ideology is such that it is hidden from our awareness; by definition, an ideology is something that is not critically questioned. It is partly for these reasons, then, that psychologists have not, historically, been "agents of sociopolitical change" but rather, have been "architects of adjustment in preserving the status quo" (Sugarman, 2015, p. 13).

It is often pointed out that the analyses of neoliberalism that do exist are largely critical (Carlquist & Phelps, 2004; Sugarman, 2015; Thorsen & Lie, 2006). This tendency can be attributed to the fact that neoliberalism and the individualist ideology that supports it are associated with structural inequalities such as the widening income gap, poverty, the "disempowerment of people," and environmental degradation (Carlquist & Phelps, 2014, p. 1236). These systemic problems can lead to "deteriorating mental health levels, meaninglessness,

violence, and criminality" (Carlquist & Phelps, 2014, p. 1236). However, the connection between these systemic problems and psychological well-being is not typically addressed by psychologists, as, under the influence of neoliberal ideology, responsibility is located at the level of the individual. Both neoliberalism and psychology circumvent an adequate ethical consideration of systemically rooted problems and social welfare. Because they have failed to examine ideology, psychologists do not see how they are participating in a system that produces these structural problems. Psychologists thus need to be ideologically aware in order to properly understand the ethical implications of their research and practices (Carlquist & Phelps, 2014; Madsen, 2014; Sugarman, 2015).

Psychology and ideology critique

Zizek (1989) claims that the "ideological is a social reality whose very existence implies the non-knowledge of participants as to its essence" (p. 16). Ideology does not refer to distortions of reality, but is, rather, an inherent aspect of reality. As Parker (2016) claims, Zizek's project is "largely a critique of the notion that it is possible to escape ideology: to make choices and to find satisfaction outside or independently of it." How, then, can ideological critique occur within psychology, as Sugarman (2015) and Carlquist and Phelps (2014) claim it should, if it is precisely that which influences our thought and behaviour in ways of which we are not aware and can never fully know? Ideological analysis must be seen as an ongoing, never finished process. Teo (2011) likens ideology critique to the journey of Odysseus: it "does not follow a linear or even dialectical path but rather a path of search, failure, and rescue" (p. 20). Nor does ideology critique "have an endpoint or a happy ending" (Teo, 2011, p. 25). However, for Teo (2011) this does not mean that ideology critique is a futile endeavour, but that it "is about

widening and deepening one's horizon about ideology" – this, he argues, will lead to "a more complex understanding and for drawing upon a broader array of sources for one's decisions and actions" (p. 24). Ideology critique is thus an ongoing practice of reflexivity as to one's unacknowledged biases and assumptions.

Ideological critique in psychology would allow for the social structures that shape subjectivity to become visible. It would be beneficial for psychology to go beyond its methodological paradigm, which isolates variables at the level of the individual, removing them from the larger contexts in which they are embedded, and include an analysis of the social impact and ideological influence of its research. By incorporating this kind of reflexivity, psychology would produce richer, more holistic, and ethically informed knowledge of human life. One of the most basic and essential features of being human is the capacity for rational, critical thinking. When psychological research adheres too strictly to the natural scientific model and the positivistic methods of the empirical sciences, it fails to reflect this critical mode of thought. Psychological research says to its public, "look, this is what you are" – the image it provides being, for the most part, limited to isolated neurobiological, behavioural, and cognitive processes. By incorporating reflexivity into its approach, psychology could instead demonstrate, in addition to its quantitative and empirical findings, the ways in which subjectivity is also a product of sociohistorical processes. Rather than simply providing what aims to be objective, positivistic knowledge of human life, if psychology acknowledged the contingency of the knowledge it produces, it could convey the capacity for individuals to think critically, and to break free from restrictive and oppressive forms of subjectivity. As Teo (2011) argues, ideology critique from the perspective of subjectivity can be undertaken not just in the interest of improving our epistemological standpoint or for "idle self-reflection," but also towards the

ethical end of alleviating oppression (p. 25). Self-reflexivity on both the academic and individual level can be exercised to extend our horizons and analyze our biases, assumptions, and social circumstances in an attempt to remove barriers to creating social justice (Teo, 2011).

Psychology has seen much success as an individualistic science that is depended upon to enable the self-governmentality required by neoliberalism. Given its concordance with the dominant political rationality, it is no surprise that psychology has been so widespread in its reach to so many areas of academia as well as our everyday lives. Critiques of psychologism and psychologization seek to obtain a perspective outside of psychology from which generative theories of subjectivity can be produced. The next section will examine the theoretical problems entailed with critiques of psychologism and psychologization to show the difficulty of finding a standpoint from which to examine subjectivity that is not itself psychological.

Beyond psychologization

Psychology's pervasiveness

Psychology has become so pervasive in academia and our everyday lives that the question arises as to whether or not we can realistically imagine a de-psychologized society. De Vos (2012a; 2013; 2014) argues that psychology and psychologization inevitably occur together, and that even critiques of psychologization cannot avoid psychologizing discourse and practice. After the birth of the modern sciences, psychology emerged as the discipline which would provide an objective account of the subject that had up until then eluded the scientific standpoint – psychology was "to contain and master the problematic subjectivity which structurally haunted scientific objectivity since it emerged in Modernity" (De Vos, 2012a, p. 7). In this process, De Vos (2012a) claims, psychologization immediately came on the scene as well. The scientific

gaze was now not only applied to the external objects in the world, but was turned on itself to examine the subject, a position which gave psychology a unique role among the sciences.

For De Vos, psychologization co-occurs with the attempt to understand subjectivity scientifically. Psychology removes the subject from their everyday engagement with the world, and opens up a perspective from which individuals are invited to look upon themselves as psychological subjects. De Vos (2012a) refers to this standpoint from which subjectivity can be analyzed as a "zero-level" of psychology or subjectivity, meaning that it should presumably be empty and free from psychological discourse if it is the space from which that discourse is applied to the subject. De Vos (2012a) claims,

> at the zero-level of subjectivity and psychology we do not find a subject which could be
>
> fleshed out again psychologically, sociologically nor neurologically and perhaps not even
>
> culturally or politically. This is the crux of my critique against mainstream psychology,
>
> as I argue it is not up to this task of acknowledging a zero-level of psychology (p. 13).

Because psychology tries to account for all of human experience, and because it does so in empirical and positivistic terms, De Vos (2012a) argues that it cannot adequately keep the vantage point – the zero-level of subjectivity – from which it produces its knowledge empty and free from psychological thinking. By claiming to provide a scientific understanding of human experience, the notion of an underlying lifeworld unmediated by science loses its meaning.

Psychology thus precludes any space that could be kept free from psychological thinking. By opening the standpoint from which human experience can be encompassed in its totality using empirical and positivistic discourse, psychologization is an inevitable process that "appears to lead to less and less mystery outside the self" (Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 181). Ironically, then, under this view psychology can actually lead to increased suffering and

depression. Rather than staying within its original purpose that was to provide empowering knowledge and infuse subjectivity with meaning, by saturating the subjective realm with scientific discourse, psychology leads to a state in which "the individual loses interest (desire) in the on-going world" (Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 181). Psychology leaves no room for anything radically outside of its discourse as it

> became the science of everything that scientific materialism could not explain, which, as happens, was almost everything about human beings, including meaning, morality, and more or less, life as such. This meant that psychology became, not just the science of everything human, but also a prism for experiencing life (Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 184-5).

Psychological thinking does not take into consideration the dimension of human experience that is always ahead of itself, transcending what can be known through science, or rational or empirical inquiry. Philosophical, aesthetic, political, and psychoanalytic perspectives, in contrast, often do incorporate this pre-intellectual realm of experience into their models: insofar as it can be, that which exceeds the objectifying outlook is made visible in concepts such as Levinas' (1999) Other, Lacan's (2006) *objet petit à*, Kant's (2003) thing-in-itself, Serres' (1982) parasite, the phenomenological realm of embodiment or perception, and the nonverbal meaning expressed through music and art. While psychology permeates all realms of experience and provides the dominant discourse by way of which we understand ourselves, it is simultaneously limited in its capacity to address these aspects of experience that underlie our rationalizations and scientific culture. Science can never encapsulate the world or provide a complete picture of it, and it is what exceeds the intellectual grasp that psychology fails to address.

Finding a position outside of psychology

Psychology is so pervasive that, like neoliberalism, it often operates invisibly – it "asserts itself as a pure and direct reality, turning everybody into a psychology" (De Vos, 2008, p. 11). In this sense, not only does psychology operate as an "ideological tool" in the service of neoliberalism, but it is also ideological itself, as it is taken for granted that we are psychological beings, and psychological discourse and practice shape the ways we think and act (Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 186). This means that psychology must be included in ideology critique, which has been the accomplishment of the critiques discussed here. Although it may not be possible to overcome psychologization, as De Vos argues, its processes can nevertheless be rendered visible, its contingency can be revealed, and possibilities for alternative configurations of subjectivity can be imagined.

The benefit of the critiques of psychologization that come from philosophers and sociologists is that they highlight the aspects of subjectivity that are bypassed in psychological thinking. The critiques destabilize the epistemological prevalence of psychological thinking, opening the space in which to assess the adequacy of psychology as an approach to subjectivity and its effectiveness in improving people's lives. While it is taken for granted that psychology is a fruitful discipline that helps people and benefits society generally, critiques of psychologism and psychologization reveal that psychology neglects philosophical and sociopolitical analyses of subjectivity, when engagement with these approaches is crucial to understanding what it is to be human and can be advantageous in contributing to the goal of psychological well-being.

However, the trap of psychologization is immediately recognizable again in these critiques, as they still presuppose a better form of subjectivity – an underlying true self or authentic way of being that can be accessed through philosophical or sociopolitical analyses. If,

as Zizek (1994) claims, finding an empty space from which to do ideology critique is essential

for it to be effective, then critiques of psychologization must themselves avoid falling into

psychologizing discourse. While there may be difficulty in accomplishing this, the critiques of

psychologism and psychologization that come from philosophers and sociologists are

nevertheless attempts to find a radical outside of psychology, and allow for different

understandings of subjectivity to emerge. It may be impossible to theorize subjectivity without

falling into psychological discourse or presupposing a reified self, yet the choice about what

approach to take can be made in a conscientious way that promotes both critical thinking about

subjectivity, focuses on the relation between the individual and the social, and avoids any all-

encompassing theories that demystify experience by psychologizing everything.

The need for something beyond psychologization, for a position outside of psychology

from which to critique its discourse and practices is crucial both on a theoretical level in regard

to the effectiveness of the critiques, and on a personal level in regard to the need for individuals

to feel connected to something beyond themselves. Madsen and Brinkmann (2010) refer to the

importance of this outside position for individuals in a number of ways. They point out how

Freud argued that "a lack of contact with the Other leads to death, as a result of suffocation of

one's waste products" (Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 190). The notion of the divine in other

cultures, as "something perceived as being outside human control" was seen as important as it

was both "outside the human sphere, and, concomitantly, created for man's sake" (Madsen &

Brinkmann, 2010, p. 190). The despair that comes with the inability to connect with anything

outside of oneself is also found in literature from authors such as Houellebecq and DeLillo

(Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010). In terms of Lacanian theory, "when empty spaces no longer exist

… the space for the Lacanian *objet petit à*, and for desire, closes up, leaving the subject alone

and isolated within himself, uninterested and unable to connect to the Other" (Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 195). All of these cultural and theoretical examples indicate the loss of significance that can occur when everything is reduced to the psychological self. Ironically, then, while psychology is meant to help relieve despair, its permeation into so many facets of how understand ourselves and the world can increase suffering as it can hinder meaningful connections to that which is beyond the self.

In a similar way, neoliberalism is all-encompassing and forecloses on any space outside of its rationality. The self-governmentality required by neoliberalism and fostered by psychological thinking has meant that individuals no longer look outside of themselves for guidance, but instead must be able to conduct themselves autonomously and find fulfilment from within: "neoliberal subjects are increasingly cut off from the bonds to traditional authorities, giving them – for better or for worse – more freedom" (Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 189). Not only is the onus of responsibility for one's conduct centered within the self under neoliberal governmentality, but neoliberalism is also characterized in how it "appears to fill every space and sphere of difference, and commodify it" (Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 195). Dufour (2008) refers to the "desymbolization" brought about with the total consumption of experience under capitalism as a process in which any meaning extraneous to an object's economic value is sidelined or precluded as it is turned into a commodity. Dufour (2008) explains how historically subjectivity has consisted in a "series of subjections to great figures placed at the centre of symbolic configurations" – such as a monotheistic God, race in racial ideology, or the nation in nationalism (p. 26). These symbolic configurations of the Other have been largely determinative of the shape taken by a society's cultural, political, economic, and intellectual landscape. However, the distance between subjects and the symbolic order to which they are subjected has

gotten smaller over time, from the "impassable distance between us and the multiple gods" of polytheism to the "intermundane distance between individual and collectivity in the republic" (Dufour, 2008, p. 27). Under neoliberal capitalism, Dufour (2008) argues, "this distance is reduced to zero" (p. 28). Subjectivity is no longer beholden to anything extraneous and this relation is replaced with a situation in which "the subject must ground itself upon itself, rather than in relation to a third part (the Other) – as has historically been the case" (Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 189). This has led to more freedom for the individual, yet for many "this extensive freedom is unbearable, and therefore responsible for much human suffering" (Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 189).

Conclusion

Neoliberalism and psychologization have engulfed how we think and act in the world – not only are they ideological, but they are "rapidly changing the very nature of human character" (Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 189). The task becomes to open a space beyond these ideologies from which they can be critiqued, which would allow new perspectives to emerge that extend outside the individual and enable a reconnection with the social and spiritual dimensions of experience. In spite of the paradox involved in seeking a space beyond that which is all-encompassing, it is nonetheless an important obstacle with which to grapple. Madsen & Brinkmann (2010) come to the conclusion that "even the critical tools themselves are psychologized" and resistance would therefore appear to be futile (p. 196). However, the authors do not accept this conclusion, and argue that it only indicates that "critique is made more difficult, and, thus, that this task is more important than ever" (Madsen & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 197). Because psychological thinking is so omnipresent, it is especially pressing that we find ways in which it can be critiqued. While it may

not be possible to circumvent psychological thinking all together, this need not be the goal

precisely. What is feasible is to find a position outside of psychology from which to critique its

discourse that would create less individualistic forms of subjectivity and promote resistance and

critical thinking in individuals. Madsen and Brinkmann (2010) make the following argument:

> it is absolutely necessary for the critic to believe in some sort of utopia (possible better
>
> outcomes) in order to go on. One utopia depicts the psychological subject as a subject
>
> with critical potentials. As people have acquired psychological modes of self-
>
> understanding, including the capacities to reflect and evaluate life possibilities, they may
>
> put these acquired skills to use in criticizing debilitating conditions, including those
>
> conditions under which their psychological self-reflective skills were cultivated and
>
> disciplined in the first place (p. 197).

This argument states that it is through psychology itself that the tools with which to critique its

practices can be garnered. While the outcome of a "subject with critical potentials" is desirable,

it is arguable whether psychology provides an adequate framework within which this kind of

subjectivity can be cultivated. Psychology tells us what we are through the results of empirical

and largely quantitative research, instead of embodying a critical, reflexive methodology that

would promote dialogue and analytical thinking about subjectivity. I argue that it would thus be

best to employ tools from *philosophy* – in all it has to offer from phenomenology, to critical

theory, to postmodernism – in order to engage critically with theories of subjectivity and find

modes of resistance to oppressive forms of subjectification.

One of the main claims made by Dufour (2008) is that neoliberalism has consumed

everything, including our own minds, such that we are witnessing "the rapid extinction of those

modern philosophical forms of the subject which until recently served as reference points and

allowed us to think our being-in-the-world" (p. 2). The Kantian critical subject of modernity that had the ability to make a priori judgments by invoking the higher power of reason is left behind with the desymbolization of neoliberal capitalism. Dufour (2008) laments the loss of critical reason in postmodern forms of subjectivity, claiming that "it is as though the full development of instrumental reason (technology), which was made possible by capitalism, had resulted in a deficit of pure reason" (p. 2). Under this view, philosophy needs to be reinvoked as a form of resistance to the usurpation of critical thought by capitalism. Psychological thinking works alongside neoliberalism to desymbolize the world and reduce everything to the level of the individual. This way of approaching subjectivity precludes philosophical and social analyses of subjectivity, and contributes to the problem of "shrinking heads" that is diagnosed by Dufour.

The critiques of psychologism and psychologization presented here are examples of positions outside of psychology that allow us to see beyond psychological thinking. While they may not be completely free of psychological thinking themselves, they promote critical analyses of our concepts, our social world, and of subjectivity itself. Philosophy appears in all three critiques of psychologism and psychologization that have been discussed – in the forms of phenomenology, critical theory, and genealogies of subjectification. Each of these philosophical approaches reveal different dimensions of subjectivity. The conclusion that follows will revisit each of the critiques of psychologism and psychologization with the purpose of examining the specific contributions they can provide to a philosophical theory of subjectivity – one that can complement the empirical findings of psychology and stimulate critical reflection on ourselves and the social world.

Epilogue: Philosophical theories of the subject

What can be gleaned about subjectivity from philosophical and sociological critiques of psychologism and psychologization that have spanned the 20th century from phenomenologists, to critical theorists, to postmodern thinkers? The perspectives presented in this argument all encourage critical engagement with ideas about subjectivity that go beyond the individualized and naturalized conceptions of human mental life involved in psychological discourse and practice. Psychological thinking has pervaded academic areas and everyday thinking. Yet subjectivity is not merely a sum of empirical psychological concepts nor are psychological practices beneficial for everyone – it has even been argued that they cause more harm than good (e.g., Madsen, 2014; Rimke, 2016). The psy-disciplines work alongside neoliberal rationality to produce self-governing individuals, while neglecting to address structural problems and solutions that are crucial contributors to mental well-being. Insofar as its analysis remains at the level of the individual, the psychological conception of subjectivity does not engage with the intersubjective, sociopolitical dimensions of human life in a philosophically rigorous way. Nor does psychology foster the capacity for critical thinking that could lead to possibilities for resistance to oppressive social structures. Psychological thinking works to maintain the status quo instead of challenging the societal and systemic norms that may have negative effects on mental health, especially for those who are disenfranchised or alienated within the current socioeconomic system.

There are many theoretically and philosophically based conceptions of subjectivity that go beyond the empirical research of psychology, and focus on the intersubjective and sociopolitical dimensions of human experience. Each chapter in this thesis has focused on different critiques of psychologism or psychologization that have come from philosophical or

sociological perspectives. The critiques are not continuous – they do not refer to the same psychological phenomena or processes and they do not follow a progressive argumentative thread. It is precisely in their discreteness that a robust theory of subjectivity can be garnered, as each critique reveals different ways in which we can enhance how we think about human experience. What does tie the critiques together is that they encourage us to think on a deeper, more critical and philosophical level about what it means to be human. The critiques are not merely negative such that they only highlight defects in psychological thinking. Rather, they reveal theories and techniques that can be harnessed to contribute to new ways of conceptualizing subjectivity in academia and everyday thinking about ourselves.

Each critique points us to different philosophical frameworks from which we can develop theories of subjectivity. Phenomenology stemmed directly from Husserl's critique of psychologism, and it has continued to offer fruitful and dynamic understandings of subjectivity that seek to go beyond the empirical concepts of psychology. Mills' sociological critique of psychologism was associated with New Left politics and can be complemented with reflections from critical theory concerning ideology critique that have emancipatory potential. Genealogical critiques of psychology from Hacking and Rose reveal the contingency of psychological knowledge along with the sociohistorical power relations that are constitutive of subjectivity. It will now be seen what specifically can be taken from these different critiques to contribute to a philosophically grounded theory of subjectivity that highlights the critical potential of individuals to think against and beyond mainstream psychological thinking and the oppressive social structures in which it is embedded.

Phenomenology: The first-person perspective and intersubjectivity

While psychology uses techniques modelled on the natural sciences in order to observe subjective thought and behaviour, phenomenology also aims to understand psychological experiences in a systematic way, but through a rigorous analysis of the first-person perspective rather than from an outside objective viewpoint of the scientist. Phenomenological approaches have been employed in psychological research to an extent – for example, in Giorgi's (2009) psychotherapeutic model, in Sass et al.'s (2011) work on schizophrenia, in Zahavi's (2007) conception of the self, and in Dreyfus's (2014) fusing of phenomenology with recent work in cognitive science. Yet in spite of the phenomenological work being done, psychology continues to be dominated by empirical and quantitative approaches to understanding human life. The potential contributions of phenomenology to psychology that go beyond these approaches can be described as twofold: phenomenology offers a richer philosophical analysis of empirical psychological concepts, and it presents individual experience as being fundamentally intersubjective.

In the first instance, the phenomenological system was meant to examine the underlying essences and meanings of what was empirically described and explained in psychology. Husserlian phenomenology investigates the underlying intentional structures of psychological acts like perceptions, judgments, and feelings – there is always a psychological act that is directed towards an object, and both of these have essential structures that can be revealed through the phenomenological reduction. Rather than investigating the outward, empirical manifestation of perceptions and judgements, phenomenology looks to how these acts are experienced by the subject; it involves trying to access the perspective of the subject in order to have a richer understanding of psychological experience. Phenomenology has been applied in

psychology with Giorgi's (2009) approach to therapy – his method takes the experiences of clients and tries to unravel the meaning behind the emotions and behaviours that are expressed to the therapist. Sass et al.'s (2011) work on schizophrenia emphasizes the importance of understanding how the disorder is experienced by the subject. Whereas schizophrenia is largely investigated from a neurobiological perspective in psychological and psychiatric research, phenomenology recognizes that there is important knowledge to be gained from the perspective of the subject.

In the second case, phenomenology highlights the fundamental way in which experience is not just subjective, but rather is intersubjective – it is always informed by our relations to others and the world outside of us. The three main figures in phenomenology – Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty – all discussed intersubjectivity as main components of their philosophies and thinkers such as Levinas picked this up as well, with his work on the experience of the Other. This intersubjective notion of experience moves us beyond the individualistic assumptions of psychology and demonstrates the need to understand the self in its relational manner. Given that critiques of psychologism and psychologization are often based in the argument that psychology neglects the social dimensions of experience, phenomenology provides the philosophical framework for theorizing human experience as intersubjective.

Overall, phenomenology's central critique of psychology is that it regards the empirical, natural scientific treatment of subjectivity as being inadequate, insofar as experience can never be totally objectified in the way that things in the natural world can be. Husserl's main concept with which to understand the underlying messy and ephemeral nature of experience is the lifeworld. For Heidegger it is being-in-the-world. And for Merleau-Ponty it is the realm of embodiment and perception. The nature of subjective experience is that it is always changing and

becoming, and that it defies objective thought. The concepts and methods by way of which we understand subjectivity should thus reflect our experience of being in the lifeworld, of our relationality and shared experience with others, and of pre-intellectual embodied experience. Phenomenology pushes us to think beyond the discourse of empirical psychology for a deeper and more complex understanding of subjective experience.

Critical theory: Ideology critique and political engagement

While phenomenology highlighted the shared nature of subjective experience, Mills' thought also went beyond the individual, but his work differed in that it was examined how the individual's concrete sociopolitical and economic circumstances play an important role in the constitution of their experience. While his critique was directed at psychologism in the methodologies of the social sciences, it was also overtly political, as he aimed to engage people to think critically about the ways in which individual thought and behaviour was embedded in the larger sociopolitical system. Husserl's critique of psychologism, in contrast, did not contain this explicit political dimension, and phenomenology has been criticized by later philosophers for being too idealistic, relying on the notion of an essential subject, and failing to contain a radical sociopolitical component (see, e.g., Adorno, 1940). While the other and intersubjectivity are crucial dimensions of the phenomenological understanding of experience, the tradition puts the individual subjective experience at the centre of its paradigm by claiming this is the most irreducible component of experience. Many thinkers have refuted the idea that that phenomenology is individualistic and have attempted to show the way in which phenomenology can be politicized, but the question remains as to whether it genuinely gets outside of subjectivism or idealism.

Coming from the standpoints of sociology and critical theory, Mills' and Marcuse's primary aims were to understand the social realm and its relationship to subjectivity in order to facilitate ideology critique. The thinkers from these traditions wanted to unearth the ways in which subjectivity harnessed underlying capitalist and liberal ideals that were inherently oppressive. As such their theories were overtly political – they were concerned with the relationship between theory, science, and political action. Critical theorists highlighted the importance of thinking against the status quo – both in our scientific endeavours and our everyday lives – in order to have a society comprised of citizens who are more politically involved and able to recognize and resist oppressive state structures. Mills' sociological critique of psychologism, along with critiques of individualism and therapeutic culture, sought to unhinge the methodological constraints of the positivist approach to the social sciences and to engage individuals with their sociopolitical circumstances. The important role of critique in philosophy and the sciences, and of critical thinking in our everyday lives, was brought to the fore by thinkers like Mills and Marcuse. The arguments against psychologism and therapeutic culture were attempts to get beyond methodologism and individualism that were propagated by psychological thinking, and to incite individuals to deepen their political understandings and become empowered to resist oppressive ideology.

Postmodernism: Critiques of individualized subjectivity

While phenomenology provides a philosophical understanding of subjective experience, and Mills and critical theorists promote critiques of state structures and ideology, what Foucauldian genealogical approaches offer is an analysis of the ways in which subjectivity is constituted by historical configurations of power relations. Foucauldian scholarship seeks to undermine the

modern philosophical conception of the subject that runs from Descartes' *cogito*, to Kant's a priori categories of the understanding, to Husserl's transcendental ego, and even into critical theorists' reliance on psychoanalysis' notion of the unconscious as the seat of oppressive ideological desires. For Foucault and his interlocutors, there is no essential, underlying subject that can be known with apodictic self-certainty. Rather, subjectivity is fundamentally constituted by power relations that are contingent upon a multitude of particular sociohistorical configurations, and which determine the possibilities for human thought and action. Foucault thus goes beyond the phenomenological and critical sociological conceptions of the subject to highlight the importance of looking at the ways in which subjectivity is determined not by first-person experience or by capitalist ideology, but by the history of the discourse, practices, and technologies of a given society. While there is crossover between the underlying assumptions of critical theory from the Frankfurt school and Foucauldian scholarship, what the latter postmodern conception of subjectivity offers is a way of thinking about forms of resistance to power relations that do not rely on an underlying theory of an essentialized subject (Dews, 1984). The subject in the postmodern conception is distinctly not a metaphysical subject and instead is understood as purely historical.

Foucauldian analyses of psychologization show the ways in which psychological discourse and practice are involved in power relations, as they make individuals into certain kinds of subjects, particularly the kind that are self-governing and adhere to neoliberal free market rationality. The final chapter emphasized psychology's ties to neoliberalism and the theoretical issues around thinking outside of individualistic psychological and neoliberal ideologies. It is important to seek spaces for resistance to the all-encompassing nature of psychologization and neoliberalism, and critical philosophical thinking can provide us with the

tools for doing so. It is only through seeking a philosophical position that incorporates reflections on subjectivity from phenomenology, critical theory, and postmodernism, a position that is beyond the positivism and empirical determinism of psychology, that the capacity for critical thinking and political action in individuals can be adequately facilitated. This will lead to a more ethical, other-oriented, and politically motivated ways of being.

While the phenomenological, sociological, and Foucauldian critiques of psychologism and psychologization have various underlying assumptions and points of contention with the discipline, they all promote rigorous, more philosophical and critical ways of thinking about subjectivity than that offered by traditional psychology. Even though there may be no underlying, core subjectivity that can be uncovered by psychology or philosophy, it is nevertheless the case that one of the essential features of being human is our capacity for rational and critical thought. Instead of fostering this capacity, psychology inherently deflects from it, as the discipline privileges method over theory in its research and practice. Rather than individuals being told "look, this is what you are," in terms of psychology's neurobiological, cognitive, and behavioural quantitative analyses of large groups of people, the perspectives highlighted here open the space for subjectivity to be theorized, critically examined, and creatively constructed. The perspectives all promote an active thinking about subjectivity in research and in everyday life. Instead of relying on method for the production of psychological knowledge, psychologists should develop their theories and look to advancements made in the philosophy of science and in the humanities in order to enhance their research. And rather than being passive consumers of psychological research and practices, the public should develop their skills for thinking critically about this knowledge and about subjectivity in general.

Subjectivity is inherently resistant to being objectified – as the standpoint from which objective knowledge is sought, it is precisely that which exceeds our capacity for complete knowledge, representation, and categorization. Phenomenology focuses on the first-person experience of subjectivity, in which consciousness is always ahead-of-itself, resistant to complete knowledge, and embodied in a shared social world. Critical theory and Mills' politically engaged sociology emphasize the way in which ideology shapes subjectivity and the importance of developing the capacity for ideology critique in understanding and overcoming repressive modes of subjectification. Foucauldian thinkers debunk the notion of an essential subject and show how subjectivity is constituted by contingent historical discourses and practices. These are all ways of theorizing subjectivity that get beyond the positivist and naturalized psychological conceptions of psychology and give us the tools to think imaginatively and critically both in research and in our everyday lives. Along with the critical capacity, there is an ephemeral component to being a subject – one that is captured through mediums such as art and philosophy – and this should not be overlooked in psychological thinking.

Perhaps, one could argue, it is a matter of a division of labour, and there is no problem with psychology remaining within a positivist framework, while the humanities, philosophy, and the arts can attempt to address and express the both the ineffability and critical capacity of subjective experience. This might be an acceptable argument if psychology did not have a tendency to overreach its boundaries and dominate knowledge of subjectivity, as the critiques presented here have shown that that it does. As the dominant science of subjectivity, psychology needs to go beyond its mainstream approach and incorporate findings from other disciplines, as well as a reflexive understanding of its values and its involvement in sociopolitical power relations. It is only through taking an interdisciplinary approach that involves philosophy,

sociology, history, political theory, and the arts that we can approximate an adequate

representation of human mental life. These philosophically grounded understandings of

subjectivity can help individuals and researchers to exercise their capacities to become more

critical, thoughtful, and politically engaged.

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