

# Macro Cultural Psychology: A Political Philosophy of Mind

(Oxford University Press, 2011)

Carl Ratner

Psychology is in need of its own Das Kapital  
(Vygotsky, 1926/1997b, p. 330).

## Dedication

I dedicate this book to my friends. Their personal and intellectual support has sustained my struggle to develop cultural psychology into an intellectual, cultural, and political force that can improve our social, psychological, and natural existence. My friends' support has helped me follow Shakespeare's advice: "pause not, for the present time's so sick; be fire with fire, threaten the threatener, and outface the brow of bragging horror."

## Book description:

This book articulates a bold, new, systematic theory of psychology, culture, and their interrelation. This book explains how macro cultural factors -- social institutions, cultural artifacts, and cultural concepts -- are the cornerstones of society and how they form the origins and characteristics of psychological phenomena. This theory is used to explain the diversity of psychological phenomena, such as emotions, self, intelligence, sexuality, memory, reasoning, perception, developmental processes, and mental illness. I draw upon Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural psychology, Bronfenbrenner's ecological psychology, as well as work in sociology, anthropology, history, and geography. This book also explores the political implications and assumptions of psychological theories regarding social policy and reform.

The theory outlined here addresses current theoretical and political issues such as agency, realism, objectivity, subjectivism, structuralism, postmodernism, and multiculturalism. In this sense, the book articulates a systematic political philosophy of mind. The book utilizes this political philosophy of mind to examine numerous

approaches to psychology, including indigenous psychology, cross-cultural psychology, activity theory, discourse analysis, mainstream psychology, and evolutionary psychology.

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## Preface

This book is related to the social, economic, and ecological crisis of our time. The crisis (for it is one crisis that appears in different forms, rather than a coincidental set of separate problems) impels us to rethink many fundamental social issues in order to find a sustainable, fulfilling way to live. Analyzing the roots of the crisis and reforming them requires structurally identifying which factors were central to the crisis and need to be reformed in order to achieve maximum benefit; it also requires knowing the direction in which their form and content need to be changed in order to truly solve the crisis and prevent its reoccurrence.

This book addresses these tasks from the perspective of psychology. It regards psychology as a cultural specimen—an example that embodies a broad, complex cultural system and history (genesis), just as clothing, art, furniture, architecture, the prison system, concepts of childhood, and crime statistics do. Consequently, psychology draws us onto the cultural plane where we can understand how culture works.

Psychological phenomena are windows into culture. They allow us to see a culture's strengths and weaknesses from the vantage point of its psychology. The scientific study of psychology thus leads to cultural critique and reform. The psychological critique and reform of society will draw upon, extend, and refine similar efforts by scholars in other fields such as education, criminology, medicine, environmental science, and political economy.

Even working memory in young adults reflects on society. The level of working memory is inversely related to childhood poverty and stress. The greater the duration of childhood poverty from birth to age 13 years, the worse one's working memory as a young adult (Evans & Schamberg, 2009). Working memory is thus a psychological window into social inequality

and a testament to the need for social reform to reduce class distinctions.

Mental illness is also. Prevalence and recovery are closely related to prosperity and employment. During the Great Depression, the rate of recovery from schizophrenia was half that of the decades preceding and following the economic crisis. Furthermore, the national unemployment rate from 1840 through the 1960s has been found to correlate with admissions to mental hospitals. These social facts about mental illness indicate how society can be reformed in the interest of enhancing psychological functioning.

The same is true for aggression. Americans kill each other at the rate of 16,000 a year! Given that this murder rate is far higher than those of almost all other countries in the world, it is clearly fostered by broad social factors that can be identified and changed by using the psychology of violence as a cultural specimen (Ratner, 2006a, pp. 4–6).

Suicide is another psychological phenomenon that reflects society and is a window into its character. China has one of the highest suicide rates in the world, with an overall suicide rate of 230 per million people, while the world average is only 100 per million. China's suicide rate is 2.3 times the world average. Recent statistics show that more than 287,000 Chinese end their own lives every year, with another 3 million attempting suicide. Data from the Beijing Psychological Crisis Intervention Center shows that suicide is one of the top five causes of death in mainland China, and the leading cause of death for 15- to 34-year-olds. China is the only country where suicides among women outnumber those among men (in the Republic of Taiwan, by contrast, two-thirds of suicides are male). It is also one of the few countries where rural suicides outnumber urban suicides. Half of the suicides on the mainland are by women in rural areas, who commonly drink pesticide to end their lives (Phillips, et al., 2002).. These demographic details of Chinese



suicide direct attention at transforming the structure of rural life, gender relations, and youth that generate them.. The 1-month prevalence of (all kinds of) mental disorder in 17.5% of the population (Phillips, et al., 2009) testifies to additional social stressors that need to be eradicated.

These sorts of psychological insight into culture supplement insights from other disciplines such as public health, education, environmental science, economics, and political science about how to enhance fulfillment by improving the social organization of our culture. Psychological insights into culture are possible only if psychological phenomena are recognized as being cultural specimens..” Psychological theories that ignore culture’s relation to psychology, develop no understanding of culture that could be used to enhance psychological and social functioning.

This book shows how features of cultural factors are contained in psychological phenomena as a kind of secret that can be unlocked with proper analytical tools . These tools include a social theory that identifies the structure and content of cultural factors that bear on psychology. I articulate this theory under the name “macro cultural psychology.”

Cultural factors in psychology may be analogized to atoms in steel: they are constituents which are invisible to the naked eye, and are difficult to accept from the perspective of common sense. Looking at a steel beam, it seems inconceivable that it is composed of atomic particles which are in motion; similarly, looking at a happy mother, it seems inconceivable that her joy is composed of cultural elements that originate in government agencies and corporate headquarters. Macro cultural psychology is analogous to atomic science in revealing constituents of phenomena that are invisible to the naked eye, are counter-intuitive, and are difficult to understand and believe. Macro cultural psychology changes our way of

understanding psychology just as fundamentally as atomic theory changes our way of understanding steel beams.

Some readers may ask, “If macro cultural factors structure psychology, how can you talk about changing them?” The reason I can talk about transforming factors that structure our lives is that these factors are cultural, which means they are constructed by people and can be changed by people. While these factors are in existence, they are powerful organizers of our lives and psychology. However, we can reflect on them, especially their history, origination, and effects, and we can transform them. I call this “determinable determinism.” Cultural factors determine behavior in the sense of structuring it; however, this very determinism is determinable by people. We construct it, and we can change it. Transforming macro cultural factors is a difficult, protracted, organized, political struggle against entrenched interests who employ violence against reformers (e.g., the American Revolution and Civil War). However, macro cultural change certainly occurs. People change governments, social systems, school systems, and transportation systems.

Macro cultural change appears impossible only in the face of thinking that separates structure from subjectivity. This is reification. It is a fiction. People clearly employ their subjectivity to create emergent cultural structures. This subjectivity is capable of transforming the structures it created.. Reification is based upon the misconception that individuals can control only personal actions. Macro cultural factors are then deemed to be beyond individual control. This is a false theory about human action. Humans construct, maintain, and transform macro cultural factors. This simple change in the theory of human action dispels any notion of reification. In summary, cultural determinism is real and should not be denied; however, it is also changeable or determinable

(at the structural or macro level). The two are dialectically integrated, not opposed.

The term macro culture may be traced to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. He enumerates a set of social contexts (levels, layers) from the micro, interpersonal level to broader levels, some of which are never directly experienced—such as parents' working conditions that affect their interactions with their children. The broadest level, which forms the framework of parameters for all the other, narrower levels, is the social structure: "Finally, the complex of nested, interconnected systems is viewed as a manifestation of overarching patterns of ideology and organization of the social institutions common to a particular culture or subculture. Such generalized patterns are referred to as macrosystems. Within a given society or social group, the structure and substance of micro-, meso-, and exosystems tend to be similar, as if they were constructed from the same master model" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 8; Ratner, 1991, pp. 172–178). The macro level is the core of, and key to, all the layers and factors in a society. "Public policy is a part of the macro system determining the specific properties of exo-, meso-, and microsystems that occur at the level of everyday life and steer the course of behavior and development" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 9).

Bronfenbrenner did not have a coherent model of the constituents, structure, or dynamics of macro culture, but he at least introduced the construct into Psychology. This book develops macro culture as the basis of culture and of psychology.

Vygotsky stated the general principle of macro cultural psychology: "the structures of higher mental functions represent a cast of collective social relations between people. These [mental] structures are nothing other than a transfer into the personality of an inward relation of a social order that

constitutes the basis of the social structure of the human personality” (Vygotsky, 1998, pp. 169–170). The wording of this statement deserves emphasis. Vygotsky says that mental structures are nothing other than social relations of a social structure, and that there is therefore a social structure of psychology. Psychology is part of the social structure, and it embodies it in form and content. Vygotsky further said, “Higher mental functions [are] the product of the historical development of humanity” (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 34). Psychology is neither a personal construct nor a natural, biological construct. Shweder (1990, pp. 1, 24) similarly stated, “Cultural psychology is the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute the human psyche, resulting less in psychic unity for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self, and emotion. . . . In the language of cultural psychology there are no pure psychological laws, just as there are no unreconstructed or unmediated stimulus events . . . . Cultural psychology signals an end to the purely psychological in psychology . . .”

In broad strokes, the major postulates of macro cultural psychology are that (a) psychology is implicated in forming, maintaining, and participating in culture; (b) culture is primarily macro cultural factors such as social institutions, artifacts, and cultural concepts (of time, wealth, childhood, privacy), (c) therefore, psychological phenomena have properties that are geared toward forming, maintaining, and participating in macro cultural factors; and d) therefore, understanding psychology scientifically requires understanding macro cultural factors that are the basis, locus, objectives, mechanisms, features, and function of psychological phenomena.

Macro cultural psychology emphasizes psychology’s social character as the basis of psychology’s higher conscious processes such as reasoning, reflecting, imagining, and

remembering. Cultural features and cultural operating mechanisms elevate and expand consciousness beyond animal consciousness. Human consciousness is more active and agentive because it has a cultural operating mechanism that deals with complex, vast, dynamic cultural phenomena.

For instance, human memory is based on symbols (words). Symbols are cultural products, and they have become embedded in our minds, where they act as the constituents and operating mechanisms of memory. It is because our memory is composed of cultural symbols that we can recollect specific events (e.g., our 15th birthday, the house we used to live in, our first kiss). As Volosinov (1973, p. 13) said, “Consciousness takes shape and being in the material of signs created by an organized group in the process of its social intercourse. The individual consciousness is nurtured on signs; it derives its growth from them; it reflects their logic and laws.” If you attempt to study personal memory without understanding the logic and laws of cultural symbols, and the specific cultural symbols of the particular culture, your study will be incomplete and superficial.

The more complex the cultural constituents are, the more active and sophisticated psychological phenomena are.

Broader, higher levels of psychological functioning are the prototype for and basis of psychology in general. Broader, higher levels of cultural psychology “trickle down” to individual and interpersonal psychological functioning.

Cultural psychology is defined by one’s conception of culture. The details of, and variations in, approaches to cultural psychology stem from one’s definition of culture. Macro cultural psychology is distinctive because of its distinctive conception of culture as objectified, institutionalized macro factors.

Macro cultural psychology does not simply seek to identify some cultural factors that correlate with psychological

processes. It seeks to reconceptualize the nature of human psychology as a cultural phenomenon. Psychology is not simply influenced by macro factors in certain respects; its genesis, characteristics, function, principles, operating mechanisms, telos, and explanatory constructs are cultural. Psychology is not outside of macro culture, operating on the basis of other principles that interact with cultural principles. It is part of culture and it has cultural features.

Consequently, the methodology for studying macro cultural psychology is distinctive.

Psychological phenomena are subject to the principles, forces, and dynamics that govern macro cultural factors. If cultural factors are institutionalized and administered as cornerstones of social life, then psychological phenomena are also. If cultural factors are enduring, unifying cultural phenomena, then psychological phenomena are also. If cultural factors are formed by political struggle among competing interest groups, then psychological phenomena are also. If cultural factors need to be reorganized in order to solve social problems and enhance human development, then psychological phenomena must be part of that transformative process.

Bourdieu used the term *habitus* to express this point. *Habitus* is a structure of cognitive, perceptual, and emotional dispositions that is structured by social positions and conditions, and which produces and reproduces them. The psychological dispositions of *habitus* are so cultural that Bourdieu calls them “cultural capital.” He means that psychological dispositions are cultural resources that enable one to navigate within a cultural field—analogous to financial capital being a cultural resource that one utilizes to navigate within the economic field.

We must think of psychology on an entirely new level, as having an entirely new basis, character, and function. Whereas mainstream psychology explains culture in terms of the

individual, adults in terms of childhood experiences (e.g., books such as *The Philosophical Baby: What Children's Minds Tell Us About Truth, Love, and the Meaning of Life*), the human in terms of animal processes (e.g., *The Ape Within Us*), the large in terms of the small, the complex in terms of the simple, and the extrinsic (culture) in terms of the internal (mind, biology), macro cultural psychology explains the small, the simple, the individual, the child, and the internal in terms of stimulation and organization by the large, the complex, the adult, and the extrinsic (culture). Large, complex, extrinsic macro cultural factors are the foundation and function of psychology.

Macro cultural psychology takes facts that are traditionally overlooked or regarded as marginal (e.g., cultural variations in emotions, and culturally oriented emotions, such as love for one's country, fear of god, and delight at viewing Michelangelo's sculpture David) and construes them as prototypes of human psychology. Rather than being extensions of simpler, natural, universal "basic emotions" such as fear and love, these macro cultural emotions are the basic form of human emotions. Emotions that are invoked on the interpersonal level are derivatives and extensions of macro features of emotions, not vice versa.

The macro cultural basis of psychology means we must understand the dynamics of how cultural factors are formed, maintained, and reformed in order to understand psychology. We must understand the politics, institutionalization, administration, reformation, and structure of cultural factors in order to understand their psychological/subjective elements, aspects, and features. Psychology must be approached as subjective elements, aspects, and features of culture, not as personal inventions or natural processes, nor simply as influenced by culture in an external fashion.

Macro cultural psychology is a psychological theory. It is not simply an acknowledgment of cultural "influences" on

psychology. It explains why and how psychology functions as it does. It is a general theory about emotionality, perception, motivation, reasoning, intelligence, memory, developmental processes, personality, and mental illness. It concludes that human psychological functioning is the way it is because it is cultural.

I analogize macro cultural psychology to astronomy. Astronomy is concerned with the immense, broad system of factors beyond the earth that bear on it and bring it into being; cultural psychology is similarly concerned with the immense, broad system of factors beyond psychology that bear on it and bring it into being. Just as characteristics of the earth are unintelligible if one doesn't understand the astrophysics of the sun, moon, other planets, distant galaxies, and the big bang, so characteristics of psychology are unintelligible without first understanding macro cultural factors such as social institutions, social conditions, artifacts, politics, and cultural concepts.

Neither of the broad systems, of astronomy and macro culture, can be captured through sense experience; both require sophisticated methodologies based upon inference and deduction to link focal phenomena (earth, psychology) with their broad origins and causes. Just as astronomy is fascinating and awesome for its ability to apprehend immense factors and processes (the formation of galaxies billions of light years away from us), so cultural psychology is fascinating and awesome for its ability to apprehend broad cultural factors and processes (such as "consumer capitalism," "commodification," "alienation," and "ideology) and their affects on intimate phenomena such as self-concept, love, and sexuality.

Mathematical competence has been studied in this way, as a specimen of macro culture. According to research, gender differences in mathematical competence (numeracy) are largely an artifact of changeable sociocultural factors relating to gender inequality. There is substantial variability in the size of



the sex difference in mathematics. There is no general, universal sex difference in mathematics achievement. Girls significantly outperform boys in seven nations, and boys significantly outperform girls in five nations (Nosek et al., 2009, p. 10593).

The psychology of numeracy reflects and illuminates oppressive politics, and it indicates that they must be politically reformed to enhance psychological functioning.

Using contemporary data from the U.S. and other nations, we address 3 questions: Do gender differences in mathematics performance exist in the general population? Do gender differences exist among the mathematically talented? Do females exist who possess profound mathematical talent? In regard to the first question, contemporary data indicate that girls in the U.S. have reached parity with boys in mathematics performance, a pattern that is found in some other nations as well. Focusing on the second question, studies find more males than females scoring above the 95th or 99th percentile, but this gender gap has significantly narrowed over time in the U.S. and is not found among some ethnic groups and in some nations. Furthermore, data from several studies indicate that greater male variability with respect to mathematics is not ubiquitous. Rather, its presence correlates with several measures of gender inequality. Thus, it is largely an artifact of changeable sociocultural factors, not immutable, innate biological differences between the sexes. Responding to the third question, we document the existence of females who possess profound

mathematical talent. Finally, we review mounting evidence that both the magnitude of mean math gender differences and the frequency of identification of gifted and profoundly gifted females significantly correlate with sociocultural factors, including measures of gender equality across nations. (Hyde & Mertz, 2009, p. 8801).

Differences between girls' and boys' performance in the 10 states surveyed were close to zero in all grades—even in high schools where gaps had previously existed. In the national assessment, differences between girls' and boys' performance were trivial. Worldwide, gender differences in mathematical ability are a function of structural gender issues such as political empowerment, economic participation and opportunity, and educational attainment. Gender equality in society correlates roughly 0.40 with various measures of gender equality in mathematical competence. (Noteworthy is the fact that the United States ranked only 31st out of 128 countries on a measure of gender equality; Hyde & Mertz, 2009, p. 8806.)

Macro cultural psychology breaks down the traditional isolation of psychology from culture and politics. This is a seismic shift in conceptualizing psychological phenomena and the discipline that studies and treats them. Durkheim expressed this when he said, “Psychology is destined to renew itself, in part, under the influence of sociology. For if social phenomena penetrate the individual from the outside, there is a whole realm of individual consciousness that depends partially upon social causes, a realm which psychology cannot ignore without becoming unintelligible” (cited in Ratner, 2006a, p. 67). Sociologist Lester Ward similarly theorized in 1893 that “social forces are the psychic forces as they operate in the collective state of man” (cited in Heinze, 2003, p. 235).

Macro cultural psychology is as great a paradigm shift as Einstein's integration of matter and energy was. Einstein reconceptualized mass and energy as two forms of the same thing. Newtonian mechanics did not attribute kinetic energy to mass, and it did not regard energy as contributing to the mass of an object. However, Einstein saw mass as energy, and energy as mass. When energy is removed from a system, its mass decreases proportionally because mass is energy.

Macro cultural psychology similarly reconceptualizes the nature of human psychology. We see culture and psychology as two forms of the same thing. We see psychology as including culture, and culture as including psychology. If psychology is removed from culture, culture vanishes because its subjective side is eliminated, and if culture is removed from psychology, psychology vanishes because its objective basis and character are removed. Einstein described the equivalence of mass and energy as the most important upshot of the special theory of relativity, because this result lies at the core of modern physics. I maintain that the equivalence of culture and psychology is the most important upshot of macro cultural psychology because this result lies at the core of what psychological science must become. (Of course, macro cultural psychology acknowledges the conceptual distinction between psychology and culture just as Einstein acknowledged the conceptual distinction between mass and energy.)

Macro cultural psychology corrects the pervasive resistance by social scientists, and psychologists in particular, to appreciating the importance of culture for psychological phenomena. A few examples document this insularity:

By any account, the last twenty years of the 20th century have seen the most rapid and dramatic shift of income, assets and resources in favour of the very rich that has ever taken place

in human history. This ‘raiding of the commons’ has been most evident in the former communist nations, especially Russia after 1989, where an arriviste plutocracy emerged in little over a decade from the hasty, even squalid, privatization of state assets and public resources. We can see the rise of the ‘super rich’ in the ‘old’ capitalist nations, especially those such as the UK and USA, which have enthusiastically embraced neo-liberalism from the early 1980s. In both countries the top one or five percent of income earners have more or less doubled their share of total income since the early 1980s and we have now almost returned to pre-1914 levels of income inequality. There is no historical precedent for such regressive redistribution within one generation without either change in legal title or economic disaster such as hyper-inflation. For reasons which nobody yet understands, corporate chief executive officers have for two decades obtained real wage increases of 20 per cent each year and the much larger number of intermediaries earning multi-million \$/£ incomes in and around finance has hugely increased.

Where, however, are the social theorists who focus on these processes as central to understanding the contemporary dynamics of social change? As the rich draw away and inhabit their ever more privileged worlds, one might expect a revival of elite studies from contemporary critical writers who are concerned about such developments. After all, earlier generations of theorists were in no doubt about

the importance of elites and elite formations for understanding the social dynamics of their nations. . . Yet, from the middle of the 20th century we can detect the erosion of this animating concern (Savage & Williams, 2008, p. 1).<sup>1</sup>

Cultural psychologists have manifested the same aversion to concrete culture. The most dominant cultural force in the world over the past three decades has been neoliberalism. It has restructured entire societies and it has provoked reactions to itself in the form of religious fundamentalism and movements for economic justice across the globe. Yet the word neoliberalism is never mentioned in the leading journals on culture and psychology. The word neoliberalism is never mentioned in the 17 year history of *Mind, Culture, Activity*. The word neoliberalism never appears in any article in *The Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, which has been publishing for 40 years. Neoliberalism only appears once in 16 years of articles in the journal *Culture & Psychology*. While the editors, authors, and editorial boards of these psychology journals have failed to mention (much less discuss) cultural and psychological aspects of neoliberalism in their publications, journals in anthropology,

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<sup>1</sup> Savage & Williams (2008, pp. 3–4) explain the demise of traditional elite studies by unraveling the “pincer movement” that dispelled traditional elite theory. One part of this pincer is the rise of positivist or neo-positivist social science. A central feature of this shift was the insistence by quantitative social scientists that the sample survey was the central research tool for analyzing social inequality. Given their small [group](#) size and invisibility within national sample surveys, elites thereby slipped from view. The other side of this pincer comes from rejecting macro, political-economic, structural analyses of society and explaining society as the product of micro-level interactions. These theories “insisted on the distributed, local, and mobile character of socio-technical relations, thereby rejecting any obvious appeal to an ‘elite’ acting as a “deus ex machina” which orchestrates society. Acting together, these two different arms of the pincer have theoretically and methodologically “whipped the carpet” away from elite studies which became deeply unfashionable right across the social sciences from the mid-1970s onwards.”

geography, sociology, cultural studies, education, and social studies of science, have devoted special issues to these central cultural and psychological issues.

Another example of psychologists' glaring failure to address concrete culture is the fact that the most famous and decorated social psychology text ever published, *The Social Animal*, by Elliot Aronson, which is now in its 10th edition, never mentions social class once.

A similar rejection of macro cultural issues has occurred in the study of mental illness:

In North America, especially in the United States, the discussion of social factors in the development of psychotic disorders has changed profoundly over the last 40 years. Whereas macrosocial factors (such as migration and poverty) were once the subject of study and discussion, they have fallen from prominence and have given way to a preoccupation with microsocial issues; the social environment has been reduced to the clinic, and research efforts have focused on how clinicians diagnose psychosis in minority populations. (Jarvis, 2007, p. 291).<sup>2</sup>

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2. Even Mother's Day has been depoliticized. It originated after the Civil War as an anti-war movement of mothers who sought to stop war from killing their sons and husbands. The Mother's Day Proclamation, was written by Julia W. Howe in 1870, spoke to this concern, and pleaded for mothers to work for the peaceful resolution of conflict. This inbuilt political significance to Mother's Day has been extirpated and long forgotten in the move to convert Mother's Day into a purely personal celebration of motherhood.

The same transformation occurred within the term "male chauvinist." Women use the term casually and almost humorously to refer to selfish or domineering behavior of men. There is no understanding of the political origins of the term or the sexist behavior that is being denoted. "Male chauvinist" was coined in the United States by women members of the Communist Party in 1934 (Mansbridge & Flaster, 2007, p. 642). It was part of the CP's attempt to understand sexist and racist

Ignoring the concrete organization of society in relation to psychology impoverishes the science of Psychology. Since psychology is cultural, avoiding its cultural character prevents completely understanding psychology. This constitutes a crisis in Psychology. Non-cultural approaches to psychology can detect certain elements of psychology; however, they can never comprehend psychology in a complete, organic manner. As Zinchenko (1984, p. 73) said, “The exclusion of the real process of the subject’s life, of the activity that relates him to objective reality, is the underlying cause of all misinterpretations of the nature of consciousness. This is the basis of both mechanistic and idealistic misunderstandings of consciousness.”.

Disguising, discounting, and denying the full nature of the social system is accomplished through a myriad of imaginative strategies that , minimize, trivialize, fragment, mystify, marginalize, naturalize, personalize, and subjectify, the social system. We shall critique these throughout the book (in part, because they often contradict each other), and we shall utilize macro cultural psychology to explain cultural reasons for why they have been employed. We shall explain how to overcome this impoverishing of Psychology by developing the new approach of macro cultural psychology.

To reach the truth about psychology, we need a new epistemology that can apprehend the neglected features of psychological phenomena. In other words, we need a new epistemology as well as a new ontology. The concrete cultural

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behavior and attitudes as fostered by exploitation of the capitalist system. Party activists read writings on sexual equality written by Lenin’s wife. New Left activists of the 1960s, including Betty Friedan, passed on many of these communist ideas about the socioeconomic origins of chauvinist behavior. As “male chauvinist” entered popular culture, it became depoliticized by the individualistic, personal ideology of capitalism. It thus lost its potential to critique and transform the social system that promotes sexism.

reality of psychology is not obvious and awaiting our inspection, as if all we have to do is turn our gaze toward it in order to apprehend it. On the contrary, a special epistemology is necessary in order to apprehend psychology. Existing epistemologies have proven inadequate to the task. This book will therefore pay attention to how we must develop our consciousness, not simply to the object that our consciousness must apprehend. This is precisely what Hegel did in his Phenomenology of Spirit. As he explains in its Introduction, consciousness has two objects: the object of investigation and the mental process of investigating it (i.e., consciousness itself). We believe with Hegel that the new and true object (i.e., psychological phenomena) is revealed via the dialectical process that consciousness executes on itself, on its knowledge, as well as on its object. The appropriate epistemology for cultural psychology is what I develop under the rubric of a political philosophy of mind.