

A Meditation on the Research Methodology in Psychology: On the Diversity of Psychology

Akihiro YOSHIDA Ph. D.

The theme of this paper is the diversity of psychologies and its unique nature, in distinction from the similar diversity observed in other sciences. A novice psychology student would be perplexed with the diversity of various psychologies, many of which are named after the originator of each one. The same kinds of diversity might also be observed to exist in other disciplines. However, the diversity in psychology is unique in its nature, in that psychologists disagree among themselves on the very research object of their discipline: either behavior or experience, for instance. This disagreement carries over also to the disagreement on the major research methodologies and methods among different “schools” of psychologies: e. g., behavioristic and/or introspective psychologies.

The author at first asks the question as to whether those diverse psychologies really belong to a single discipline, while they openly declare that the research objects are mutually different. This uniqueness of diversity originates from the fact that the object of psychology, “psyche”, is essentially “invisible”. Thus, the “invisible” is either abandoned or retained. Could the diversity of psychologies be compared to the well-known allegorical situation of blind people discussing over their own explorations of a supposedly identical elephant? No, since a psychologist has no other way than to choose his/her “Point of View” and “Subject-Matter” *simultaneously*, facing the “Subject-Matter” never “visible”. Thus, the explication of the nature of our subject-matter is urgently needed. The challenge of our discipline of Psychology, in this author’s viewpoint, is to accept this very difficult task and project of grasping the “invisible” and its “logos” through the “visible”, while activating and including all the diverse, past and present, also actual and possible, psychologies, into a larger theoretical structure. A further exploration into such a theoretical structure is to be expected.