

A Meditation on the Research Methodology in Psychology

—On the Possibility of Integrating Diverse Psychologies—

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This paper continues, while following the track initiated by the preceding paper (Yoshida, A., 2003), its exploration into the possibility of integrating diverse psychologies observed in the contemporary scene. The objective of this exploration is simple and clear: to discover the way to “a larger theoretical structure” (Becker, E.), which is capable of including all opposing views found in the diversity of psychologies.

A preliminary attempt has been made to clarify the logic of the approach toward “a larger theoretical structure.” First of all, the “larger theoretical structure” being sought should be the only one, i.e., not plural but singular, by the very definition of the structure. However, there will be plural ways toward the theoretical structure since these ways will be multiple depending on the starting points and the choice of the possible ways. At present, there regrettably prevails mutual contempt, whether open or hidden, among diverse psychologies. Thus, if each psychology were asked to present the “larger theoretical structure,” then each will at best give a structure, placing itself on the top in the ranking, which will not at all satisfy any other opposing psychologies. This will certainly be a deadlock. In other words, by the very logic of coexisting psychologies with open and/or hidden mutual contempt, any existing self-believing psychology is not qualified to present the structure being sought. Some other detours will become necessary for discovering the “larger theoretical structure.”

A rough sketch of an imaginative great river Nile is presented, the river simultaneously containing and overlapping: 1) the personal histories, in terms of psychological ideas, of any human beings, 2) the developmental histories of psychological ideas of all individual psychologists, 3) the history of psychological ideas of humankind in various historical periods, societies, cultures, generations, and 4) the history of various kinds of pre-psychologies and psychologies. A many-many correspondence is presented and examined between the set of diverse presently existing psychologies, on the one hand, and the set

of diverse people respectively believing and supporting those diverse psychologies, on the other. A way to discover the structure to order diverse psychologies is proposed by looking through the structure ordering the people believing in respective psychologies. Some foreseen obstacles to this attempt have been pointed out: 1) the lack of historical viewpoints in natural scientific psychological research studies; 2) the diversity of the nature of research studies among the first, the second and the third generations of psychologists; and 3) the impossibility of perfecting the discipline of psychology because of the inevitable transformations of the psyche from the “before” to the “after” of knowing a psychology.

Regardless of these obstacles, attempts will be made further to discover the way toward the structure giving order to diverse psychologies by way of looking at them through the developmental psychological “stages” of people respectively believing in each of these diverse psychologies.

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