Abstract A complete and thorough grasp of culture eludes psychology because of the pervasive dualism that pervades psychology and Western thought more broadly. Drawing on interactivism, a process model for human phenomena, we make two main points: first, culture cannot be reified, seen as distinct from the self, nor can it be treated as something objective or subjective; and, second, agency and culture are intertwined and distributed across levels of knowing. We explore how interactivism provides powerful resources for modeling the relationship between culture and the person and indicate how interactivism is generally compatible with social practice, hermeneutic, dialogical and narrative insights but situates them within a developmental ontology. We consider implications of interactivism for existing theories like internalization, self-construal theory and individualism–collectivism.

Key Words individualism–collectivism, interactivism, self-construal theory

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Culture, Self and Identity: Interactivist Contributions to a Metatheory for Cultural Psychology

Over the last several decades psychologists have largely abandoned pretensions to culture-free research, theory and practice, and have begun to grapple with the relationship between culture and psychology. In addition to considering how culture constitutes behavior, emotion, cognition and the self, there is a growing self-reflexive turn as psychologists explore how culture also shapes the discipline of psychology itself. There are two general currents within these efforts. One current is marked by attempts to situate contemporary psychological theory, research and practice in its historical and social settings (e.g. Christopher, 1999; Cushman, 1990, 1991; Danzinger, 1990; Kirschner, 1996; Richardson, Fowers, & Guignon, 1999; Sampson, 1977, 1981; Slife, Reber, & Richardson, 2005; Sugarman & Martin, 1995). The

second current is constituted by efforts to challenge psychology's underlying metatheoretical framework, which is arguably based on Newtonian and Cartesian presuppositions (e.g. Benson, 2001; Bickhard, 1994; Brown, 2002; Christopher, 1996; Cole, 1996; Faulconer & Williams, 1990; Gergen & Davis, 1985; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Hoshmand, 1996; Martin & Sugarman, 2003; Richardson, Rogers, & McCarroll, 1998; Stigler, Shweder, & Herdt, 1990; Woolfolk, 1998). Both currents are aiding the development by cultural psychologists of alternative psycho-sociocultural theories that are less biased by the dualistic and individualistic presuppositions of Western culture and much of mainstream psychology. Following in this spirit, this article attempts to contribute to a metatheoretical framework for cultural psychology and psychotherapy by discussing contributions from interactivism, a process-oriented ontology developed by Mark Bickhard, and then exploring interactivism's implications for understanding culture, the self and identity.

Interactivism is a systematic theory that has developed within a process metaphysics that is related to the pragmatic orientations of Peirce and Piaget. It began as a model for representation as an emergent property in interactive systems and developed into a metatheoretical framework that includes models for other mental and social phenomena such as learning, emotions, consciousness, language, perception, memory, motivation, personality, psychopathology and rationality. Interactivism has not to this point developed an account of culture per se; however, in developing a process ontology of the person that, it is hoped, avoids many of the dualisms that plague mainstream psychology, interactivism helps to deepen and enrich interpretive, hermeneutic and practice theory understandings of culture and in this way add to cultural psychology. The intent of this article will not be a historical review of the origins of interactivism but instead a presentation of some of those features of interactivism that are most relevant to forming a cohesive metatheory for cultural psychology. While there are very strong connections with other theories and orientations in philosophy, psychology and cultural psychology, the limitations of space preclude our being able to do more than occasionally hint at points of convergence and departure. One further caveat is that each of the aspects of interactivism synthesized in this article has been elaborated in considerable depth—this article aims to provide a broad vision of this metatheory for cultural psychology, not address more detailed or nuanced justifications of these components.

We contend that much of mainstream psychology is dominated by substance and structure ontologies in contrast to process ontologies

(Bickhard, 2002, 2003; Bickhard & Christopher, 1994). In the natural sciences, substance and structure ontologies such as phlogiston theories of fire, caloric theories of heat and fluid theories of magnetism have all been superseded by process models. Substance models have been replaced by process and patterns and organizations of process. Psychology has yet to develop a generally accepted process ontology. One implication of this is that much of psychology is left trying to establish relationships between 'things' that have been reified, such as mind and body, culture and self, inner representations and external realities, facts and values, and so forth (see also Adams & Markus, 2001; Hermans, 2001; Sawyer, 2002). Once split by these reifications into substantial domains, entities or realms of entities, however, it has proven to be impossible to reintegrate them. Interactivism's process ontology is an attempt to reconceptualize psychological phenomena in such a way that these 'things', and the dualities among them, are overcome. In particular, they are reconceptualized as poles or aspects of process, and of organizations of interacting process, rather than as entities in any foundational sense. In other words, structures are emergent stabilizations of process.[1]

While it almost taken for granted now within mainstream psychology that we are greatly shaped by culture, there is considerable room for more precisely articulating the nature of this relationship. Commonly, the accounts within mainstream psychology of culture and how it impacts the person are, according to a number of theorists, vague, superficial or metaphorical (Adams & Markus, 2001; Christopher, 2001; Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Jahoda, 2002; Ratner, 2000; Seeley, 2000; Shweder, 1991). A well-developed ontology is lacking that would help to address such questions as: What is the ontology of culture and how does it relate to the self, identity and agency? How is culture communicated, transmitted and learned? What exactly does it mean for us to be 'expressions of culture', as Bruner (1990) declared? How exactly does culture influence behavior, emotion and cognition when we generally have no awareness of its influence? How is culture created and maintained? And how is that we can come to recognize cultural influences on us? The need within psychology, as Shweder (1990) pointed out, is to 'develop an analytic framework for characterizing the relationships between reality-constituting psyches (intentional persons) and culturally constituted realities (intentional worlds)' (p. 27; see also Sawyer, 2002).

A central problem, as we see it, is due to the difficulty we have in extracting ourselves from dualistic patterns of thinking deeply rooted in Western thought that induce us to treat culture and the person as

two separate 'things'. One of the consequences of individualistic ontological assumptions about the self is that they presuppose that the boundaries of the person are roughly at the surface of the skin, creating a divide between internal and external realms. This split introduces the long-standing predicament of accounting for how external influences, like culture or socialization agents, can impact the internal experience and subjectivity of the developing person. This predicament is re-inforced by the tendency within much of mainstream and cross-cultural psychology to treat culture as an independent variable, despite attempts by Briggs (1992), Cole (1996), D'Andrade and Strauss (1992), Holland (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Holland & Quinn, 1987), Kashima (2000), Shweder (1990, 1991) and Valsiner and Lawrence (1997), to account for culture in more process-oriented and less dualistic terms.

Arguably, cultural psychologists have been at the forefront of rethinking culture in less reified and dualistic terms. The recent in-corporation of the conceptual resources provided by continental European theorists, particularly of Vygotsky, Bourdieu and Bakhtin, has clearly enriched theory and research. Yet, while a considerable improvement over mainstream psychological accounts, accounts of situated activity, dialogical thought and appropriation models, preva-lent in cultural psychology and psychological anthropology, are subject to problems, as Turner (1994), for one, powerfully indicates. Turner focuses in particular on the so-called 'practice turn' in the social sciences and argues that notions such as social practices, inherited backgrounds, tacit knowledge and shared presuppositions are names of what he calls 'an analogical object'. These theories, he suggests, rely too heavily at core on metaphor and suggestion. He contends that as a result not only do these theories, and the applications on the basis of them, tend to subtly reify these concepts, but they also fall short in providing proper casual explanations. For example, Turner points out how Bourdieu's widely used phrase 'inscribed on the body' really does not deal with the problem of connecting 'the stuff of thought to the world of case and substance' (p. 29). Elsewhere, as an example, he writes,

> It is simply an overstatement of the case to say that people have to in-ternalize a norm of dress in order to participate in the activity. There is no single 'norm' that corresponds to the various 'mastering' strategies that people exhibit in the course of responding to the problem of appropriate beach attire. (Turner, 2001, p. 129)

The results, according to Turner, are vague social theories that are undermined by what he terms 'the problem of transmission'.

Our outlook is largely compatible with much of the current theorizing within cultural psychology. The aim of this article is to extend and deepen these theoretical forays by suggesting a process ontology that is more detailed and more specific and can help to resolve some of the problems at which we have only had space to hint. Of course there are other problems with these important social theories, like all theories, but, in general, the problems, we maintain, are related to the quest to find a genuine process ontology and the tendency to relapse into re-ifications and dualistic thought. While the interactivist model presented here is clearly not the only attempt to develop a process ontology, we will focus largely on its potential contributions—more than on cross-comparisons.

One brief example illustrating this is the notion of internalization. Typically it is assumed by developmentalists, as well as psychologists more broadly, that for something to have an influence upon the person it must be internalized or in some way brought into or made present within the mind of the person. Different psychological mechanisms are posited to take what is outside and internalize or introject it so that it become a part of the developing child. Developmental theorists such as Piaget (1962; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), Vygotsky (1978), Lawrence and Valsiner (2003; Valsiner & Lawrence, 1997), Thompson, Easterbrooks and Padilla-Walker (2003), and Wertsch (1985; Wertsch & Stone, 1999) make recourse to notions of internalization or interiorization to solve the problem of how what is outside the person (namely culture, society, context, the environment, primary caretakers) can make a lasting impact upon the person.

In a similar way a variety of attachment and object relations theorists (Blatt & Behrends, 1987; Bretherton, Golby, & Cho, 1997; Kernberg, 1984; Meissner, 1981) rely on notions of internalization, as for instance with the well-known premise in attachment theory that children create 'internal working models' of primary caretakers. Elsewhere, we have argued that notions of internalization as they appear in the object relations literature lack explanatory power, attribute to the child cognitive capabilities which the child does not yet possess, and are little more than a waving of hand to cover over a pseudo-problem caused by dualistic understandings of the person (Bickhard & Christopher, 1994; Christopher, Bickhard, & Lambeth, 2001). Admittedly, these theorists are far less subtle than Lawrence and Valsiner's (2003) rendition, yet they illustrate the pervasiveness of these dualistic and reified assumptions.

The metaphor of internalization suggests that what is outside the mind or person comes to exist inside the mind or person, via some sort

of transmittal or impression. This is a temporally extended version of the Greek notion of a signet ring pressing into the wax of the mind—a scratching into the wax over time. The interactivist model offers a process of person-level constructions that engage the world, including the social world, in a quasi-evolutionary manner that avoids the suggestions of pressing or transmitting from outside to inside (e.g. Bickhard, 1992a).

In the remainder of this article we will explore how interactivism, by addressing a level of ontology that precedes the differentiation of the person and culture, obviates the need for a variety of notions like internalization that have functioned to try to put the two back together again. We discuss four aspects of the interactivism model—implicitness, interactive representation, a variation and selection constructivism and the Knowing Levels—that we contend can help provide a more specific ontology, and a more integrated ontology, for addressing the relationship between culture and the person. Following Shweder et al. (1998), this ontology helps to advance the general propositions that 'the self is (a) constituted in interaction with others; (b) collectively constructed through sociocultural participation; and (c) a product of history' (p. 908).

Implicitness

Implicitness provides a way of addressing how cultural values, meanings and assumptions are inherent in our thoughts, feelings and behavior, without these values, meanings and assumptions having to be either internalized or known by the person. Implicitness assumes there is not a sharp internal–external or objective–subjective divide that needs to be broached. From the interactivist perspective, such a divide is based on a faulty premise: that the individual is sharply distinct from his or her context. The notion of implicitness allows us to conceive of how the environment can influence a person without requiring that the influence be via a kind of *thing* or force present within the person. The source of influence is not the environment per se or some sort of outer thing coming to be inside. The influence is not one thing influencing another thing.

Instead, learned interactions, often habitualized, develop between the person and the environment. Crucially, such interactions can presuppose values and meanings or 'propositional attitudes' (Shweder et al., 1998). It is this property of *presupposition*—a relational property, it turns out—that transcends the substance models of externals pressing into an internal realm: certain properties or relations can be

functionally true of a system, an organism or person in interaction with its environment without those properties or relations having to be necessarily present or existent anywhere *within* the entity. In particular, properties and relations can be presupposed by a system in interaction with its environment.

Interactivism is premised on the notion that persons constitute an emergent ontological level that develops out of the biological realm (Bickhard, 2004). One consequence of interactivism's non-reductive naturalistic ontology is that concepts such as implicitness are found throughout life and not only in the human domain. Interactivism emphasizes that many of the processes and principles of human growth and development do not simply appear *ex nihilo* with human beings. Rather, they are emergent, at times in systems much simpler than human beings, but often manifested with the greatest complexity in people.

A simple example of implicitness of meaning presupposition is found in the sentence 'The King of France is bald'. Upon inspection, we notice that this statement contains presuppositions which may or may not be true, such as France has a king. In this way, sentences can presuppose certain conditions without those conditions being present in the sentence. Furthermore, presuppositions can themselves involve presuppositions. Implicitness can iterate. In this case, 'France has a king' presupposes that 'France exists and is a nation'.

Meanings, values and presuppositions are all implicit in our behavior. Children learn patterns of interaction over time within their family system. Such patterns are an opening up or closing off of certain ways of being, initially behaviors and emotions, but eventually, through development, thought. As a result these patterns are what Heidegger (1962) terms 'structures of care' that reveal ways of 'governing' the self (Foucault, 1986; Rose, 1996). These patterns presuppose a variety of assumptions about the nature of the world, others and the child that coalesce as *moral visions*: implicit understandings of what the self is as well as notions of the good person and good life (Christopher, 1996, 2004). Traditional accounts within psychology commonly make the assumption that the child's representation of reality (self, others and the world) as well as various goals, values and meanings (both personal and cultural) are present within the mind of the child as some sort of mental content. Social cognitive accounts, for instance, focus on the cognitive structures thought to underlie behavior, judgment, affect and action (Cervone & Shoda, 1999; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Mischel, 2004). In most psychodynamic accounts the content is unconscious, but still reified, treated as a mental 'thing'. Another frequent assumption

within psychology, as mentioned before, is that this mental content originally comes from outside the child and needs to be internalized or in some other way taken into the mind of the child. Let us consider a specific example of how these issues can be dealt with through the concept of implicitness.

Consider for a moment an infant raised in a household with an emotionally volatile father and a depressed and withdrawn mother. Such an infant in response to unpredictable emotional outbursts and lack of mirroring might develop a visceral type of self-protection. This protection might manifest itself bodily as a chronic form of gastro-intestinal tension. Conceivably such an infant might rarely have moments of felt safety and security. Such an infant would likely learn quickly to always be vigilant but at same time to maintain a 'low profile' to avoid causing emotional turmoil. Cries for assistance would not only elicit suboptimal responses, but could even be dangerous.

The patterns of interaction the infant has learned have layers of presuppositions, just like the sentence 'The King of France is Bald'. And just like the sentence, these presuppositions do not need to be explicitly present; they can remain implicit. For example, the vigilance that the infant has learned presupposes that life and people, particularly men, are dangerous. Also presupposed is that his needs are less important than others; they are trumped by his father's need to be emotionally explosive and his mother's need to be disengaged. Also presupposed in the infant's learned interactions are the value of self-denial, self-control and compliance over emotional dependency, succor and need. Indeed, and more broadly, such interactive patterns between the parents and the infant can presuppose a vision of what is to be a good person and to live the good life. To borrow Geertz's (1973) famous phrase, patterns of interaction that children learn from infancy on involve extensive 'webs of significance': presuppositions or meanings concerning the nature of the self, others and the whole of life.

Clearly such an infant is 'learning' from this environment, but we see a need to consider more precisely the nature and ontological status of this learning. Through trial and error such a child has learned that his basic needs for intimacy, security, warmth, are not adequately attended to, which presupposes that they are relatively unimportant. Obviously, the learning is not mediated by a conscious, thinking subject. The child's learning does not take the form of propositional knowledge, or the kinds of thoughts, beliefs or self-talk presupposed by cognitive therapies. Infants and young children are not cognitively capable of having the kind of explicit cognitions necessary to conceive of such things as self-control, self-esteem and independence. So then what is

their ontological status? How do we model both what's been learned and how what has been learned comes to influence personality?

Within social-cognitive theories, with which we are generally sympathetic, knowledge structures, including representations and beliefs about self and others, expectancies and goals play a critical role in explaining personality (Cervone & Shoda, 1999). With cognitive maturation these types of representations, beliefs and goals can be consciously known. Often, however, such cognitive structures are not known, or, in the case of young children, can't be known, and this is where we run into conceptual challenges. How do we theorize about knowledge structures, beliefs and goals that aren't conscious or developmentally available?

Often this issue is ignored. Other times the approach has been to make them implicit, automatic or tacit. At one level this approach satisfies the problem. But at another, the word 'implicit' in such usages doesn't really explain anything; it merely indicates that they are analogous to those consciously known mental processes. It is in this way that Turner was critical of social practice theories for glossing over the assumption that tacit or implicit beliefs or goals are like regular (explicit or conscious) beliefs or goals, only implicit—analogy is used instead of explanation. In other words, labeling mental processes as tacit or implicit may be descriptively useful, but ultimately it doesn't provide a dynamic explanation of what actually takes place. The question is what is foundational. Our point again is not to question the existence of knowledge structures. Clearly, knowledge structures exist, but we believe they are emergent in development. We suggest that the notion of implicit presupposition provides an ontology for what is learned in such cases that avoids the problems of reification into some sort of explicit contents, with associated assumptions of adult-level cognitive capacities in very young infants.

The interactivist notion of implicitness guards against prematurely attributing these kinds of implicit presuppositions to specific cognitive elements (such as internal representations, beliefs, schemata, etc.) that might exist in the child's mind. A variety of presuppositions or tacit meanings may be implicitly present in the infant's way of being in the world, and may be identified by outside observers, such as teachers or therapists. But they are implicit presuppositions: the infant and child are not initially cognitively capable of having *any* of the explicit cognitions that would be necessary to conceive of such things as self-control, self-esteem and independence. We are not implying that psychologists necessarily make the assumption that representations, beliefs, and so on, need to be conscious. It is rather that the way that

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these notions are used in our theories typically fails to provide a sense of what these could be other than our more familiar notions of them as conscious elements or content.

Instead, the child's learning takes the form of an inner distancing of himself from emotional longings and an external distancing of himself from people and situations where such needs might be most vulnerable. He learns viscerally and through his emotions not to get too close to the kind of needs that he's learned from experience do not lead to satisfaction. The learning is evident in the patterns of behavior that the child begins to adopt. What are learned are dynamic patterns of functioning, not propositional 'beliefs' or explicit representations.

The cognitive abilities of infants and children have a number of important ramifications regarding implicitness. Cognitively, infants and young children are unable to differentiate the properties of the current environment from alternative environments. They are also unable to differentiate which agents contribute what to any given interaction. And they only progressively differentiate a specific sense of themselves in a specific context from the totality of their being. As a result, interactive patterns involve meanings or presuppositions that are not simply about the child or specific others at specific times. Rather, they are true for the whole of existence, the whole world the child knows. Children are pre-reflective players in a game of life that is the only game of life they know. The interactive patterns and social practices they learn afford ways of being, but these ways of being are not restricted to the specific contexts that they have thus far experienced, they are implicitly about the entire world—an infant's *lack* of differentiation of this situation from others, and of these caregivers from others, *implicitly presupposes* totality, and this occurs without any explicit cognitions or cognitive capabilities on the part of the infant.

As of late, the 'practice turn' has come to influence a number of social science disciplines (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & Savigny, 2001). Bourdieu in particular has been widely influential in helping social scientists to discern a level of agency that is pre-reflexive but imbued with meanings, values and relations of power. The notion of implicitness provides a way of specifically modeling how the social practices in which we are immersed influence us without our having to be aware at all of this influence. Implicitness demonstrates that we live *on the basis* of meaningful self-interpretations and interpretations of life, without our needing ever to *form* interpretations or consciously know what these interpretations are. Moreover, the account of implicitness obviates the need for these interpretations to be mental objects or

things. This level of agency, recognized by both hermeneutic and pragmatic social theorists, is prior to the creation of sharp boundaries that separate the person from external influences. Implicit in the engagement in social practices, and implicit in being-in-the-world, are a multitude of cultural values, assumptions and meanings. The notion of implicitness is thus generally congruent with the accounts of engaged and embodied agency that theorists like Heidegger, Dewey and Merleau-Ponty bring to light. The interactivist notion of implicitness helps to deepen these accounts by clarifying how cultural values, meanings and assumptions are implicit within these forms of agency, such as being-in-the-world. In this way interactivism also helps to guard against what critics such as Flanagan (1990) see as an overly cognitive tendency in some narrative, dialogical and hermeneutic accounts to assume that 'all self-comprehension, all self-interpretation is linguistic' (p. 51). To re-emphasize the point, culture in the interactivist view is not some sort of 'thing' or independent variable that then needs to be reconnected to the self. Culture is instead always present, but frequently only implicitly.

Representation

Representation has been a perplexing problem throughout Western history. Many attempts have been made to model representation in some sort of factual relationship, such as the impression of a signet ring in wax or the chemical changes induced when light strikes the retina. Each such attempt yields multiple further issues to be addressed, and attempts to address those often generate still further issues, producing a labyrinth of problems. For example, if representation is constituted in some sort of informational relationship between brain states and that which is represented, then the same form of informational relationship would not only hold with, say, the coffee cup that is to be represented, it would also hold with the light patterns in the air, the quantum activities in the surface of the cup, the cup a minute ago, and so on. Which of these informational relationships is the representational one? All such attempts, however, have ultimately foundered on the problem of representational normativity: the property of being true or false of what is being represented. In the informational case, to continue the example, if the crucial informational relationship (whatever it is supposed to be) holds, then the representation exists and it is correct, while if that informational relationships does not exist, then the representation does not exist. These are the only two possibilities, yet a third condition remains to

be modeled: the representational exists but it is incorrect. The problem of representation is central to modeling psychological phenomena, but its problematic nature is seldom understood, and its problems are certainly not solved in the general literature.

Nevertheless, representation is an essential concept within psychology that is generally taken for granted. Models of representation are usually based on assumptions about structural isomorphism or informational or some other form of correspondence between the external world and our internal representations, reinforcing the dualistic tendency in much of Western thought to think of internal and external divides. There is a predominance of visually based metaphors in which our representations are treated as mental snapshots or pictures whose function is to mirror external reality (Bickhard, 1980, 1995, 1999; Bickhard & Richie, 1983; Bickhard & Terveen, 1995; Rorty, 1979). Although our theories of representation and perception are more sophisticated than Locke's *tabula rasa* or Plato's and Aristotle's signet ring pressing its form into wax, contemporary theories still rely on the same basic ontological and epistemological commitments (Bickhard, 1992a; Bickhard & Richie, 1983).

We are certainly capable of having mental images and memories of such images. However, these forms of representations are not foundational. Mental images are not the building blocks of representation and cognition. They can only emerge after more basic forms of representation are developed (Nelson, 1992; Squire, 2004; Tulving, 1985a, 1985b). We have argued elsewhere that there are different types of representation and that image-based representation is a highly developed form that only emerges with age. Such considerations are essential especially when we consider the types of representation available to the child of his or her environment, particularly the family constellation (see Bickhard, 1980, 1992a, 1992c, 2003; Bickhard & Richie, 1983; Bickhard & Terveen, 1995 for detailed arguments against standard correspondence-encodingist-approaches to representation).

Given that problems exist with standard approaches to representation, what might an alternative look like? For an initial and partial illustration of the differences between interactivism and standard approaches to representation, consider the example of a representation of a living room. A standard approach would consider our representation of the living room to be our mental image of the room and its contents, or some similar structure of correspondences, much like a photograph. Interactivism, in contrast, begins with the assumption that representations are functional and based on the types of interactions that we can have with our environment. In this case, our most

fundamental representations differentiate the room into what types and organizations of actions are possible in the room and with the objects in the room. They are constituted as functional anticipations of organizations of interactive potentiality. Such an understanding of representation takes on more meaning when we realize that the infant learns about the world by experimenting with actions, in a trial-and-error manner, to determine the nature of the world. It is through action that the child constructs knowledge of objects and what can be done with them (Bickhard, 1992a; Chapman, 1988; Piaget, 1985, 2001). Thus, a child's initial representation of a chair would not be a visual image but, instead, the accumulated knowledge that chairs can impede crawling in certain directions, can eventually be climbed on, and can even be knocked over to startle others. Within interactivism our most foundational form of representations are the possible interactions afforded us at any given moment.[2]

The interactivist model of representation relates directly to the notion of implicitness: what is most fundamentally represented, what can be true or false about the organism's (anticipations of) interactions, are the implicitly presupposed conditions under which anticipated interactive possibilities are in fact possible. That is, anticipations of possible interactions presuppose that 'this' is the right kind of environment for those interactions: they presuppose that the environmental conditions under which those interactions are *in fact* possible are true of this current interactive environment. Such presupposed conditions are implicit, not explicit. And they can be true or false (Bickhard, 1993, 2003).

According to the interactivist model, the child comes to learn in his or her environment, the family, what types of interaction are successful, and it is from the accumulated experiences of what is successful and what is not that the child forms his or her personality. The interactive approach stresses not the specific memories of events but rather patterns of functioning in a larger environment. One significance of this view of representation, which lies at the heart of the interactivist model, is that it highlights the way that representation is another aspect of a culturally situated, engaged and embodied agency. Representation from the onset presupposes cultural values, meanings and assumptions because agency, from the onset, presupposes cultural values, meanings and assumptions. Culture is not analogous, in this view, to some sort of secondary quality that is a mere subjective coloring of underlying perceptions of reality. Instead, culture is infused in our ability to represent the world—there is no way to fully disentangle the two, because they are not two separate 'things'.

Variation and Selection Constructivism

Variation and selection constructivism, the next element of inter-activism relevant to a cultural metatheory, provides an alternative account of the persistent influence on the person of early experiences and the kinds of cultural meanings we have suggested are implicit in social practices as well as representation. There are three general ways in which the persistence and stability of personality tends to have been dealt with in mainstream psychology. Most commonly the problem is ignored—the stability is attributed to various cognitive elements like beliefs or representations that are then assumed to have stability and persistence. Moreover, no account is typically offered of how beliefs and cognitive elements that can emerge in later development are, or could be, grounded on earlier infant experiences—an age during which such sophisticated representations are not cognitively possible. Second, internalization models are suggested whereby the external events are taken in by the child to form internal representations or working models. However, working models and internalized representations are often vague metaphors that reify and distort psychological process. For instance, working models are treated as a kind of mind 'thing' or substance that mediates external events (like parental care) with personality development. And once internalization has occurred, the internalized content is assumed to continue to exert its influence in an unproblematic manner. The third, more recent response is appro-priation models—these models correctly, in our view, make reference to the child learning to take over various social practices. However, appropriation models often do not fully develop or explain what appropriation actually is or how it works.

Variation and selection constructivism helps to account for the persistence of early experiences, or what Cervone and Shoda (1999) call the 'coherence of personality', in process terms without resorting to the limitations discussed above. At the same time this means that variation and selection constructivism helps to explain the persistence or trans-mission of the cultural meanings which are implicit in the early experi-ences. Variation and selection constructivism is also an account of learning. As we shall explore, variation and selection retention models, so long as they are recursive, are inherently historistic—they involve constructive trajectories in which the history makes a difference in what can be constructed next. Passive mind models do not have this property: the world presses itself into the mind independently of whatever else has pressed into that mind. Historicity is intrinsic for recursive variation and selection retention models.

The infant and child's most basic mode of experiencing life is not due to influences and experiences being impressed upon the mind; inter-action systems cannot be impressed by the world into a passive mind. Rather, it is through construction, learning which types and organizations of actions are successful and which unsuccessful, that patterns of functioning develop and form the foundation of personality. The child's understandings of the family system, and later the larger world, are acquired actively, not through passive imprintings. If the success or appropriateness of these constructions is not already known, then error is inevitable, and constructions must function as variations to be checked out, to be subject to selection by how functional or dysfunctional they are in further interactions. An action-based model of representation forces a variation and selection constructivism. It forces an evolutionary epistemology (D.T. Campbell, 1974).

In learning the culturally imbued dynamics of the family, the child cannot know in advance what actions and responses will be successful. Consequently, the child proceeds in a trial-and-error manner, or, more precisely, engaging in a variation and selection constructivism. Each 'trial' begins with the procedures used in other successful interactions. Should older procedures prove unsuccessful, the child will create and try modifications of what was previously tried (variations). This process builds on past experiences through a process of differentiating what works in which type of situation and modifying past strategies to create new procedures. Patterns of successful interactions (constructions) provide the foundation for future interactions. Moreover, past constructions intrinsically impose an inherent constraint of coherence. Past constructions form the context to which new variations must adapt. If a new construction contradicts the previous basic constructions, it is not likely to survive, even if such a construction is successful in other contexts. For example, if a person's most basic goal is to be liked by everyone, then a later goal such as accumulating money at all cost is inconsistent and may be abandoned when it conflicts with the person's primary goal. As a result, consistency of a new response with prior selections will be an internal selection pressure. Thus, the stability of our personality occurs because we use responses from past experiences when we encounter a new environment; even when these past responses are unsuccessful they nevertheless are the resources from which we create new variations or new trials to deal with the current situation. These persistencies also result from the selection pressure to fit with what is already present. Past constructions, then, are both the resources out of which new constructions are made and the framework within which new constructions must fit.

The relationships between old constructions and new is both conservative and enabling. It is conservative in that the constructive potentialities are constrained by available resources and the current framework; it is enabling in that previous constructions can offer more powerful resources for further constructions. Learning to learn is a genuine phenomenon. In no case, however, is the constraint a determining one: many possible constructions, variants on available system organizations, combinations, and so on, are always possible. Novelty is always possible, especially in the interactive model in which new representation and cognition can be emergent in system organization, and is not restricted to combinations of representational atoms somehow already available (Bickhard, 1991).

In a similar way a variation and selection constructivism helps to account for the general stability of social groups and culture while still allowing for the possibility of social change. Bourdieu (1990) declared: 'I can say that all of my thinking started from this point: how can behavior be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?' (p. 65). The notion of a variation and selection constructivism mated to the interactivist account of representation helps to resolve this core issue by showing that so-called 'rules' are actually the in-built conservatism of learning through a variation and selection constructivism. The historicity of variation and selection retention models provides potential constraints on cultural history: the generational flow of culture must be of a sort that individual-level variation and selective retention processes can handle, and, in general, handle relatively easily. If the kids can't pick it up, it either disappears or is significantly altered. This has been called 'the problem of generations'.

The evolutionary epistemology that is forced by an action framework holds both within individuals and across societies and cultures. Sources and potentialities for change, as well as for constraint, occur in restrictions on and enablings of possible variations, and in regularities and changes in the selection processes functioning in society. Exploring such quasi-evolutionary commonalities across biology, the person, and societies and cultures is fascinating and powerful, but we must leave this thread for another potential contribution from the interactivist model.

To summarize, if representation is thought to be impressed into a passive mind, akin to the ring's impression in wax, then a model of some sort of transduction and induction (and internalization and interiorization) is motivated. If representation is understood to be emergent in systems of interaction, however, then there is less likelihood of thinking that competent interactive systems can be impressed

by the environment into passive minds. Interaction systems, thus representation, thus cognition, must be internally constructed, actively constructed.

Levels of Knowing

Interactivism involves a developmental process ontology. Inter-activism's developmental framework helps to clarify some of the disputes and confusions regarding agency in contemporary psycho-logical, philosophical, sociological, political and anthropological discourse. One of the important theoretical tools for doing so is the model of Knowing Levels. Through the Knowing Levels, interactivism sees agency as distributed across a variety of levels of awareness or consciousness. In short, we are always *both* being-in-the-world and developmentally capable of having the kind of self-conscious, self-directed agency epitomized by figures such as Descartes and Sartre. The Knowing Levels refer not just to knowledge and representation, but also to agency and the self, and to goals, values and culture. Con-sequently the Knowing Levels may make a significant contribution to overturning the dualisms that plague Western psychology. The crucial characteristic that the Knowing Levels introduce is the possibility of making properties and phenomena that are implicit at one Knowing Level explicit, or at least partially explicit, at higher Knowing Levels. We will consider how the Knowing Levels have implications not only for knowledge and representation, but also for goals, values, agency and culture.

The type of engaged and embodied agency brought to light by hermeneutic, phenomenological, pragmatic and practice theorists are characteristic of what interactivism terms Knowing Level 1. Knowing Level 1 is the form of knowing and awareness available to infants and young children. It is our most basic and fundamental way of knowing and representing and corresponds to Heidegger's (1962) being-in-the-world and the kind of agency that Dewey (1922) saw as fundamental. At this first Knowing Level, knowledge is constituted by the ability to interact with the world. Initially, our most basic representations and the knowledge based on them are procedural. Knowledge forms through trial and error, engaging in a variation and selection con-structivism. All knowledge at Knowing Level 1 is unreflective and pre-self-conscious. At Level 1, all knowledge is implicit. The child or infant has knowledge of the world, can represent the world in ways that allow successful interactions, but at this stage the infant is not yet cognitively capable of knowing what he or she knows. While the child

forms increasingly more differentiated understandings of the world, no self-aware, self-directed sense of personal agency exists at this point in development. In a sense there is no clear separation between the child and his or her environment. And simultaneously there is no clear boundary between the child's knowledge and sense of agency. Representing at this stage is inherent in a self-in-interaction. Thought is 'in interaction'. The 'self' is totally engaged and totally embodied; it is implicit in an engaged and embodied interactive being.

The process of development from the interactivist perspective involves the possibility of qualitative shifts in awareness. These shifts entail the ability to abstract from or transcend the patterns of inter-actions in which we are currently engaged. This prepares us to move to a new level of awareness from which we can reflect upon what has previously been implicit. This underlying dynamic of change in ascending Knowing Levels is termed 'reflective abstraction' and is akin to Piaget's similarly named notions (R.L. Campbell, 2001; Piaget, 2001). This process is defined in terms of the 'the relationship between adjacent levels of knowing . . . in which properties resident in a given level, implicit in the organization or functioning of that level, are explicitly known at the next higher level' (R.L. Campbell & Bickhard, 1986, p. 85). Through this process of reflective abstraction, a child can develop the ability to differentiate from and represent what he or she was initially immersed in. With normal development, the child begins to reflectively abstract from the patterns of interaction and social prac-tices that he or she has learned, that, in a sense, have constituted the child as an agent. At about age four this process solidifies in the capacity for a qualitatively different form of knowing, what is termed Knowing Level 2 (Bickhard & Campbell, 1996; R.L. Campbell, Christopher, & Bickhard, 2002). Evidence for the second Knowing Level includes the development of metacognition (Astington, Harris, & Olson, 1988; Bartsch & Wellman, 1995; Flavell, Green, & Flavell, 1986; Perner, 1991, 1992; Wellman, Cross, & Watson, 2001) and of autobiographical memory (Bickhard, 1992b; Nelson, 1992, 1994).

At Knowing Level 2 aspects of Knowing Level 1 can be explicitly known and understood. To return to Heidegger, the craftsman moves to Knowing Level 2 when he recognizes he's lacking the appropriate tool, and steps out of the flow of interaction to create a world of object, a world of potentially 'right' tools. At Knowing Level 1 the child cannot know him- or herself. The child does also not know that he or she knows the environment. At Knowing Level 2, the child can begin to explicitly know the self. The self can begin to become an object of knowledge. The 'self-concept' occurs with Knowing Level 2; it is only

implicit in Knowing Level 1. With Knowing Level 2, children can also begin to explicitly differentiate aspects of their environment. The kinds of self-beliefs and self-statements that can be spoken to others and ourselves is an example of Knowing Level 2. It requires Level 2 to be able to articulate (even in a rudimentary way) who we are, how we're different from other people, and what is important to us. One implication of this is that the kind of self-talk or thought distortions, such as 'I should always be in control', that are so central to cognitive therapy cannot be ontologically basic, and as a result cognitive therapy theories end up conflating higher Knowing Levels with Level 1. This can lead to the need for what Ellis (1962) so clearly demonstrated as 'persuasion', helping clients acknowledge that 'what they really must have been thinking or saying to themselves was . . . .'

In discussing Knowing Level 1 we mentioned how there was no sharp divide between agency and knowledge, representations and culture. There is also no sharp divide between goals and values and the self. Originally the self doesn't *have* values in the way that our language of 'values clarification' or 'value management' suggests. Instead, the self *is* values. This is what Heidegger (1962) meant when he wrote that concern, care and signification are presupposed in being-in-the-world and that our lives are structures of care. Similarly, Pirsig (1991) maintained that '*Between* the subject and the object lies the value', meaning that value exists before the emergence of subjects and objects; even further, that the creation of subject and object is a result of the value of undertaking that creation, and as a result 'Values are *more* empirical, in fact, than subjects or objects' (p. 66).

The infant or toddler interacts with the world in ways that tend to be organized around goals. These goals might involve representations, such as a goal of retrieving the toy left in the next room. Other goals may not entail representations, such as the blood sugar level set point that may induce looking for food if it gets too low. In the later case, all that is needed is a detection of the set point condition(s) and the appropriate interactive functional relationships to those set points. In particular, set points, such as blood sugar level, do not have to be represented. And even in the case of represented goals, such as the toy, the representation *functions* as an interactive set point: it is not known reflectively.

With the emergence of Knowing Level 2 the child can begin to reflectively abstract from these goals. This can allow the child to begin to consciously know what these goals are and organize them around higher-order goals. For instance, the child we described earlier with an emotionally volatile father may develop an explicit higher-order goal

of not upsetting his father. Such a higher-level goal can then help the child to sift through and prioritize Level 1 goals. The child at any given moment may simultaneously have a variety of Level 1 goals like playing with his father's stereo system and avoiding conflict and trying to engage his mother. A Level 2 goal can help the child learn to subordinate or de-select those Level 1 goals, like playing with the stereo, that he's learned are most likely to provoke his father.

Reflective abstraction is a potentially unbounded psychological process. This means that the Knowing Levels are also potentially unbounded (R.L. Campbell & Bickhard, 1986). Aspects of Level 2 can be known by a third Knowing Level, Level 3 by a Level 4, and on. Let's consider what this means in terms of the nature of self and identity.

As we discussed, at the first level the child does not differentiate between his or her being and a sense of self; the child has a self, but it is implicit. At Knowing Level 2 the child can begin to know his or her self, have a sense of his or her self, and thereby an implicit self-representation. With the emergence of the third Knowing Level, this implicit self-representation can be consciously known and made explicit. This allows the person a self-reflexiveness from which to 'compare his or her self to a system of alternatives, judge it against values, and construct it in accordance with those judgments' (R.L. Campbell & Bickhard, 1986, p. 119). This is the level when people begin to engage in the process Erikson (1963) termed identity formation. The child who is operating at Knowing Level 2 lives out an identity that others can clearly recognize and describe, but psychologically the child does not *have* an identity. At Level 3, however, the child can begin to *have* an identity. This means that the child can begin to know his or her identity and compare it to real or imagined others. The third Knowing Level gives us the capacity to form explicit evaluations and judgments about who we *are* and who we *should be*, and to form goals for self-transformation. Level 3 is also the level at which we can form meta-values or values about values. Research suggests that Level 3 begins to emerge from 9 to 11 years of age (R.L. Campbell & Bickhard, 1986).

With the advent of higher Knowing Levels, Knowing Level 1 does not diminish its importance. While a stage theory, the Knowing Levels are not global cognitive structures that require simultaneous or near simultaneous levels of development across all domains of the person's life with attendant leaving behind of previous stages. Piaget's notion that each stage of development is characterized by a distinct type of cognitive structure was pushed much further by his followers, such as Kohlberg (1984) and Kegan (1982), who saw them as overarching 'horizontal' structures that simultaneously apply to many different

domains of knowledge. But Piaget himself regarded stages as ways to classify instances of thinking, not whole children. And as Chapman (1988) observed, most psychologists have seriously misrepresented Piaget by attributing to him the claim that 'cognitive stage development is inherently linked with age and that the concept of structure implies synchrony in development across different areas of content' (p. 2). This misreading of Piaget has bequeathed to us the problematic assumption that development requires a high degree of age synchrony across tasks and that stage transitions must happen in tight synchrony across domains.

The Knowing Levels are instead a potentiality that may or may not be realized, and may be differentially realized in different domains. Most often, higher levels of knowing are operative in some areas of our life and not in others. Knowing Level 1 is always in service, always ontologically primary; the other levels are in a sense supplemental to it. One consequence is that in interactivism there is an inherent limitation with regard to how much of ourselves we can consciously and self-reflexively know. In this way interactivism is similar to philosophical hermeneutics. As Heidegger (1962) described, we are 'proximally and for the most part' being-in-the-world. As a result we can often best know ourselves 'not by inward turning and introspection' in the manner of Descartes, 'but by catching sight of ourselves as we are engaged and preoccupied in everyday contexts' (Guignon, 1984, p. 232). These positions are supported by recent psychological research on self-knowledge which contends that introspection can not provide a 'direct pipeline' to the adaptive unconscious or implicit cognitive processes (see Wilson & Dunn, 2004, for a summary).

Moreover, we can never be fully aware of ourselves because there is a built-in limitation due to egocentricity. There is always a highest level from which we may consider ourselves and our world, but which itself cannot be explicitly considered, unless there is a development of yet a higher level of perspective (which can then be engaged but not explicitly considered). In other words, any highest level that we operate from relies on implicit presuppositions that can't be known until a next higher level emerges.

By de-centering but not discarding a more classical sense of agency, interactivism contends that who we are, in a sense, is distributed across the Knowing Levels. We are both the sense of self that is implicit in the behavioral choices we make on an ongoing basis and we are who we consciously think we are and identify with. The higher Knowing Levels ebb and flow out of the ground of interactive functioning with the world. The higher Knowing Levels are not stages that one acquires

and then remains within. They are shifting perspectives and outlooks, not reified properties that we attain and hold on to or have. Reflective abstraction is an ongoing process, a potentiality that emerges and fades away. We can become self-reflexive or conscious of features of the environment, but inevitably this awareness fades into the background of our immersion in the world. It is difficult not to reify these higher Knowing Levels as a structure or stage that has a kind of permanence. Perhaps we might instead think of reflective abstraction as somewhat like a kind of attention that can illuminate certain features out of a background. And since reflective abstraction is a stage model based on process instead of reified structures, as we shift the focus and direction of our attention, what had been illuminated fades away.

There is also a tendency for us to assume that higher means better. Higher Knowing Levels must be better because they are more advanced, more developed. The interactivist model cautions against this bias. Higher Knowing Levels are indeed more advanced, and because of the increased capacity for reflection and abstraction they require, they are more developed. But this does not necessarily mean the higher levels are better; they do not, for instance, guarantee access to true or better perceptions or values. Shweder and colleagues (Shweder et al., 1998) remind us that there are 'developmental advantages of tacit understanding, habit, and unreflective but fluent skills' (p. 880). Higher Knowing Levels entail more complexity, but they can also be based on distorted presuppositions, thus leading to more deformation. Dostoevsky's underground man offers a torturous example of some of the perils and pitfalls that can accompany higher Knowing Levels (Dostoevsky, 2004). Summarizing a sizable body of research, Wilson and Dunn (2004) conclude that introspection frequently warps our understanding of the reasons for our feelings and attitudes and can have a variety of negative consequences such as lower satisfaction with choices, lower ability to predict our own behavior, and lower correlations between expressed feelings and later behavior (cf. Neisser, 1988). Thus, higher Knowing Levels make possible multifarious new representations, values, judgments, and so on—including new errors of such representations, values and judgments.

Interactivism and Culture

One of the most important aspects of the Knowing Levels model is that it has implications for how we think about culture. If, as previously argued, it is a distortion to separate such 'things' as the person, representation, values and culture, then culture also exists at different levels

of knowing. Culture is always present and always implicit at Knowing Level 1. At the higher Knowing Levels we can potentially begin to recognize and possibly differentiate from the cultural patterns we are immersed in. We can begin to explicitly represent our culture and that of others. However, even the patterns of thinking at higher Knowing Levels have implicit within them cultural values, meanings and assumptions. This view reinforces Gadamer's (1975) position regarding the nature of objectivity and prejudgment. Our ability to gain some critical perspective or distance on ourselves will always be conducted from some other set of prejudices. As Warnke (1987) aptly summarized:

> Human beings . . . will always be conditioned by prejudices and elements of their tradition over which they have no control. This is not to say that individuals will be unable to see through any of their prejudices . . . [but] every dissolution of one prejudice depends upon a conscious or unconscious reliance on a myriad of other prejudices, and . . . every process of illumination or self-enlightenment rests on a complementary darkening or obscuring of other possible modes of self-understanding. . . . Hence, there is no one exhaustively correct analysis of the meaning of an action or expression. (p. 123)

There is consequently no culture-free or culture-neutral way of acting, feeling or thinking.

Heidegger (1962) observed that our lives are structures of care. Within interactivism this kind of existential care is expressed at Knowing Level 1 in terms of the kinds of behavioral choices we make, the kinds of emotional reactions we have, the kinds of interactive patterns we've developed, and the kinds of social practices within which our lives unfold. There is no need within interactivism for our implicit goals and values at this stage to be consistent or harmonious—we can be pulled and drawn in multiple directions. With the emergence of higher Knowing Levels, more consciously known goals and values develop. At each level of knowing, a variety of goals and values exist, and these exist in various states of concordance and conflict. In this way interactivism is in accord with dialogical views of the self (Hermans, 2001; Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Richardson, Rogers, & McCarroll, 1998). With the addition of higher Knowing Levels, the complexity increases exponentially as the various goals and values at one level of knowing may or may not be in accord with what exists at other Knowing Levels. This helps to account for Bhaktin's (Morson & Emerson, 1990) insight that we are constituted by a polyphony of voices. The interactivist contribution is to model how these different voices can exist at different levels of knowing; some are implicit within our behavior and emotions, others are more consciously known, and still others are

implicit in our conscious patterns of thought. By pointing out different levels of knowing, but not situating agency exclusively in either the engaged and embodied agency stressed by Marx, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Vygotsky and Luria or in the thinking subject epitomized by Descartes's *cogito*, interactivism helps to model the complexity that we are.

I–C: An Illustrative Example

One application of these interactivist theories is in the controversy within cross-cultural and cultural psychology regarding individualism and collectivism, or what Markus and Kitayama (1991) define on the psychological level as independent and interdependent self-construals. Despite the popularity of the individualism–collectivism (I–C) construct in cross-cultural research, the work of Markus and Kitayama and I–C more broadly have been subject to a number of critiques (e.g. Lindholm, 1997; Matsumoto, 1999; Takano & Osaka, 1999; Voronov & Singer, 2002). For example, Matsumoto (1999) contends that there is virtually no substantive empirical evidence to support Markus and Kitayama's theory. Indeed, he concluded that the 'evidence to date, therefore, overwhelmingly indicates that the Japanese are not more collectivistic than Americans; if anything, in some cases the Japanese are more individualistic than Americans' (p. 298). In a similar but independent review, Takano and Osaka (1999) powerfully argued after reviewing fifteen empirical studies that the 'common view' which maintains that Japanese are more collectivistic than Americans is on 'unexpectedly flimsy ground' and is not supported by research. They contend that the 'overwhelming support for the common view can be explained by a combination of well-known cognitive biases such as the fundamental attribution error' (p. 331).

We believe that interactivism can contribute to this debate by helping to interpretively situate the empirical findings that have been used to question Markus and Kitayama's theory. From the Knowing Levels perspective, self-report pencil-and-paper questionnaires and measures can only access Knowing Level 2 or higher. Knowing Level 1, the ontological ground of being, cannot be tapped by a questionnaire. If 'individualism and collectivism do not exist [we would add solely] within people's minds but, rather, manifest themselves in people's behavior which is determined by the context' (Voronov & Singer, 2002, p. 474), then research relying solely upon self-report measures is methodologically limited.

From the Knowing Levels perspective, the empirical studies that Matsumoto marshals provide evidence that at higher Knowing Levels people from Japan tend to respond to specific self-report questions in ways that researchers have determined are characteristic of individualistic cultures and independent self-construals. If the ontology of the person is more complex (i.e. the person has multiple levels of knowing and agency), then the critical question is what do these responses to psychological measures mean? Or, put another way, which form of data do we privilege? The short answer, we contend, is that *both* the empirical data which suggest that the Japanese may not be so collectivistic *and* the 'common view' which suggests that they may be are correct. The interactivist view lends itself to integrating the data from empirical psychological studies with the data from other social and historical sciences by situating them in a more nuanced ontology of the person. The answer to the question of whether the Japanese are more or less collectivistic is that it depends upon the level of agency and knowing being examined.

At the outset it is important to acknowledge that the kind of self-representations that are conscious and explicitly held by those in so-called 'collectivistic' cultures are increasingly individualistic. Historically, in China and India important philosophical and religious outlooks have incorporated individualistic orientations (e.g. Jhingran, 1989; Munro, 1985). Over time the dominant cultural ideologies in Asian cultures have changed and now advocate more individualistic values and outlooks. Some of these changes are likely due to the influence of Western culture, modernity and the exposure to Western media. The first author, for instance, while in a small village in Sumatra, witnessed the entire village gathered under an outdoor pavilion to watch a small television. As a study in contrast and irony, an Eggo waffle commercial aired. Punctuated by the individualistic credo 'L'Eggo *my* Eggo', the wily child outwits his elders, parents and older siblings to get the first waffle. It does not require much imagination to consider how such messages may begin to alter the cultural landscape. Nonetheless, psychological research using cultural experts (Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002; Peng, Nisbett, & Wong, 1997) as well as decades of ethnographic, sociological, and historical research suggest that that East Asians are indeed more collectivistic than Americans, at least at Knowing Level 1, the level of social practices.

If we try to cast a wider interpretive net to make sense of Matsumoto's charges, there are a number of issues to consider. First, what meaning do these increasingly popular individualistic values and outlooks have within East Asian cultural contexts? In Taiwan, for

instance, self-reliance, a stereotypically individualistic character trait, is considered a virtue. However, when the importance of self-reliance is explored, more collectivistic or communitarian justifications are often provided: for instance, self-reliance is important to avoid becoming a burden on one's family (Christopher, 1999; Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999). To fully understand the meaning of responses to a self-report questionnaire, individual items must be interpreted within a cultural context of meaning. Accurate linguistic translation are no guarantee that items will retain a common meaning as implicit presuppositions provide the context for understanding and responding to psychological measures (see also Peng et al., 1997).

The process of articulating and espousing certain values and outlooks always rests on a more foundational level of being (R.L. Campbell et al., 2002). The kinds of engaged and embodied agency that are involved in cultural practices may or may not be consistent with a person's consciously held and espoused values. Recent psychological research on attitudes, values and motives suggests people apply at least two systems of evaluation: explicit evaluations 'constructed on the basis of information that happens to be accessible at that point in time' (Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000, p. 102) and implicit evaluations that seem to guide largely habitual, routine or automatic behaviors (Banaji & Greenwald, 1995; Greenwald et al., 2002; McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989; Wilson et al., 2000). Germane to the topic of I–C, Hetts, Sakuma and Pelham (1999) found that there was little difference between the self-evaluations of European Americans, Asian Americans and recent Asian immigrants at the explicit level; while at the implicit level, those of Asian background had neutral, ambivalent or negative associations with individual (as opposed to collective) identities. Levels of agency and knowing also help explain why self-reported values often correlate weakly at best with everyday behaviors (Bamberg, Ajzen, & Schmidt, 2003; Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; McClelland et al., 1989). There is also good evidence to suggest that people do not have univalent attitudes and values, making the validity of psychological measures that rely on univalent responses questionable (see also McClosky & Brill, 1983; Spencer-Rodgers, Peng, Wang, & Hou, 2004; Thompson & Zanna, 1995; Wilson et al., 2000). Interactivism again helps to situate such findings about implicit cognitions and ambivalent attitudes within a broader ontology of the person by indicating how the implicit (Knowing Level 1) exists alongside other Knowing Levels and that even within each Knowing Level there are a multiplicity of voices.

While Japanese people may more strongly endorse characteristically individualistic items on a self-report measure, this does not necessarily

indicate much about the kinds of implicit values that guide their day-to-day behavior, emotions and thought. It is possible, and even likely, that people can aspire to a more individualistic orientation and yet still be involved in social practices and patterns of interaction that are quite collectivistic. Indeed, the cultural history of individualism in Western culture has followed exactly this path. Individualism initially emerged as a socio-political tool to break what was perceived as a stultifying hold of church and state on human rights. Yet the extension and application of individualism to new realms of social practice (Knowing Level 1), as evidenced by the civil rights movement, is an ongoing and historically emergent process.

An ontology that allows for levels of agency and knowing helps to make sense of much of the complexity that surrounds cultural interactions. For instance, we may easily find that at the level of discourse we share a considerable amount in common with someone from another culture. Yet when we find out how they actually live their lives, the choices they make, the social practices they participate in, we often discover significant cultural differences. Such discrepancy between levels also seems to exist at broader societal levels. Interestingly, American culture in recent years seems to indicate a popular desire for more connection, more intimacy, more community bonds (e.g. Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Etzioni, 1996). Yet certainly Americans are ambivalent at best about this communitarian movement. While it may be a kind of corrective or balancing out of previous individualistic cultural emphases and a means of enriching our 'first language' of individualism (Bellah et al., 1985), this does not mean that our lifestyle, our interactive patterns and our behavioral choices are necessarily any less individualistic than they have been (e.g. Putnam, 2000). In a somewhat similar manner, McClelland (1985) proposed that psychological measures of needs primarily assess what the individual believes he or she *should* want and not necessarily what he or she *does* want at any given moment (for other critiques of Matsumoto's conclusions, see Heine et al., 2002; Peng et al., 1997).

'Any adequate investigation into the cultural psychology of a person or people', as Shweder et al. (1998) pointed out, 'must characterize the level of consciousness of the mentality that is associated with a particular cultural practice' (p. 880). Multiple methods of assessing I–C and self-construals have been used. However, none of these methods are fully able to access Knowing Level 1. Matsumoto (1999) did advocate the use of qualitative data and recognized 'the possibility of the simultaneous co-existence of seemingly opposing views of the self that contribute to behavior in differing relative degrees depending on the

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specific context of behavior and the psychological domain accessed' (p. 304). He also noted that,

> Given that individuals bring to any context a wide range of psychological constructs—attitudes, opinions, values, self-perceptions, and the like—we need to allow for the possibility that self-representations may differ in each of these areas, and that those differences themselves may differ in each of these areas, and that those differences themselves may differ in different contexts. (p. 305)

Nevertheless, these kinds of considerations appear as afterthoughts that did not inform his interpretation of the empirical data he used to critique Markus and Kitayama. Cross-cultural psychology thus far has lacked an ontology of the self and culture that might situate differing kinds of data. We believe that interactivism can provide a corrective by specifying different levels of agency at which culture exists, and the ramifications this has for research methodology.

Conclusion

In this article we have considered four different aspects of interactivism: implicitness, interactive representation, variation and selection constructivism and the levels of knowing. These four aspects of an interactivist ontology can help to extend and deepen cultural psychology by providing a more robust and powerful metatheory. While there are a number of implications, we will summarize four that seem to us most critical.

First, interactivism models representation in terms of interaction instead of structural isomorphisms. As a result, foundational representation is emergent in an interactive system and precedes the separation of internal and external, subjective and objective, self and culture. Interactive representations are inherent in the construction of social practices. This means that the split between episteme (knowledge) and praxis (practice) is also not foundational. Turner's (1994) argument that practice theories fail to provide a genuine explanatory model of how the realms of the tacit and implicit are communicated and transmitted points to a genuine limitation in existing theories. Interactivism provides an account that avoids these limitations by showing how the implicit realm does not need to be a 'thing' or something with mental content. This obviates the need for a 'transmission' model. Instead, the implicit realm of meanings becomes communicated and passed on through patterns of interaction that are determined by a variation and selection constructivism. This also contributes an alternative to models of internalization.

Second, through the notion of implicitness, interactivism indicates a way of modeling how cultural values and assumptions are entailed in all of human functioning. There is no clear split between culture and the self. Rather, cultural meanings are implicit in the interactive patterns that the child learns are successful in getting basic needs met. Culture remains present in the social practices in which the developing person is increasingly embedded. And it is implicit in the emotions and the various levels of knowing that may be available to the person. As a result, many of the questions regarding the transmission, communication and internalization of culture end up being pseudo-problems, products of conceptual confusion, that disappear with the shift to a non-dualistic process ontology like interactivism.

Third, the self is not a monolithic, or 'monotheistic', entity, to use Hillman's (1975) evocative phrase. In interactivism the self does not need to be consistent and coherent but is instead constituted by values and goals that exist at different levels of awareness in different states of harmony and conflict. By modeling this complexity through the Knowing Levels, interactivism adds depth to Taylor's (1985) contention that we are constituted by a 'diversity of goods'. Inter-activism indicates how this diversity is present both within and across the Knowing Levels, both at the level of engaged and embodied agency and at the levels of awareness accessible to conscious introspection.

Fourth, ontology needs to be considered prior to or alongside of research methods. Interactivism, like philosophical hermeneutics and postmodern thought, rejects the assumption that research and research methods can be objective, value-neutral and culture-free. As we explored with the research on individualism–collectivism, methods always draw upon a particular ontology of the person—in this case the assumption that self-report measures could actually capture human agency and the fullness of the way the self is constituted. An inter-activist ontology provides a metatheoretical framework for interpreting research findings as well as for generating future research that can more adequately model the complexity of human beings.

Notes

1. In this respect, our perspective stands in contrast with Sawyer's (2002) contention that process ontologies maintain that only process is real. In interactivism, structures are real but are not foundational; structures are stabilizations of process.
2. There are strong, though partial, convergences with Gibson's notion of perceiving affordances (Bickhard & Richie, 1983).

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