
A New Vision for the Field: Introduction to the Second Special Issue on the Unified Theory

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This is the second of two issues of the *Journal of Clinical Psychology* focused on the validity and usefulness of a new theoretical vision for the field (Henriques, 2003). The first two contributions from Rand and Ilardi and Geary both enrich the argument that psychology needs to be effectively connected with biology and physics and that the unified theory (via Behavioral Investment Theory) is highly successful in this way. The authors of the subsequent three articles—Shaffer, Quackenbush, and Shealy—show that the Tree of Knowledge System (through the Justification Hypothesis) is deeply commensurate with the dominant paradigms in the social sciences. Thus, the group of authors of these five articles demonstrates the viability of the unified theory both from bottom-up and top-down viewpoints. In the sixth article, the author addresses some important problems that potentially arise with the development of a clearly defined discipline. In the concluding article I address the concerns about the proposal raised by the contributors to the two special issues and articulate how the unified theory lays the foundation for the development of a useful mass movement in psychology. © 2004 Wiley Periodicals, Inc. *J Clin Psychol* 61: 3-6, 2005.

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Psychology, to borrow from Churchill, is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. After taking a broad survey of the mind sciences, science writer John Horgan (1999) concluded definitively that there will never be a dramatic revolution in psychology that would parallel Darwin's theory of evolution or Einstein's general relativity. The reasoning behind his claim was that "the mind" is hopelessly complex—too complex for the methods of science. I disagree, and I have proposed a conceptual framework that I hope

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will transform psychology from its current preparadigmatic state (Staats, 1983) into a fully functioning, mature, paradigmatic science (Henriques, 2002, 2003; Henriques & Sternberg, 2004).

The previous special issue (Vol. 60, No. 12) included a lead article, "Psychology Defined," 13 commentaries, and 2 full-length articles. As to be expected, some authors questioned the merits of my proposal and wondered if psychology would genuinely benefit from theoretical organization (e.g., Stam, 2004; Yanchar, 2005). Importantly though, most of the contributors commended the effort as being, at the very least, a crucial step in the right direction. Some saw it as substantially more than this. Gilbert (2004), for example, calls the proposal "fascinating" and suggests, "Henriques' approach . . . should be center stage to our thinking, model building and teaching of psychology" (p. 1226). Haaga (2004) states he "found the tree of knowledge taxonomy, the theoretical joint points, the evolutionary history, and the levels of emergent properties highly illuminating" (p. 1229). Stanovich (2004) expresses a similarly strong endorsement:

There is much with which I agree in Henriques' target article. I am especially in tune with the idea that the combination of Behavioral Investment Theory and the Justification Hypothesis yields the idea of a mental architecture consisting of two broad domains (parallel and logical-analytic). I agree that the discontinuity between humans and other animals is a central issue for psychology . . . [and] I think that the justification process might have played a critical role in the development of metarepresentational abilities" (p. 1263).

Calhoun (2004) calls the effort to unify psychology a "noble quest" and suggests the proposal seems to bring a special harmony to the field. He said, "As other scholars who, like great maestros, are able to bring together a variety of different theoretical and empirical sources into an integral whole, [Henriques] has begun to weave a highly intriguing source of harmony for a dissonant discipline and profession" (p. 1283). Stricker (2004) said the proposal was "imaginative," and Viney (2004) wrote, "The unification scheme proposed by Henriques . . . holds promise as a coherent and comprehensive approach to psychology and as a helpful way to think about the relation of psychology to other sciences" (p. 1275). Given the difficulty that radically new ideas often face in influencing the establishment, it was very heartening to see so many high caliber scholars acknowledge the value in the proposal.

The current issue seems likely to continue the momentum the unified theory is generating. Rand and Ilardi articulate with clarity the need for psychology to be consilient with the natural sciences and argue cogently that the new perspective certainly meets this need. Geary takes this point a step further and shows how Behavioral Investment Theory (BIT) is directly congruent with his "motive to control" hypothesis. He articulates the breadth and depth of this perspective by cutting across evolutionary theory, neuroscience, cognitive science, behavioral science, and ethology. In particular, he demonstrates how BIT and the motive to control metaphor can serve as a unifying framework for the general mind sciences.

A key part of the argument in "Psychology Defined" is that human psychology represents a unique and separate subdiscipline of the general mind sciences. Because humans have capacities for self-reflective awareness, language, and exist in a socio-cultural context, human behavior represents a qualitatively different level of complexity than the behavior of other animals. It is because of this difference that the bridge between the natural and social sciences has been so difficult to cross (cf. Wilson, 1998, p. 126). According to the Tree of Knowledge System, the Justification Hypothesis provides the bridge across these great domains of science, and the authors Shaffer, Quackenbush, and Shealy articulate some of the key aspects of this idea. Shaffer offers an incisive review of

relevant research from sociology and demonstrates that the JH organizes and clarifies much of the research in that discipline. Then, Quackenbush (2005) effectively articulates some of the core concerns of postmodern philosophy and shows how the JH and the ToK System can address those concerns while also being commensurate with the natural sciences. He writes,

“The ToK System represents an Archimedean perch from which it is possible to assume our freedom as psychologists. Unlike Wilson’s (1998) Consilience, the ToK System does not mask over the tensions between naturalism and social constructionism. Rather, properly interpreted, such tensions cease to be *substantive*.” (p. 78)

Finally, Shealy shows how the JH opens the door for fascinating analyses of religious and political justification systems. He also demonstrates how the JH is commensurate with existing research on the development of attitudes, beliefs and values, and offers excellent suggestions for future research.

The sixth article in this issue has a slightly different tone. Slife (2005) grants the argument I have offered a high degree of legitimacy, writing:

Henriques’ contribution is particularly welcome. He not only seeks to resolve issues that are internal to the discipline, but he also seeks to situate psychology in the wider context of other disciplines. He does so through a comprehensive set of ideas that he hopes will subsume and unify the discipline. In fact, he shows fairly convincingly that his concepts “readily lend themselves to phenomena currently under scientific investigation” as well as “many other areas to which the analysis can be extended” (Henriques, 2003, p. 177). Indeed, he demonstrates his subsumptive prowess by connecting the work of two dramatically different thinkers—Sigmund Freud and B.F. Skinner. Such a connection is impressive and evidences the promise of his unifying framework. (p. 108)

Yet his primary focus in his paper is on the fact that some in psychology might feel “defined out” of the field by my proposal, and he specifically focuses on qualitative research and theistic psychology. This raises one of the most vexing problems faced by the discipline—can we have unity with pluralism? Are all views welcome or are some views simply wrong? Who is to say and do we want to be able to do so? I address this issue rather extensively in the concluding article, and use my system to articulate the nature and boundaries of science and specify why I believe qualitative research is in, but theistic psychology (as Slife defined it) is not.

Will the unified theory be able to untie the Gordian knot that currently is the field of psychology? In the best possible sense of the word, the answer appears to be “maybe.” At the very least, it seems clear that the new unified theory offers an intriguing and promising new perspective on the discipline, one that is sure to raise serious questions and controversy about the nature of our field and its subject matter for a long time to come.

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