
Gifts Bestowed, Gifts Withheld

Assessing Psychological Theory With a Kochian Attitude

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Sigmund Koch, along with several members of his generation, insisted on a critical and self-critical stance toward psychological theory. Blending critique and possibility, Koch and others focused on the intricate links between theory and practice, morals and values, and the actual, although usually unacknowledged, choices open to theorists. An examination of "theory biographies" heightens appreciation of the legacy of such analyses as well as the positive promise of a Kochian perspective on psychological studies.

Sigmund Koch raised consciousness about theory. Several generations of psychologists, enlightened by his essays, realize that "with his death, psychology has lost one of its most trenchant critics and most skeptical, yet ultimately hopeful, prophets" (Leary, Kessel, & Bevan, 1998, p. 316). Throughout his career, Koch insisted on, and instructed about, the powers of theory. His lessons were not about those lofty ideals of universality, generalizability, prediction or control, or even those ancillary decorative virtues of parsimony and elegance—those ambitions of theory so dutifully memorized by generations of students. Rather, Koch's appraisals were at once more sobering and generative, demanding that, as research psychologists, we reflect on our precepts about good theory and synchronize our abstract ambitions with the social and empirical realities of scientific practice.

Koch's voice was clear, and his words were unsweetened, sometimes irritatingly direct. By his own account, his critical work on theory constituted "epistemopathic surgery" (Koch, 1985b, p. 87). Koch was not alone in ministering to the illness of psychological theory in America: He was part of a cohort that boldly looked beyond epistemological niceties of theory to diagnose the ailments and, more important, to rejuvenate the powers of theory. That cohort's work on theory is a gift bestowed to contemporary psychologists; yet to date, it is a gift that has been underappreciated.

This exposition is a note of gratitude to those psychologists and to Koch as well as an invitation to current researchers to heed these predecessors' work. This appreciation resembles Koch's propensity to twin cynicism with hope and critique with possibility. In 1970, Koch wrote of the scientism that was prefiguring psychological inquiry and the parallel impoverishment of modern life:

The reduction of man to his present dimension need not be temporary. When the ability to differentiate among experiences is lost, experience is lost. When the perception of differential values as they inhere in the quiddities of experience and action is lost, then value is lost. Nothing says that these things need return. (p. 130)

The first part of this essay in a somewhat roundabout way rehearses Koch's lament: It considers the work of those theorists who labored to enrich theory but whose efforts were largely unappreciated. Their ambitions were varied, but they coalesced around three connections: the linkages between theory and practice, morals and values, and the actual though usually unacknowledged choices available to theorists. Tragic histories need not always be rendered cynically, and the remainder of this essay considers alternative prospects for psychological theory. Here again, Koch's observations on the need to relate theory to cultural practices—to see the direct connection between intellectual constructions and material life—afford possibilities for the development of theory.

Gifts of Theoretical Vision

Writing in the 1960s and 1970s, some otherwise properly trained psychologists critically interrogated the place and play of psychological theory in the world. These psychologists are nearing the end of their careers in the scientific community; indeed, as some are retiring from the academy, others have already left or died. Acknowledgment of their gifts thus seems timely, and the current state of theory in psychology lends urgency to such appraisal. My list of these psychologists is compiled from the more visible literature; it is both partial and impersonal. Some of these individuals attended to the importance of connecting theory with practice—"giving psychology away" in George Miller's (1969, p. 1063) words or exploring how, in terms attributed to Kurt Lewin, "there is nothing so practical as a good theory" (cited in Farr, 1996, p. 135). In addition to Miller, these theory-practice advocates include Otto Klineberg, Martin Deutsch, Dorothy Dinnerstein, William

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Bevan, and Seymour Sarason. Others explored the consequences of this giving away, often pinpointing the inadvertently negative effects of theory and its derivative research: such is the work of George Albee, Phyllis Chesler, William Ryan, Carolyn Sherif, and Franz Samelson. Still others interrogated tacit features of theory, usually called "values," which were operatives in the sometimes subterranean connections of theory with practice. Here can be grouped individuals with diverse techniques yet with a shared focus on theory and value: Sigmund Koch, Brewster Smith, William Kessen, Edward Sampson, Herbert Kelman, and Joseph Rychlak. Also to be included are those psychologists who have described the relations between scientific practices and the values of theory: Lee Cronbach, Sheldon White, Lloyd Strickland, Saul Rosenweig, and David Bakan. Others certainly warrant inclusion in this list.

Against what did these theorists dissent, and why are their acts, albeit now generally neglected, deserving of celebration? Answers to these questions require a momentary inspection of the claims of theory. For many psychologists trained in experimental psychology after World War II, theory often was presented as a troubled concept. On the one hand, positivist education taught that a judiciously crafted theory, sparse and logically pristine, could be submitted to the hypothetic-deductive method; that is, it could yield tidy hypotheses for laboratory testing. On the other hand, as psychologists in training, we learned that theory can be excessive, even fantastical, and can lead even stalwart experimentalists down a garden path of wanton conjectures, depraved presuppositions, and profligate claims about human nature. Without proper rules of investigation, theory too easily can distort the facts. The aforementioned psychologists contested this hegemonic conception of the nature of "good" theory, and some went on to imagine

other configurations of theory. However, the then-dominant scientific vision of theory was firmly entrenched as it transpired in a peculiar historical time when American scientists were especially anxious about knowing about the very possibilities of science.

What was apprehended by these dissidents but largely unrecognized by most practicing scientists is that theory is not universally a fixed term but is historically contingent practice. In his ever useful compendium of modern words, Raymond Williams (1976) provided a general and chronological taxonomy of theory and identified several meanings of theory, specifically in its relation to practice. First, theory could be an almost literal form of its Greek root, *theoria*, meaning spectacle or mental contemplation, and could be considered inferior to practical actions. As Harvey wrote in 1653, "All these theory and contemplation (which they count as Science) represents nothing but waking men's dreams, and sick men's phantasies" (as quoted in Williams, 1976, p. 266). Alternatively, theory and practice can be more commodious yet still distinct phenomena. This more positive relation is echoed in the previously cited Lewinism that "there is nothing so practical as a good theory." Finally, theory can be related more intimately to practice through the notion of praxis: From its 19th-century usage,

praxis is practice informed by theory and also, though less emphatically, theory informed by practice, as distinct both from practice uninformed by or unconcerned with theory and from theory which remains theory and is not put to the test of practice. (Williams, 1976, p. 268)

Williams's vocabulary of theory, now 25 years old, does not include recent postmodern works in which theory is taken to be a conceit of modernist knowledge seekers who imagine (and can only imagine) an epistemology of truth—of foundational, universal, transhistorical knowledge. Theory in such a postmodern view resembles its earlier depiction as fantasy.

This template of theory traditions helps situate the innovations of the aforementioned group of psychologists. And the theory to be discussed encompasses the broader domains of metatheory and even epistemology. While respecting each psychologist's unique contributions, these theory mentors can be described as sharing three core beliefs about the attributes of theory. First, theory moves practice. Whether Deweyan or Lewinian in spirit, many of these psychologists reaffirmed the essential connectedness of theory and practice; they verified these connections on epistemological as well as moral grounds. Then the connectedness of theory and practice often was explicitly developed through a commitment to democracy; theorists subscribed to either Miller's argument that scientists are serving the society in which they labor or Sampson's quite different contemplation of the larger participatory democracy of which science should be an open procedure engaged in by all.

The second core belief is that theory is irreducibly moral. The logic underlying this basic assumption is often complex: Theory statements always are constituted by con-

ceptual claims, which, at root, are prescriptions—evaluative statements—about the nature of human nature. That is, even the most rudimentary account of the world ascribes value by virtue of its selective emphasis on certain features of that world and not others. Theory acquires additional moral attributes through particular choices of language, selective emphases, and interpretive preferences.

The third core belief is that scientists can make choices about theory and can select among various alternatives. Even with reflective choice on the part of the scientist, theory remains empirically testable. For instance, theories that tacitly impute responsibility to individuals who are disadvantaged or distressed, theories that William Ryan (1971) identified as “victim blame” theories, were the result of certain choices that researchers made about causality, agency, and environmental possibilities. Those researchers who recognized and critically analyzed such choices did not claim that scientific productions are merely constructions (other psychologists would propose that later). Rather, they usually adhered to the belief that theories were testable even while they demonstrated, as Sheldon White, Saul Rosenweig, and Lee Cronbach did, the essentially social nature of scientific work.

Thus far, I have delineated an epistemology shared by these psychologist theorists and located their common notions about theory as a form of knowledge making. What I have not described is the content of their own particular theories. Given the diversity among these scholars, a thorough description of that content is not possible here. However, it can be said that most of these theorists were concerned with a set of dualist conceptions about the nature of human nature. They critically reengaged age-old dichotomies of nature versus nurture, rational versus irrational, agency versus determinism, mind versus brain, illness versus health, autonomy (individualism) versus interdependence (sociality), self-interest versus altruism or beneficence, and evil versus goodness. These psychologists generally took the side of the dualisms considered to represent liberalism whereby humans are creatures of culture, of nurture, yet also have as their essence at least a modicum of rationality, agency, interdependence, altruism, and plain goodness. In other words, they tended to resolve these classic antinomies by preferring one side over the other as the basis for defining human nature.

How Gifts Are Received

From a certain postmodern perspective, the psychologists whom I am celebrating here exemplify the sunset of a grand project in the human sciences. They detected foundational myths undergirding scientific psychology and earnestly endeavored—through both debunking of the myths and developing alternatives—to enhance scientific vision. This struggle to creatively reconfigure the shards of high positivism, piecing together fact and value, realism and nominalism, description and prescription, along with a liberal attempt to resuscitate Enlightenment man as honorable if imperfect constitutes a final gesture in a 200-year project to establish a science of human nature. According to such a postmodern account, the efforts to link theory and

practice, to celebrate the moral dimensions of science, and to furnish empirical demonstrations of humanist constructs were ultimately doomed, resting as they were on an unworkable epistemology along with a fantasy about the human subject. In this view, the gestures to liberate both science and human nature through some version of scientific faith illustrate not only the impossibility of such a project but also the irony, partiality, and misidentifications that postmodernists claim to be the common stuff of modern intellectual ventures.

Another account of these theorists’ engagements is possible, however, one that avoids positing the postmodern attitudes of exhaustion, ruptures, terminal ends, or apocalypse. With their cognitive acumen, these theorists designed a more powerful microscope through which to gaze, but it is not necessarily the case that what they were observing actually were damaged cell walls and unsustainable life forms. Instead, it can be argued that these psychologists made their object just as they observed it. In their own practices, theory was vital and palpable: It shaped the world and did not simply describe it. Theory was constitutional inside and outside the laboratory; it provided far more than representation. As such, theoretical acuity pierced through a firmly established and honored positivism, a feat that might go underappreciated from the current vantage point. As early as 1953, Bevan recorded this way of seeing:

From the very beginning, scientific method has consciously and deliberately abstracted from the total of experience. Yet many psychologists are inclined to conceive of facts as “real” bricks out of which theories are built, independent of the theory and independent of the builder. Concepts, fact and framework, are man-made devices. They are created to help the experiencing human being make increasingly better sense out of what he experiences. (as quoted in Kessel, 1995, p. 8)

They glimpsed theory as being a more complex, cellular structure with membranes that perform respiration, transportation, exchanges, and perhaps even transmutation.

In other words, another telling, and the one I propose, is that theorists such as Koch began the observation and description of a new form of life. They understood theory to be much more than a cognitive tool; they found theory that is generative, transformative, and reflexive. Thus, just as these psychologists saw theory as less than what it was claimed to be in the high positivism of their schooling, so they discovered that theory was much more and much richer than it was depicted in the hypothetic–deductive model. Koch’s multivolume epistemic critique of psychology, *Psychology: A Study of a Science* (1959–1963), attests to the engaged observation of such viable theory. Although the project is taken as an arch critique, Koch appealed to and relied on the experienced existence of an ever-present alternative: This project “that I directed at mid-century was to test the official epistemology of the Age of Theory via apposition of the creative experience of the many distinguished participating theorists with the stipulations of regnant canon law” (Koch, 1985b, p. 81). His project presumed another seeing, another life of theory.

A cynic might respond that my alternative account entails nostalgia about the past or that it represents a splendid case of the seduction of the daughter. However, my story does not eschew critical scrutiny and continues with a complex if somewhat futile second chapter. The next generation of psychological theorists (several cohort groups are combined here), that is, those whose education included the skepticism expressed by the generation just described, have traveled in two different directions. The vast majority, trained to be more sophisticated empiricists who are knowledgeable about falsification, scientific revolutions, and the like, slipped into a comfortable position of taking theory as a more or less technical operation safeguarded by manuals of procedures and devices. This position, resembling the previous Age of Theory, can be included in Koch's (1985b) description of "a meaningful inquiry":

It presumes that knowledge is an almost automatic result of a gimmickry, an assembly line, a "methodology." . . . Presuming as it does that knowledge is generated by processing, its conception of knowledge is fictionalistic, conventionalistic. So strongly does it see knowledge under such aspects that it sometimes seems to suppose the object of inquiry to be an ungainly or annoying irrelevance. (p. 79)

Fewer members of the following generation have taken a second direction and have addressed the problematics of theory and its content. Among this small cohort, some researchers have followed the critical spirit of the previous generation and ultimately adopted postmodern notions of the constructed nature of human nature. Others have followed the humanist vision implicit in some of their predecessors' work and promoted theories that restore dignity and agency to human subjects (humanism). These bifurcated efforts of appraising theory have had a number of practical implications, including intellectual factions and more or less independent language communities. The separate emphases on postmodern and humanist models have left gaps in the larger alternative venture to advance psychological theorizing. Once again, Koch (1970) presciently considered the need to avoid such specialized training:

It is clear that psychology needs many individuals having sensitivities overlapping with those of the humanist. Yet the same individuals must, in the first instance, have the special aptitudes and sensitivities—whatever they be—which equip them for *scientific* modes of analysis! (p. 129)

Whether challenged by the systematic manufacture of theory or by more novel ventures in theory making, psychologists today proceed with a poorly equipped tool kit. Neither the dominant nor the alternative theory preoccupations yield conceptual instruments adequate for assessing the theoretical and meta-theoretical projects that have risen across psychology's landscape. Psychologists do not have the requisite tools, for instance, for appraising the reemergence of overdetermined theories such as sociobiology, genetic determinism, and the ironclad "bell curve." Nor can psychological theorists adequately evaluate dominant tropes of theory. We have no instruments, for example, to

calibrate or fix "stress and coping" theory, which collapses nearly every human struggle and tragedy into events in which no one or nothing is responsible save the actor's efforts to pull himself or herself up by the bootstraps. Likewise, there are few resources with which to diagnose or adjust the cascading taxonomies of mental illness or proliferating self-help theories, each of which is wrapped with layers of troublesome assumptions about human nature, causation, responsibility, and power.

Our current preoccupations, conventional and unconventional alike, have comprised magnificent distractions from the human science theory that Koch and others of our predecessors glimpsed and left for their successor to nurture and interrogate. Whether occupied by technical productions or by exercises of more global theorizing, the current generation has all but ignored a most prescient inheritance. The generation of theorists who rejected a rote positivism and contemplated the relations of theory to practice, values, and culture also began to reconfigure theory as a dynamic phenomenon. In sketching the contours of such an entity, they bequeathed the gift of an emerging life form that requires sustained care but that has received scarcely more than dutiful acknowledgment (if it has received any notice at all). What has been neglected is no less than the powers of psychological theory—powers to transfigure, transform, generate, loop, and otherwise move us, the builders, as well as the subjects, of theory.

Theory thus conceived is an entity of our making, although we are not free to design it simply at whim. Theory work is shaped and moved by theories that came before and theories that coexist, as well as by the pressing dynamics of the cultural moment, the current rules of scientific practice, and the dynamics of psychologists' own selves. The theory that is made, both in its intended structure and its inadvertent qualities, at once bestows certain powers on the world (or on agents in the world) and withholds certain powers. In the title of this essay, the word *gifts* thus has a double meaning: the gifts of a particular prior generation of theorists and the similarly neglected general gifts of theories themselves. What has been withheld or left in abeyance since then might be called the originary, teleological, and reflexive dimensions of theory. Originary here refers to the social embeddedness or cultural origins of theory; teleological refers to the consequences or social ends of theory; and reflexivity connotes the back-and-forth exchanges that transpire whenever the object and the subject of theory are of the same class, in this case, humans.

These terms signal the multidirectionality of the powers of theory. To deploy them as central analytic terms and to go no further would be unwise, however, because they lend themselves not only to the temptation of simple analytic dissection but also to relativism. That is, theory could be made to appear as merely a particular process of social fabrication. To the contrary, the life of theory is part of a real, material world. Like the objects in the world to be explained, theory too is at once vital and confected.

Koch and his colleagues who were dedicated to new kinds of theorizing took large steps toward understanding

this dynamic psychological world of which theories themselves were integral features. More recently, Ian Hacking (1986) developed this perspective in his "dynamic nominalism." Hacking's model, and his more recent notion of looping, insists on the viability of both realism and constructionism: It holds "not that there was a kind of person who came increasingly to be recognized by bureaucrats or by students of human nature, but rather that a kind of person came into being at the same time as the kind itself was being invented" (Hacking, 1986, p. 228). Kinds of persons and patterns of human action inform scientific classifications, which, in turn, loop back to enter the experiences of those so classified, thereby providing material for new experiences and actions that then require new analyses and classification (Hacking, 1995). Theory, then, is integral to making human kinds and is, in turn, made by them.

Keeping in focus the dynamics of both making theory about human action and theory itself making human action, the terms *originary*, *teleology*, and *reflexivity* are useful. Well outside the laboratories that comprise our scientific world, in the realm of the everyday, we can witness these qualities of theory. Astute observers can see, for instance, the origins or social embeddedness of the concepts of "eating disorders" or its recent kin, "self-mutilation," in a culture that objectifies and commodifies bodily form. Such a culture imposes on bodies not only some "authentic" emotional fulfillment but added value, virtue, and respectability. Also clearly visible from this dynamic perspective is the teleology or the consequences of theory; for example, the fascination with, even epidemic of, "attention deficit disorder" ignores or smoothes over personal as well as social failures, altering self-expectations and performance. In a similar vein, theories of gender differences surface with regularity, visiting the adolescent girl in math class, the desperate couples flailing in relationships, and the parents of toilet-training toddlers. In all such instances, psychological theories literally make a difference. And reflexivity, although somewhat more difficult to discern, is also in play (Morawski, 1994). With self-concepts in mind, psychologists refine their representations of intelligence by continually returning to concepts that reflect already-existing representations of intelligence and, more interestingly, mirroring their understandings of their own intellectual styles. In a similar manner, the "repressed memories" debate entails a conflict of reflections and a volley between opposing experts whose already-existing self-understandings fuse with their scientific representations of memory, forgetting, and telling.

Acknowledgment of the originary, teleological, and reflexive dynamics of theory makes evident the emancipatory or subversive potential of theoretical projects. Theory is used to reinterpret human actions or change them. Just as stock traders respond to new information about market patterns by changing their own daily pattern of trade, so other agents in other situations respond to knowledge about their performance—resisting, refusing, exaggerating, or otherwise altering their actions or sense of themselves. Not only did the psychological theorists revisited in these pages

grasp the significance of psychology's power in what Koch (1970) referred to as "the world outside the cloisters" (p. 130), but they vigorously debated the matter. In an elaborate rebuttal to George Miller's proposal that psychology give away its knowledge for the benefit of humanity, Koch criticized both the underlying conceit about scientific knowledge and the impoverished model of human nature encased in theories. Koch's (1980) criticism of the discipline's scientific conception is unabashed:

In my view it will find its dignity only to the extent that it retracts the *feckless* promises, pseudo-conceptualizations, and corrupt technologies it has flung out upon the world, and succeeds in re-establishing authentic continuity with the Western scholarly tradition. (p. 49)

Human nature not only is simply misrepresented in these giveaways but also is subject to change:

Dr. Miller fails to see that the revolutionary reconception of the nature of man that he will be gallantly offering the world—whether in the guise of paradigm 2 or paradigm 42—will, by the very rhetoric of its proclaimed "scientific validity," its linkage with the iconology of science, have the force of making, remaking, steering the development of its beneficiaries. (Koch, 1980, p. 36)

In other words, the reflexive and generative powers of psychology were appreciated and interrogated by these psychologists.

Psychological theory, then, has a rich and complex life; its world is far more wondrous and dangerous than is implied in the textbook characteristics of predictability, generalizability, universality, parsimony, and elegance. Those worn rules of scientific procedure and politeness do not suffice to explain theory's actions in the world. Nor does the more recent manufacture of tidy, modest theories explicate the workings of practice, values, and culture. Even the efforts to rejuvenate humanism or to weave it into a postmodern cloth fail to acknowledge and creatively address the complex dynamics of theory. The challenge to continue to develop what our theory mentors such as Koch began is still before us.

Theory Biographies

One important preliminary step involves acquiring a finer appreciation of the lives of theories so as to understand their palpable relations with cultural practices and individual actors. Historical scholars, often writing from outside or at the margins of psychological science, have garnered ample evidence of the originary dimensions and cultural embeddedness of psychological theory. Their studies of the lives of particular theories are now so numerous that one could assemble prosopographies, group histories, of theories that were produced within a given time. This scholarship demonstrates how theory choices frequently correspond with cultural needs, beliefs, anxieties, or preoccupations. For example, Philip Cushman (1990) explored the bases of a now-dominant psychotherapeutic construct that organizes psychotherapy theories: the idea of an "empty self" in need of (psychological) fulfillment. Cushman lo-

cated the origins of this empty-self construct not in a scientific hypothesis or empirical data, but rather in its paralleling (or vivification) of economic trends in America. Just as capitalist industry strove to find markets for excess production early in this century, so psychotherapy mimicked (as well as served) that market by articulating the commodities and needs of the psychic self. And psychotherapy is no exception: Techniques and theories in experimental psychology were shaped by their consumers' desires for aggregate data and "norms" of psychological functioning that were useful in the sorting, classifying, and selecting of individuals (Danziger, 1990).

Capitalist formations and practices influenced other theories as well. B. F. Skinner's theory of learning through reinforcement mirrors the organization of labor in industrial capitalism, a system of rewards for unit execution of work in a controlled environment (Schwartz, 1997; Schwartz, Schuldenfrei, & Lacey, 1978). People came to behave in what is now called a Skinnerian fashion even prior to Skinner's theorizing. Schwartz (1997) noted how "human behavior could look more or less like the behavior of rats pressing levers depending on how the human workplace, and other social institutions like schools, mental hospitals, and prisons were structured" (p. 22). Other social formations have served as a pattern for theory design; notable among them has been conventional gender relations. Betty Bayer (1992) located in experimental small-group research the reenactment of the gender arrangement of normative family structures. Thus, far from the kitchen table, researchers depicted group decision making as constituted by persons, typically men, who acted much like mom and dad. In a similar manner, Janice Haaken (1988) located in field dependence theory a gender dichotomy of personality types in which field-independent participants maintain the masculine ego described in psychoanalysis and field-dependent participants demonstrate feminine ego styles.

Graham Richards (1987) argued that such correspondences between scientific productions and cultural formations are neither linear nor unidirectional in causality. That is, it is not the case that external cultural pressures simply are exerted on or through scientific ideas. Rather, science is culture. For instance, the ascendancy in the 1930s and 1940s of theories about the human tendency toward compliance and conformity reflected neither ideas separate from culture nor responses to that culture. Rather, such theories themselves constituted "one further level of expression of the general cultural preoccupation with conformity, just as later U.S. psychological work on prejudice and the roots of racism was part and parcel of the wider civil rights movement" (Richards, 1987, p. 207). Richards's conception of theory accords with Donna Haraway's (1989) account of primate research: "The sciences that tie monkeys, apes, and people together in a Primate Order are built through disciplined practices deeply enmeshed in narratives, politics, myth, economics, and technical possibilities" (pp. 1-2).

The originary moments of theories are not only or simply those of larger cultural conditions; they are some-

times found more locally, even in the highly specialized zones of scientific work. Analyses of such local marks of theory have revealed, among other things, the reflexive properties of theory. Three case studies illuminate the ways in which local scientific environs spawn or engender theory. Gerd Gigerenzer (1991) traced the concept of statistical inference with its attendant view of the mind as a faulty statistical-analytical machine to a period in the 1950s when psychologists, anxious about their own rational decision-making capabilities, adopted statistical inference to provide a more reliable and valid decision-making tool. It was only a matter of time before psychologists conjectured the mind to be such a statistics processing instrument. A different play of theory development and self is evident in the scientific study of homosexuality. Jennifer Terry (1997) suggested that some homosexuals' recent fascination with science has ensued from two cultural shifts: increased homophobia associated with the AIDS epidemic and heightened interest in and beliefs about genetics. Deterministic scientific theories of homosexuality at once suggest the existence of definitive lines between "normals" and "gays." And with confidence in genetics, "scientists may feel that 'nature' really is more liberating than 'nurture,' if only because the former is more manipulable than before and the latter is imagined as hostile, hopeless, and homophobic" (Terry, 1997, p. 288). The third case example suggests that theory is not fixed by the cultural and scientific moments in which it is created. Anson Rabinbach (1992) documented the transmutations of neurasthenia theory. In the late 19th century, neurasthenia, claimed to affect thousands of Americans, was explained as an individual's reactions to the extreme physical, social, and moral pressures of modernity. Over a short time, this explanation was to be inverted, and neurasthenia, along with the underlying fatigue, was taken to be an economical means of adapting to modernity. Through theoretical inversion, "the pathology of neurasthenia revealed the paradoxical secret of progress, efficiency and the order of productivity" (Rabinbach, 1992, p. 186).

Just as theory is discovered in culture and in particular dynamic, meaningful relations to its makers, so it proceeds in the world, returning to the culture from whence it came. In its teleological functions, theory simultaneously is always available to transform and be transformed. Joan Brumberg's (1992) analysis of anorexia nervosa as cultural contagion amply illustrates one kind of transformative effect. Brumberg examined how anorexia shifted from "a predominantly psychiatric disorder into the category of a 'communicable' disease" (p. 136). Through popular texts, biographies, health education programs, and grassroots activism, anorexia came to be an epidemic. Girls learned how to be anorexic. Theory entered practice, altered practice, and left needs for further theorizing. Mary Brown Parlee's (1994) examination of another gender-linked phenomenon, premenstrual syndrome, or PMS, suggests a similar pattern: Cultural anxieties about gender relations, transpiring in paradoxical ways with feminist efforts to debunk sexist ideologies, infused energy into notions of a biological-based syndrome at "that time of the month."

It should be noted that theory is not everywhere. David Kipnis (1994, 1997) argued, for example, that psychologists have neglected to theorize about or observe the psychological forces of technology, particularly in the workplace. In the absence of such theoretical efforts, significant transformations of human relations and relations of power go unrecorded and without intervention. Another gap exists in psychologists' abeyance of what can be called "monetary practices." In an economic moment when acquisition, accumulation, and even hoarding approach historic records, psychologists do not theorize about these symbolic and material exchanges; they practically leave the psychology of money entirely to the economists. "Whiteness" as a race category comprises yet another lacuna in psychological theories (Fine, Weis, Powell, & Wong, 1997; Morawski, 1997).

As these case studies indicate, the twists, pushes, and transfigurations of theory, both originary and teleological, have not been ignored entirely. The epistemological and theoretical-reflexive work of such scholars as Haraway and Hacking provide innovative templates should psychologists decide to acknowledge and attend to theory in all its dynamics. Haraway (1994), for example, underscored the inclusiveness and vitalism of science: Everyone and everything, as it happens, participate in the establishment of objects, objectives, and effects; they produce and are produced through the technology of stories (theories). Haraway (1994) insisted that all involved entities "be seen to be lively, consequential, where the action is" (p. 65). Hacking (1995) coupled realist and constructionist epistemes and resisted the divisiveness of dichotomies by providing a place for both determinism and agency. His model makes room for temporality by revealing how we retrospectively redescribe actions and thereby live new experiences. He also made accommodations for morality: Agency and self-knowledge connect with moral judgment, which is really about "our best vision of what it is to be a human being" (Hacking, 1995, p. 267). These are strenuous, brilliant exercises in the appreciation and revivification of theory; they supply bridge work for future theory development.

Conclusion: Beyond Surgery

Most psychologists working in the latter decades of the 20th century have not attended in any comprehensive sense to the insightful work of a prior generation of theory-inclined, theory-positive scholars. These mentors, however, deserve considerable attention. Above all, they directly guided psychology out of what Sigmund Koch defined as the positivist, reductivist, methodological-fetishized "Age of Theory" when it was "as if something called 'theory' became an end in itself—a bauble, a trinket—of which it was neither appropriate nor fair, certainly most naive, to inquire into its human relevance" (Koch, 1985b, p. 81). Koch referred to his own critical analysis of theory as performing extensive "epistemopathic surgery." His colleagues identified in this essay also practiced such surgeries, ultimately giving ample opportunity for subsequent generations to revive and nurture the life of theory. Since then, psychologists have not been entirely successful, di-

verted instead either to projects that sometimes look like New Age theory or to humanist and posthumanist wanderings. Koch (1961, 1985b) saw new age theory as the result of succumbing to the essential antinomies of human nature: "Antimonality, in sum, is at the basis of the endemic need for crawling into cozy conceptual boxes—any box, so long as it gives promise of relieving the pains of cognitive uncertainty or easing problematic tension" (1985b, p. 87). But the life of theory, like life elsewhere, occupies no boxes. Born of cultural contradictions, fixations, opportunities, and tensions, theory transmutes just as it introduces new biographical possibilities for the persons instructed by it. And, here too, Koch (1985a) was prescient about the power of theory for ill and—he hoped—for good:

Perhaps the most pervasive phenomenon definitive of the twentieth as "the psychological century" is the disposition of people everywhere to construe their own reality in categories derivative, however distantly, from lowest common denominator models, metatheories, images of the human condition, conceived (or misconceived) within technical psychology. (p. 33)

Thus, through the images generated within technical psychology, current theories become plans for this 21st century. The challenge is to be proactive theorists, to use the gifts of our mentors, to exit from our boxes, and to revitalize theory. The challenge requires transformations in our own pedagogy: We can begin this revitalization by thoroughly investigating the origins of theory; tracing its teleology or consequences, both the inadvertent and distal as well as the obvious and proximal; and critically analyzing our own participation in the making of theory. By exiting our boxes, we will have world-making theory and a psychology to share.

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