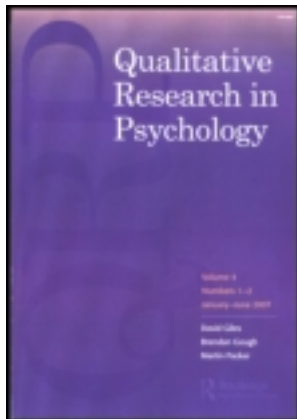


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Fostering Dialogue in Psychology: The Costs of Dogma and Theoretical Preciousness

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Methodological discourse has the potential to divide or unite research psychologists depending on our approach and understanding of each other's work. We note the various ways in which genuine dialogue between qualitative and quantitative researchers has been hampered by dogmatic adherence to certain theoretical and epistemological stances. We point to a corresponding phenomenon in the theoretical orientations of clinical psychologists in which cognitive-behavioral therapy is often polarized with humanistic perspectives regarding the approach to psychotherapy. The nature of such polemics within the field of psychology will be discussed along with an example taken from the authors' personal experience of dialoguing across methodological difference. Finally, we will discuss practical suggestions for how we can increase openness and genuine dialogue between qualitative and quantitative perspectives in psychology.

Keywords: dialogue; discourse; qualitative research; quantitative research; reflexivity

Divisive discourse exists in countless forms in American culture including, but not limited to, the realms of politics, religion, race, sexuality, and social class. In this article, we examine how the academy, with its many forums for polemical debates about validity of theoretical and epistemological perspectives, is another realm of divisive discourse. We will describe examples of such polemics within the field of psychology and focus specifically on the lack of theoretical understanding that frequently exists between researchers who adopt either qualitative or quantitative methods. We examine what is potentially lost to the field of psychology when we do not dialogue across theoretical and epistemological perspectives.

The first author (Zerubavel) has a PhD in clinical psychology and does quantitative research on trauma, particularly sexual victimization and intimate partner violence. She is a psychotherapist who works from the theoretical orientation of third-wave cognitive behavioral (i.e., mindfulness-based) therapy. Zerubavel completed her doctoral training with the second author (Adame), who is a clinical psychologist and now works as an assistant professor. Adame is a qualitative researcher who writes primarily about the psychiatric survivor movement and alternatives to traditional mental health services. She works from the theoretical stance of existential-phenomenology and is influenced by object-relations theory in her clinical work and writing. In graduate school, the authors embarked on a series of in-depth discussions about the overlap and points of divergence between qualitative and quantitative inquiry that emerged from a qualitative writing group. This article developed

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directly out of these conversations and our shared desire to promote respectful dialogue between quantitative and qualitative researchers in psychology. Thus, fittingly, this article is itself the product of dialogue between researchers with ostensibly different backgrounds and perspectives.

We begin by situating the past and current state of what we refer to as *dogmatic discourse* in the field of psychological research. Initially, we focus on the polemics that currently exist (and that we have both experienced first-hand), and we then give an example of how we negotiated our own theoretical divide during the process of editing a manuscript. Finally, we conclude by discussing a way forward: a shift away from *either/or* positions with discourses that espouse “right” and “wrong” approaches and toward a *both/and* stance of genuine dialogue and mutual respect for the different approaches to our work.

In order to be self-reflexive and provide a transparent agenda, we will pause to clearly position our own perspectives with regard to the dogmatic stance. History is rife with stories of contemporary established “truths” being disproved (Leahey 2001). Furthermore, we have both had many experiences throughout our lives of being completely sure of something only to discover that we were wrong. We have learned that even when we may be “certain,” there is still a chance that we are mistaken. As a result of these experiences, both of us promote a stance of pluralism and believe in multiple, small “t” truths. In other words, we think that there are many valid ways of knowing, ways of being, ways of recovering, and ways of changing. We agree that while all people share a physical environment and may be bodily situated alongside one another, all people also have their own experience of reality. Within our value systems, it is of the utmost importance to honor the perspective of the other, and this is done through listening, exploring, and reflection. We believe that by joining together and bridging across our divergent perspectives, we are in fact enacting the dialogue that we advocate.

It is equally important to acknowledge that we are all dogmatic in some ways about our work and our beliefs. We are passionate and have strong convictions about what we consider ethical, good, and just. These beliefs drive the work we do and motivate us to take up topics in our research that are not only professionally but also personally important to us. We are not suggesting that we let go of those convictions that make our research and clinical work meaningful. Instead, we are suggesting a shift in the ways we communicate those beliefs to others. We are trying to move towards a stance of genuine dialogue (Buber 1958, 1965), particularly with those whose beliefs are radically different from our own.

We use Buber’s notion of genuine dialogue in this context to mean that each person engaged in a methodological discussion is respectful and open to learning from another’s perspective yet does not relinquish one’s own standpoint in the process. In the following passage, Buber (1965) describes the pluralistic and dynamic relationship between people and the knowledge that they create based on their shared experiences in the world:

Human life and humanity come into being in genuine meetings. There man learns not merely that he limited by man, cast upon his own finitude, partialness, need of completion, but his own relation to truth is heightened by the other’s different relation to the same truth—different in accordance with his individuation, and destined to take seed and grow differently. (p. 59)

In genuine dialogue we do not try to convert the other person to our perspective, nor do we so rigidly hold to our own point of view that we cannot find common ground. Ideally, we shape new meanings and advance our knowledge about methodology through the dialogue, gaining greater understanding of our own position by recognizing “the other’s different

relation to the same truth.” Buber holds that we may ultimately disagree with the other person’s stance, yet still be open and secure enough in our position to do our best to hear and understand how our partner in dialogue has arrived at such a perspective.

We recognize that the ideals of genuine dialogue are not always met in the ongoing methodological discourses between qualitative and quantitative researchers in the field of psychology. In bringing some of these issues to light, we are not trying to point the blame at either quantitative or qualitative researchers, or at clinicians with mainstream theoretical orientations or alternative ones. Rather, we are trying to emphasize that in order to move forward in dialogue, both sides must be open to participating with openness and respect.

Contextualizing the Issue

The history of the field of psychology is rife with theoretical impasses, debates, and the development of new ways of dialoguing across difference (Baum 1995; Bem & Looren de Jong 2006; Griffin & Phoenix 1994; Rabinowitz & Weseen 2010; Roberts 2002; Rose 2011). Psychology has been conducting itself in a dogmatic manner (Burman 1997; Carson & Fairbairn 2002; DeVault 1999; Josselson 1995; Marecek 2003; Rabinowitz & Weseen 2001), with each faction working to convince the rest of the profession that the particular concepts and methods they are using exemplify “real” psychology or completely ignoring other perspectives. Clearly, there are consequences for being on the “wrong” side of an issue, and many marginalized perspectives are seemingly forced into taking a defensive (and equally divisive) “us versus them” stance in order to legitimize their position. These schisms most predominantly exist in the domains of methodology and theoretical orientation. For example, in some psychology departments, qualitative researchers feel marginalized and invalidated when their colleagues promote the belief that experimental design is more “scientific” and thus carries more weight than interpretive approaches to research. Such dogmatism may easily lead qualitative researchers to feel defensive about the legitimacy and value of their work. Unfortunately, such defensiveness sometimes leads to an equally strong assertion that qualitative researchers have the “correct” ideology. In other cases, qualitative researchers are sometimes all too happy to break off into smaller, insular factions in order to avoid debating with their colleagues altogether. However, in doing so, the opportunity for dialogue is also lost and the divide between the two camps draws wider.

Dogmatic believers are extremely confident about their viewpoints, perceiving their beliefs as “true” and “right”; they seek to promote their beliefs without giving credence to or having tolerance for different perspectives (Rokeach 1960). This is a fundamental aspect of dogmatism: in the presence of other perspectives, one must prove the rightness of the promoted perspective and the failings of the other. Therefore, when holding a perspective dogmatically, *success is contingent upon the undermining of other perspectives*. Also, if those with other perspectives are not convinced, it is assumed that they misunderstood or are “too entrenched” in the other point of view; it often remains outside of the realm of possibility that the perspective of the other may itself be correct. Another manifestation of dogma is the marginalization or ignoring of alternative perspectives. The manifestation of dogma is reflective of power dynamics: the dominant perspective often maintains hegemony by ignoring and overlooking the other perspective, while alternative or nondominant perspectives are more apt to present their “rightness” by working to undermine the hegemony. Dogmatism is often linked to a fundamentalism in which it is rigidly held that there is only one “right” way (Chamberlain 2000). This may occur in various domains, such as in research regarding “correct” or “proper” methodology (i.e., methodology; Chamberlain 2000; Hesse-Biber 2010).

The Authors' Dialogue

In the interest of experientially demonstrating a dialogical stance, we will share an example from our own work together that illustrates some of the concepts we have been discussing. This dialogue represents a movement between the perspectives of the two authors. To facilitate the reader's ability to follow the perspectives, we will present the movement between author perspectives paragraph by paragraph.

Adame: A few years ago I had submitted a manuscript for review on the topic of the use of poetic forms of representation in qualitative research. After several months I received a second revise and resubmit request from the qualitative methods journal to which I had submitted the manuscript and initially felt overwhelmed by the prospect of having to change the form of my argument so much. The main critique was that I had set up a dichotomy (a straw-man argument to be more specific) between traditional prose that has the potential to distance the writer's voice from the text and aesthetic writing forms such as poetry that highlight the co-constructed nature of the participant's and researcher's words. I presented an example of a poem I created based on an interview text to show the creative potential for alternative forms of representation. Yet ironically, I wrote much of the rest of the article in the same traditional prose I was criticizing and lobbied a divisive critique on positivist as opposed to qualitative and aesthetic knowledge bases. I decided that the qualitative writing group that I was participating in would be an ideal place to get feedback on how I might proceed in editing the manuscript. Noga was a member of this group and recalled how she reacted to her reading of my article.

Zerubavel: I experienced a strong internal struggle as I read Alex's paper. On one hand, I felt myself drawn in, as her words were thoughtful and sensitive, respectful of her participant. They elicited in me feelings of embracing the other, understanding, connecting. On the other hand, I experienced jarring moments of distancing and alienation by the form of her argument. The accused other, the villain in this writing, was impersonal and objectifying, and yet. . . *I* was the other. The categories were drawn clearly, and I could not deny that once the lines were drawn, I was on the "wrong" side. I felt defensive and estranged yet still drawn in by the beauty of Alex's work and by my attraction to her perspective. The push/pull dialectic distracted me from the content. The discordant feelings thwarted my ability to enjoy the aesthetic beauty of the work.

Adame: My colleagues agreed with the editor's observation that my argument against traditional prose set up a needlessly antagonist dichotomy between positivist and qualitative forms of knowing and describing research data. Noga made a comment that resonated with the group, which was that my manuscript essentially had an "energy problem." She explained that in its current form I was using too much energy pushing *against* everything that the poetic form of representation was not, thereby implicitly rejecting those other ways of writing as inferior to qualitative approaches. Noga suggested that I depart from the oppositional energy I had in the original manuscript, and instead *embrace* poetic forms of representation as one among many valid ways of knowing the world.

Zerubavel: As soon as I articulated the manuscript's "energy problem," Alex responded with openness. Our receptiveness to one another's differences has always been a trademark of our friendship. In fact, I would say that it was out of that stance—out of a mutual respect for our intellectual differences—that our friendship developed. We listened to one another as voices with new perspectives. As we discussed the article, it was easy to shift from feeling alienated to an experience of being heard and accepted.

Adame: This new inclusive stance allowed me to let go of abstract theoretical arguments against positivism and other objectified ways of knowing, and focus on showing

readers how to experiment with novel ways of presenting an interview text. When I restructured my manuscript in this way I created a dialogical space to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using alternative writings forms rather than asserting the superiority or “correctness” of this form of representation.

Problems with Dogmatic Discourse

The central problem with a dogmatic stance, as we see it, is the intrinsic inability of the perspective of the other to make an impact, sacrificing opportunities for modifications, improvements, or better understanding of psychological experience. Dogmatism is built upon *theoretical preciousness*, the belief that one’s own perspective (and *not* others) is “rational, coherent, and true” (Miller 1992, p. 2). Miller notes that theoretical preciousness leads to perceiving the perspective of the other as “not only less adequate but fundamentally misguided, illegitimate, and false” (p. 3). Miller (1992) posits that theoretical preciousness impedes exploration and advancement through philosophical dialogue. This insular approach may be particularly problematic given the confirmation bias. The well-established confirmation bias (Nickerson 1998) highlights the tendency for individuals to only seek out evidence that supports their held position and disregard dissenting opinion as irrelevant or misguided. This same confirmation bias also exists at the group level, influencing social groups such as psychological camps or factions (e.g., qualitative vs. quantitative; cognitive-behavioral vs. psychodynamic).

The problem with the dogmatic stance is that it is positioned to have only one conversation, that is, the one that validates the promoted ideology. In contrast, in dialogue advocates of both positions listen to one another with the assumption that there will be points of convergence as well as elements of incompatibility, which broadens and opens the perspectives of both parties (Berman 1996). Dialogue reveals assumptions, providing an opportunity for those assumptions to be further elaborated or modified, whereas a debating of perspectives focuses on defending assumptions (Berman 1996). The dogmatic stance cuts off opportunities for this sort of dialogue; in fact, its starting point is one of theoretical preciousness so strong that there is an idealized goal of converting the other party to the “right” side.

The dogmatic stance can be performed in a variety of ways. As one might expect given the diversity of perspectives within psychology, different factions enact dogmatism in different ways. Psychological camps are different with respect to how rigidly tenets are defined, tolerance for other viewpoints, as well as other systemic qualities. Factions also differ with respect to how inclusive the “other” category is. Such a mindset can even tend to create more divisions and animosity within the subgroups as well. For example, within the qualitative community there may be hostility directed toward those who pursue mixed-methods rather than exclusively qualitative approaches. Although some perspectives clearly state their position by openly discrediting and dismissing the perspectives of the other, ironically most speak of openness *while* devaluing and trivializing the perspective of the other.

Theoretical orientation factions ignore that recommendations for well being and psychological health at an individual level are also true for groups, including the psychological camps themselves. For example, a cognitive-behavioral approach focuses on changing formulaic, rigid, automatic responses to particular experiences by encouraging exploration of alternative thoughts and encouraging cognitive flexibility. Nonetheless, when cognitive-behavioral theorists present this theoretical orientation as the dominant paradigm backed by empirical support and thereby suggest that it is the “best” or only approach, this shuts down potential cognitive flexibility that may be gained by considering alternative approaches.

The same is true for many other theoretical frameworks that focus on why the particular approach is better than all others while espousing openness as a value for therapy and intervention. From a clinical perspective (i.e., in our work as psychotherapists), we believe that *assuming* that the perspective of the other is wrong is egocentric and signifies a lack of ability to take the perspective of the other. Although most psychological perspectives espouse flexibility and open-mindedness, we tend to overlook that there is often a dogmatic stance hidden beneath the rhetoric of openness.

In effect, both the implicit and explicit dismissal of the other's perspective are invalidating in terms of relational positioning. Thus, the dogmatic stance may also have a negative interpersonal effect because it creates a milieu of judgmental morality as well as a relational experience of opposition. A shift to dialogue invites a movement from defending and attacking ideas to a compassionate exploration that "seeks to not alienate or offend" (Berman 1996). Importantly, within a dialogue, it is not necessary for a believer to abandon his or her promoted ideology. Rather, it is the willingness to question and explore that is necessary for dialogue. To end the era of dogmatic approaches to psychological knowledge and treatment, we must step into a new epoch—an era of philosophical dialogue. Mason (2006) suggests that a research team that includes individuals from differing epistemological and ontological perspectives is one particularly beneficial approach to developing and leveraging dialogue across perspectives. Mason proposes that teams that bridge across divergent perspectives (e.g., across the qualitative-quantitative divide) transcend differences and thus engender creativity and enhanced research contributions.

In pointing out the hypocrisy of many claims to openness and diversity, we also implicate ourselves and must consider our own role in such rhetoric. For instance, Adame considers herself to be a feminist, and inherent in this identification is a respect for a number of valid ways of construing the world. However, in her manuscript that we described earlier, Adame set up a rigid dichotomy between qualitative/aesthetic forms of representation ("correct" viewpoint) and quantitative/descriptive forms of representation ("incorrect" viewpoint). The argument was so divisive that it overshadowed and weakened her argument for the use of alternative forms of representation in qualitative research. Based on feedback from Zerubavel and others in the writing group, Adame realized hypocrisy in her simultaneous assertion of being a feminist, respectful of others subjective experiences and understandings.

Zerubavel draws on a clinical example to reflect on her own tendency to be a dogmatic believer and how this was a barrier to effectiveness. For instance, while working in a domestic violence and rape crisis agency, she had come to hold dogmatically to the belief in a victim's veracity. While this was often clinically beneficial, when on a consultation team on which a client confessed to lying regarding a sexual assault, she was faced with the reality that a stance of credulity, when held dogmatically, might itself be clinically problematic. She was then forced to reformulate the belief to a nondogmatic synthesis: although the assumption of veracity is often beneficial, it is not always helpful or accurate. We believe that the acknowledgement of these hypocritical tendencies, however distressing or embarrassing, present us with an opportunity to take responsibility and modify our own approach to be in line with the values that we have espoused.

Benefits of Genuine Dialogue

Dialogue provides a stark contrast to dogmatism. When perspectives are polarized and pitted against one another, the professional community is fragmented and divided, and communities of thought remain within perspective rather than across perspectives. In contrast,

a dialogical model “creates an open-minded attitude, an openness to being wrong and an openness to change” (Berman 1996, emphasis added). Most importantly, the philosophy underlying the dialogical model is the belief that there is not one correct answer held by one faction, but rather that each faction has some components of a greater solution that can be pieced together through the convergence of diverging perspectives (Berman 1996). *Convergence* does not require conversion; it only requires a sharing of thought through dialogue. Convergence involves appreciating the sharing of thoughts as an inherently valuable process (see Kelle 2006 and Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2005 for more on the advantages of combining qualitative and quantitative approaches in the dialogical spirit). In fact, the process of engaging in dialogue is in and of itself as valuable as coming to shared understandings (Russell 1945, as cited in Miller 1992).

Shared dialogue creates opportunities for both sides to contribute to reaching a synthesis, which can be achieved through dialogue but can never emerge from debate and a stance of theoretical preciousness. The philosophy of dialectical approaches focuses on the notion that identifying polarization provides an opportunity to develop a synthesis between two seemingly opposite or contradictory ideas (Hegel 1977). Kant (1999) discussed the use of dialectical thinking to address the illusion of transcendental judgments, providing a synthesis between dogma and skepticism. As such, synthesis is developed through seeing elements of truth in both perspectives (Robins 2002). Through the process of developing synthesis, a deeper, more encompassing understanding is achieved. In this philosophical perspective, insight is gained through the understanding that *either/or* can shift to *both/and* through a process of synthesis. This dialectical philosophy stands in stark contrast to the often held scientific approach in which two opposing positions clash, resulting in the one side winning and emerging as the truth, similar to the legal system.

In addition, dialogue increases tolerance for and understanding of perspectives different from our own. In fact, a philosophical dialogue assumes that the coexistence of different perspectives is beneficial to the profession. Taylor (1992) suggests that via the coexistence of multiple perspectives, we broaden both the potential questions we can ask and the potential answers that we can find. He recommends a hermeneutic approach, focusing on interpretation and meaning, contributing a different perspective than an approach that seeks truth or concrete answers (Taylor 1992).

We recognize that, somewhat ironically, we are presenting dialogue as the “correct” way (or at least the stance we believe in) to repair the divides in the field of psychology. However, we believe that it is impossible *not* to have a standpoint, and the fact that we take a certain position over another is not problematic in and of itself. Even the most empirically minded quantitative researcher is unlikely to believe that scientific objectivity represents a “view from nowhere,” and we believe that most postpositivist methodologists would resonate with many of our claims about the importance of recognizing the researcher’s standpoint. More simply, we are arguing for more reflexivity and transparency about our positions and philosophical underpinnings of our professional stances, regardless of what they are.

Recommendations: Steps towards Genuine Dialogue

In order to facilitate dialogue, the field of psychology would benefit from applying some of the values that we carry into clinical work toward our interactions with colleagues, particularly those with perspectives from other psychological camps. This is particularly relevant in the context of professional training, where psychologists become indoctrinated within the values of the field. Specifically, we believe future psychologists will

benefit from a developmental process that emerges from pluralistic dialogue rather than debate or methodolatry. This is relevant to the international community of psychologists, as noted by New Zealand's Chamberlain's (2000) concern for the impact of methodolatry on inexperienced researchers.

One primary barrier may be linguistic, and we must begin by learning one another's language (Taylor 1992). An example of this would be placing greater value on the ability to be "bilingual" in both quantitative and qualitative approaches. DeVault (1999) writes about feminist research as positioned in relation to mainstream, empirical inquiry in the social sciences. She explains:

... in order to speak effectively, one must know and use the language of one's conversational partners [. . .] The various potential audiences for research appear as communities with distinctive customs and languages. The task for researcher, then, is to negotiate membership in these different communities. The oppositional researcher must learn to be 'bilingual'—that is, comfortable, or at least competent. (DeVault 1999, p. 200)

In practice, this may mean that psychology departments could move toward a model of offering or requiring that majors take coursework in both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. Such curricular changes would not only help students learn both approaches early in their education but would also require that faculty are well versed in both approaches to the extent that they would be comfortable teaching such a course. Understanding the underlying assumptions of one's methodology, and more broadly of the field itself, is a critical first step in recognizing what makes us different and similar as psychologists. The same would be true for theoretical orientations. While there are some programs that may provide comprehensive methodological course opportunities, or clinical training in multiple orientations, this is far from common practice.

In terms of training, this means a greater focus on the philosophical foundations of theory as well as their historically situated context so that developing psychologists can make thoughtful choices about their career paths informed by exposure to multiple viewpoints and understandings of reality (Messer & Winokur 1992). Training should incorporate an exploration of values, both the developing psychologist's values and those of approaches that are presented (Prilleltensky 1997). Many programs of doctoral-level psychological training reflect the dogmatic stance of the profession, producing programs of indoctrination. However, we also recognize that to some degree, all training programs indoctrinate students into a professional culture and this is part of the process of moving from the student role to one of psychologist. Part of the developmental process is embracing the tenets and values of a culture to which one is choosing to become a member. As such, we encourage a focus on the tenets and values of our field, including respect for perspectives different from our own, openness, receptiveness, curiosity, and an interest in learning from what others have to offer.

Recently, there have been some important articles that echo many of the points we have been making that support the many potential benefits of genuine dialogue and collaboration between qualitative and quantitative researchers (e.g., Chamberlain 2000; Gabb 2009; Frost et al. 2010; Hesse-Biber 2010; Johnson 2012; Mason 2006). Both Chamberlain (2000) and Hesse-Biber (2010) make the point that our choice of methodology is based on certain ontological and epistemological standpoints that lead to particular worldviews, perspectives on how knowledge is created and communicated, and modes of researching phenomena in the

world. However, a rigid adherence to a particular perspective (either qualitative or quantitative) leads to “methodolatry . . . [which] prevents us from looking at the assumptions behind our research” (Chamberlain 2000, p. 293). If we pay attention to the theories and philosophies underlying our research practices, then we are forced to be critical practitioners and consumers of psychological concepts. There would be no taken-for-granted assumptions or “right” ways to fall back upon as justification for why one approach is adopted as opposed to another.

In an innovative article, Frost et al. (2010) demonstrate the concept of methodological pluralism by showing how a research team analyzed the same interview transcript from four different qualitative analysis approaches to see what different types of interpretations emerged. By considering how we go about applying particular methodologies to researched phenomena, we simultaneously take into account the fact that we each have a standpoint and choices about the particular lens(es) of conceptualization, analysis, and interpretation that we may employ in addressing our research questions. When we increase our self-awareness that we *choose* a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approach, we also become far less likely to claim that there is one approach that is more “true” or accurate than another. Each perspective offers different kinds of information that then lends itself to be considered according to the various standards for validity, reliability, and utility as defined by the different methodologies. It is how we understand, use, and communicate research that becomes most important when we take a dialogical stance towards our work. In particular, the ability to communicate to colleagues across methodological perspectives in an understandable way is an important feature of any research study.

Conclusions

The essence of our message is that in order to maintain its integrity, in both senses of the word, psychology needs to develop a philosophical dialogue (i.e., Miller 1992) with an explicit commitment to abandoning the dogmatic stance of the profession. This philosophical dialogue would be dedicated to the exchange of thoughts and the maturing of the intellectual process through reflection upon and elaboration of beliefs and assumptions. Understanding the underlying assumptions of one’s methodology, theoretical orientation, and, more broadly, of the field itself, are critical first steps in recognizing what makes us different and similar. Philosophical dialogue helps to reveal false dichotomies, improve the accuracy of interpretation of other perspectives, create opportunities for synthesis, and reduce impediments to mutual understanding.

Retaining the insularity of each particular subdivision of the field generally does not serve to benefit the greater whole of the field of psychology. In fact, creativity is fostered by a dialogue of difference and is not promoted by recycling the same essential knowledge in endless iterations. In this case, what is the resistance to such collaborations? Are we afraid that our fundamental understandings will be diminished as a result of applying our research in other domains? Do we fear losing the integrity of a particular subspecialty by opening up the conversation? In an odd sense, there is sometimes a sense of protectiveness around our “truths” and a reluctance to share them with others who we deem incapable of comprehending such ideas. Theoretical preciousness may lead to a coveting of “secret” knowledge that may only be revealed to those enlightened enough to speak the right language. So perhaps, although unpleasant to admit, a sense of theoretical preciousness or intellectual superiority is part of the resistance to dialogue that keeps us stuck in a mode of debate. However, to the extent that we believe in a dialogical perspective, there is great value in the task of disseminating knowledge.

We believe that the developmental process of psychologists is based on critical reflection and questioning of the status quo of the field, rather than blindly embracing the culture and one's role in it. In essence, we hope to be demonstrating that very process through this article. We both embrace the culture of psychology to some extent, as we have chosen to pursue careers in this field. However, we are also critical (and at times radical) thinkers that are not satisfied with maintaining the status quo of the profession. We are trying to transcend the tired debates between quantitative and qualitative researchers, and between theoretical orientations, in the interest of showing that there are alternative ways of being situated in the field with respect to one another. As a result, we are not abandoning the culture of psychology, but rather are trying to improve upon divisive and invalidating ways of relating to our fellow psychologists.

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