John Dewey's Critical Anticipations of Personality Psychology

Brad Piekkola

Vancouver Island University.

Nanaimo. Canada

Abstract

A brief introduction to the developmental history of personality psychology is given. Two trends, the clinical, holistic approach and the experimental, elemental approach, lay the foundation for issues that would confront the field into the present. While the accepted mandate has been the study of the whole person, the experimental paradigm has been hegemonic. Emphasis has been placed on knowledge of individual differences across variety of abstract constructs. The person and the situation, two central concepts, have been decreed independent, alternative, competing factors in accounting for individual conduct. John Dewey's psychology, based on organicism and person-environment mutualism, is presented as challenging basic assumptions and theories of personality psychology. For Dewey, personality is a product of individuals being incorporated into the socio-cultural milieu that is their life context, and from which they cannot be disengaged. Kritische Psychologie is discussed as sympathetic to some of Dewey's propositions.

In considering John Dewey's criticisms of personality psychology, it should be recognized that personality did not become an identifiable subdiscipline until the 1930s (when Dewey was in his 70s). Nonetheless, Dewey, in his psychological writings, addressed themes and issues that would be taken up therein. Specifically, Dewey's organicism, and the related stress on coordination, emphasized the person as an organized whole, inseparable from the environment that was the individual's life milieu. Such coordination was not an original datum but a product of development and sociocultural experience. The infant enters life with reflexive biological connections to the world but is immediately subject to the influence of other persons. Development was a matter of establishing adaptive habits that function to orient and connect the individual to the physical and sociocultural environment and, in that process, form the dispositions, attitudes and abilities that constitute the concrete personality. Themes that arise in this, that apply to personality psychology, include a holistic versus an

additive model of personality, the person versus the situation, experimental abstractions versus the contextualized individual, the personal environment, evolutionary fitness, and the fallacy of neglected development. In closing, parallels are established between Dewey's critique and developments in Kritische Psychologie.

Personality Psychology: A Brief History

Personality psychology became an identifiable sub-discipline during the 1930s with the appearance of the journal *Character and Personality* in 1932 and some major texts in the later decade (McAdams, 1997), including Allport's *Personality: A psychological interpretation* (1937), the first authoritative text which set the stage for what would follow (McAdams, 2009). The problem of the individual or individuality had, until then, been treated by science as bothersome and was brushed aside by psychologists in favor mind-in-general, thereby omitting self-consciousness and organic unity (Allport, 1937). This abstract representation was to be supplemented by the new movement's emphasis on individuality. While the movement may have been new, it marked a coalescence of antecedent trends rather than an abrupt beginning.

During the 19th century *character* was the category for discussions of human conduct and referred to community concerns with moral issues like duty (Nicholson, 2003). As the century was ending, concern with issues of individual distinctiveness led to character being displaced by personality as the preferred category. Personality, as a popular term, entered psychology through the discourse of clinicians studying multiple personalities. What became the psychology of personality in America had two roots: the (Galtonian) psychometric, individual differences approach, and the psychiatric study of persons as individual, unique, integrated wholes (Winter & Barenbaum, 1999). As Young (1928) put it, there were two distinct approaches to data gathering: (1) the structural, cross-sectional testing of traits which assessed individual standing within a group at a particular time and place, and (2) the historical-genetic (developmental) perspective of psychiatrists. The clinician was interested in the person as situated in the natural and social environment, and possessing a past, present, and future (Dashiell, 1939).

Scientific approaches to personality may be said to begin with Galton's (1884) introduction of the *fundamental lexical hypothesis*. This was the idea that important individual differences would be verbally encoded in language and spurred personality psychologists to turn to dictionaries in identifying human traits (Allport and Odbert, 1936, for instance). Another Galtonian influence was the severing of the connection of individual performance from prevailing social conditions by defining individual performance as an expression of innate biology (Danziger, 1990). The notion of individuality, that psychologists would draw upon, was a product of the societal ideal of the individual as independent, whose qualities were self-contained. Regularities in conduct were assumed to pertain to an individual in isolation rather than an individual-in-a-situation. The environment, other people, institutions, and so on, were conceived of as external to the skin-bounded person as an autonomous individual (Winter & Barenbaum, 1999). The skin-boundedness of the person leads to the assumption that personality is something internal to the individual. The commonsense conception of personality that emerged was that it is internal to the individual, behind the skin; the skin being the boundary between person and environment (Sanford, 1963). With that distinction in place, questions arose as to whether consistency in behavior was due to inner determinants or to the force of situations, to the person or the environment. Personality testing contributed to this distinction.

Personality testing, an offshoot of the success of intelligence testing (also begun by Galton), emerged from a need, during the First World War, to identify emotionally unstable recruits, given the large numbers of shell-shock victims (Gibby & Zickar, 2008). Woodworth answered the military's commission and, in 1917, introduced the *Woodworth Personal Data Sheet* to assess emotional stability; other tests of maladjustment would follow. In the 1920s, personality testing became part of industrial-organizational psychology. A 1921 symposium convened by *The Journal of Educational Psychology* on intelligence measurement and future directions concluded that tests of character, of personal qualities, were needed (Piekkola, 2013). While Wells (1914) had argued that the disuniting of personality characteristics may ease comprehension, such characteristics could not be separated absolutely from other characteristics. Kelley (1928), on the other hand, maintained the necessity of establishing trait independence and separate measurement to avoid confusion. A Unitary Trait Committee (1931-1935) pursued the idea that personality is a composite of isolated traits (Piekkola, 2013). That trend continues into the present; for instance, the popular Five Factor Theory posits five independent trait factors which comprise an inherited structure of personality (McCrae & Costa, 2003).

While early psychometricians were engaged in elementalistic investigations, there were others who took a holistic stance regarding personality. Prince (1920), for instance, referred to personality as "the sum total of all the biological innate dispositions, impulses, tendencies, appetites and instincts of the individual and all of the acquired dispositions and tendencies" (p. 405). Roback (1928) expanded on that in emphasizing that `sum' should be taken not as additive but integrative. Allport (1924) bemoaned the lack of an adequate representation of the total personality given the current investigations of isolated traits; traits were there, but personality was missing. McDougal (1932), in the first article of the inaugural issue of *Character and Personality*, wrote that ". . . each personality is in its degree an integrated unity of all its factors . . . each distinguishable part of which owes something of its nature to its place in the whole and to its active relations with all other parts" (p. 16).

A small number of psychologists, thus, were writing of the need to develop a view of persons as integrated wholes operating in the world (Woodworth, 1951). The outlook was holistic with the aim of studying the whole person, which contrasted with the prevailing elementalism in American psychology (McAdams, 1997). Even Terman (1934), of intelligence testing fame, contended that an accurate representation of personality could not be cobbled together from numerous test scores; it is an organismic whole, not additive. Personality traits are more than intercorrelated; they are functionally interactive in ways that are infinitely complex. From such thinking arose the mandate for personality psychology to explain persons as integrated wholes functioning in their daily lives (Funder, 2013). While that may be the mandate, it is the individual differences approach, focused on isolated characteristics, that has dominated the field. To Allport (1937) this method, which he called differential psychology, fails to deal with individuality. It selects a single quality or attribute for study, rather than the individual from whom the attribute is abstracted, and places it within a range for a population. As Allport wrote, "the patterning of the individual functions in the *individual* case is never directly considered" (1937, p. 10, emphasis in original).

Among those seeking evidence of individual traits, a consensus arose that evidence of traits would require cross-situational consistency and temporal stability. Early on that assumption faced challenges. Watson (1930), the arch behaviorist, reduced personality to the sum of objectively observed activities/habit-systems which are dominated by the situation.

Likewise, Kantor (1938) considered personality a series of latent responses evoked by an appropriate stimulus—a reaction system. Symonds (1924) questioned whether traits were universal qualities of the individual, operating in independence from situations, given the alterations in people's reactions to changing situations. Subsequently, Hartshorne and May (1928) provided empirical evidence for a lack of consistency in the trait of honesty. Newcomb (1929), too, found no compelling evidence of similar responses to varying situations. The issue of consistency versus specificity had thus taken root before the formal subdiscipline arose, and, with it, a supposition of person-environment separation. During the 1940s and 50s centralist theories focusing on internal determinants were dominant in the field, but this `person' view would be challenged by a situationist critique (Pervin, 2002). During the 1960s-80s it was manifest in the `person-situation debate,' on the significance of internal and external determinants of behavior. The debate stems from the `pure trait' model and the idea that people display consistencies in behavior (expressing the trait in question) over time and situations (Kenrick & Funder, 1988). Rather than an either/or proposition, advocates of interactionism would propose that behavior is a matter of characteristics of the person interacting with situational factors.

Beginning in the 1960s empirical research demonstrated that both person variables and situation variables, together, affected behavior. Statistical analysis demonstrated that the interaction of the two accounted for more variance than either alone. Endler (1983), a main proponent of interactionism, distinguished between mechanistic interaction, based on person-environment independence, and another (unlabeled) type in which person could not be realistically separated from situation. In behavior, the person and situation are interwoven in a continuous process (Endler and Magnusson, 1976). This second type was deemed empirically unfeasible since it would require study of the interaction process over time. Nonetheless, as Endler expressed it, "We are dealing with static snapshots rather than movies" (1983, p. 192). By the 2000s, the importance of personality-situation interaction was recognized (Corr & Mathews, 2009) and a broad consensus had formed (Blum et al., 2018). The separation of person from situation, however, remains.

Roberts (2007) concluded that most researchers accept that models of human nature require an interactional foundation. The question remained, however, as to which situations are the most important to the functioning of personality. At different periods attempts have been made to determine taxonomies of situations but they were so different that their integration was improbable. Some emphasized subjective aspects while others emphasized objective characteristics. Woodworth (1937, in Pervin, 1985) for example, maintained that personality consistency rested on the perceived similarity of situations in relation to what the individual was trying to achieve. Moos (1973), on the other hand, emphasized ecological dimensions, organizational structure, and behavior settings. What is defined as environment varies depending on whether it is the actual environment or the perceived environment (Pervin, 1978a). If, as Mischel and Shoda (1995) argued, the definition of a situation is with respect to features deemed significant by the researcher, but irrelevant to those being studied, it should not be expected that behavior will vary meaningfully over situations. McAdams (1996) suggested a need to study the person's life ecology, the environments and settings that are salient. Despite objective similarities, personal life history may render an assumption of equivalence of situations over persons a falsehood.

While the foregoing merely sketches the historical development of personality psychology, it does indicate some central issues that are sufficient for present purposes. During the early formative period, John Dewey was developing his psychological perspective that would

challenge some of the fundamental assumptions of personality psychology. That is the next consideration.

John Dewey's Anticipatory Critique of Personality Psychology

As was stated, Dewey's major works were written before personality psychology had achieved the status of a subdiscipline, but his general psychology had considerable bearing on the issues taken up within the field. Beginning with his organicist views, a consideration of some of his relevant propositions will be considered next. To set the stage, his general standpoint was well expressed in his twenty-fifth anniversary address to the American Psychological Association (Dewey, 1917). Therein he proposed that when elementary biological functions were removed, what remained of mental life fell within the scope of social psychology. He cautioned that such an abstraction did not exist, that human psychology in the concrete was bio-social. In his eighties, Dewey (1939) concluded that the psychology he had been developing was a socio-biological or biological-cultural psychology. From birth, the biological human organism was engaged with the physical and sociocultural environment, its milieu, and through adapting to it, and interweaving with it, there emerges the qualities of mind and individuality. In this, his general theory of psychology, there are aspects that bear upon issues in personality psychology. These will be discussed thematically in terms of organicism and the person-situation debate, coordinated activity in the environment, developing connections with the sociocultural environment, the development of personality and individuality, and whether human engagement with the world is best accounted for in terms of evolutionary adaptations or adjustments to the current environment. Lastly, Dewey's concerns with the adequacy of psychological research will considered as they apply to personality psychology.

Organicism and the Person-Situation Debate

To Dewey (1884) human life provides psychology with its material but psychology owed a debt to biology for its introduction of the concepts of `organism' and `organic.' As Haldane (1884) expressed it, when considering the organism as composed of numerous, separate parts, the parts must be viewed as being in reciprocal relations to each other within a whole, a system in which all parts constantly act upon each other. The idea of reciprocity, furthermore, was extended by Dewey to the relation between organism and environment. Accepting the necessity of the environment to the organism, Dewey (1884) incorporated psychical life into his organicism: "The idea of environment is a necessity to the idea of organism, and with the conception of environment comes the impossibility of considering psychical life as an individual, isolated thing developing in a vacuum" (p. 285). The individual, beyond the physical environment, is in an organic relation with organized social life from which mental nourishment is drawn, and within which the person must function. Each person is wed to societal life, and through it there are close connections with the social past through heredity, tradition, and education. At this point in his career Dewey was entrenched in Hegelian, absolute idealism, and the proposition that an absolute mind is objectified in cultural institutions, and that these shape the individual mind (Dewey, Ja., 1939). Regardless, there was little evidence of idealism in the 1884 article but there were clear traces of the naturalism that was to follow (Flower and Murphey, 1977). As Dewey (1930a) wrote in autobiographical statement, his study of physiology as an undergraduate

left the impression of the human organism as a unity and spurred a desire to establish the same interrelatedness and interdependence of life and world.

Given the emphasis on interrelatedness, Dewey (1938) had a somewhat different perspective on the person-situation debate. Although commonsense distinguishes between organism and environment, that differentiation can lead to an assumption of their independence and, subsequently, to the introduction of a third thing—their interaction (as the interactionists in personality psychology clearly did), when, in fact, they are integrated. There are not organisms and environments but organisms-in-environments, As Dewey & Bentley (1949) expressed it:

> Organisms do not live without air and water, nor without food ingestion and radiation. They live, that is, as much in processes across and "through" skins as in processes "within" skins. One might as well study an organism in complete detachment from its environment as try to study an electric clock on the wall in disregard of the wire leading to it (Dewey and Bentley, 1949, p. 128).

Medium and environment are more than what surrounds and encompasses an individual (Dewey, 1916/1961). They refer to a continuity of surroundings with the individual's characteristic, active tendencies, and consist of the conditions that support or hinder those activities. This is reflected in what he earlier wrote on individuality. There are two sides to individuality: on one side are the person's special dispositions, talents, and temperament, and, on the other, the surroundings, the situation, and the opportunities afforded (Dewey, 1891/1969). Each of these in isolation was an unreal abstraction. Rather than being constituted by the two together, they are two ways of looking at individuality—from within and without. No capacity or disposition will manifest without exterior circumstances. The environment and circumstances of the individual, along with constituent makeup, are involved in individuality:

> The difference between one individual and another lies as much in the station in which each is placed as in the capacity of each. That is to say, environment enters into individuality as a constituent factor, helping make it what it is (Dewey, 1891/1969, p. 302).

In separating organism or person from environment, as much as with detaching individual traits from whole persons, one has instances of what Dewey referred to as the 'tradition of separation and isolation' and the `analytic fallacy.'

With the `tradition of separation and isolation' qualitative differences are identified and, then, that conceptual distinction is left to stand on its own, apart from the context in which it was embedded (Dewey, 1928)—such as persons from environments, traits from persons, or minds from bodies. This creates an artificial isolation of the discriminated characteristics from each other. Positively, such abstractions from immediate conditions of existence, form ideas and become concepts, give order to such interrelations, and support effective engagement. In abstraction something is freed from one experience in order to transfer it, or generalize it, to another (Dewey, 1920). In that there is no problem (Dewey, 1928). Negatively, there is an issue when such abstractions become reified, given an ontological existence, rather than an intellectual, conceptual status, and treated as though a concrete actuality.

The problem of the `analytic fallacy' is not with the analysis but in the ignoring of the context within which the analysis took place, and for which analysis was undertaken (Dewey, 1931/1998). It is present when elements or distinctions have been discriminated and then treated as self-sufficient. It results in atomizing and a desiccation of the world lived in, as well as of ourselves. The logical conclusion is the denial of continuity and all connection. This was what occurred with the concept of the `reflex arc' whose elementalism Dewey overcame with the principles of coordination and activity

Coordination and Activity

Dewey (1896) contended that the reflex arc, as a unit of analysis, resulted in a disjointed psychology, a series of disconnected reflexive reactions, that broke the continuity and unity of ongoing streams of behavior, of smoothly flowing acts. Rather than the reflex, Dewey preferred the *act* as a unit of analysis for psychological activity. The act captures the ongoing interplay of organism and environment and includes feeling, thought, and purpose as integrated, inseparable aspects (English & English, 1958). Psychological discourse, to Dewey (1948), has mistakenly torn apart the practical, intellectual, and emotional, turning them into entities and creating, thereby, the artificial problem of restoring their working together. Pervin (1978b), among later personality psychologists, recognized the challenge of treating feelings, thoughts and behaviors as separate entities, especially given how organized functioning actually is.

The act represents what Endler (1983) referred to as the interaction process wherein person was inseparable from situation in a process extending over time. The reflex arc concept, like the separation of person from environment, failed when studied in the context of concrete behavior. The breaks that existed were in the psychologist's interpretive processes and left out something crucial—the supposed reflex is both preceded and followed by ongoing behavior. Active living, as an ongoing process, involves transitions through transforming circumstances which are missing from momentary research considerations wherein situations are represented as independent variables.

Central to Dewey's (1896) reflex arc critique was the concept of `coordination' in which parts of an organism work harmoniously together and, through successfully adapting to life conditions, the person and the environment are harmonized. Coordination is an act of organic connection of the psychophysical organism with the environment, including the sociocultural milieu. When coordinations require no further adjustments, and are regularly called upon, they become habits. Coordination, indivisibly connecting organism and environment, is relatively fixed in habit but malleable in adjustment. Dewey (1899/1976) expanded on the principle of coordination, as that is applied to mind and personality, in his paper on child development.

Developing Coordinations and Personality

In biological growth the main function is the construction of coordinations (internally and externally) that support the infant in adjusting to the environment (Dewey, 1899/1976). From birth, separate motor and sensory systems are associated and combined into more complex coordinations (like cephalocaudal development and eye-hand coordination), becoming operative organically. The crystallization of these adjustments into habits facilitates effective, rapid action, and survival. These are further elaborated as adequate activity levels are achieved and serve larger ends. Gradually, instinctive aspects are decreasing in importance and the child is developing skills needed to enter the social world

of the community and societal/cultural conditions. Those conditions increase in their degree of influence and draw the individual into expanding activities in the social medium, through the development of more wide-ranging habits. The habits formed are not immutable and permanent (Dewey, 1922). Old habits may cease to be functional as life proceeds and the need for further adjustments, serviceable under new conditions, arise. Allport (1937) considered Dewey's conception, which he referred to as generalized habit, to be equivalent to his own conception of traits (although Allport's conception was internal and Dewey's was transactional). It would also be comparable to McCrae and Costa's (2003) characteristic adaptations (products of the Five Factors of personality interacting with the external environment) but, in both approaches, the person-environment inseparability is missing.

According to Dewey (1911), just as the body needs food and air, a cultural medium is required for mind and character (roughly equivalent to personality) to develop. Humans enter life with primitive impulses that are undirected and loose, and the cultural environment provides the design by which each new entrant is transformed (Dewey, 1922). The loose impulses are remade into serviceable habits, the patterns that individual conduct is fashioned into. Physical conditions are molded in cultural environments, interwoven with traditions, customs, interests, purposes, and occupations, and envelop the individual (Dewey, 1938). The social medium produces systems of behavior and dispositions to action (Dewey, 1916/1961). Mind (and personality) was not innate; it is an acquisition formed by original activities being shaped by social forces, by the child taking part in joint activities and language (Dewey, 1917). The quality of mind formed depends on the quality of the society and social relations born into. Mind is a product and only after being produced does it become a cause. Operation of native tendencies in non-social environments leads to negligible development, a relative vacancy of mind. Individuality, subjectivity, selfhood, and personality are functions that emerge in complexly organized social interactions (Dewey, 1925/1958).

The Individual's Environment and Individuality

To Dewey, each newborn, biological infant is connected to the environment, as with respiration and reflexes, but is, from the start, subject to a social/cultural world to which connections are established, and from which meanings are appropriated; these orient the child to the world-as-lived-in (Dewey, 1916/1961). Through active engagement with the world, the individual establishes a personal relationship to aspects of what is potentially available. A distinction needs to be made, therefore, between a global environment, and those specific aspects of the environment with which an organism establishes relations (Dewey, 1938)—a personal environment. What is referred to as `environment' involves physical conditions which are enmeshed in conditions that are cultural (Dewey & Bentley, 1949). The environment is not something external to, and around, activities. It is the medium, the milieu for those activities, the channel for their movement and continuation, with which the individual is coordinated.

In analyzing conduct, it is important to consider not just the agent but the situation within which activity is occurring (Dewey, 1894/1897). Conduct may issue from an agent but it is done in reference to the conditions that are present. Environmental conditions, including the social, constitute action because (1) education shapes the habits of feeling, thinking, and acting. (2) Acts are subject to control by the demands of others (family, friends, authorities), surrounding stimuli (books, tools, objects), and the range of opportunities afforded. (3) Without environmental forces no idea or plan could transition into action. The definition of

conduct has to include the scene of the performed action unless that definition is restricted to wholly internal states. Internal states, at the same time are not to be excluded since what a situation is to a person depends on personal capacities (skills, resources, knowledge).

Besides the differences between cultures adapted to, within cultures there exist subcultures (classes, occupations, clubs, gangs) that have their own specialized modes of social organization, and these have formative influences on the active dispositions of individuals (Dewey, 1916/1961). The conduct of individuals is given shape through inculcation into the habits of thought, feeling, and action of their group (Dewey, 1894/1897). It is in these transactions that the distinctive, stable patterns of the individual have their origin. Traditionally, it was such characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior that personality theories were intended to be accounts of (Funder, 2013).

On Personality as an Evolved Adaptation

The popular Five Factor Theory of personality identifies five dispositions or personality traits that are biologically rooted tendencies (Costa, et al., 2019). These basic tendencies, which are the supposed universal structure of personality, are purported to have a causal influence on behavior and are unaffected by experience or the environment; but they do interact with the physical and social environment to produce characteristic adaptations (McCrae and Costa, 2003). As biologically based, Costa and McCrae speculate that these dispositions may have conferred an adaptive advantage on humans. To MacDonald (1995), they are subsystems that evolved to solve adaptive problems which, to Buss (1991), are related to survival and reproduction and arose, through natural selection, as adaptations to problems confronting our hominid ancestors. Differences in personality are strategies directed toward solving recurrent adaptive problems (Buss 2009). For Dewey, should these biological bases exist, they would be impulses, and subject to adjusting to current conditions and problems that are beyond those from our evolutionary past.

Cultures, to Dewey (1939/1989), stimulate native tendencies and support a range of variation over the course of development. Such variation is a factor in human individuality. In this, Dewey rejects the supposed fixity of human nature. Certain needs may be constant but the consequences they lead to are subject to modification and being shaped into new forms, given prevailing cultural forms (laws, morals, science, industry, religion). Humans have few pure instincts; instead there are loosely organized impulses that are subject to a broad range of possibilities (Dewey, 1894/1971). Dewey (1898) therefore rejected arguments that account for human conduct in terms of fitness or adaptations to conditions from the evolutionary past. The term `fit' had to refer to social structures and demands, the ideals and group habits, that assured effective conduct under present circumstances.

The current environment is continuously changing, so fitness requires flexibility in adjusting to unanticipated change. Biological impulses, inherited from distant ancestors, must be modified, restrained, suppressed, or replaced, to be effective under current conditions. Through education, there is an alternative form of natural selection upon individual action. The social process of education (which is more than formal schooling—Dewey, 1916/1961)) forms habits and interests that equip the child to assume adult occupations (Dewey, 1900). From birth, the child is subject to the attention and demands of others, guiding, instructing, and socializing the child, promoting the acquisition of limitations and habits (Dewey, 1922). As Dewey (1946/1975) expressed it, "all institutions are educational in the sense that they operate to form the attitudes, dispositions, abilities, and disabilities that constitute a concrete personality" (p. 62).

More recently, in line with Dewey, Cantor (1990) argued that evolutionary accounts refer to ancestral origins and ancestral environment, but it is contemporary life problems and complexities that confront people. Human behaviors and the brain systems that underlie them, to Panksepp and Panksepp (2000), are considerably more plastic than is emphasized by evolutionary psychologists; adaptive behavior is guided by genes, experience and culture. The path of human evolution, Rose (2000) contends, has led to organisms that are eminently plastic, having brains/minds and ways of living that are adaptable, and that, besides genes, we inherit cultures and technologies which shape individuals profoundly. Despite our common biological heritage, as Dewey contended, we are presented with a range of possibilities that lead to individual adjustments and activities.

On Psychological Research

According to Dewey (1900) there are clear benefits to be gained through the psychological laboratory, but they are accompanied by deficits. Complete control over conditions, and accuracy in determining influences, requires an isolation and exclusion of the usual conditions of thought and action. The result is findings that are remote and artificial. Unless laboratory results are to yield abstractions only, the results should be interpreted by gradually re-approximating real-life conditions. To ignore context is equivalent to its denial (Dewey, 1931/1998). In more recent psychology, this has been termed `context stripping,' referring to the reduction (or elimination) of complexity and individuality by ignoring lives in their natural milieu (Worell & Etaugh, 1994). Arnett (2008) connected this to early psychologist's attempts to emulate the natural sciences and the effort to identify universals in human behavior.

The context of the experimental situation, to Dewey (1931/1998), includes more than the final, abstracted elements. There is the background of the experimenter, which includes the state of theory that set the problem under investigation, and the purpose of the design and measures used. For instance, Endler (1983) expressed the need, theoretically, to study the person-environment, interaction process, where person and environment were inseparable, but reverted to interacting, discrete variables because a method was lacking. This reflects mainstream psychology's emphasis on what Holzkamp (1984/1991) referred to as `variable psychology,' the experimental-statistical method.  A method that is based on the `act,' Dewey's suggested unit of analysis, might have addressed the integrated, person-environment process. Besides the experimenter aspect of the experimental context, there was the subject's current disposition and habits. In personality research we know little of our participants, beyond information like age, ethnicity, gender, or education level, the focus being on the preferred construct. We know so little of the people being experimented upon that it prompted Carlson (1971) to ask where the person in personality research is.

To Dewey, the distinctions identified in the laboratory are isolated from contexts (such as personal history and conditions of individual living) and lead to generalizations that are based on compounds of independent units. For instance, the Five Factor Theory traits are considered completely independent of each other which, obviously, is inconsistent with personality as an organized whole. Generalizing such independent units into a broad theory, Dewey maintained, arises logically from the suppression of context and, because of that suppression, the elements are rendered absolute since there are no limiting conditions. The results, which are valid under specifiable conditions, are transformed into a broad metaphysical doctrine. Allport (1939), reflecting on Dewey, concluded that Deweyites are unimpressed by segments of behavior that are excised in the laboratory since they know that

true statements cannot be conferred upon fragments that have been removed from natural contexts. "They," he wrote, "have little use for a psychology that isolates separate functions within the total course of experience, and prefer a thoroughgoing organismic psychology, preferably one that has a strong social emphasis" (p. 289).

Fallacy of Neglecting Development

Related to the idea of ignoring context is the `fallacy of neglecting development' which is another aspect of individual context. Dewey (1928) discussed this with respect to the isolation of an organic process or structure for investigation, as with the use of the reflex arc as the unit of analysis. Such an analysis is cross-sectional, looking at a moment frozen in time for purposes of analysis, rather than longitudinal, and supports mechanistic explanations, bereft of qualities of intellect and emotionality. Looked at longitudinally, human action incorporates a history and an outlook on the future, including understandings, purposes and attitudes. The fallacy of neglecting development is the ignoring of individual history and its directive effect on ongoing conduct. To know a person, Dewey's protege Percy Hughes (1928) wrote, one must establish the person's `life-history,' learning of the past and current engagement in life activities to establish a sense of the person's `life-movement' which only manifests in wholeness. Context-stripping ignores `life-movement.'

This has bearing upon psychological research with respect to the situations or stimuli that are incorporated into experimental research. Mischel and Shoda (1995) proposed that if the definition of the situation is with respect to features that are significant to the researcher, but irrelevant to the persons studied, one should not expect behavior to vary meaningfully over situations. One should first identify those situational features that are meaningful to the individuals. Situational analysis, to Wagerman and Funder (2009), must begin by identifying attributes that are relevant to people psychologically. Furthermore, there is a problem of perspective since personal perceptions of a situation can differ (which pertains to an individual's developmental history).

Outside of the abstract conditions of research, it must be asked what, in the concrete, constitutes a stimulus? Life, to Dewey (1916/1961), is matter of acting, rather than passive existence, and the environmental medium enters activity as a condition that sustains or frustrates it. When the process of activity is fully coordinated, habits operate without a need for consciousness; situations sustain continued, progressive movement. Frustrating conditions, on the other hand, are those in which forward movement is impeded and call forth a need to constitute the conditions, to determine what needs doing and, in this, the stimulus and the response are constituted simultaneously (Dewey, 1896). What renders something a stimulus is the whole organism's condition, the needs and type of behavior currently engaged in, and that is historical and longitudinal (Dewey, 1928). In concrete life, the situations encountered enter into ongoing conduct under the direction of current purposes and activities, and stimulating conditions arise from disruptions in the coordinated activity.

Abstraction versus Approximating Context

To concretize what has been presented let us consider the paper that introduced Interactionism in personality. Endler et al. (1962) examined the trait of Anxiousness as it interacted with different situations. The situations examined were commencing a long road trip, meeting a new date, entering a psychological experiment, crawling along a mountain ledge, rising to deliver a speech, entering counselling for a personal problem, setting off to

sail rough waters, entering a public contest, being alone in nighttime woods, entering an important job interview, and going into an important final exam. The participants were 232 male and female introductory psychology students. They were selected for being high or low on a test of anxiety. To each situation they were asked to rate their estimated intensity in 14 physiological reactions associated with anxiety.

The first obvious point is that these people are without a personal identity and represent the fallacy of neglected development. With the limited information available only two situations can be expected to be relevant: entry into a psychology experiment (which they were in) and taking an examination (being students). Outside of that their personal history has great relevance. Were they accustomed to any of the situations? As Mischel and Shoda (1995) noted, these situations, if not relevant to participants, may yield meaningless results. I used to live in the Rocky Mountains and have been on ledges so that is not anxiety provoking to me. Also, I have camped alone in the forest, so I have established habits and coordinations that make anxiousness over pondering that inconsequential. For the remainder, I would have to speculate. A person's life-history, their life-activities, matter. What is of interest to the experimenters, however, is the abstraction under investigation, not whole persons in context. Forgetting the function of the detached fragment is, to Dewey (1920), false abstractionism. The aim of the investigation was to establish the statistical, person-environment interaction, not what conditions in the participant's personal lives provoke anxiousness, or not. The intent was to establish some lawful generality. In the opinion of Dewey (1910), actual life conditions involve a multiplicity of details but establishing scientific laws leads to a universality that is remote from such conditions and, hence, abstract. In contrast, the ends to which actual conduct is directed, are specific and concrete.

To move beyond abstractions, laboratory results must be reinterpreted by re-approximating real-life conditions or context (Dewey, 1931/1998). It is a matter of establishing what can be called `concrete validity.' McClelland (1951), acknowledging that the goal of personality psychology is an adequate understanding of individual persons, pointed out that while general laws are needed their validity is tested through being applied to individual cases. Allport (1962) proposed that, after searching for generalizations, we should return to individuals for a more accurate assessment. As he put it, "we stop with our wobbly laws of personality and seldom confront them with the concrete person" (p. 407). Further, he asked, should measuring instrument validation be limited to objective validation, or should subjective validation be sought by asking participants what they think of the diagnosis made? This, the richest source of data, is seldom consulted. In other words, we are left with a psychology of abstractions which are not connected to concrete lives. As Dewey (1931/1998) wrote, analysis can falsify when results are portrayed as complete unto themselves, separate from context. The counterpart to the `analytic fallacy' is the `fallacy of unlimited universalization' (Dewey, 1931/1998). If context is considered, every generalization is recognized as occurring under `limiting conditions' that situations set. When that fact is ignored a principle that holds under specifiable conditions can be extended without limits.

Coincident Postulates in Kritische Psychologie

While Dewey's theorizing was not organized into a theory of personality, it applies, nonetheless, to mainstream personality psychology. Outside of that institution, in the tradition of *Kritische Psychologie* (Holzkampian Critical Psychology), there have been developments in personality theorizing that, while independent of Dewey, resonate with

some of his criticisms. Dewey, as was noted, was critical of the abstract nature of decontextualized, experimental procedures and argued that it was necessary that real life conditions be better approximated. This was echoed by critical psychologists. To Dreier (2007, 2009), mainstream psychology has advanced the proposition that psychological phenomena should be studied scientifically, arranged experimentally, with limited features abstracted from life conditions serving as variables. Such procedures isolate both experimenters and participants from their current social participations. The knowledge produced is about links between variables and is largely ill-informed about how personal functioning coheres with the world-as-lived-in. Psychological functioning and its structure are rendered free-floating, detached from the social practice structures of the life milieu. In contrast, critical psychologists emphasize surpassing this `psychology without a world' by focusing on the `conduct of everyday life' as the proper subject matter for psychological investigation (Holzkamp, 1996/2013). They argue that to understand persons we need to examine them in the world that they participate in, rather than being concerned with abstract personality structures that are internal to the person (Dreier, 1999a). Instead, they favor `practice research' which involves empirical studies conducted with persons while involved in concrete social practices (Dreier, 2020).

Most personality theories, in the estimation of Dreier (1999a), are based on a fixed internal structure (needs, traits, goals), and an emphasis on coherence or integration. In this, there is failure to do justice to the diversity and complexities of social practices which foster lives that are multidimensional. Prevailing notions of unitary subjects is too simplistic to account for the conduct of life in complex societies (Dreier, 1996). For that reason, Dreier (2011) preferred the term `person' over `personality to represent an agentic, holistic approach to persons-as-situated, embedded in social practices and locations. That means that `participation' should be an important concept, in psychological theory, concerning how persons are continually engaged in social practices (Dreier, 1999b). This, as did Dewey's person-environment mutualism, unites personhood with the world, instead of succumbing to an analytic distinction that renders personality separate and internal. Accordingly, the foundation of personality is located in everyday life, in the structures of personal participation in structured social practice; it is contextualized (Dreier, 1999a). As Dewey noted, through entry into the societal/cultural medium, individuals are interwoven with the enveloping traditions, interests, occupations, and purposes of the groups with which they participate. In this they establish a personal milieu from the more global socio-cultural environment.

Dreier (2009) expands upon what was germinal in Dewey by introducing the distinction between location, position, and stance, and the recognition that their configuration is variable over diverse contexts. The lifeworld is not homogeneous; individuals, in everyday life, do not inhabit a single context. They are occupied with home, work, fellowships, comradeships, and so on. To fully participate in any presupposes knowledge of the organization regarding procedural arrangements, social positions, task and authority distribution, and the concerns of other participants. One's position of influence and action possibilities, and the types of practices exercised, will vary in accordance with their place in the particular `social structure of practice' (Dreier, 2016). Across contexts, persons are guided by stances, by personal concerns, which reorient and redirect activities in current contexts (Dreier, 1999a). Stances help guide people to be flexible in acting without becoming chameleons; to be situated is not to be situation bound. Persons must decide what they stand for, what is important, what they would support, oppose, or change (Dreier,

2016). Transitioning from one context to another, participation modes, positions and relationships vary, and the range of possible activities fluctuate, as do the personal concerns relative to each. Just as Dewey warned against overgeneralizing experimental results, given the limiting conditions set by existing conditions, Dreier (2011) cautioned against overgeneralizing assessments based on conduct in a single social context. In reflecting the diversity of their life-contexts, persons are multifaceted, and that evades detection in isolated instances.

As a final point of concurrence, personhood has an historical dimension at both the individual and the societal levels. As Dewey wrote, individual life-history has a directive effect on ongoing conduct and must be known to get a sense of a person's life-movement. Collectively, evolutionary `fit'-ness was not a question of adaptations to an evolutionary past but flexibility in dealing with current societal structures and the demands imposed by socio-cultural change. The life-trajectories of individual persons, Dreier (2009) wrote, have an historical dimension in that, over the course of life, there are changes in the composition of the social context (childhood, school, peers, work, family), and practices therein. And these influence the conduct of everyday life and, hence, personhood. Beyond that, social practices themselves undergo historical development, and the changes effected imply transformations in personal practice, and in the abilities required for full participation in altered social practices. Dewey witnessed this firsthand.

In Dewey's lifetime there were enormous changes in American society that were reflected in the changing character of the people (Dewey and Dewey, 1915/2008). During the pioneer period, people lived largely in isolation and had to be self-sustaining and self-sufficient, providing for all their needs. The world did not present itself to them ready-made. Their occupations required the psychological qualities of adaptability, inventiveness, and courageousness. That period ended with the passage into industrialism and commercialism (Dewey, 1930a). Companies provided for one's needs and people were moving into the cities and mechanized factory work. With this came a change in mental attitude (Dewey, 1930b). Rather than minds being stimulated by demands for creativity and independence, there was an emphasis on receptivity to the discoveries and ideas of others. People became consumers, not just of products but ideas. Independent, critical judgement became lacking as people became more submissive, passively receptive to political and commercial methods of persuasion. Individualism and independence was giving way to conformity and interdependence. In less than a century the psychological makeup of the people had been restructured by the new societal structures and practices.

Approaching Personality Organization and Consistency

We close by returning to the beginning and the question of the whole person. Personality psychology was established to study persons as unique, coherent wholes (Mischel et al., 2008). As McAdams (2009) expressed it, only personality psychology professes to be studying persons as complex wholes, putting all the parts together. This to Funder (2013) is an impossible mission: "If you try to understand everything about a person at once, you will immediately find yourself overwhelmed" (p. 5). The solution is to limit what you look at, an approach that produces different paradigms. Consistent with that, there has been a proliferation of constructs to address the question of personality: trait theory, physiological approaches, cultural psychology, situationism, self theory, cognitive approaches, and others. This diversity leads to variable definitions of personality. There is no single agreed upon definition and the differences that exist reflect different theoretical beliefs (Cervone &

Pervin, 2013). That means there is disunity. The field still fails to meet its historical mission of developing an integrative framework for comprehending whole persons (McAdam & Pals, 2006). To that end, McAdams and Pals proposed `five big principles' to draw together various approaches into an `elegant theoretical framework.' Essentially, they, and others, have attempted to overcome the disjointedness by developing different versions of eclectic coherence. Regardless, as Cervone and Mischel (2002) maintained, the challenge is to come to grips with the psychological architecture of persons as intact wholes.

A corollary of the effort to account for personality organization and integration was the need to account for individual differences between people in their stable patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior. It was really this that experimentalists concerned themselves with. Some sought evidence of the cross-situational stability of some characteristic, others favored situational specificity, and, more recently, the interaction of person and situation. At the root of their debate was what Dewey referred to as the `tradition of separation and isolation' which distinguished between person and situation, hypostatized them, and made them discontinuous. With this absolute separation the issue of their relation became problematic. Instead, as both Dewey and Dreier emphasized, persons are not detached from their environments. Rather than seeking the foundation of personality or personhood internally, it is to be sought in person-environment mutualism (Dewey) or in persons-as-situated in social practices of everyday life (Dreier). Perhaps what is needed is the attitude that Dashiell (1939) ascribed to clinicians –that their interest was in persons as situated in the natural and social environment, and possessing a past, present, and future. If there is a historical aspect to personhood, personality development should not be bypassed. In this, we may address the proposition of Allport (1937) that "*a general law may be a law that tells us how uniqueness comes about*" (p. 194, original emphasis). Before being subjected to the ahistorical, decontextualized, dissecting process of experimental psychology, persons *are* organized wholes, and in coordination with their everyday world, which is essential to their survival. Stability of personality rests with stability of contextualized practice. If the overall configuration of a context changes significantly (from the individual person's perspective) one can expect a change in the qualities characterizing individual conduct. For instance, a person may be pleasant and gregarious at work, but might become bitter and withdrawn after being bypassed for a promotion because of nepotism. That could carry over into the context of home life but may not affect engagements with friends. In the final analysis, persons live in, through, and across contexts and that is where personality manifests.

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About the author

Brad Piekkola is currently an Honorary Research Associate with Vancouver Island University (VIU). He received a MA in Cognitive Psychology (1987) and a PhD. in Personality/Theoretical Psychology (1990) at the University of Victoria. His PhD dissertation, *Personality theory: Beyond interactionism* was a theoretical assessment of major issues in personality psychology. From 1989, until his retirement in 2015, he taught courses in the History of Psychology, Personality, Cognitive, and Theoretical Psychology at VIU. He is the author of *Conceptual and Historical issues in Psychology*: SAGE, 2017.

Contact: brad.piekkola@viu.ca