CHAPTER SEVEN

DECONSTRUCTION AND PSYCHOLOGY

At the end of the last chapter the degree of reality assessment characteristic of attitudes was briefly discussed. It was concluded that the beliefs characteristic of an attitude are sometimes demonstrably false as in the belief that, for example, most barbers are Italian, and sometimes demonstrably true as in the belief that, for example, Chinese eat more rice per capita than do Norwegians. This raises the more general issue of how to assess the reality of social perception and how that reality is perceived by the social scientist who would explain it in predictive terms. In short, not only the validity of social perception, but the way we explain social perception is challenged by what we know about the way attitudes function, since social scientists function within that same social perceptive milieu. The most severe challenge derived from those who espoused what came to be called "deconstruction."

Although theorists in psychology have largely abandoned the hypothetico–deductive approach in organizing their data, they have, of course, kept experimentation and informal theory construction in an attempt to explain the nature of human activity. The result has been the production of a set of verbalizations or texts which purport to correspond with reality. By this I mean that psychologists believe that the world behaves in the way that their theories say that it does. As we know, one set of verbalizations or text can be different from another even though both are intended to explain the same phenomenon. In the 1960's a criticism was raised concerning the very nature of a text, and therefore of textual explanation, such as that found in philosophy and science in general and in psychology by implication. The first assaults on the nature of the verbal text were directed toward fictional literature, but the arguments raised were applicable to any text. This position, of

course, was labeled deconstruction and is associated mainly with the work of Derrida (1976).

The fundamental ideas of deconstruction did not come full blown from Derrida, but represent a continuing analysis of the nature of explanation. The origin of such an analysis is difficult to determine, but the attention to this issue is certainly found in the works of Descartes, Vico, Hume, Kant, Nietzsche, Freud and others. A summary of Descartes', Vico's, Hume's and Kant's ideas, which Derrida considered seminal to the early development of what constitutes legitimate explanation, will allow a look at the continuous nature of this epistemological enterprise. Derrida's definition of deconstruction will be discussed later in the chapter.

Descartes and Vico

How do we know that our explanations correspond with reality? How do we know that our own processes of knowing do not influence our perceptions of reality such that our explanations are as often reflective of what is true about us as functioning organisms as they are about the events we are explaining? We use the spoken and the written word when we explain. The written word has a finality which the spoken word, being under the possibility of momentary revision, does not. In Descartes' statement of the *cogitatio* he concluded that thought allowed for certainty in explanation if the thought was clearly and distinctly known to the subject. Clear and distinct thinking was best accomplished through the use of mathematics and logic. Since mathematics and logic were the best means to understanding, a person is presumably uninfluenced by his or her social environment in considering reality. Descartes believed he had established both the objectivity and the possibility of clear and distinct thinking, which would allow one to correctly assess the nature of reality. He did this by doubting the solidity of information from the senses and from his belief that what he doubted not at all was his doubting. Once he established the primacy of logical thought, he drew the revealing conclusion that most of our probably incorrect explanations of human and other phenomena are based upon social customs that differ from culture to culture and from time to time and which are likely to be cyclical in nature. "I took into account also the very different character which a person brought up from infancy in France or Germany exhibits from that which, with the same mind originally, this individual would have possessed had he lived always among the Chinese or with savages . . . . I was thus led to infer that the ground of our opinions is far more custom and example than any certain knowledge" (Descartes, modern edition, no date, p. 50). In a somewhat altered form, this was to become one of the major points of deconstruction some 300 years later. However, Descartes thought it possible to dis-

tance oneself from the error that resulted from the contamination of social custom and time by utilizing the timeless and custom-free methods of mathematics and logic. Mathematics' and logic's very circularity and lack of empirical content seemed to Descartes to promise the possibility of certain knowledge. Vico did not quite see it the same way.

Vico sought universal ways of correctly characterizing reality as did Descartes. However, one of his central objections to Descartes' notion that clear and distinct ideas were sufficient to capture the nature of reality was that clear and distinct ideas lacked a social context, the very idea that Descartes believed contributed to error. This social context was best understood by attention to the long-term history of the group. To buttress his claim, Vico made a distinction between *verum* (truth) and *certum* (certainty). Truth is reached by understanding universal and eternal principles. Logic and mathematics yield true propositions because they are essentially explications of the a priori. That is to say, the nature and content of mathematics and logic are not observed in, or taken from, the external world. They are part of human thought. Vico and Descartes are in agreement about the nature of these activities, but not, as we shall see, about the activities' position in the enterprise of human understanding. *Certum* refers to the results of gathering contingent facts and, therefore, is examinable through probability analysis. It refers to the empirical process utilized by scientists. Where Vico departs significantly from Descartes is in his recognition of a third avenue to knowledge which reaches understanding of the nature of the social. Vico placed the comprehension of the social under *verum* because social arrangements were created by human beings and therefore seemed similar to mathematics and logic for that reason alone.

Vico (1668–1744) was born in Naples and was a professor of Latin eloquence at that city's university. He counted himself among the followers of Descartes, but he conceptually departed from Descartes by the time of his own death in 1744, when the third edition of his principal work, *The New Science*, was published. Bergin and Fisch, the translators of *The New Science*, considered this book to be "one of the few works of original genius in the entire history of social theory" (Vico, 1744/1961, p. xiii). Vico's ideas represent the beginning of the counter-analysis of Descartes that resulted in the separate epistemologies necessary for examination of social existence.

Vico's distinction between *verum* and *certum* is in large part an attempt to correct the weakness of Descartes' position that understanding is a function solely of the operation of mind. We can, perhaps, accept Vico's difference between the truth of mathematics, as mathematical systems are tautologies, and the certainty of the natural sciences, because science requires observation of objects and processes occurring outside of our own tautological inventions. However, placing what we can know about social process alongside of

mathematics and logic rather than the natural sciences is unacceptable to contemporary social theorists. Social science is an empirical enterprise and does not have the same epistemological quality as mathematics and logic. However, although social science shares formal experimentation and empirical observation with the natural sciences, social science is separate from them in other ways. The distinctions between the natural sciences, mathematics, and the social sciences is illustrated by their related, but still different epistemologies. Rather than two epistemologies characterized by *verum* and *certum*, there are three. Mathematics is totally deductive and tautological. The natural sciences utilize contingency analysis yielding probabilities of occurrence of observed environmental events. The social sciences are in part like the natural sciences when they analyze certain social observations probabilistically, and are unique when they utilize historical information to describe a social context. This third way was Vico's contribution to restructuring human understanding. Vico's new approach was historical, philological, and focused particularly on the human customs and sensibilities that developed at the dawn of particular civilizations and that, therefore, preceded the methods of philosophers and scientists.

Vico was concerned with the social soil from which mathematics, logic and science grew. He was interested in the social foundations of language groups whose existence preceded the development of rational laws and customs. One way to describe social context is to understand a group's myths through an analysis of the development of its language. It is by language that ideas concerning customs, laws and the group's sense of what it means to be human are carried. It is language that provides the definition of life itself. Because the first principles by which humans lived preceded those of the rational philosophers such as Descartes, these principles were the natural laws of the people developed from the way they formed their first social arrangements. The human custom of burying one's dead indicates that one knows one's kind; being monogamous allows one to know one's children and thus provide them with inheritance and provide oneself with the "immortality" of progeny. For Vico, these are part of the original act of consciousness that formed society in the past and as we know it today, and that preceded abstractions about society. These contextual social principles are the beginning of language, the development of the mind, and the onset of social existence. The clear and distinct thinking of Descartes is a product of this murky, non-rational context which limits rational thought in its application to solving various human problems. In short, although Vico certainly does not disdain the rational, he saw more clearly than Descartes that many human problems remain unsolvable by rational methods.

Hume and Kant

Hume's (1739/1961) inability to distinguish between the contiguity of objects or events in space and time and objects and events in a cause and effect relationship confronted Aristotle's conception of efficient cause and, therefore, challenged the very basis of inference. Hume's observations can be summarized as follows (see Lana, 1991, for a detailed analysis of this issue).

Ideas are either complex or simple. Simple ideas are unanalyzable, but complex ideas can be analyzed into simple ideas. The principles by which simple ideas are combined to form complex ideas are the rules of association. Every simple idea has a corresponding simple impression. A simple idea [I think of an apple] is produced by the perceptual apprehension of an object or process [I see an apple]. Simple ideas combine to form complex ideas which do not necessarily have corresponding complex impressions. Simple ideas are combined by the process of association which is accomplished by resemblance, contiguity, and cause and effect. Resemblance refers to the process where one idea or event determines the recall of another because of similar elements existing in both. When two ideas appear together in space and time and the presence of one calls up the idea of the other they are said to be contiguous. A cause and effect relationship exists when the presence of one idea or event seems to necessarily compel the appearance of another idea or event.

This is to say:

I. (a) All simple ideas are derived from simple impressions that correspond to them and that they represent.

   (b) These impressions and ideas are in constant conjunction; therefore, the impression may, but does not necessarily, cause the idea it precedes in time.

II. Two objects that are perceived as cause and effect have the following characteristics:

   (a) They are contiguous in space and time.

   (b) The cause occurs before the effect.

   (c) There must be a *necessary connection* between cause and effect in order to differentiate causation from (accidental) contiguity.

Hume rejected the conclusion that the effect is produced from a cause on the grounds that the idea of causation involving production (the cause com-

pelling the effect) is reducible to IIa and IIb (contiguity in space and time and the cause preceding the effect). This can be further clarified as follows:

> (d) It is equally valid to assume that an object may exist without it having been caused as to assume that it necessarily would have had to be caused. To assume that an object had to be caused to exist is to assume the validity of the idea of production as an essential ingredient in causation and not a proof of it.
>
> (e) Therefore, the idea of necessity in causation is not a function of reasoning logically; rather it issues from the experience of the individual that gives rise to the idea of necessity in causation. The idea of causation, therefore, is an epistemological attribute of human beings.
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> (f) Causation as a human process extends beyond sense impressions to unobserved events as when we come to expect an object or event to occur when we make a prediction based on another observed object or event.

III. The nature of the experience that yields our idea of causation is determined by:

> (a) An impression or an idea of an object and an impression or idea of another object or event.
>
> (b) The idea of the connection of the two by causation, that is, one object or event causing the appearance of the other object or event.

IV. There is a limitation in the idea of a necessary connection between cause and effect: even though the constant conjunction of the cause with the effect is required for our perception of causation, we cannot legitimately conclude that there is a concurrence between the objects or events we have observed in a causal relationship and those which are beyond our observation because they have not as yet occurred (as when we make a prediction).

Even though causation is an epistemological aspect of human inference characterized by contiguity, succession, and constant conjunction, Hume concluded that it is only of value in allowing us to make correct inferences if it somehow corresponds to a natural relation among impressions and ideas. In short, causation is a useful idea if it has ontological as well as epistemological status.

Hume's skepticism concerning the Aristotelian conception of causation as involving necessary production challenged what was familiar in the eighteenth century. Immanuel Kant (1781/1961), intrigued by Hume's analysis, continued this assault on familiar interpretations of human thought by further clarifying the nature of the phenomenal world (see Lana, 1991).

Kant proposed three levels of reality. (1) Noumena or an ultimate reality that transcends and generates human experience, but is unknowable. (2) A realm of appearances or phenomena, which is the objective experience of the world common to all human consciousness, but not reducible to the merely subjective states of individuals. (3) A realm of purely private imaginings. The irreducible relational elements in the objective, experienced world (2) are the forms of sensibility, the categories of the understanding, and the ideas of reason. We directly sense space and time. They are pure forms of perception that are presupposed by our perceptions. Space and time are a priori for it is impossible to imagine the absence of space although it is possible to imagine space with no objects filling it. Similarly, it is not possible to imagine the lack of time passing. When processes act upon the senses they always do so either following one another or appearing simultaneously, both of which are temporal events.

The categories of the understanding are twelve intellectual forms which combine with the forms of sensibility and sense content to produce the consciousness of an ordered experience. The categories of the understanding are limited to experience as they are forms for relating phenomena and are themselves devoid of content. For example, the attempt to prove the existence of God through the concept of causality is impossible because it would extend causality beyond experience. The principle of causality requires that in our sensibility, that is, in space and time, every condition that we can reach in examining given phenomena is again conditioned (in the sense of having conditions attached to). These phenomena are not objects by themselves in which something absolutely unconditioned might possibly exist. The categories place the data of perception into relation with one another in such a way that every phenomenon must necessarily be thought of as being conditioned by other phenomena. Every phenomenon has its conditions, which leads to an infinite regress. The ideas of reason, however, seek to reach the self-caused that contains in itself the conditions of all phenomena. The ideas of reason and mental representations of the unconditioned arise because human reason extends beyond merely attempting to discover phenomena and understanding them as *our* experience. It is the object of reason to ascend from the conditioned synthesis beyond the understanding. Pure reason never refers directly to objects, but to the concepts of objects framed by the understanding.

This brief discussion of certain aspects of Kant's system hopefully allows a glimpse at his continuation of the criticism of Hume which forms part of a

continuous line of inquiry that limits or adjusts the possibility for knowledge exactly corresponding to reality. Derrida acknowledges their precedent. For the contemporary psychologist, the issue is whether or not the deconstructionist movement extends the possibilities for explanation particularly regarding social issues to the contemporary process of theory construction.

Derrida has said that, since Kant, philosophy has been aware of taking responsibility for its discourse. By this he means that it has examined what is familiar to its methods and its stated and unstated theoretical assumptions. When this ideational set is carried over to psychology, the result is, or should be, a challenge to the methods and conceptions of the field that have been in use since the late nineteenth century. The limits of these methods and theories are discovered through an examination of the text. Theories are texts. They are a list of principles which have an absolute status when they are written down even though, of course, they are subject to revision and even elimination. However, even when they are eliminated they are replaced with other texts subject to the same process. Derrida's examination of such texts for their unstated meaning is the subject matter of his deconstruction. He reminds us that Hegel in *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1967, p. 92) has said "What is 'familiarly known' is not properly known for the reason that it is 'familiar.' When engaged in the process of knowing, it is the commonest form of self-deception . . . to assume something to be familiar and to let it pass on that account." This, of course, is an orientation familiar to scientists at principally one level of meaning. Scientists define each of the terms of their text carefully and link them to observable processes thereby putting the burden of the demonstration of their truth on sense data. This process has been found useful, but Derrida carries the examination of the familiar to a different level. He sets himself the task of penetrating epistemology itself to discover the usually tacit basis on which it is built. One of Derrida's contentions is that in examining familiar things we come to such unfamiliar conclusions that our language is twisted and bent even as it guides us. We cannot do without language in explanation, but it is as likely to confuse as enlighten us, both at the same time. Therefore, language, particularly when it is written, is the target of his analysis.

The Sign

In speech (unwritten language) a self-presence is felt when one, in solitude and silence, thinks of self. In writing the sign we get what Derrida calls "a place of difference" between being and signified. There is a trace left by the word when it is written which is not there when it is thought or spoken. Another way of saying this is that writing is not being, neither is it experience

of he or she who writes — nor is it merely a symbol for that which it represents and nothing more. To write a word and then cross it out or erase it requires that both the inaccurate, rejected, crossed out word remain as well as the word last used in the text. The crossed out, rejected word conveys a meaning that must be attached to the assumptions upon which the thought is based or it would not have been written in the first place. This is because one's preliminary or initial thoughts put down as words reveal the personal, historical context from which a word gains its meaning for the writer. Without knowing this context, the reader cannot fully comprehend the text. There is no necessary reason why a particular word should be identical with a thought or a thing. Thus the sign is a structure of difference between being and the person as signifier. Half of a sign is always "not there" (being) and the other half "not that" (the thing or the thought). The structure of the sign is determined by the trace or track of that other which is forever absent. Either being is absent because a sign is offered as a symbol for being, or the thing or thought is absent because a sign is an abstraction and not the thing in itself or the thought in itself. "The world is the manuscript of an other, inaccessible to a universal reading which only existence deciphers" (Jaspers, quoted in Derrida, 1976, p. 16). The text, having been written, immediately begins to decay because it establishes a place of difference between being and signified in the manner just suggested. A text as the totality of a signifier cannot be a text unless it already exists as a preexisting totality constituted by the signified which influences its signs and its inscriptions. For example, the Western tradition depends upon the logos in its construction of text.[6] This is a limiting construct, one that is dependent upon metaphysics. Writers such as Nietzsche have challenged such a text by suggesting that writing is not subordinate to the logos and the truth. Rather, this subordination has come to be during an historical era beginning with the classical Greeks whose meaning must be deconstructed. This is because the Western tradition of writing tested by the logos and the truth is not the only way to read writing. Joseph De Maistre (circa 1795), preceding Nietzsche, held that the Jewish people and the Spartans attained to true greatness because they did not contaminate themselves with the scientific spirit. "Too much, even of literature, is dangerous, and the natural sciences are still more worthless to the statesman. The ineptitude shown by scientists when it comes to dealing with people or understanding them or leading them is something known to everybody" (quoted in Berlin, 1990). The scientific outlook rejects all authority and leads to atheism which De Maistre likens to a disease.

[6]Reason or the manifestation of reason as constituting the controlling principle in the universe.

> One of the inevitable drawbacks of science in every country, and every place, is to extinguish that love of action which is the true vocation of man; to fill him with sovereign pride, pervert him from himself and the ideas which are proper to him, to make him the enemy of all subordination, a rebel against every law and every institution, a born champion of every innovation . . . . The first among the sciences is that of statesmanship. That cannot be learnt in academies. No great minister from Suger to Richelieu, ever occupied himself with physics or mathematics. The genius of the natural sciences makes impossible that other kind of genius, which is a talent unto itself. (quoted in Berlin, 1990)

De Maistre suggests that his text is not subordinate to the Greek text which is centered on the logos and the truth. Nietzsche suggested the same about his own text. However, De Maistre, more than Nietzsche, could be said to be extremely anti-textual, but therefore, a captive of the very logos he sought to overthrow. De Maistre's text has as a context the preceding text of the Greek sense of logos and truth. De Maistre's text decomposes even as it seeks the decomposition of the logos. Similarly, Nietzsche distrusted metaphysics and was suspicious of the value of truth. A human inability to tolerate chaos yielded "interpretations" of our existence. Derrida says that in the *Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche (1887/1956) reads the history of morality as a text to be deconstructed, an idea captured in the very first line of the preface: "We knowers are unknown to ourselves, for a good reason: how can we ever hope to find what we have never looked for" (1887/1956, p. 149). The Dionysian quality that is the basis of existence is a quality without value judgments, a quality beyond good and evil, beyond the Apollonian logos. The negation of order is beyond anything real or conceived. It is a primitive state that must be grasped so that being and becoming can be seen to have no purpose and meaning. Therefore, becoming entails no guilt or merit and has no intrinsic value. Life is fundamentally non-order. For Nietzsche, this primitive non-order is reflected in the essence of human beings. This essence needs to be discovered beyond reason and human rationality. This contention not only sparked Freud's investigations, but later also influenced the phenomenologists who were to begin their studies with similar assumptions. Freud's emphasis on the primitive motivational core of human existence, where the reason of the logos is subverted and superseded by the direct, primitive passions, Derrida takes as the obliteration of the "transcendental distinction between the origin of the world and being-in-the world" (1976, p. xxxviii). Notice that Freud textually produces this distinction while obliterating it. Derrida perceived psychoanalysis to unscramble "the founding concept-words of ontology, of being in its privilege" (1976, p. xxxviii). Freud's point, of course, is that what is unconscious is the true psychological reality and what is conscious is an incomplete representation of that reality. Consciousness yields the restricted, written text.

These arguments lead Derrida to a consideration of being itself and its relation to the word. Meditation on the questions of truth, of sense, and of the

logos, misses or "dislodges" the question of the meaning of being. Derrida (1976, p. 22) indicates that Heidegger's "voice of being" is "silent, mute, insonorous, wordless, originally a-phonic." Heidegger's claim is that being is produced as history only inside the logos and is nothing outside of it. This illustrates the constant composition and decomposition of the word in its meaning or the text in its meaning and being itself. Ultimately, there is no difference between signified and signifier. They are in a constant state of flux. The logos is being outside of itself, which thus renders it suitable for precisely the kind of deconstruction suggested by De Maistre, Heidegger, and finally Derrida.

Writing and Science

Derrida believes that writing should define science. The question he raises is whether or not science can be determined independently of historical and metaphysical considerations. He holds that (1976, p. 27)

> (1) The idea of science was created in a certain epoch of writing.
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> (2) Science was formulated as task, idea and project so as to produce an axiological relationship between speech and writing even though mathematics, its ideal expression, moved away from this goal.
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> (3) The idea of a general science of writing consistent with the logos came into being around the eighteenth century and was subject to the special conditions of that time and place.
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> (4) Writing is not merely the tool of science, but is rather the condition of the possibility of ideal objects (theoretical abstractions) and, therefore, of scientific objectivity. Writing is the condition, the means, of epistemology.
>
> (5) Historicity is linked with the possibility of writing. Writing allows for historical becoming.

This sense of the history of science or, as Derrida puts it, of the science of science, no longer depends upon logic as its core process, but upon grammatics. However, this latter sense of science interferes with its classical logic-based approach and thus must be repressed if the pursuance of facts is to be realized. The repression of the science of science, that is, its deconstruction, exacts a price, however. Its history, its context, are lost or, at least, suspended in the activity which follows from the dictates of the logos. The grammatologist pursues the question of the very origins of writing, and we have already seen how language and its use rest at the core of the *socius*. Derrida realizes

that the origins of writing and the origins of language are difficult to separate. Linguistics, as the science of language, seeks the unity of sound (phone`), meaning (glossa), and the logos. Writing is derivative from this unity, a "sign of a sign." Language has an oral tradition which is independent of writing. Writing exists in order to represent speech. This representation does not translate the choices and evaluation of the speaker in producing speech in the first place. Writing is a kind of summary of the choices and evaluations of the speaker and therefore does not communicate the speaker's psychological and metaphysical presuppositions. Derrida concludes that the science of language must recover the "simple and original . . . relationships between speech and writing, that is between an inside and an outside" (1976, p. 35). Language is bound by sound, writing by sight. Derrida believes that these conceptions provide the basis for the deconstruction of the episteme and logocentric metaphysics which are the foundation of all Western methods of analysis, reading, and interpretation.

For Derrida grammatology as a positive science is directed toward the undoing of logocentrism. He is aware of both the possibility and the impossibility of this task because his own written effort is subject to the same deconstruction as that which he is deconstructing. One must already know what writing is before asking the question of where and when it began. The linearity of Western writing sets a metaphysics, which has only recently been realized by its practitioners. Time is bound up with linearity which itself has its roots in non-linear writing. Chinese, in its non-linearity and apparent arbitrariness, is a visual rather than a phonetic writing which suggests that its origins are not necessarily as logocentric as those of the West. The Cartesian cogito with its certitude marked both a conclusion and a challenge to Western logocentrism. Objectivity is established by representation of the idea which is certain and linked to that which is present to the self. Word is no longer sign, but is part of self which renders the voice silent. That is to say, with Descartes, the objectivity of the word is fused with the self which effectively cuts off attention to the contextual, historical origins of the logos itself. The challenge is taken up by Vico in his concept of the *ricorsi* and his attention to the nature of the origin of language. Vico places the origins of language in the first *ricorso* (cycle) of human development. The first peoples and nations were poetical. Reasoning was weak and form and meaning were given to society by theological pronouncements based upon the group religion. Consequently the governing body was theocratic, deriving its power from the divine and holding it by a display of piety. Divine ceremonies gave rise to government by those who understood the divine mysteries, priests who were said to enter into the mind of God. God's will was understood through revelation which is given only to certain people who interpret it to the multitude. Writing consists of mystical hieroglyphic signs. "Thus the first

language in the first mute times of the nations must have begun with signs, whether gestures or physical objects, which had natural relations to ideas [to be expressed]" (Vico, 1744/1961 p. 85). Vico captures one of Derrida's central ideas of the pre-logocentric quality of language and the word. Vico continues,

> For the first language, spoken by the theological poets, was not a language in accord with the nature of things it dealt with . . . , but was a fantastic speech making use of physical substances endowed with life and most of them imagined to be divine. This is the way in which the theological poets apprehended Jove, Cybele or Rerecynthis, and Neptune, for example, and, at first mutely pointing, explained them as substances of the sky, the earth and the sea, which they imagined to be animate divinities and were therefore true to their senses in believing them to be Gods. (p. 86)

These passages from Vico's *Scienza Nuova* capture both Derrida's sense of the differences between speech and writing, and the limitations of writing imposed by speech's historical priority.

The poetic age provides the basis for the next cycle in human history. The priests of the poetic age eventually arm and believe themselves to be of divine origin. They regard the plebeians, not privy to the word, to be bestial in nature. The governing body is aristocratic, ruling in a choleric, punctilious manner. Force controlled by religion is given voice by heroic blazonings such as is used in military speech. For example, "The blood boils in my heart" communicates anger. Universals are described by reference to myth, as Achilles is a sign for valor and Ulysses a sign for cleverness. Metaphors, images, and comparisons of all sorts make up a good part of the language during this heroic age. Understanding divine mysteries as a means of constructing laws in the poetic age gives way to law by precise formula. Jurisprudence develops in a manner that carefully uses the proper words and expressions to make legal points such that the formula of the law is satisfied. The letter of the law is supreme and this sets the possibility for, or is part of, the development of the logos. The final or human age occurs when the plebeians revolt in order to insure themselves the rights encompassed by the aristocratic auspices. Marriage allows property to be passed from one generation to the next and assures other rights, as those held by the aristocracy. It is then that language becomes the property of the people and develops into a vulgate. Human intellect and reason culminate in the development of rational laws. The complexity and exclusivity of Latin devolves into Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian, the languages of the majority.

Vico indicated that metaphors are the earliest explanatory devices of the heroic age. The metaphor is a brief fable initially used to endow inanimate objects with human characteristics. This, in turn, allowed people to express cause and effect relationships among objects similarly to the way that they mutely understood their own bodies. From this was created the large number of body metaphors still in use today. Vico lists several: head for top or begin-

ning, mouth for an opening,, the eyes of needles or potatoes, hands of a clock, and many more. Metaphors signaled the operations of a mind capable of abstractions. To this day we often abandon our supposed precise abstractions to create a metaphor which better captures an idea. There is a realization in Vico and Derrida that the logos is preceded by a more direct apprehension of existence and that "Writing *reduces* (Derrida's italics) the dimension of presence in its sign" (1976, p. 281). The result of Vico's and Derrida's deconstruction is to frame natural and social sciences in significantly different ways.

Natural and Social Sciences

Alphabetic writing is not the end of the alienation of the natural voice. It is the penultimate step. As phonetic writing it maintains an essential relationship to the presence of a speaker in general. There is still the connection of sign to signifier. The final step in the alienation of speaker from what is written occurs when the vowel is eliminated and only consonants, which can not be spoken, but only read, are used. This is the end of speech. Algebra is an example of a language of consonants that has been deliberately created to complete the alienation of speech and the primitive realization from writing. It is the prime achievement, the final triumph, of the logos. As algebra and the other symbolic logics took their place as the fundamental writing of natural science, the absolute alienation of the representer is achieved. The consciously held goal of science is to eliminate the autonomy of the individual voice and substitute for it a model of the complete logos. Such an achievement accomplishes the possibility of the absolute attainment of truth completely separated from the representer of such truth. This was the Greek ideal and it remains the ideal of the natural sciences. Such a language, however, is of no value in the conduct of civil life. It can be said that Derrida's entire proposition was aimed at reaching this conclusion.

Derrida, after Levi–Strauss (1966), refers to the nonhuman, or so-called natural sciences, as "engineering." Since "engineering" produces the text written in the consonants of algebra, it is an exercise in the manipulation of signs. The engineer substitutes one sign for another as each must decompose giving way to another. The discourses of formal logic and the problems of the nonhuman sciences can take place in engineering since it is specially constructed to deal with specific technical needs. Contrasted with engineering are the social or human sciences characterized by their methods which Levi–Srauss has called *bricolage* (pottering, as in pottering about). This bricolage refers to the fact that social scientists tend to use any method or concept that works, which must be crossed out or which decomposes because it can only be defined by its opposite science, engineering. Without believing in the engineering scientist, bricolage is menaced, that is, the difference in

which it took its meaning decomposes. Bricolage, captured in the difference between *certum* and *verum*, is the central idea in Vico's *Scienza Nuova*. Bricolage is not a less polished, more primitive, pre-scientific method of investigation. Rather, it is a part of an opposition to the formality of engineering and, as we have seen, all oppositions decompose. This decomposition more broadly indicates that, from the psychologist's point of view, there is no dialectic possibility of resolving the various dichotomies that periodically flare up in psychological theory. Mind–body, innate–learned, cognitive–behavioral oppositions that appear in the history of psychology put each other under erasure in that one half of a dichotomy must decompose and suggest the other half. There is no possibility for a dialectical fusion that allows the creation of a synthesis from the dichotomy which forever eliminates it. This is because each pole of these dichotomies depends upon the other for meaning as bricolage depends upon the formal sciences for its meaning. The "any means possible" that is *the* central idea of bricolage refers to the use by various social sciences of techniques in reaching conclusions in addition to the techniques used by mathematics and logically structured experiments. Freud interpreted his observations without using formal logic and experimentation to create his text of the personality. Contemporary clinical psychologists do the same, as do social psychologists who are dependent upon the history of social customs and institutions.

Vico's new science was one of the first to recognize such differences between the natural and social sciences. His distinctions between *certum* (the certain) and *verum* (the true) mark the differences that Levi–Strauss and Derrida refer to when they speak of bricolage and formal science. Truth seeks to understand universal and eternal principles. *Verum* characterizes the logos, but Vico acknowledges its precedents in his concept of the *ricorsi*. This separation of the social from the natural sciences captures Levi–Strauss's and Derrida's sense of bricolage. Vico's proposition of differences between *certum* and *verum* required separate epistemologies for study of the external world compared with study of the internal or ideational world. As we have seen, Vico's new science, geared to comprehend the social, was historical, philological, and concerned with the customs and sensibilities that developed during the pre-logos period of human development.

Bricolage occurs because "engineering" cannot make the sign (the means) and the end (meaning) self-identical. The very hermeneutic isolation of engineering from the signifier makes bricolage necessary for social science which, by its very definition, needs to account for such a signifier. The logocentric goal of the natural sciences is to eliminate the presence in the signified of the signifier since the signifier is subject to the historical context which is pre-logos. Derrida makes the additional point that even natural sciences are subject to the influence and shaping of those events that existed beyond the

logos. Because social science is subject to bricolage, the field is not merely empirically unknowable, but theoretically unknowable as well. Derrida has remarked that the language used by social scientists criticizes itself. He means that social scientists frequently abandon both their method and their conclusions when these prove to be fruitless only to take them up again at a later time. The shifts in emphasis from the techniques and conceptions of behavior to those of cognition and back again are just such instances of Derrida's point.

Having identified bricolage as the approach of the social sciences, Derrida does not, however, accept the idea that the so-called exact sciences have a method which is an exact epistemological model. He holds that all knowledge is a species of bricolage including that garnered by the natural sciences. This follows from his position that the natural sciences produce texts and these are subject to the same deconstructive analysis as with any text. Hence the difference between bricolage and engineering is both preserved (as when one speaks of the contrasts between the social and natural sciences) and decomposed (as when one speaks of natural science as a text to be deconstructed). The idea that the natural sciences are subjectable to the same deconstructive analyses as any other text is of course controversial and largely repudiated by natural science practitioners. However, for our purposes, it need not detain us here. It will be discussed below.

Derrida recognizes that psychoanalysis is a way of reading that penetrates the concept words of the consciously constructed ontological text and reveals what is pre-rational in being. It provides a method for deciphering any text. For Freud the unconscious was the true psychological center of human existence. Derrida notes that writing carries the oppositional character of the Freudian known–unknown, conscious–unconscious, id–superego etc. Freudian opposites are related in that the one is only the other deferred. The Freudian superego is only meaningful in a direct, but opposite, relation to the idea of the id. The decomposition of the one provides the other. These Freudian distinctions are examples of Derrida's concept of difference, differing, deferred, detour in opposites, the sign under erasure, and the sign decomposing.

Derrida, is concerned, as was Freud, with what is concealed by words when they are written. He recognizes that his own writing about deconstruction is textual. He believes what he says, and provisionally "forgets" that his text is necessarily and always deconstructed. It is already a palimpsest. Therefore, deconstruction can never be a positive (engineering-like) science. The relationship of deconstructor to text is not unlike Freud's relationship between analyst and subject. In short, being is no longer simply exposable through ontic assessment. The logos and the fundamental words of ontology need to be deconstructed since the linguistic form of Western metaphysics yields a limitation of the sense of being.

Deconstruction and the Explanation of the Social

Of the sub-areas of psychology, those which are devoted to explaining social processes are most susceptible to fundamental deconstructive criticisms. Indeed, social psychologists have attempted to deal with such criticisms throughout the history of the field. The major points of deconstructive criticisms that are directed toward the enterprise of professional social psychological explanation will be discussed, after first defining postmodernism.

Postmodernism establishes a difference from modernity. It is conceived to be the process of deconstructing modernity. Modernity is identified with the logos, and, therefore, also with science. It is believed that it is possible to solve various problems by following a rational, logical course that will result in satisfactory, that is, true solutions to those problems. Modern, as opposed to postmodern, social psychology attempts to discover the truth about social behavior and cognition and assumes that this truth resides in the single subject under examination without necessarily any reference to historical or group context. There has been little objection to this approach either from social psychological practitioners or from the general public. However, there has been a small group of social psychologists (e.g., Armistead, 1974; Gergen, 1973; Lana, 1969, 1991; Parker and Shotter, 1990) who have been aware of this issue since at least the 1960's. Indeed, in the contemporary university, it is possible to hear voiced the notion that the many experimentally-based doctoral dissertations in social psychology are of little value, not because they are poorly designed according to the requirements of good scientific practice, but because they have no chance of mirroring social reality. The practice continues because it exists within a powerful social psychological professional climate that has failed to substitute any other activity to mark the essence of doctoral training. In addition, postmodernism points to the contradiction inherent within modern social psychology that separates action from experience and then constructs a representation in the form of a theory of action. It abstracts key elements from an action that may or may not represent that action to the participants. This is mindful of the phenomenological distinction between being and essence (Husserl, 1966) made many years before the term "postmodernism" was coined. One interesting implication of this postmodern contention is that the contemporary behavior–cognitive or innate–connectionist distinctions discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 are of little consequence since both are imbedded within a modern rather than a postmodern sensibility. The postmodern (by deconstruction) approach to modern social psychology can be summarized by the following issues. These have largely been gleaned from the work of Parker and Shotter (1990), which is a self-professed continuation of Armistead's (1974) work, one of the first attempts to re-socialize social psychology.

The Status of Natural Science

Sciences such as physics, chemistry, and biology which are concerned with non-human matters are represented by texts as much as are those fields that deal directly with the human being in a social context such as psychology, sociology and anthropology. So, according to Derrida, the Galilean–Newtonian physics text is as deconstructible as any other. It cannot be challenged on its own grounds for to do so is to accept the very idea of the logos and all arguments that can be derived from it. The assumption that human beings are reasonable and that this reasonableness is the controlling principle in the universe is rejected, or at least modified by suggesting that the logos constitutes only one of a number of possible texts regarding the process of explanation. This deconstructive notion challenges the very idea of science as the only useful *Weltanschauung* and seeks to offer other practical ways of confronting the subject matter of positivist scientific ideology.

To my knowledge no deconstructor nor postmodernist exempts natural science from the status of "text." On the contrary, it is often a special target for deconstruction. Yet the terms of the deconstruction are vague and usually refer to the general principle of the logos rather than the more specific set of assumptions upon which the natural sciences are based. Richard Rorty (1982) is an articulate defender of the position that the natural sciences are as susceptible to deconstruction as are other systems of explanation. For Rorty the best argument against the position that the natural sciences have a singular, non-deconstructible character different from all others is embedded within the logocentric theory of truth and the idea that these truths can be said to correspond to reality. He identifies three main themes in the history of the pursuit of truth. (1) The Platonic tradition holds that an empirical approach to truth is true, but banausic (governed by or suggestive of utilitarian purposes) and irrelevant to truth. Accordingly, truth is a principle by which existence occurs, but which is independent of any emprical demonstration of it. (2) The empirical tradition, especially since Galileo, has demonstrated how spatio-temporal events could be represented by mathematical laws such that space and time make up the only reality that exists. Truth is correspondent to that reality. This is the modern, as opposed to postmodern, logocentric, scientifically friendly position that holds that science has a unique position in discovering the truth about reality which is independent of the epistemology used to reveal that reality. (3) The pragmatic tradition, supported by Rorty, which holds that seeking explanation which corresponds with reality (as in 2) and seeking abstract principles of reality (as in 1) are no longer feasible and are not meaningful problems because they can not be demonstrated to be true. Therefore, pragmatists conclude that true sentences are true not because they correspond with reality, but because

they allow one to deal with one's problems. Rorty's arguments in support of this pragmatic position are as follows:

> 1. The distinction between true sentences belonging to one of two types, those that correspond to something other than themselves and those which are true by convention, is abandoned.
>
> 2. Language as a medium in which we form pictures of reality is also abandoned. The position is taken that language is simply part of human behavior. "On this view, the activity of uttering sentences is one of the things people do in order to cope with their environment" (1982, p. xvii). One cannot separate language as a process or tool from its users. We cannot check language for its adequacy in achieving our purpose because this suggests that there is some way to separate from language in order to compare it to something else. However, there is no way to think about the world or our purposes except by using language.

Rorty divides in two the argument against the pragmatic, deconstructionist position made by the so-called realists (e.g., Foster, 1982; Johnson, 1973; Levy, 1981; Peterson, 1976). Technical realists hold that the correspondence theory of truth is valid in that language is verifiable because it refers to something physical. That is, the belief that X is Y is verified by checking what X is and whether or not it is also Y. The pragmatists ask whether belief in X is Y is more useful than its contradictory (X is not Y). If it is, the additional notion that the statement X corresponds to reality is unnecessary. The intuitive realists accept the notion that problems (such as the above) can arise which are unsolvable, but nevertheless real, such as the belief in the existence of facts beyond the reach of human concepts. Since science is successful, this is only possible if some scientific statements correspond to reality. The pragmatic counter argument asks what further specification of the correspondence relation can be articulated? There is no physicalist, non-semantic referent for correspondence or "truth."

However, an argument against this pragmatist relegation of natural science to the status of a text of apparently equal truth status to any other text, can be made as follows. The claim of science, and we are confining it for the time being to physics, chemistry, biology and their derivatives, is that science is non-rhetorical, non-interpretive, and succeeds by eliminating the participation of all human characteristics save that of perception and rationality, that is, the logos. Its claims to success are validated by inviting anyone to participate in this exercise of perception and rationality and, by so doing, come to an explanatory conclusion about the physical world. The confidence of science is that, given a certain period of time, everyone will come to the same

conclusions and, most importantly, those conclusions will match the *personal beliefs* about the nature of physical reality of everyone who participates (see also Vision, 1990; and Williams, 1990). That is not saying these conclusions will be proved to be true in any absolute sense, which is logically impossible, but rather everyone participating in a scientific process will finish with the same beliefs in the constitution of physical reality.

It does not matter if errors are made at any given point in the process. People will still believe in the efficacy of science and display behavior consistent with the correspondence theory of truth, which holds that the world behaves the way our theories say it does. I also suggest that every deconstructionist and postmodernist believes in the efficacy of science in the same way as does everyone else who participates in it. If a chemist warns you not to eat a certain substance which, although perfectly sound looking, he declares to be poisonous, you will probably not do so. A deconstructionist will react in the same way and by doing so indicate her belief in the correspondence theory of truth as represented by the scientific principles involving chemical combinations which are destructive of human tissue. This behavior demonstrates the extra-textual character of these very scientific principles. This belief itself can be manifested either by a statement of the person's confidence in the chemist's knowledge or by behavior (avoiding eating the substance). If a deconstructive analysis cannot separately accommodate the belief in the truth value of science with respect to the physical world, we need to change the conceptions of deconstruction, not those of science.

The Current State of Research and Theory in Social Psychology

Some deconstructionists consider social psychology to be a pseudo-science which is placed in juxtaposition with "true" science in that the nature of one represents the unstated nature of the other. This places them both under suspicion and, therefore, ripe for specific deconstruction since both are derivatives of the logos.

Deconstructionists criticize modern social psychology for using jargon to indicate that which is obvious to the lay person. As one wag put it, "Social psychologists pierce the veil of the obvious." This is a criticism shared by many social psychologists who do not necessarily embrace the general deconstructionist viewpoint. Quite often experiments are performed to test an hypothesis, the acceptance of which, if not logically following from the statement of the hypothesis, is at least so highly likely that such an experimental demonstration seems trivial. In order not to unfairly single out the work of any particular researcher as an example of the quality of obviousness of the hypotheses of so many social psychological studies, an unreferenced, but actual example is offered. In many studies hypotheses are constructed so

that the expected result is highly predictable because social or logical imperatives are built into the design. For example, one study sought to discover whether workers' self-reported lateness would be the same as the actual company records of lateness of the workers. The results indicated that the workers underreported the number of instances of being late compared with company records, but that the two indices were positively correlated. The obviousness of these results leads one to wonder whether the study was worth doing in the first place. Since the workers know that their recollections of being late can be checked against company records, they are strongly motivated to report them with some degree of accuracy. However, if they err or deliberately distort, they do so in their own favor. This result is predictable by any layperson. Social psychology is replete with these kinds of studies where the results obtained are highly predictable by both trained and untrained personnel. At best, this is what I call an entry level hypothesis. It is one that establishes a baseline to allow further, non-obvious hypotheses to be constructed. This, however, is a criticism not of the methods used to investigate a problem, nor of the scientific method in general, but rather one addressed to the failure to construct a meaningful, rather than a banal, hypothesis in the first place. In short, if the hypothesis itself is highly likely to be true, it does not really need experimental confirmation. By reversing the emphasis, it can be said that social psychology has attempted to explain scientifically what laypersons think they know directly by experience or by "common sense." The implication is that common sense explanations are inadequate because they are not the result of scientific inquiry. The contradictory nature of public aphorisms such as "strike when the iron is hot" and "haste makes waste" are taken by social psychologists to be examples of the confusion of the general public's interpretation of the nature of reality. Deconstructionists, however, take these contradictory conclusions to be reflective of different real life situations. Deconstructionists hold that these contradictory conclusions are not necessarily inferior to unitary social psychological explanations of the same phenomena.

The second deconstructive criticism of contemporary social psychology is more complex and addresses the difficulty of experimentally examining any hypothesis that refers to a social process or arrangement of any kind, whether obvious or not. The criticism is that few problems are ever solved in social psychology. Typically a problem is isolated and research uncovers more and more complications which splits the original problem into component parts all of which must be examined by further experiments such that the results of the original problem are redefined, but never solved and a new series of research is begun. Eventually the original problem is abandoned only to resurface several years later in a slightly different guise and the research sequence is repeated sometimes on the very same problems that were

addressed previously. No issue is ever laid to rest or incorporated into the body of social psychological knowledge about which everyone agrees. This criticism leveled by the deconstructive emphasis is well taken and has been made by some social psychologists throughout the history of the field. Why is this the case? Those social psychologists who believe that it is possible to build a viable social psychology through the application of the scientific experiment to various social issues (these must be counted in the majority if what fills the major journals in the field is any indication) hold that it is a question of refining experimental technique and of framing hypotheses more imaginatively so as to capture the essence of a social psychological phenomenon. Conversely, the position held by the deconstructionists is that the very nature of social phenomena disallows experimental examination, except in very few instances. However, even with the repeated failures of experimentally oriented social psychology to successfully present a coherent set of scientifically derived principles to explain various social phenomena, it continues as a self-perpetuating enterprise.

The deconstructive argument is that the experimental method and the theoretical explanations it spawns, such as those of behavior analysis and the various cognitive orientations, are doomed to failure because the idea of the social cannot be captured within the framework of the logos. Modern social psychology emphasizes the cognitive conditions under which the individual functions in the social context. Deconstructionists hold that the social and historical determiners of an individual's group representation of the social world, rather than the individual's representation, is more crucial to understanding because group representation exists as the unstated context in which individual representation is formed. The deconstructive alternative is to study individual *and* group representations. This indicates a shift in focus from a logos-centered method, such as the experiment, to a descriptive approach more characteristic of phenomenology. Another way of putting it is to say that the individual or the group provides the description of the social phenomenon in question and thereby centers our focus on a lived, immediately perceived social reality. What one does with this information, however, is quite another matter. If it is to be organized in some way so as to extract its universal quality, a text of abstractions would result which would place the effort back with the modern (as opposed to postmodern) sensibility.

Shotter's (1990) suggestion is that social psychology needs to be more than just textual. He takes the deconstructive path by emphasizing that we must examine what exists at the periphery of social psychological texts, the unspoken, that is, that which is under erasure. Taking a position reminiscent of Vico's, Shotter says (1990 p. 159) "To build knowledge upon foundations constructed upon an analogy between perceiving and knowing, is to see *certainty* [Shotter's italics] as a matter of the world 'outside' our human world

imposing something upon us, rather than as something we achieve in conversation between ourselves." Shotter concludes that we must, therefore, face the fact that there is not pre-established order in the world before we speak of it. This is another challenge to the correspondence theory of truth, which, as we have seen, is to be verified, not only from logical argument and empirical demonstration regarding the presumed truth, but also from people's belief in it. Shotter's notion likely does not hold for the physical sciences, although it is a reasonably apt assessment of what happens in the social sciences. He goes on to say that the way the world is constituted influences the way we talk about it, but that it is equally valid to say that what we take to be the condition of the world depends upon how we talk about it. Both statements are true for they depend upon one another in a Derridian way. Each alternative must ignore or suppress the other if it is to succeed as a text. A text must state its case as if no other interpretations of the same phenomenon are possible, much less true; otherwise, why bother to state it in the first place? The contention that light consists of particles must totally ignore the possibility of it being best described as waves, just as the wave theory of light must do the same regarding the idea that light is composed of particles. More generally, the idea that a dialectic, by considering thesis and antithesis, can reach a synthesis requires the belief in the possibility of reaching truth which is somehow contained in the thesis and antithesis, but which is not now apparent. A contrary contention is that a dialectic assessment may not produce a synthesis because the thesis and antithesis only apparently contain the possibility for synthetic fusion, but are in reality severely different propositions. As we have seen, there are certain aspects of the behavior–cognitive opposition which are probably not amenable to synthesis.

How then is a deconstruction-sensitive social psychologist to proceed? Shotter holds that people must be allowed to speak for themselves outside of encapsulation by any text since a text makes sense only in reference to other texts. One must be able to take a stance with respect to the world and attempt to "act rightly." In a conversation, as opposed to reading a text, if there is a lack of clarity, one or both speakers have the chance to make themselves understood by using other word arrangements. We give ourselves the opportunity to be clear with one another and to come to an agreement on meaning. This is, of course, not possible with a text since its content is set and must await another text, with all its limitations, to respond to it. Conclusions drawn from a conversation are often known only to the participants, which means that the knowledge gained is neither a "knowing that" nor a "knowing how" (Shotter also borrows the terminological distinction made by behavior analysts, for example, Hineline, 1983) because this distinction is peculiar to the nature of the social situation. Shotter calls it a "practical–moral" knowledge which is presumably non-textual and reflective of

what uniquely occurs when people interact. "To insist that words have predetermined meanings is to rob people of their individuality" (Shotter, 1990, p. 164). However, this statement might be countered by saying, "Not to insist that words have predetermined meanings is to invite the chaos that precludes any conversation or agreement at all." This is the unspoken "difference" implied by Shotter's statement. His emphasis on the direct experience of another through the use of language represents a focus which is compatible with that of the phenomenologists of the early part of the century. These criticisms notwithstanding, Shotter's analysis does indicate some of the inherent inadequacies of the scientific study of social interaction. He mentions Stam's (1986) observation that the concept of "learned helplessness" does not include discussion of its social origins, but rather considers only the individual's reactions to given, unanalyzed social conditions. In short, learned helplessness is seen as a problem for the individual not for society. It is the individual who must change or "adapt" in her isolation. The text of learned helplessness desocializes, deinstitutionalizes and dehistoricizes the social. This is, of course, true for most social psychological and personality assessments made within the Western emphasis on the individual as supreme and the logos as epistemologically primary. Shotter mentions Marx and Engels' "three tricks for the production of 'ruling illusions.'" They are (1) separate the data from the people and from whom it was collected and from the situation in which it was collected, (2) find an order in the data and present it as a scientific discovery, and (3) explain the order discovered as being the result of a causal agent, that is, something within the person that determines the activity. In following these tricks presumably the context is lost, as is people's reaction to it. Shotter's conclusion is that no matter how benevolent their intentions may be, social psychologists do not make sense of people's lives in the people's own terms.

Politics and Power as Determiners of Social Psychological Explanation

A primary deconstructionist, postmodern contention is that social psychology, and all of the other behavioral and social sciences, have arisen in order to participate in the control of human behavior consistent with the desire of various power sources such as the state, industrial organizations, or other social institutions. Power produces social ideologies which social psychologists rarely take into account in their studies. The question becomes whether or not it is possible that a social psychology can be built which is free from the influences of these power sources. All of these sources in the liberal Western world are directed toward the individual, who is considered (as we have seen) to be self-contained. According to social psychological deconstructionists, this is the

central core of the definitional problem of the idea of the socius, that is, that it is directed toward the welfare of the independent individual. There is (Rose, 1990) an inherent contradiction between the concept of human welfare and that of the self-contained individual. To reintroduce what is truly social back into social psychological consideration it is necessary to view the person as a social individual emphasizing the "self-in-relationship." One must be an individual by virtue of one's connections to others, a kind of "embedded" or "constitutive" individuality (Rose, 1990, pp. 123–124). This non-Western prescription for the definition of the social individual is reminiscent of the Chinese and the Japanese senses of self. It is worth exploring these descriptions as they indicate both a possible corrective to the Western sense of self and a limitation to the deconstructive social psychological thesis.

In old, pre-communist China intellectuals conceived of two senses of self (Hsu, 1985). *Ta wo* the "greater self" was distinguished from *hsiao wo* the "smaller self." *Hsiao wo* refers to the individual's own desires and behavior although it may encompass the behaviors and desires of those closest to him or her such as a spouse, a child or a parent. *Ta wo* refers to a person's concern for the greater community or even for all of humanity. In the West, the emphasis in the study of personality is clearly on what the Chinese call *hsiao wo*. Hsu sees the study of personality as reflecting the Western ideal of individuality and, in that respect, he takes a position similar to that of the social psychological deconstructionists. There is a general consensus that the idea of personality is (1) Western and (2) both a contributor to and a result of the concept that the individual functioning independently of others is highly desirable. The individualistic core of the concept of personality, however, does not allow the concept to be meaningfully applied either to a Chinese or to a Japanese person. Hsu uses the Chinese term for man, *jen*, to encompass an individual's social transactions which can be either good or bad. Similar uses are recalled in the Yiddish *mensch* meaning both man as well as man who acts considerately, which captures a similar, if not identical, meaning. *Jen* thus refers to an individual's interpersonal relationships especially with the people closest to him or her. For the Chinese, the individual's center is somewhere between these relationships, not in his or her individual unconscious as it is in the Western interpretation of personality. Human beings tend to seek intimacy with others; however, in cultures as individually oriented as those in the West, it can be difficult to obtain these intimate relationships. If an individual fails to obtain such relationships he or she finds other intimate attachments in Gods, ideals, even pet animals. These relationships must be understood in order to understand the individual personality. The Chinese sense of self, of worth, and of the future, is forever linked to parents, siblings and to other close relatives. Chinese families tend to stay intact in that family members live close to one another and interact on a reg-

ular basis. Since this intimate contact is constantly available, a Chinese person does not usually require contact with people who are not family members nor does he or she need religious activity or membership in organizations made up of non-related people.

In contrast to the Chinese, Westerners are required to separate themselves from their parents and other close relatives in order to fulfill the goal of individual, as opposed to familial, independence. The continuing relationship with one's parents is voluntary, not required, as it is in Chinese culture. The intimate relationships that are stressed in the West, and especially in the United States, are those with peers and particularly with a member of the opposite sex. Marriage produces the ideal where the principal intimacy and responsibility is between marriage partners, with the parents receiving and accepting a secondary emotional role in the life of their offspring. In order to create the emotional ties which are necessary to all people, the Westerner must work hard at cultivating the friendships with non-related individuals that provide much of the intimacy that is acquired by the Chinese in familial relationships. Should this search for intimacy fail, as it frequently does, the need is filled by developing one's religious beliefs, taking up causes to help the bereft, or even lavishing love on a cat or a dog. All of this leads to an exploration of and a focus upon one's "inner world" which, in part, explains the great interest in and success of psychoanalysis from the early part of the century to the present. One of the unfortunate legacies of the self-sufficiency ideal is a rather unsatisfactory, intense self-absorption which is itself an expression of a lack of intimacy with others. The result of this Western emphasis on individuality, and the subsequent difficulty of establishing intimate relationships as compared with the Chinese, is that this turmoil is turned toward changing the world in order better to promote the self. Exploration, industrialization, and the founding of new nations have all been more a legacy of the West than of China.

Japanese culture is similar to the Chinese (Hsu, 1985; Ryback, Ikemi, Kuno, and Miki, 2001) in that the concept of self-worth is connected to relationships with other people. All Chinese sons are linked with their parents and their common ancestors, but only the inheriting Japanese son is in a similar situation. The non-inheriting sons must find their intimate human linkages outside of the immediate family. They must connect themselves either to another relative or to a non-relative as a kind of apprentice. Their loyalty, and therefore their sense of self-worth, is transferred from the immediate family to the head of their work unit. Their obligations to their ancestral group are then severed. Japanese are, thus, less tied to their kin than are Chinese. Hsu notes that this Japanese arrangement is the basis of Japan's enormous economic success following World War II. The intense loyalty given to the head of the economic unit produced a worker whose efficiency

and dedication contributed to industrial success. However, it is not clear that this particular Japanese characteristic is, indeed, the principal cause of Japanese economic success. Japan showed an early post World War II willingness to adapt the business practices and techniques of the United States. Its hope was that this introduction of foreign business and production techniques would not interfere with what was considered to be the core of Japanese culture, with its attention to and veneration of elders and of superiors, as well as its attention to the rituals and practices of politeness and social sensitivity. Group cohesion rather than individual success was emphasized. This combination of the adoption of Western business techniques and traditional Japanese sensitivities produced a high degree of central planning of the economy by government officials working with the heads of industry in contrast to the more loosely constructed, and therefore more flexible, United States economy. What the Japanese apparently failed to realize was that their "Americanization" had only just begun and could not be exercised only in the economic sphere. What was in store for them was an ever-increasing "Americanization" in various other aspects of their daily lives including their sensitivity toward others in their communities.

A *New York Times* article (July 15, 1997, "Real Capitalism Breaks Japan's Old Rules") reports that some Japanese now believe that their economy must become even more like the North American competitive system if it is to survive. The prices of many Japanese products are kept artificially high by government fiat. The Japanese believe that they should patronize local shops regardless of their higher prices because the maintenance of neighborly feelings is more highly valued than is household economy. That same coherence has, until recently, prevented Japanese industrialists from laying off workers for any reason. Social cooperation is one of the highest held values in the Japanese community. These days, however, younger Japanese are seeking lower prices rather than acting to maintain the social cohesion represented by buying at local shops. The article reports that Japan is conflicted with what some see as the need to create a thoroughgoing, competitive, Western system of doing business in order to succeed economically. If their plan is carried out, it will change the very nature of Japanese cooperative social life. If the Japanese continue to emulate more and more aspects of the Western type of economic system, their social structure will continue to change as already evidenced by an increase in the number of incidences of violent crime, and by an increase in the divorce rate. About that, there seems to be little doubt. Shopping for the cheapest goods instead of patronizing local higher-priced merchants either drives the merchants out of business or forces them to adopt merchandising techniques that require them to be more dispassionate toward their old customers. The "Americanization" of Japan continues in a way that interrupts the old patterns of social behavior.

Cultures differ with regard to their assignment of the locus of control of human action either to internal or external processes. The Western conception, as we have seen, emphasizes individual autonomy and clear boundaries among individuals and between the individual and external social sources of control. In Japan the locus of control lies external to the individual, residing instead in the group will. In the West, yielding to the group is seen as producing the negative consequence of losing personal autonomy, while in Japan not yielding to the group is an occasion of social failure and loss of personal esteem. In the West social life has been affected by increasing ethnic diversity which is the result of population movement which, in turn, is a result of war and massive economic changes, the feminist perspective, and the increase of communicative possibilities through advances in technology. Whether the individuated Western sense of self has been altered, or should be altered on moral grounds by these changes, remains an open question. The Western sense of self has its limitations in that it is more likely to produce individual alienation from the larger community with all the negative consequences for the fabric of society that this implies. At the same time, this emphasis on individualism characteristic of the West has allowed for enormous success in the building of economic strength which means that, in general, people in the West are better fed, clothed and housed than they are in, for example, China. Conversely, the close relations existing among family members in China reduces or eliminates the problems of alienation and mental illness more prevalent in the West, but has, until recently, prevented the Chinese from building a viable economy. This lack of economic and political unity has often resulted in massive famine and extensive poverty of the kind not typically found in the West.

This comparison among the Western, the Chinese, and the Japanese sense of self marks both the major points of social psychological deconstruction and indicates its limitations. As we have seen, some deconstructionists believe that the Western sense of the social sets an agenda that is limited by its focus on the individual. They suggest that reference to the individual defined by relationships with various groups would make social psychology more accurate in that it would reflect what people perceive to be their actual social context and personalities. Hsu's perceptive analysis serves this purpose. There is, however, either a direct or implied criticism of the Western sense of the individualized social that is misplaced. The Chinese sense of the familial social and the Japanese sense of the occupational social suffer from limited, contextual world views to the same extent, but in different ways, than does the Western sense of the social. Although the Western sense of self may make no sense when applied to a Chinese, it does reflect much of the self-perception of a Westerner.

For deconstructionists, because social psychology attempts to explain people's actions with regard to others, it is more obviously an inherently political enterprise than is science in general. Kohlberg's assessment of the development of morality in children is given as an example (Kitzinger, 1990) of the political and power-based aspects of social psychology. Kitzinger points out that despite the empirical and theoretical assaults on Kohlberg's theory of human moral development, Kohlberg's theory of moral development remains in the theoretical armementarium of psychologists, and is almost always discussed in textbooks on human development, because it serves the political purposes of the liberal ideology of the West. Another instance of the politically tinged character of the choice of social problems to be examined is found when a decision is made to compare the intelligence test scores of Whites and African–Americans, which is clearly motivated by socio-political conditions and pressures. Researchers do not systematically compare, for example, the intelligence test scores of Swedes and Albanians because there are few social and political reasons to make such a comparison. In addition, it is clear that the de-pathologization of homosexuality in the DSM of the American Psychiatric Association was a decision made on the basis of political considerations and not just as a result of research findings and consequent theoretical adjustments. This point is also extended to the non-social physical sciences which are also considered to be affected by political, power-based influences. However, as we have seen, whether or not political influence is relevant at the basic theoretical level of the physical sciences is another matter entirely.

Some deconstructionists claim that psychology seeks to regulate human functioning through clinical prescription and influence on social policy. Although deconstructionists would not deny it, it is important to note that every other discipline seeks the same kind of regulation with regard to human functioning. Rose (1990) makes the point that the governments in England, and later in the United States, involved themselves with teaching their citizens to control themselves in ways that were instructive rather than coercive. Self-evaluation followed by self-regulation was encouraged by the schools, mental health professionals and, eventually, families themselves. All of this training was done in the name of freedom. In the West the belief that one has freedom of choice is wide spread and is the official doctrine of both government and the predominant religious institutions. The discipline and restraints that are applied in various social training settings in schools and the military are considered to be aids to the establishment of free choice. The idea of living by free choice or living in a "free" country is, of course, somewhat illusory since there are clearly many restraints imposed by societal power sources. Biological conditions restrain individual autonomy as do

social power arrangements. The deconstructive role is presumably to articulate the specific conditions of power which affect individuals within contemporary Western societies and this is a reasonable task so long as it is recognized that it is not possible to escape the influences of some such social power arrangement. The principal conclusion that social deconstructionists draw is that the nature of the human being expressed within Western societies is considered to be objective reality, while this nature is rather only an expression of Western morality encapsulated within a particular text. The development of the Western idea of the social produces its morality that it takes to be the truth. This "truth" is not revealed by this analysis to be false, but rather indicates the context and the conditions by which it is encapsulated by attending to what seems to be marginal and making that marginality central to understanding. An example of a social response which is assumed to be marginal and which provides a glimpse into what is actually central is given by Deschamps (1984). He suggests that white, middle class males partially maintain their dominant position by describing out-group members (e.g., women, minority races, ethnic groups, and the working class) by their presumed group characteristics thereby making it easier to dismiss or belittle the out-group. Members of their own in-group are described individually, referring only to personal characteristics. Although this is a reasonable assessment of some white male behavior, Deschamps fails to mention that all in-groups engage in precisely this kind of behavior, and that is what makes them in-groups. In-groups are defined by those who are not members of the group. This is one of the characteristics that describes the text of attitude. It is an instance of the generalization process and as we have seen is found in nonhuman animals as well as human beings. It is difficult to conceive of there being any other initial reaction to members not of one's group other than the one which generalizes certain characteristics to all of its members. It is in the liberal democracies where an attempt is made to instruct people to evaluate others by their individual, rather than their group, characteristics. This is consistent with the ideal of individual competence typical of liberal democracies. Although this emphasis on assessing the single individual may be contrary to what people actually do, it is certainly desirable from the deconstructive point of view. The assignment of presumed out-group characteristics to an individual need not be negative as in the behavior toward out-groups of people whom we label, for example, Anglophiles. In either the negative or positive case, such generalizations tend to be essentially false because we know that differences among individuals within the same group on any given characteristic can either be great or small.

Logos-driven information does provide power to those who possess it. Of that there is no question. The deconstructive alternative, in addition to being a corrective to the political excesses of those who use science, is a con-

cept where the text is either completely destroyed or turned over to those toward whom it is addressed for rewriting. The inevitable result seems to be that a new text will be created which will be infused with the same kind of political tyranny as that which it replaces. In fairness to the social psychological deconstructionists, it should be said that they wish to replace all social texts by the implementation of the concept of a self constituted by others. One wonders whether such an arrangement, if achieved, will dispense with the social text altogether or if another will simply replace it. There may be no substitute in social arrangement for the development of power sources. Perhaps the best one can hope for is that such sources are cognizant of their own influence and act to build restrictions to it. Deconstruction, in part, suggests a kind of intellectual anarchism that, in itself, can act as a corrective to existing social texts so as to keep them under constant revision. However, the concept of the social is already under constant revision in the modern world as a result of continuing economic and other changes so that the deconstructive argument may provide the text, despite itself, that codifies these experiential changes in social arrangement. This may be the real value of deconstruction, one that is, of course, not new, but rather simply the next step in a constantly evolving critical process whose function is to correct the deficiencies that inevitably arise in the contemporary expression of the logos.

History, Rhetoric and Social Psychology

Psychology as a discipline began in the nineteenth century and is thus a product of the cultural and political milieu of that time. The Kantian emphasis on phenomena or direct experience partially displaced the eighteenth century's glorification of science and logic. Psychology arose as a rather bewildering attempt to combine the logical and scientific emphasis with the late nineteenth century's parallel emphasis on direct experience as expressed by Brentano and Husserl. This intellectual development has been well documented and need not detain us here. However, the political climates of those eras are less attended to in the standard histories of the field. Lacan's (1977) interpretation of this history is informative. Before the eighteenth century the monarch's task was to maintain the power of the state by military and economic means and to decree laws for the control of the population. In the eighteenth century, with the belief that problems could be solved by using the methods of science and logic, the state not only maintained military and economic power, but also assumed the task of assuring that its citizens sustained correct dispositions as well as good order. The rational establishment of general tranquillity and the moral order was central to this planning. Those who were most accomplished in the methods of rationality were needed to supply the conceptual structures that would allow

for an interpretation of the nature of human existence. They became the purveyors of interpretations, that is, texts, about the human condition. These practitioners were the scientists and logicians whose work provided the textual definition of the European eighteenth century as the age of reason. The logos had come to full political flower. The eighteenth century is when science took hold of Western Europe's powerful leaders, and thus the possibility of a social psychology was born.

Social psychology gained its greatest impetus in the United States during World War II. Certain early research by Hovland and his co-workers (e.g., Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield, 1949), begun during the war, concentrated on the nature of attitude change and the persuasive process. This firmly established the field, at least at that time, to be in the service of the central government. Hovland et al. examined the formation of attitudes and opinions and the persuasive techniques required to change them, and thus provided the language and the representations, the text, for the possibility of manipulating various beliefs of the North American population. The intent, during the war, was to shape opinion and attitude to be consistent with the aims and goals of the war effort. It is a clear indication of the influence of political power on social psychology. It matters not whether social psychologists believed, as individuals, in the goals of the federal government at that time — their texts were and are now often directly influenced by government policies even as these policies are influenced by the work of social psychologists. Many attitude studies and surveys serve as keys for describing the subjective world of individuals and collectivities so as to provide information to various power groups such as those of government and industry. Social psychology may influence the power groups it serves, but the final decisions regarding social action lie with those outside of the discipline.

The so-called crisis in social psychology of the late 1960's and 1970's occurred primarily as a result of two factors: the Vietnamese war and difficulties with the methodology of social psychological experimentation. Armistead's (1974) book was probably the first comprehensive statement concerning the relevance of typical social psychological research to the social situations, such as the war in Vietnam, from the political point of view. The malaise precipitated by the Vietnamese war led many people, particularly the young, to challenge the moral choices of the United States that lead to such a war: for social sciences the issue became one of "relevance" of the field to the actual concerns of people.

The methodological crisis regarding artifacts in behavioral research was best summarized by Rosenthal and Rosnow (1969). It was observed by a number of researchers that laboratory methods and experiments on social topics generally "break up" meaningful collective behavior in a manner which no longer mirrors reality nor are the procedures meaningful to the

people engaged in them as subjects. This is, of course, true of much scientific analysis and representation. However, experiments on human beings are not usually performed in natural settings and the resulting artificiality is often apparent to the subject and often results in responses diverse from what they would be *in situ*. The postmodern emphasis is to preserve the unitary, autonomous subject which, however, contradicts another postmodern point — that the single individual is always influenced by her personal and group history. If the text is historically influenced then so is the unitary subject.

Social psychologists have generally overlooked the role of rhetoric in the explanation of the social. Deconstruction is an attempt to establish the primacy of rhetoric over logic. Deconstructionists believe that mathematics, induction, and deduction are not higher forms of discourse than are those established by the principles of rhetoric. Processes of thinking are modeled after those of public argument between people (Billig, 1990). Consequently, some individual cognitive processes must be of this argumentative nature which are group influenced. In addition, attitudes are not considered to be individual arrangements concerning a social stimulus class, but rather as communications with a decided rhetorical quality regarding a public, and usually controversial, topic. As we have seen, the expression of an attitude by the communication of the beliefs and the evaluations of those beliefs that define it is particularly difficult to change. The very fact that attitudes suggest their opposites requires that any meaning or conclusion drawn with respect to their content must be extracted from the justifications presented for the two opposite arguments. To insist that Republicans as a political class will ruin the country requires not only an argument defending this position, but also requires a consideration of the argument as to how their stance might help the country.

A major problem arises (Burman, 1990) for someone who accepts deconstruction's persistent criticism of the assumptive limitations of all textual means of explanation so as to render them essentially political. Deconstruction's inability to align itself with any particular political position results in a distancing of the deconstructive process from the solution to a given social problem. Of course, this is the major point of deconstruction, but also its failing: virtually all interpretations and/or objective systems are "under erasure" and fail in some fundamental way because they do not recognize their origins in what is unsaid, what is peripheral but not really peripheral, and what is the historical and social origin of their interpretation. Burman believes that deconstruction operates appropriately when it, for example, exposes "the underlying political program of psychology as reproducing and perpetuating a liberal humanist ideology of the rational uniform subject" (1990, p. 211). She goes on to say that deconstruction allows us to indicate "the default politics at work, the cultural imperialism, the individu-

alization, and denial of oppression and ultimately the reinstatement of the mind–body, self–other, emotion–reason oppositions that have structured Western philosophy and politics since the 'coincidental meeting' of Descartes and capitalism" (p. 211). Burman is disappointed that deconstruction's very program does not allow it to embrace a feminist or socialist program as the socialist program would have to immediately be placed under erasure and we would discover its historical routes in capitalism as did Marx. Feminism, on the other hand, needs to define itself as a silent part of capitalist and Marxist systems, both of which tend to create the same or similar problems for women. The very idea of a "feminist view of the world reinforces men's idea that there is a 'feminist' view of the world thus perpetuating the separation and political inequality of the sexes" (p. 214). Burman holds that deconstruction may depoliticize the feminist viewpoint because of its emphasis on "difference" which " . . . may become a substitute rather than a starting point for resistance" (p. 214). This can happen if women are depicted as alienated from a collective politics.

In short, deconstruction paralyses political action. It paralyzes theoretical development as well, or at least stops it periodically in order for theory to examine and re-examine its social, historical, and political origins and its assumptive base. Such examination is periodically valuable, and this is where deconstruction takes its place as a next step in the history of epistemology, whether it recognizes itself that way or not. The fear for deconstructionists should be that their efforts will, and indeed already have in some instances, degenerate into a subjectivity that itself is part of the legacy of Descartes' cogitatio: that which deconstructionists most wish to change is that which characterizes them. Nevertheless Burman and other social psychological deconstructionists hope that social psychology becomes linked to political action and that it is reflective of the perception of those actually engaged in relevant social activity. The fusion of political engagement and social interpretation, a combination not unrelated to the hopes of some during the turbulent 1960's, is the goal of at least some deconstructing social psychologists.