Critical Psychology in a changing world

building bridges and expanding the dialogue

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Editorial
This World Is not Enough : The Dialectics of Critical Psychology

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Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, narrow-mindedness, all foes of real understanding. Likewise tolerance, or broad wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.
Mark Twain, USA

This issue of the Annual Review of Critical Psychology is devoted to critical work around the world. This journey began in 2006 with ARCP 5: Critical Psychology in a Changing World. In this leg of the journey, the 49 papers of this issue will take the reader on a very informative tour around the globe, visiting psychological scholarship in places such as Aotearoa-New Zealand, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Flandern, France, German Speaking countries, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latin America, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Philippine, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Nigeria, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, and USA. Part of our own odyssey as co-editors of this issue of Annual Review of Critical Psychology was to familiarize ourselves with the large body of literature on what is considered "critical psychology" around the world. As we reviewed articles for this special issue of the journal our ideas on what are critical theory, critical practice, research, and epistemology expanded and several insights emerged, which we highlight in these opening words and vignettes.

Psychology as a discipline and practice cannot be performed by academic scholars/ researchers and practitioners alike as though it is disconnected or divorced from the social and political contexts in which they are embedded (Fox & Prilleltensky, 1997). Psychology is imbued with social, ethical, and political assumptions and ramifications which are inexorably

linked to the historical and geo-political circumstances in which it is conducted. These circumstances and the overall context need to be taken into consideration and reflected upon if dominant psychological theories and perspectives, which have been granted hegemonic status, are to be challenged.

Moreover, if injustices in practice and with regard to misrepresentations of the ideological and philosophical tenets which are promulgated in the academic literature are to be rectified, different voices from the around the globe need to be presented, heard, and understood. This special issue of this journal presents crucial contributions with the intent of opening up the space – breadth, scope and capacity – of critical psychological knowledge and dialogue around the world.

The vignettes that follow are our contribution to the ongoing dialogue. These vignettes provide different but interconnected perspectives on critical psychology. The first vignette emphasizes some challenges of the expansion of critical psychology in a changing world. Manolis Dafermos demonstrates the variety of forms of critical psychology in different geopolitical regions and countries, as these depend on particular sociocultural contexts. In the same vignette several open-ended questions are posed regarding critical psychology's agenda.

In the second vignette, Athanasios Marvakis considers the issue of the crisis in psychology and other social sciences from the perspective of the crisis and restructuring of the Western world. He focuses on two different perspectives to answer the question "what is to develop" after the crisis. The first response to the crisis legitimizes the discipline's clinging to "business as usual." The second critical response is based on the maintenance of the dynamic of "crisis" and constant reflection about the possibilities for resistance to the "dictates" of the epoch.

In the third vignette, Sofia Triliva reflects upon the problematic character of professional practices which, by overemphasizing the individual or the family system, ignore the effects of the wider social systems in which families are embedded. She argues that transformative change entails practices that weave together theory, research and practice. She goes on to elaborate that action research paradigms that bring people together to engage in activities that strengthen collaboration may enhance critical practices.

In the fourth vignette, Desmond Painter reflects on the development of critical psychology on a world scale (a process that is vividly represented by the articles collected in this volume) in relation to two concepts drawn from postcolonial theory, namely "provincializing" and "worlding". Whereas "provincializing psychology" involves the unmasking of mainstream psychology's universalistic pretentions, especially as these have mediated its relationships to imperialism, colonialism and capitalist globalization, "worlding psychology", on the contrary, involves an attempt to reconfigure psychology in world terms beyond ideologies of both the global and the indigenous.

In the final vignette, Mihalis Mentinis analyses several aspects of capitalist realism which expresses the re-affirmation of the hegemony of neoliberalism as the only choice for the organization and management of society. He articulates some crucial points for the development of an interdisciplinary, radical social science.

We thank the ca. 250 people who have contributed in writing, editing, reviewing, and translating the manuscripts that are included here. The dialogue and travels will not end here,

and we cordially invite repeat travellers or new companions to prepare for another round of 'around the globe' travel within the next couple of years.

Vignette 1:
How has critical psychology changed in a changing world?

Manolis Dafermos
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Whosoever wishes to know about the world must learn about it in its particular details.
Knowledge is not intelligence.
In searching for the truth be ready for the unexpected.
Change alone is unchanging.
The same road goes both up and down.
The beginning of a circle is also its end.
Not I, but the world says it: all is one.
And yet everything comes in season
        Heraklietos of Ephesos, 500 B.C

Psychology and the "end of history"

Fukuyama (1992) declared that the universalization of Western liberal democracy marked the "end of history", and although his declaration is now famous, the world continues to change as rapidly as Heraklietos of Ephesos described more than two thousand years ago. Although liberal democracy was declared triumphant it appears to have marked a new historical moment of crisis, having linked itself to market dictatorship, increasing social inequality, and the suppression of human rights.

Under conditions of global, systemic, structural, economic and political crisis, the ruling class promotes ways out of the crisis through waging a social war against labour, using public external debt and other instruments for the colonization of regions and countries – not only of traditionally dependent post-colonial countries, but also of "peripheral" countries of one of the three centres of the so-called "First World", the European Union (such as Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain) (Patelis, 2012). 150 years ago Karl Marx wrote that public debt "becomes one of the most powerful levers of primitive accumulation" and acknowledged "great part that the public debt, and the fiscal system corresponding with it, has played in the capitalisation of wealth and the expropriation of the masses…" (Marx, 1986, pp. 706-708). Marvakis (2012) argues that nowadays the "debt-crisis" is used as a political tool whereby for the dominant elites to legitimize the privatization of societal, common goods and transforming them into commodities. Moreover, Marvakis (2012) points out that neo-liberalization is not (only) about "cutting off" some social welfare and/or getting less money for ones work. Neo-liberalization constitutes a completely different conceptualization of (organized) society and, along with that, new forms of subjectivity, grounded on a new – a neo-liberal – anthropology. "So too we are witnessing a Great Experiment in the making of a new neoliberal humanity through the crisis. Will the neoliberal model of what it is to be a human being become definitive for the next fifty years?" (Caffentzis, 2012).

Dominant discourses of modernization and globalization failed to meet the challenges of the contemporary world; to explain the contradictory nature of social change, the basic asymmetry of global and local societies, and the growing gap between the richest and poorest people in the world. The globalizing ideology of neoliberalism, by heavily prioritizing the values of consumerism, individualism and competition, gradually dehumanizes society, communities and individual humanity (Nafstad & Blakar, 2012).

Mainstream North Atlantic psychology, based largely on the ideology of liberal individualism (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008), has been canonized as truly universal psychological knowledge for all peoples and all nations. "Yet, in the history of Western psychology, individualism and the search for universal laws have been closely linked: Psychological laws would be considered universal insofar as they applied to all individuals along a common set of dimensions" (Danzinger, 2006, p. 272). In the context of the "modernization" of "non-western" countries the mainstream North Atlantic positivist psychology has been transported and adopted by many psychologists around the world (Igarashi, 2006; Gao, 2012). Via universalism, North Atlantic psychology has been incorporated into the neoliberal "Globalist" discourse and has been granted a status similar to that of economic liberalization in the capitalist economy (Fairclough, 2006).

The emergence and formation of critical psychology

Since the appearance of psychology as an independent academic discipline in the end of 19th century, various forms of critiques on psychology's subject matter and methodology has emerged (Teo, 2005). However, critical psychology appeared in 1970-1980 in protest against mainstream psychology, which is dominant in North American and European Universities. This kind of psychology emerged "in the northern hemisphere (even if it has had outposts in the South) and it is located mainly in the West (even if it has found some adherents elsewhere)" (Parker, 2009, p. 74).

Critical psychology has emerged in academia in protest against mainstream positivist psychology. A critique of positivism in the social sciences had developed from widely different theoretical perspectives (critical theory, phenomenology, constructivism, etc.). One of the sources of critical psychology was critical theory, which emerged on the base of Frankfurt Institute of Social Research (Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, etc.), which attempted to develop an interdisciplinary social theory as means for social transformation. In contrast to "traditional theory", which reproduces uncritically the existing society, critical theory seeks human emancipation "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (Horkheimer, 1982, p. 244). Phenomenology focuses discussion on human subjectivity in a critical way (Giorgi, 2005). Many varieties of constructivism emphasize ways in which subjects create (rather than depict or represent) constructions of reality (Raskin, 2002). However, by focusing exclusively on the subject, previous approaches do not overcome "binary" thinking and the objectivism-subjectivism dualism of social theory.

During 1960-1970 the *crisis of traditional laboratory-experimental social psychology* erupted and a wide range of new approaches (phenomenology, structuralism/poststructruralism, etc.) were developed and disseminated (Parker, 1989). In the same period, under the influence of social movements, *radical psychology* as a new approach that rejected reductionism and the individualistic focus of mainstream psychology was also developed.

The "linguistic turn" and the "second cognitive revolution" (Harré, 1995), which connected with the shift to the study of discourse and meanings, further stimulated the search of new alternative theoretical and methodological approaches in psychology. Many heated debates took place around new theoretical currents such as social constructionism, discursive psychology and critical realism (Parker, 1998, 2002). In the 1990s the first books on critical psychology were published. Critical approaches in different sub-disciplines of psychology were represented in the edited book *Critical Psychology* by Dennis Fox and Isaac Prilleltensky (1997).

Critical ideas and approaches emerged not only in theoretical psychology, but also in applied psychology and different kinds of professional practices (critiques of psychiatry and psychotherapy, radical social work practice, Participatory Action Research, etc.). According to Thomas Teo (1999), there are four forms of critical psychology: "(a) critical theoretical psychology, (b) critical theoretical psychology with a practical emancipatory intention, (c) critical empirical psychology, and (d) critical applied psychology" (Teo, 1999, p. 121).

Critical psychology is an umbrella term which covers different reactions against mainstream psychology (Walkerdine, 2001). Different types of critique of psychology can be found in the literature: cultural-historical, feminist, social-constructionist, and post-colonial critiques are a few. Some psychologists use the term "Critical psychology" to define their theoretical positions, whilst others avoid it (social constructionists) (Teo, 2009). Critical psychology can be understood as a metadiscipline that critically evaluates the moral and political implications of psychology as science (Austin & Prilleltensky, 2001).

Critical psychology is not as a particular theory, but a kind of orientation to psychological knowledge and practice. According to Hook (2004), it may be understood as a critique of power-relationships constituted and reproduced by psychological knowledge and practice. In the same direction, Parker (2007, p. 2) argues that critical psychology may be considered as "the systematic examination of how some varieties of psychological action and experience are privileged over others, how dominant accounts of 'psychology' operate ideologically and in the service of power". Critical psychology includes not only criticisms of mainstream psychology and its relationship to power, but also raises the question of social transformation and emancipation. Critical psychology places emphasis on "transforming the discipline of psychology in order to promote emancipation in society" (Sloan, Austin, & Warner, 2006, p. 43).

Overcoming the gap between academic psychology and professional psychological practice is one of the most important challenges in critical work. Taking inspiration from Marx's *Theses of Feuerbach*, critical psychologists attempt to develop forms of practice research (Nissen, 2000). The idea of making closer connection between research, action and the empowerment of marginalized groups has been developed in the context of various projects of action research (Montero, 2000). How to conceptualize the multilevel, mediated, dynamic relationship between theory and practice, depending on the particular sociohistorical context, remains an open-ended question for critical psychologists.

Challenges of the expansion of critical psychology around the world

During the last decade critical psychology expanded in many countries around the world. Critical psychology has moved out of North America and Europe and into Latin America, Africa and Asia. The global expansion of critical psychology creates new challenges. Many psychologists note that the dominant positivist psychology cannot understand and solve the

key problems of people in "non-Western countries". "…[C]ritics argue that Western mainstream psychology has not sufficiently attended to the social problems that are prevalent in non-Western countries: the effects of poverty, drug abuse, problems of living in too confined quarters and of not being able to read and write" (Allwood, 2005, p. 85). What do critical psychologists contribute to a proper understanding of and the struggle for solutions for social problems that arise in contemporary global world, such as those of unemployment, poverty, homelessness, etc.? Not only "non-Western countries" face these problems, but also European countries such as Greece, Spain, Ireland, etc.

Many questions arise when we consider social changes in the contemporary "global" world: What is the nature (character) of social change? What and who are changing? Who is the subject of social change? In which directions does social change occur? What barriers exist to social change? How could we achieve through social change? These are some of the questions that social scientists (including psychologists) around the globe are required to answer.

Critical psychology takes different forms depending on its particular sociocultural contexts. Cultural-historical psychology and activity theory, which emerged in the context of Soviet psychology, inspire many critical psychologies in different countries and regions. In Germany, a "Psychology of the Subject" was developed on the basis of Marxism and activity theory. Klaus Holzkamp, the founder of German critical psychology, not only challenged traditional, positivist psychology, but also suggested an original theoretical framework for a foundation of psychology (Holzkamp, 1983, 1993). Critical psychology in Britain is closely associated with qualitative, specifically discourse-analytic social psychology (Parker, 2006b). French post-structuralism, especially the ideas of Foucault about the relationship knowledge and power, has been one of the most influential sources of critical approaches.

North American critical psychology have emerged and formed under the influence of intellectual currents from Europe, Latin America, and South Africa, such as German critical psychology, British Marxism, French poststructuralism, Latin American social psychology of liberation, etc. (Sloan, & Austin, & Warner, 2006). In Latin American psychology a wide variety of critical approaches are found: the social critical version of psychoanalysis (Pichon Riviere, Bleger, etc.); critical social psychology (Martin Baro, M. Montero, B. Jiménez, T. Sloan, J.M. Salazar, P. Fernández Christlieb, J. Kovalskys, S. Lane, I. Dobles, among others), and the cultural historical approach (González Rey, etc.) (Rey & Martínez, 2012; Carvalho & Lenz Dunker, 2006). We would like to particularly emphasize the importance of critical pedagogy, which has its roots in Paolo Freire's ideas, and had great influence in Latin America (Freire, 2000). Moreover, South American liberation psychology – in relation to the problem of oppressed, marginalized masses – has developed on the base of the theoretical tradition of liberation theology (Martin-Baro, 1994).

In Africa critical psychologists focus on the danger of importing of Western systems of understanding and discuss alternative African sociopsychological frameworks (Mkhize, 2004). In West Africa critical psychology is focused on promotion of "more socially equitable conditions – in which non-western healing frameworks can flourish and serve communities of indigenous people" (Akomolafe, 2012, this volume). In South Africa various forms of critical psychology have emerged under the influence of Marxism, feminism, post-colonial theory, often aligned with broader political movements (Painter, Terre Blanche, & Henderson, 2006).

In Asia, critical approaches in psychology emerged as a protest against "cultural colonization" (Mkhize, 2004), the transfer and imposition of ideas and practices from developed counties.

Similarly, in India an indigenous or Indian cultural viewpoint emerged, arguing against the Western (Euro-American) psychological perspectives (Kumar, 2006). In Japan, qualitative research and theoretical psychology emerged as protests against mainstream positivist psychology (Igarashi, 2006).

In Aotearoa/New Zealand critical psychology is constituted through engagement with feminist theory, indigenous theory, postcolonial theory, cultural theory, psychoanalysis, semiotics and poststructuralism (Morgan, Coombes, & Campbell, 2006).

Even this simple description of the trends of critical psychology in different regions of the world indicates that critical psychology has become increasingly fragmented. Painter, Terre Blanche and Henderson (2006, p. 213) argue that the aim is not to display local specificities for their own sake, but "to create the kind of dialogues and resistances that will counter the fragmentation of the critical psychological imagination along 'national' or 'geopolitical' lines".

In opposition to mainstream North Atlantic psychology, the indigenization movement in psychology emerged and developed in different regions and sociocultural contexts. Indigenous psychologies have appeared in Latin America, Asia (India, China, etc.), Africa and other geopolitical regions as a reaction to westernization, modernization and globalization. "The goal is a culturally appropriate psychology, based on indigenous realities, or a psychology that relies on native values, concepts, belief systems, problems, methods, and other resources" (Hwang, 2005, p. 83).

Are these indigenous psychologies a real alternative to mainstream North Atlantic psychology? Many critical psychologists highlight the inadequacies of particularism and localization of critique. "To focus exclusively on the 'local' may thus render invisible the hierarchical, transnational relations of power in which psychology operate. It may also limit the ability of critical psychology to be articulated as a more-than-local form of resistance and so curtail the way 'mainstream psychology' and its categories remain the nodal points around which accounts of subjectivity, experience and human activity are articulated. As long as we define ourselves only as local opposition to an industry that in itself knows no borders, we will not create more optimal conditions for a different psychology, nor add to the conceptual and institutional infrastructures required for different forms of political solidarity" (Painter, Terre Blanche, & Henderson, 2006, p. 212).

Cultural relativism as a theoretical background of indigenous psychologies has created the risk of hypostatizing cultural differences and fragmentation of society into separated cultural groups/ counties/ regions which should at all costs maintain their "cultural authenticity". Moreover, from the standpoint of indigenous psychologies it is difficult to distinguish the heterogeneous character of local cultures and hierarchical relations of power in the local and global cultural contexts. The increasing globalization and homogenization of culture and its fragmentation and localization are in fact closely related. Global universalism and postmodern particularism are actually two sides of the same coin. Some psychologists argue that non-critical cultural relativism is not the antidote to universalism (Dhar & Siddiqui, 2012).

Posing open-ended questions

The global expansion of critical psychology in different countries and the formation of a large heterogeneity of various critical approaches create confusion about the meaning of "Critique".

Is critical psychology simply a rejection of mainstream psychology in the context of a dualistic conceptualization (mainstream versus critical)? Can and should critical psychology develop a coherent or systematic alternative to the mainstream? (Cromby & Willis, 2012). What are the relationships between the theoretical critique of mainstream psychology and changing professional practice? How can critical psychology touch and change the lives of real people, especially marginalized people?

In many cases the "work in what now pretends to be 'critical psychology' is taken up uncritically" (Parker, 2006a, p. 51). There is a need to reconsider the meaning to be critical (Hook, 2005) and to develop a self-reflexive critique of critical psychology.

Critical psychologists take Vygotsky's criticism of fetishization of particular techniques of applied psychological research into account and opt to pose crucial, open-ended questions. "A correct statement of a question is no less a matter of scientific creativity and investigation than a correct answer – and it is much more crucial. The vast majority of contemporary psychological investigations write out the last decimal point with great care and precision in answer to a question that is stated fundamentally incorrectly" (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 258). Critical psychology promotes a reflection on hidden, underlying assumptions of psychological knowledge and orients itself to reframing the problem (Parker, 2007).

Critical psychologists can learn a lot from the experience of Russian intelligentsia in pre-revolutionary Russia. In Russia, the intelligentsia was not a professional group such as writers, academicians, or educated people in general. The intelligentsia was a special group of educated people distinguished from the others by its devotion to the goal of serving people. "Its members often sacrificed their comfort, security and even their lives to the moral imperative of defending the deprived" (Read, 1984). In the context of the deep economic and politic crises of 19th century Russia, the Russian intelligentsia posed questions such as *Who is to Blame?* (Alexander Hertzen) and *What Is to Be Done?* (Nikolay *Chernyshevsky*).

In conclusion, a few open-ended questions that are crucial for how we will understand the nature and development of critical psychology:

- To what extent are psychological knowledge and practice culturally and historically constructed, and how may alternative approaches confirm or resist the ideological assumptions in mainstream models? (Parker, 2007).
- Could critical psychologists produce a positive theoretical programme oriented to reconsideration of the still open questions regarding psychology as a science (epistemological framework, subject matter, research methodology, etc.)? How should the promotion of the theoretical analysis of psychology as a science beyond the limits of bourgeois society be achieved? (Dafermos & Marvakis, 2006).
- How could critical psychologists connect their theoretical work with empirical research programmes oriented to particular subjects, subjects who are immersed in different cultural and social conditions? (Rey & Martínez, 2012).
- What does it mean to be a critical psychologist in a changing world in different countries and geopolitical regions?
- Is it possible to promote international collaboration between critical psychologists of different countries and regions and to organize their resistance the in international arena?

We hope that the current special issue of *Annual Review of Critical psychology* becomes a forum for discussing previous and many other open-ended questions.

Vignette 2:
Historicity of societal organization – historicity of critical psychology

Athanasios Marvakis
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It is clear that the social sciences – including psychology, since it is one of these – cannot be understood apart from the broader economic, political, social, historical and regional conditions within which they emerge, evolve and alter. These multiple and multilayered conditions always intersect with particular social science disciplines and are in a *dialectical* relationship with them. In other words, the social sciences are "outcomes" of certain specific socio-political conditions and processes, but at the same time they are also technologies (knowledge *and* practices) by means of which these conditions are developed, reproduced *and* changed. Based on the relationship respectively between the structure and organization of our societies and that of the social sciences as specific responses to social issues, we have to focus on the ongoing historical social processes of our epoch. The emergence and development of the social sciences (as we have come to know them) are the articulations and the products of a class-struggle-compromise in a historical concrete regime; where the historical opponents of this "compromise" are constituted by the social sciences, on the one side, and the social movements, on the other.

The social changes our societies have undergone during the last decades will probably bring about the restructuring of the social sciences as a whole (Wallerstein, 2001). This restructuring will, in turn, entail radical changes in the organization and the structuring of psychology as a whole – as an autonomous and distinct academic discipline – as it had been fabricated and continued to function from the end of the 19th century until the present. One possible development could be the division of psychology from a single, unified academic discipline into two parts (Dafermos & Marvakis 2006). One part may entail the formation of an "individualist-cognitive-neurological" psychology, merging with other relevant lines of research. The other part may be comprised of the development of a "social psychology" – in the broader sense – merging with other relevant strands or disciplines in the social sciences. Such a "move", however, will reinstate – as a supposed "solution" – the old dualism which tantalizes psychology as a whole, and is expressed in the existence of two "camps" with insurmountable differences (Staats, 1991). This rupture between aforementioned "camps" reproduces the methodological dualism that rules not only psychology, but also other social science disciplines. The mutual criticism of the representatives of these camps does not go beyond the horizon of the existing segmented, fragmentary psychological knowledge. Generally, we can realize that up to our historical moment the "defeaters" and the "defeated" between the different currents of psychology "within" and "outside of" academia reproduce, directly or indirectly, the theoretical and social limitations and the methodological dichotomies of a mode of science that is tailored within the bounds of bourgeois society in its historical stage of development (Haug, 1977).

Of course, the fact that psychology is situated in and intersects with other predominant processes of a society does not mean that in each specific historical period there is only one psychology that is feasible. It is possible, that is, for some particular psychology to become

hegemonic by means of its relation to the dominant class and to the mode of production, but there are always other psychologies that arise to actively question this hegemony, bringing forth another perception of the person and of the social. The acknowledgment of this interweaving places stress on the necessity to not examine either of the two independent from one another – possibly in the name of being scientifically unbiased or modest. Therefore, if we wish to understand the (accepted, dominant) psychological models, we must situate them in the context of the societal processes *within* and *on account of* which these models acquire their particular meaning and their utility. This simple axiom should also be true for critical psychologies!

Given that the formation and establishment of the social sciences – as we got to know them in the 20th century – is based on the historical concrete organizational form of societies as nation-states, with a particular dominant mode of organization of production (code worded: "Fordism"), we can reflect that the re-organization of our societies (code worded: "neoliberal globalization") and of the mode of production (code worded: "neoliberal post-fordism") will require and promote other kind and standards of subjectivity and normality, and, consequently, other models of psychology. On such a basis, many "critical psychologies" have emerged and have been consolidated as attempts toward the (re)contextualization of the psychical in the social (gendered, class, cultural and other) "coordinates" of the particular time-space that accommodates the development and action of the psychical and of psychology. Along with the reorganization of societies and the different demands and opportunities for new subjectivities, the original issue for the emergence and development of the social sciences/psychologies is raised anew and in a new way: what are the particular and new "answers" articulated with regards to the new demands and opportunities in the new societal order?

In such a new societal context, the (self)designation "critical" does not constitute in and of itself a diachronic and indisputable tool for emancipation. It does not constitute, that is, some type of "fetish" we embellish ourselves with and carry. "Critical" is (can be) a social instrument which may even enable make it possible for users to simply adapt to the demands of new capitalism. Putting it differently, "criticality" can effortlessly be transformed into a "technocratic" tool for the mere purpose of adjustment, with its "critical aspect" being exhausted in the (in)explicit claim that the old models of psychology are now inappropriate for the new "needs" (one could wonder, whose needs?) in modern neoliberal capitalism. In this case, the (self)designation as "critical" functions merely as a (modernized) proposition or creates a new commodity for the competitive market of appropriate (theoretical) "tools" for adjusting and subjugating to the new social conditions.

The adjective "critical" denotes, first of all, opposition to historically specific dominant responses to also historically specific social conditions. However, the use/utility of the new (critical) psychologies ought to be determined not in terms of the past – in terms, that is, of past social relations/conditions[1] – but in terms of the present and the future, in terms, that is, of the potential future social relations/conditions. It is at this point that the (old) issue of power, of its (re)production, and of the functionality or utility of theoretical models in relation to it, is raised anew. Moreover, via reflection on future dimensions, the issue of emancipation also re-emerges.

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[1] This may probably have the meaning of "delayed modernization" in particular geo-political regions of the world.

The adjective "critical" cannot be understood as an essentialist and unvarying characteristic of certain models, one which is "inherited" once and for all. Instead, it requires a continuous rethinking regarding the historical expressions of the individual/society dialectics, and, therefore, regarding the particular social/political functions carried out by the theoretical models concerning the (re)production of power relations, of class conditions, and of the prospects for subjects' emancipation. It is only in this way that the adjective "critical" would (is able to) maintain and renew the social and political legitimacy that it has possibly acquired at some historical moment. The critique of the "universal truth" – as a historical example of the subversive function of criticism – must *also* be applied, from the very beginning and with the same decisiveness (determination), by critical psychologies on themselves! Only then will they be able to negotiate, if nothing else, at least the terms of "cohabitation"; the terms, that is, of their utility and application in the new social conditions that now emerge and are (re)produced *also* by critical psychologies.

Despite all the immense changes that we may notice under the new societal conditions, the historical dilemma of "criticality" for all the new social sciences/psychologies to emerge still oscillates on the same "range": (modernist?) loyalty to the – old and new – demands of local – old and new – authority and power; or continuation of the "crisis" and constant reflection about the possibilities for resistance against the "dictates" of the epoch. This pendulum constitutes the dialectical challenge for *all* critical psychologies being formed today, being the most promising voices in the field during the last couple of decades.

Vignette 3:
The business of change in systemic psychotherapy: can change agents encompass the crisis-ridden wider social systems in their praxis?

Sofia Triliva
University of Crete

Approximately two years ago I spent a weekend attending and presenting at the 4th Pan-Hellenic Conference on Systemic Psychotherapies in Hersonissos, Crete. The title of the conference was: "Human systems today: Delinquency, drugs, violence and abuse." The focus of many of the presentations was systemic therapy as it is being practiced today in Greece and abroad. The invited presenters from Greece, several other European countries and the United Sates included very prominent systemic professors, researchers, theorists, educators and practitioners.

My presentation was in Greek and it was well attended by Greek colleagues. The title of the presentation was: *Are we focusing too much on the family system and ignoring the effects of the wider social systems in which families are embedded?* The economic crisis had just begun to unfold in Greece and the talk enumerated the social changes that were taking place and the impact of such crises on social systems, as they are outlined and substantiated in the international literature. The argument focused on the importance of developing theories and principles of practice that make alternative interventions viable. The goal of the talk was to challenge systemic scholars to develop and disseminate cogent, practical, and broader theoretical models for advancing systems thinking and systems change, being that systems theory conceptualizes human systems as continuously evolving, constructed and reconstructed by their component parts (Capra, 2002). Ecological systems theory was discussed as a useful theoretical framework for understanding how wider social systems (micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chrono-) impact on individual and family functioning (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Community psychology principles, such as empowerment, community capacity building, accountability, and social justice (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005) were also discussed in showing how members of the same activity system can develop common purpose and vision that includes brining about social change. In short, the argument outlined how it is not the economic hardship that families in Greece will go through, nor their ways of communicating and performing their culture that is the problem, but the gross inequalities and injustices that these massive economically and politically motivated social changes produce.

Change in systems was broadly outlined as "efforts that strive to shift the underlying infrastructure within a community or targeted context to support a desired outcome, including shifting existing policies and practices, resource allocations, [and] relationship structures" (Foster-Fishman & Behrens, 2007, p. 192). Shifts in political agendas and economic supports and their impact on community-based mental health services were outlined, though the "*troika*" (Economists from the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Commission) measures and the concomitant socio-political and economic plans were not even fathomed at the time that the conference took place. The talk ended with a discussion of how systemic thinkers and therapists can readjust their lenses in order to create new ways of practicing at a time when the focus on the family was perhaps too narrow for

both researchers and practitioners alike. Since many of the colleagues there were family therapy trainers (they were educators and supervisors of psychologists and mental health professionals) the talk also touched upon pedagogy and how it involves reflecting on the national-cultural-economic context, values, history, the broader environment and transformative learning experiences. The discussion was bolstered through family life issues seen in psychotherapy practice, imaginative rethinking of alternatives, but also a look backwards to Greek philosophy and the history of the mental health movement to draw on a rich legacy of communal funds of knowledge and social capital that can be used in bringing about progressive, critical, and transformative change.

Colleagues in the audience listened carefully and asked questions regarding rates of suicide, depression, health and socioeconomic upheaval, disparities, and crime. Yet, they questioned and laughed at suggestions that new ways of viewing systems and providing the services needed if, as mental health professionals, we wanted to prevent and alleviate the corrosive power of – as one participant stated – "economic destruction and (*the supposed*) 'inevitability' of social destruction". My suggestion was to augment and expand the concept of "system" from a community psychology perspective so that a wide array of phenomena including neighbourhoods, organizations, schools, service delivery consortiums, and central government agencies could be understood as such (Foster-Fishman, Nowell, & Yang, 2007). Given that systemic thought distinguishes between "first-order" and "second-order" change, why, then, continue to look for the same linearly construed manifestations of change as economists do? Rather than focusing on the complexity second-order change brings about by transforming the fundamental beliefs and assumptions about system dynamics, structures, norms, rules, resources and interactions it appears to be easier to focus on stress experienced by individuals or families and the mostly predictable challenges schools and other organizations confront. Radical and transformative change advances disruption in the status quo, is far-reaching, impacts on everybody's life, is intense, lasts a long time, and engenders enduring transformations. Emphasis was placed on how larger and synergistic systems can be crucial in implementing programming and forging transformative changes. Such changes would not be possible by focusing on the individual, the family or any single element of the multiple systems involved in people's lives (Foster-Fishman & Droege, 2010; Peirson, Boydell, Ferguson, & Ferris, 2011).

One example used in the presentation was the current state of affairs in secondary and tertiary education in Greece, and how with the advent of such drastic socioeconomic changes, second order change was essential to counter the disparities, social inequalities, and stratification taking place in that domain. The therapists and supervisors in the audience were asked to respond to the following questions:
1. What is the most common presenting problem of the families who come to therapy?
   The people who responded noted that the most common problem for families was dealing with adolescent children's behaviour and school-related problems.
2. What problems do adolescent children present and how do families try to deal with the problems prior to coming to therapy?
   The problems enumerated by the participants were listed in the following order of frequency: not studying for school, anxiety, depression, eating (excessive and starvation dieting), lack of motivation and indecisiveness regarding University majors / careers. According to the therapists the parents used many and varied strategies to deal with these issues The primary ones presented were: 'getting extra private lessons for school subjects', parental supervision with homework, studying and eating, family meetings described as vacillating between 'strategy sessions' to verbal confrontations,

offering rewards or privileges for good grades, taking away privileges and applying strict supervision, enlisting the help of tutors or changing tutors, and seeking help form dieticians, family physicians or members of the extended family.

3. What methods, goals or techniques are generally applied in the therapy with families experiencing difficulties with their adolescent members?

   Since this was a very diverse group of therapists/ supervisors numerous differences in the practice and use of theory and fluidity in practice were apparent. Many therapists/ supervisors in the audience mentioned an active process of meaning making and an enumeration of the variant realities that the family members experience, helping the family develop understanding of alternative ways of seeing the problem, their relationships, and how to best link the explanations they have about the problem and their behaviours, developing narratives of acknowledgement and more positive account(s) of the adolescent's behaviour as a family, and allowing for alternative narratives of what is going on for the family to emerge.

The example was embellished further by citing research on the traditional high demand for tertiary education (mostly University-AEI rather than the TEI-Higher Education Technological Institutions which are considered "less desirable") in Greece (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2008; Pasharopoulos & Tassoulas, 2004). The very steep competition and high stakes of the university entrance exams (Panhellenic National Examinations) that have resulted in forcing students and their families to attend two schools each day – the official school and the supportive preparatory or cram lessons (dubbed frontistiria – "supportive preparation") (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2008). These supportive preparation lessons are either one-to-one (in the home of the student), in small groups, or in private centres for learning specific subjects. They present huge economic hardship for parents (Psacharopoulos & Tassoulas, 2004) and transfer the preparation of adolescents for tertiary education to tutors and the cost to the youngsters' families, since they pay dearly for all these "necessary" lessons. The "frontistiria" also create loss for the economy in that income taxes are not paid on the revenues earned by private tutors and centres. These supportive lessons are huge businesses that do not generate the tax revenues the country desperately needs, yet, add greatly to the already overburdened family finances and apparently to family conflict and discord.

The students are burdened greatly with regard to time spent in "lessons". Moreover, they report stress and depression throughout the Lyceum years, particularly in the "preparation years" (Triliva, Vasilaki, & Chimienti, 1998). They are also considered the "hardest working non-workers in Greece" with regard to hours of study they have each day and the dearth of leisure activities they engage in. It was also pointed out that tertiary education researchers in Greece have highlighted how "choice has been driven largely by the students' social class" (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2009, p. 22) and how social inequalities and stratification exist (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2008) and is likely to increase given the economic and social upheaval that the "crisis" has augmented.

After presenting what the audience considered to be "academic" and not "useful" information, I asked: Are there alternative explanations regarding the problems secondary school students are experiencing, explanations that do not involve family functioning? The answer from the audience was that we are family therapists, family therapy trainers, and we teach family therapy. "Families spend a lot of money and try very hard to protect their children from failure." "What else can they do?"

My last question was how about the multi-level and multi-dimensional nature of the problem. The examples brought up were, the inefficiency of schools, the mechanisms of the entrance exams through which students are evaluated, the disparities and inequalities implicated which reproduce and legitimize social inequalities, the "privatization" of what is supposed to be a democratic and publicly funded education from kindergarten through graduate school? Members of the audience responded that these are not family systems issues but larger system and political issues; therefore they cannot deal with these in therapy. One person in the room went on to challenge me by asking: "What are your solutions to the problems families present and all of the research results you cited?"

I responded that the problems appear to require a broader ecological perspective, a perspective that clarifies and legitimizes the dynamics, relationships and interconnections between people and environments (school, community, policies, governments) within a particular cultural and historic context. One of my suggestions, not a radical one, was family and school partnerships in dealing with the problems that the adolescents are confronting and which seem to interface within both of these systems. My second suggestion was apparently a radical break from "traditional solutions" in that it created upheaval in the room, laughter, and smirks, depicting the audience's appraisal of the suggestion as being "a crazy idea". The solution was for families to demand a "free and public" education for their children from the Ministry of Education by petitioning for this (politically) and by not sending their children to "cram preparatory lessons". This idea was apparently too incredulous for the audience to even consider: adolescents' acting out by not studying "hard enough" is a family issue that can be dealt with within the family and not a collective and political issue. When I tried to explain that this would be a way to prevent the chaos that was imminent in that most people, including those of us in the room, would not have money to pay for our children's "cram lessons", and this threat would bring even more upheaval in families if we do not think outside the "family system box", and move from second-order change within the family, to second order change within the larger systems – schools, communities, ministries, policies, and the political and socio-economic system. Creating wider networks for educational reform can be a potential impetus for vital and important change processes to materialize. The session ended with lots of commotion to evacuate the room as though the things said in there were anathema.

Two years have transpired and Greek families and the educational system have been driven towards greater instability. Families cannot pay for frontistiria, yet competition for education continues. In the public universities departments are closing and neo-liberal models of "management" have taken hold. Within the mental health field, many community services and centres are on the brink of collapse due to inadequate funding and lack of personnel, especially psychologists. Mental health problems within the family have reason to exponential proportions in Greece while the National Health System is overburdened and undergoing major neo-liberal transformations (Kentekelenis, Karanikolas, Papanicolas, Basu, McKee, & Stuckler, 2011; Economou, Madianos, Peppou, Patelakis, & Stefanis, 2012). Adolescents are tittering on the edge, a massive wave of divisiveness is very apparent, political parties in the far right have been voted into parliament, fascist attacks on immigrants are numerous, the advent of the working poor is a reality, and the demise of work and employment is considerable, especially for youth.

This professional exchange allowed me to reflect on how inclined the Greek context is in readiness for critical, community, and emancipatory approaches to intervention. From an ecological perspective the problem is not the adolescents and their family functioning but an educational system that reinforces great disparities, allows for inefficient teaching and

privatized parallel schooling in secondary education, and yet insists that it is a "free and democratic system". Moreover, the high stakes entrance exams render secondary education in Greece into a caricature of what pedagogy and pedagogical methods should be. Children and youth are not led into citizenship, community, and paideia, and the holistic education of the mental, physical, social and critical facilities appears to be lacking. The ancient Greek words appear to echo the same meanings and understandings, yet the "leading of children into citizenship" in the current market-driven environment is now rendered in terms of economic competiveness. Hence, the education system is left bereft, serving economic interests and not its subjects and their mental, physical, and critical facilities.

Change initiatives from within a critical ecological perspective are rooted in the assumption that significant improvements in the outcomes for families and their adolescent children (e.g., less conflict for adolescents and their families, less economic burden, adequately run secondary schools where adolescents learn what is required to take the Panhellenic University Entrance Exams, and where "private parallel schooling" is not required to compensate for the inadequacies of the public schools) will not occur unless the surrounding systems (e.g., school systems, communities, policies, Ministry of Education, more government spending on education ["Spending for public education in Greece is relatively low. Greece spends 2.27% of its GDP in education—this percentage is the lowest in the European Union", Giamouridis, 2006, p. 6] adjust to accommodate the desired goals. Critical methodologies were highlighted as means of understanding the communal and political dimensions of the economic collapse and to provide lenses through which social programming can be designed and implemented. Why would colleagues trained in systemic theory find it so difficult to fathom "second order" change in wider social systems? Why would participatory approaches in which mental health professionals respond to these socio-economic and political challenges, and the problems that arise from them by thinking and acting outside the constraints of their therapy offices and of traditional therapeutic dialogues, into active community and wider-system participation, be so unfathomable? Why would mere grappling with issues of greater equality, justice, and fairness be considered imaginative and an "academic" exercise? Why do such strict boundaries between professional, personal, and political abate us from commitments to participate in wider system change efforts, when change is at the core of our work?

At that point in time perhaps the people in the audience were not ready to challenge the view that there are no alternatives within schooling and educational practices and that the privatization of what is supposed to be public is the current status quo. It seems that the people attending the lecture found the system of schooling to be somehow natural, and therefore, acceptable as it is. Such complicity with the prevailing norms and mores may not be exactly what most people in the audience agreed with, but this was the constraining reality. Moreover, it may not be to the best of their personal interests to continue to see this form of schooling as natural, but entertaining "radical alternatives" means transforming complex situations and contexts, which for many people is something to shy away from. Perhaps, developing objectives for family change is what came naturally for the professionals in the room. While developing a common vision which, through difficult collective activity, can contribute to transformative social change is not something the professionals were able to commit to.

Theory, research and practice are not always weaved well together in ways that allow theorists, researchers, and practitioners to engage in dialogue which augments the work of all involved. This lack of interaction, collaboration, and the resulting outcomes, may be exacerbated by the difficult and complicated relationship between policymakers, researchers,

and academics and the disjuncture and lack of synthesis between their knowledge (Solarz, 2001). Few scholars offer pragmatic approaches that practitioners can readily use to bring about change and transformation, especially in wider social systems. Theoretical perspectives need to be interwoven with policy in order to increase awareness, understanding, acknowledgement for new ideas, and influence practitioners' praxis. In considering the chasm and disparities between theorists, researchers and practitioners, Chinman et al. (2005) identify the meagre coordination stemming from differences in training backgrounds and the ensuing differences in the theoretical basis of their understandings and practices. With regard to critical perspectives, it may be that they were not, and may still not be, well outlined and developed in this particular context in order to be implemented. Person-centred or family centred, deficit-oriented approaches are deeply entrenched in Greece, and this adds to the resistance and lack of openness that exists in the professional practice communities. Moreover, interdisciplinary research, departments and collaboration is not, as of yet, well developed in academic circles in Greece. This lack of common language, theoretical understandings and collaborative practices may partially explain why critical perspectives have not succeeded in permeating social policies and actions in Greece. Gaining understandings and experiences from different contexts, engaging in dialogue and critical reflection and practical work across the ever smaller world, where diverse points of view and practices exist may be the way to enhance critical perspectives and make them more palatable to practitioners, researchers, and theorists alike. Hopefully, this volume will contribute toward these ends.

Yet, another possible explanation is that perhaps the massive inequalities and injustices that ensued were not visible at the time of the conference. Maybe parents, in the audience at that juncture, wanted the best for their children and did not see that *only what is best for all children* can lead to solidarity and transformative and democratic change, otherwise injustice and social conflict prevail. It is interesting how class issues appear and disappear in academic and other discourses. Now with the advent of the working poor and the demise of the middle class, people may be thinking of class issues and their impact on educational achievement, work, and well-being, once more.

At this juncture it has become obvious that organizations that provide mutual support and aspire toward social change are beginning to be developed. In the town where I live retired secondary education teachers are offering "support lessons" for adolescents preparing for the university entrance exams for free. They have organized a surviving the crisis initiative and have planted themselves in one local secondary school offering lessons in all subject areas for all the students who want to attend. As with the stirrings of community psychology initiatives (Triliva & Marvakis, 2007) perhaps such practices will also begin to impact not only community services but also in the policies and political advocacy of the Ministry of Education and Greek society at large. Action research paradigms can effectively capture the systemic changes brought about by such work and perhaps bolster, disseminate and convey the power that is harnessed when people come together to support one another and work for social change to better the human condition for all.

Vignette 4:
Towards "provincializing" and "worlding" critical psychology

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One of the truly exciting – and certainly unusual, at least for psychology – features of this collection of articles is its sheer geographical spread and, along with this, the extent of its cultural and linguistic diversity. Considered by itself the encyclopaedic quality of the volume already represents a substantial intervention: drawing strength from numbers, from the irreducibility of its multiple origins and theoretical/political trajectories, the clamour of voices collected here lends momentum to a certain "majoritization" – through amplification rather than synthesizing – of alternative *critical* paths in/to psychology. The aim of this collection was never to tame the rich dialectical diversity of these voices; to reduce the vernacular variety of critical alternatives around the world to the "standard language" of a single critical psychology. Instead, the volume enacts the reclamation and perhaps even the *occupation* of psychology in various ways around the world… *Occupy Psychology!* might well have been our rallying call, and not because we seek representation (or demand to be heard) *within* the existing epistemological, cultural and political coordinates of the discipline – which would only assist the globalizing ambitions of mainstream psychology, as represented for example by the Internal Union of Psychological Sciences – but because we wish to assert our critical autonomy whilst we also strive for the establishment and strengthening of relations of solidarity which, in an accumulation of distributed forces, could relativize the mainstream "internationalization" of psychology and offer more potent forms of "internationalism" in its place.

But perhaps it is prudent to steer clear of the language of internationalism, with its implied cultural-political imaginary of "nation-states-in-relation", and to utilize instead concepts developed in the ambit of postcolonial theory. If the articles in this volume are drawn together under the denominator "psychology", they nevertheless aim at, on the one hand, a "provincializing" of dominant, mainstream versions of psychology (cf. Chakrabarty, 2000); and, on the other hand, a "worlding" of (also: critical) psychology (cf. Connery & Wilson, 2007; Roy & Ong, 2011). Our worldwide survey of critical psychologies was not informed by a need to fetishize "national traditions" within an inter-national order, but to understand and reconfigure the relationship between psychology and its particular historical territorializations. To provincialize mainstream psychology means, at a basic level, quite simply to strip it of its universalistic pretensions; to re-situate psychology historically, culturally, and politically. It means, in other words, to show (or "deconstruct") what is constitutively American, European, North-Atlantic, or Western about a psychology that too frequently portrays itself as ahistorical, transcultural, and politically neutral. At another level, however, it involves more than merely claiming "universal" psychology is actually American "ethnopsychology" in disguise. Rather than critique stopping at cultural relativization or the deconstruction of a counterfeit universalism, to provincialize psychology means to acknowledge and undertake to subvert psychology's actual *universalizing effects*: how it relates contemporary subjectivities to culture, to the market, to politics, and indeed to itself. Rather than an American "ethnopsychology", mainstream psychology is, and increasingly

functions as, *globalist* psychology – that is, it equips a particular form of (capitalist) globalization, with its imperialist schemes and attendant forms of subjectivization, with a lubricating psycho-logic. To provincialize psychology is therefore not simply a cultural critique (a form of "identity politics" where the "native self" seeks its own authentic representation within psychology, thereby simply adding to the psychologization of social relations), but a *political* critique at heart. Since psychology's politics resides precisely in the psychologization of politics, the terrain of the political needs to be de-psychologized. This is one of the tasks of a critical psychology, and I would argue one of the principal gestures of "provincializing psychology".

The outcome of such provincializing of psychology is not a series of "indigenous" (or cultural) psychologies. In fact, the cultural politics of contemporary (globalizing) capitalism, not unlike the neo-colonialism of a few decades ago, renders any uncritical reliance on categories of the indigenous problematic. Here one should heed the lessons of Frantz Fanon, especially in the essays collected in *A Dying Colonialism* (1965/1959), about the treachery of simplistic appeals to "pre-colonial culture" in the struggle to overcome colonial subjection. What Fanon made clear is that the struggle against colonialism can never simply be reduced to the reaffirmation of local against imposed culture; tradition against modernity; authenticity against alienation; mother tongue against other tongue; black against white; or yesterday against today (and tomorrow). Fanon was scathing of the cultural and political romanticism of some forms of Africanism, for example, not because he believed that pre-colonial social relations and realities had been entirely demolished by colonialism (and that "Westernization" was thus the only option left for colonial subjects), but that colonialism frequently *relied on* rather than simply devaluing or substituting elements of "indigenous culture" for its practical functioning and ideological legitimation. Indigenous sources of authority, forms of governance, relations of domination, and even languages, folklore and traditions, were incorporated into the strategies of colonial rule – into colonial governmentalities, if you like (Pels, 1997). Under such conditions, avowals of indigeneity come to function, at best, as exotic cultural commodities appropriated by Western intelligentsias and "native representatives" alike – yet another version of "Orientalism" (Said, 2003). At worst, avowals of indigeneity functions as a cultural logic which is deployed in service of the political self-immunization and economic advancement of neo- and postcolonial elites – inheritors of the colonial looting of the state – after the formal end of colonial rule. Exploitation, so Fanon famously insisted, can wear a black face; and this was not a statement about the psychology (or the moral worth) of black leaders, but an acknowledgement of the continued entanglement of the postcolonial state with neocolonial relations of power and dependency and the dynamics of global capitalism. The continued political disenfranchisement and economic exploitation of the multitudes by postcolonial elites in many "independent" African states have, indeed, frequently hid itself behind displays of "authentic indigenous culture"…

Rather than indigenization, then, I prefer the concept of "worlding". The emphasis here is on the concept "world-*ing*"; on process rather than product. In other words, the aim is not to produce a "world psychology", marketable like so-called "world music", neatly niched for consumption abroad, but to relocate psychology – as a *critical* psychology – beyond the ideologies of both self-serving neoliberal globalization *and* romantic indigenization. Worlding involves an active attempt to envision new organizations of knowledge, taking into account "the ways in which a given discipline or scholarly field sets its own boundaries – boundaries which it frequently considers to be natural or self-evident" (Connery, 2007, p. 1). Worlding leaves us with a psychology that is neither self-evidently universal nor completely locally insulated. Whereas provincializing might reveal that what is often universalized as

Psychology is in fact Northern Psychology – that it indexes and advances a *particular* world, however invisible and self-evident its boundaries might have become – worlding has as its aim the spatial reimagining of psychology; or, the reimagining of psychology in terms of its irreducible spatial diversity, by allowing this very diversity to become dialectically productive – of forms of knowledge, of resistant subjectivities, of transnational solidarities.

In this regard, consider the following statement by Burawoy and Von Holdt (2012, pp. 217-218), in relation to the worlding of social theory: "There is no meaningful Northern theory insulated from Southern theory, but only theory that circulates between North and South – and the best critical theory transforms itself as it traverses the globe, turning itself against itself." It is this traversal and the dialectical movement of transformation (which is a more powerful process than mere "contextualization") it initiates that I take to be the core characteristic of the worlding of critical psychology as well. One can add finally, in agreement with Ong (2011), that "worlding refers not to a single unified political process, but to diverse *spatializing practices* that mix and match different components that go into building an emergent system" (p. 12, emphasis added). This, I believe, is an accurate description of what this volume seeks to achieve.

Vignette 5:
Capitalist realism and the future of critical psychology:
Four theses for a radical social science

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Thesis 1: Denaturalization of the present order of things

Let's set off by describing the political, economic and psychosocial order we live in as *capitalist realism.* The term is thought to be suitable for it captures both the structural configuration of our epoch, as well as the dominant pattern of subjectivity that animates, and in turn is being reproduced, by this configuration. The reader could justifiably contest that notions such as Fukuyama's "end of history", or that of "postmodernism", as theorized by Jameson (1991) as the "cultural logic of late capitalism", or "post-Fordism" (see Marazzi, 2011) could capture equally effectively both of these aspects. However, and leaving aside the various, floating meanings the term postmodernism has taken, all the aforementioned authors, as Fisher (2009) explains, developed their theses in the 80s and early 90s when there was still alternatives to capitalism or, at least, when the idea that an alternative to capitalism could exist was still a valid statement. The Zapatista rebellion in 1994, the beginning of a new cycle of anti-capitalist struggle in various forms and several countries, the re-election of Hugo Chavez in late 90s in the presidency of Venezuela, as well as the electoral victory of Lula and the workers party in Brazil in the early 00s renewed hope for a possible turn in politics. The climate started changing from the late 2000s onwards with the idea of a possible alternative gradually withering away. The failure of the Latin American Leftist parties to keep up to peoples' expectations, the failure of the massive demonstrations in Europe to stop the bombing of Iraq and, to a certain extent, the dead-end the anti-capitalist or anti-globalization movement reached, failing to pose any serious threat to capitalism or propose a viable alternative, contributed significantly to the strengthening of capitalist realism. In relation to the latter, whereas several analysts defended the movement pinpointing what they saw as the emergence of new forms of organization and subjectivities (e.g. Graber, 2002; Holloway, 2010; Shukaitis, 2008), others questioned strongly whether the carnivalesque dominated demonstrations in the context of various World Bank and IMF summits could reach any critical point beyond mere protest. Alain Badiou went even further, arguing that that this cycle of anti-globalization protests itself functions as a wild operator of capitalist globalization, which "seeks to sketch out, for the imminent future, the new forms of comfort to be enjoyed by our planet's idle petit bourgeoisie" (2003a, p. 125). In general terms, and beyond the milieu of expert and academic debates, the political conscious and unconscious, the social imaginary, seem to have been dominated by reactionary and cynical versions of the "There Is No Alternative" style: "See, even the Leftist become capitalists", "see, no matter how much protest there is around nothing really changes". Capitalist realism describes and expresses both a feeling of dead-end of resistance, as well as the re-affirmation of the hegemony of neoliberalism as the only choice for the organization and management of society.

It is precisely this massive expansion of the "There Is No Alternative" logic – to an extent even Thatcher herself could never have imagined – that lies at the core of the present order of

things. In the form of Leftist governments that forget their programmatic declarations and lapse into pragmatic (i.e. neoliberal) politics; in the form of governments consisting of technocrats imposed on countries facing economic uncertainty; in the form of austerity measures and policies ranging from the further deepening of the neoliberalization of education and the dismantlement of what is left from the welfare state to the total destruction of labour rights, the point is one: 'There Is No Alternative!' Many (ex) leftist now also repeat it with a tone of great certainty and scholarly pragmatism. Some form of nerveless and slack social democracy is the best we can hope for; a capitalism with a human face, the illusion of the surrendered and the accommodated. Even the very notion of economic crisis has now ceased to be the source of optimism as it used to be, signalling that the system could eventually collapse. Crisis is no longer a fault of the system; it is not an opportunity for an alternative. Crisis is an endemic part of capitalism, a characteristic of the economy which can be rationalized and tamed; a characteristic whose periodicity can be predicted and its effects managed. Capitalism is a permanent crisis, but anything else is either impossible or would be a mere disaster – we are told. Resistance to all this – in the form of the worn out repertoire of protests and strikes – no longer seem to pose any threat to the system, when they are not violently crashed, they are quickly subjected to crisis management techniques and even manipulated in order to add to the democratic façade of the regime: "in a democracy people are allowed to protest, but there is no alternative to consider!"

Capitalist realism is a condition which is characterized by a scarcity of and hostility to events – the event as something that punches a hole in the fabric of "what is", as a starting point of a subjectivasion process. The four generic conditions Alain Badiou (2002) has identified as event- producing, namely love, art, science and politics, are obliterated by four pseudo-conditions which while simulating the real ones, they remain homologous to the market and sterile, technically incapable of producing events. Thus, as Badiou (2003b) explains, "the name 'culture' comes to obliterate that of 'art'. The word 'technology' obliterates the word 'science'. The word 'management' obliterates the word 'politics'. The word 'sexuality' obliterates the word 'love' (ibid, p. 12). The obliteration of the event-producing conditions results in the production of servile and obedient subjectivities organized in various combinations along these four dimensions. The epitome on the "sexuality-culture-technology-management tetraptych is the figure of the "sexy and sexually liberated, cultured/sophisticated, and technologically skilled, manager" – a familiar figure which constitutes the paradigmatic model of our times for imagining individual future, personal success, self-actualization and happiness. Capitalist realism derives its power from its capacity to naturalize itself, to present itself as the natural state of things and the only course of action. It is at the same time a result of a naturalization process and the process of naturalization itself. Thus, the first thesis concerns the need for more deconstruction, for more radical and critical work, for the denaturalization of the present political, economic and psychosocial order.

Thesis 2: Politicization of pathology

The 'culture-sexuality-technology-management' complex is composed and dominated by endless entertainment circuits characterized by the predominance of the audiovisual modality; a modality hostile to everything existing outside its largely "connected" optic-acoustic reality. The comprehension of complex ideas, anything that demands high concentration and discipline, especially reading and writing, are deemed to be boring, uninteresting, not fun. As Fisher (2009) puts is succinctly: "ask students to read for more than a couple of sentences and many will protest they can't do it…it is the act of reading itself that is deemed to be boring"

(p. 23). In this context, there is an increasing demand even for a lecturer to transform to entertainer, a performer who employs audiovisual material, from PowerPoint to YouTube videos, in order to make a class fun and to prevent the students' attention from flying away. We live in an attention deficient world, a "dyslexic" world that is fond of images and sounds and hostile to reading and writing (Fisher, 2009).

Ranciére insists that unlike spoken language, written language has something radically democratic or even anarchic about it, due to the fact that it makes no distinction between those to whom it "should" and those to whom it "should not" speak. Writing is promiscuous and lawless, whereas spoken language is a facet of controlled, hierarchized, social situations. Expanding Ranciére's argument – and challenging Davis's (2010) attempt to endow other forms of language (such as recorded speech which becomes an open electronic source) with this democratic-anarchic dimension on the basis that what matters is the degree of availability for reappropriation of the language in question – we should see the importance of written language in the relationship it forms with the reader. To be more accurate, the importance of writing is not that it is the only form that can be purely anonymous (in any case, recorded speech can never be totally anonymous; the voice contains a character), but the fact that it constitutes the subject that is called "reader". And it is the act of reading that realizes the democratic-anarchic character of written language.

Reading is not the same as watching a movie of listening to a song. It is a qualitative different modality; it requires the temporal relative deadening of the listening and watching; it is a special form of training and performance that demands discipline and concentration. For Ranciére (2007) human beings are political animals precisely because they are literary animals who allow themselves to be disrupted, deviated from the "natural" course by the power of writing. It is perhaps not a coincidence that revolutionary movements very often are implicated in a struggle against illiteracy. The post-literate body, which coincides with a post-political consumer, operates mainly in an audio-visual modality that requires no special training and performance. It is too "wired", too "connected" to engage in the mostly solitary, off-line act of reading. Thus, what is called dyslexia (and ADHD) should not be understood as individual pathologies, but rather as a different psychosocial arrangement, an endemic feature of late capitalism's structuring of life. Being wired in entertainment-control circuits requires no serious and painful attention; reading disappears and with it disappears also the political being/reader who is disturbed, deviated by writing. Deleuze and Guatari (2004) famously claimed that capitalism has never been fond of writing, that capitalism is profoundly illiterate. It seems that late capitalism has taken another step in the direction of "illiteralilty", and its populace too has become, not illiterate, but post-literate; not dys-lexic, but post-lexic, hostile to the attention required for reading, hostile and indifferent to the discipline and commitment required for subversion and resistance – at best believing that things can change purely through on-line activism. Similarly, so called bi-polar disorder should not be understood as an individual pathology, but as an instantiation of the bi-polar post-Fordist organization of the psychosocial. Bi-polarity is an endemic characteristic of a psychosocial configuration which demands from people/employees that they demonstrate a total availability to the "mood shifts" of markets and oscillations in production. It is, after all, a socioeconomic configuration in which periods of euphoric growth give way to periods of economic *depression*! An understanding of this sort is not simply a theoretical exercise, but an important dimension to consider for the way critical psychological practice is done. Thus, the second thesis concerns the politicization of pathology – which is predicated upon a different understanding of the individual-society relation.

Thesis 3: Prefiguration of new subjectivities, commune-ities and realities

For those who have a privileged place, or strive for one, in the "culture-sexuality-technology-management" world and its business ontology; for those immersed in never ending narcissistic careerism, the various psy-practices, from counselling to coaching and corporate training to esoteric psychology and laughing yoga, have undertaken the task to endow them with the necessary skills for the successful life of a winner: high motivation, uplifted mood, affirmed and strengthened inner powers, optimistic approach to life, avoidance of and defences against whatever might cause negative emotions, capability for constant adaptability to constantly changing conditions, flexible and creative thinking and skills, imaginative thinking. To survive, one must be constantly training and retraining him/herself, must be permanently in "school". Having agile and swift imagination and creativity is the new fitness for the individual, qualities inherent to the process of production. It is the May 68 slogan achieving full force in late capitalism: "all power to imagination". What was once the site of the devil for the early great theologians of the ascetic Christian tradition, what was once brutally persecuted at various times in European history, from the great witch hunt to the anti-masturbation frenzy to socialist realism, is now the motor and fuel of the "sex-culture-technology-management" world in its various combinations and configurations. But, at the same time, even when appearing wild and rampant, this is a restricted and tamed imagination, entrenched within the (albeit expansive) limits of the market. Consequently, one can imagine and design all sort of extraordinary applications for mobile phones and PCs, or imagine the kinkiest sex scenes, but one can imagine no alternative to capitalism – there is no alternative! As the well-known saying has it: "it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism".

For those who take things too seriously and refuse to surrender, there is always a perpetual last chance hanging over their heads: to see things differently, to adapt. If not, it is they who have the problem; it is their attitude that condemns them to be frustrated losers. Mind you, to be a loser, frustrated or not frustrated, is not an easy thing. There is still a lot one has to do: to show devotion and obedience in the fear of losing one's job (or in the hope of getting one) is the most important performance one must give every single day. Servility everywhere! Servility and docility emerge as the intrinsic psychic qualities, not of the successful employee, but of the employee as such. And servility is characterized by its silent movement in space, its festering within the suffocating walls of the self, its lack of the ability of communication. This is the paradox of a world in which, whilst communication has become an endemic part of post-Fordist production (see Marazzi, 2011), communication itself has demised. What disappears together with communication is the commune, the common in all its manifestations – as common space, as collective ownership of the means of production, or as common sense – under the weight of silent obedience, individualized consumption, and atomistic survival. Endless individual monologues of disintegrating egos have taken the place of the commune of the Idea (of communism) – with a capital "I", in Badiou's (2011) idiosyncratic reading of Plato's concept – as that which allows the human animal to orient itself on the basis of the declaration of an event, and thus become a subject. Servility is the characteristic of a human being that has no link to the Idea, a being who never enters a subjectivation process. Servility is, in the language of German critical psychology, the characteristic of entrapment in restricted action potency (see Tolman, 1994).

To escape this condition it is important we re-invent life by reaffirming, re-declaring, even producing an event and giving new meaning to it and to the literal locutions emanating from it

(e.g. "working men all over the world unite"!). Giving new meaning is to prefigure and explore possible futures, to dream and realize a radically different world. And this is something that should not necessarily be done only in the form of academic theory. It can be done in other ways too; with active participation in social movements and social experiments; in the form of literature, theatre, film making, and so on. Our notion of the new should by no means be understood as an intellectual exercise that is performed from a position of safety and security. It resembles in no way the capitalist imperative for adaptation to the constantly emerging "new" markets and work conditions. That would mean to surrender to the language of the star columns that Adorno (1994) has analyzed so well. Taurus: 'adaptability is not defeat! It is a skill that opens a new horizon'. Libra: 'be ready to grasp the opportunity for a new future of successes'. The new is first and foremost predicated upon a spirit of adventurousness, upon a desire for rupture, upon the courage to take risks. Risk taking is also endemic in the capitalist organization of life, but our notion of risk is again a different one, for it does not prioritize personal interests and material gains; it emanates from the realization of the interconnection between resistance, thinking and risk: "not to resist is not to think. Not to think is not *to risk risking*" (Badiou, 2005, p. 8). A reversal of the aforementioned phrase makes things more clear. Our notion of risk aims to claim back for the subject a sense of adventurousness and tenacity that breaks with the language of security and safety – in all aspects of life, from the way we do theory or practice to the way we love. Against the identity, the sameness, the perfect matching promised by dating agencies (Badiou, 2012) or the self-interest and equal exchange principle dominating market relationships (Illouz, 2008) of the "sexuality-culture-technology-management" world, we re-invent love as an adventure, as a risk emanating from a contingent encounter.

The production of new subjectivities is further predicated upon a break from the positive psy-complex and the obsessive pursuit of happiness. To reclaim the right to be dissatisfied is to reclaim the right to revolt. To be dissatisfied is to realize that the conditions of life are not the ones we want. Dissatisfaction is revolutionary consciousness rising against the stupefaction and affective straitjacket of happiness and comfort. We need to reclaim the right to unhappiness. As Ahmed (2010) argues, the freedom to be unhappy is not about being wretched or sad, although it might involve the expression of such feelings, but the "freedom to be affected by what is unhappy, and to live a life that might affect others unhappily" (p. 195). And the freedom to be unhappy with the present state of things, to disrupt the happiness matrix, and to cause unhappiness can only be a collective revolutionary project. And we need to go further and break with the psychic orthopaedics and reclaim not only unhappiness but rage too, a joyous revolutionary rage emanating from doing politics of rupture; for as the Invisible Committee (2009) puts it, "without the first (rage), the second (politics) is lost in discourse; without the second, the first exhausts itself in howls" (p. 111). It is perhaps important, then, to turn to biography and rediscover it as a critical psychological genre; to turn to resistance figures, to uncomfortable, unruly, disobedient personal trajectories, and see what they have to tell us –avoiding at the same time making new idols and resurrecting the cult of personality (Parker, 1996; Mentinis, 2011). We need to rediscover heroism (let's not be afraid of the word) amidst cowardice and dismay: heroism as commitment to the Idea, heroism as courage to break with habit and repetition; heroism as rupture in thought, as negation, as passion.

It is one of the paradoxes of late capitalist societies: on the one hand they are described as "risk societies", and yet people more and more are looking for security and comfort even if this means a life sentenced to servility and self-annihilating flexibility. The flexible, mobile, unhinged (even whilst constructing and retaining a shielded internal self), individual

paradoxically requires not simply artificial forms of socializing, but also short-circuited notions of community that feed conservatism and fascism, but enhance a feeling of disengaged belonging and security. For, at least partly, whereas capitalism wrenches the person from community and family ties at one level, at the same time it requires the family and community to undertake functions and services the state abnegates, and thus provide a security and safety net. Risk, then, is not simply an isolated individual characteristic; it is rather related to a different understanding of community, of society – not as a group of people with common property, common identity, common origin, common history, common genes and characteristics (which all are after all never as common as thought to be), but as the gap between personal lacks, the gap between what is given to the outside, what is leaking from the person. And such understanding of community necessitates and affirms that the person is always a risky opening to the outside, a lack, and it is this risky opening that produces community (Espocito, 2009, 2010). Our third thesis, then, is that we need to build new forms of subjectivities, new forms of organization, new commune-ities, to open up new realities.

Thesis 4: Critical psychology as an independent critical social science

To denaturalize the psychosocial, politicize pathology and prefigure new forms of subjectivity and organization require that critical psychology is first and foremost a social psychology. There are at least two dimensions of the term "social" which would define a broader strategy for a major change in psychology. First of all, as Porshnev (1970), among many others, argues, the fact that the individual is a social entity means that all psychology should be a social psychology. In other words, social psychology is more general than general psychology and perhaps, as Porshnev prefigures, one day a properly social psychology may stand for psychology as a whole. Affirming such a position means that there is an urgent need to reclaim the adjective "social" from its usage in mainstream psychology, redefine it, and free it from the shackles of the experimental, mostly cognitively orientated branch of general psychology. The so-called social psychology is a mainly an a-social enterprise developed within US individualism from F. Allport onwards, and contains a depleted, or even totally absent, notion of the social, reducing itself to a kind of mechanics applied for predicting and controlling behaviour (see Farr, 1996; Greenwood, 2004). To reclaim the social from its asocial usage in the branch of social psychology, as well as bringing about semantic overlapping, emulation between a properly social psychology and psychology as such, should be a task for critical psychology. Critical psychology should then break the limits of academic psychology and make use of theoretical frameworks and research findings from across the spectrum of the social sciences – which is something already happening. Critical psychology emerges as an interdisciplinary endeavour, as an assemblage point of all social sciences and humanities: sociology, social theory, anthropology, political economy, linguistics, literary studies, and so on. But again, we should be careful here, for what we advocate is an attempt for unifications (in plural) of social sciences and not a kind of interdisciplinary eclecticism which would leave intact and unchallenged the bourgeois assumptions existing in all social sciences whilst simply looking for meeting points between them. Such attempt, as Holzkamp has shown, would leave psychology intact too (see Tolman, 1994).

An important issue raised here is whether critical psychology will be a kind of branch of general psychology; something like bourgeois psychology's left arm, or a properly independent social science. There are various competing views here, some appearing radical but imbued with a kind of voluntarism; some appearing more hesitant and yielding to the limits of the objective conditions within the discipline of psychology. One line of argumentation seems to support the idea that a kind of "entryism", an uncomfortable co-

existence within mainstream psychology, allows critical psychology to corrupt and change the discipline from within. On the other hand, though, this argument tends to underestimate the power of mainstream psychology to co-opt and alienate students (and teachers alike). Experimental, a-social, bourgeois approaches with promises for strong market applicability and job prospect (even an insecure one) attract students and co-opt even the most radical of them, who eventually come to find it natural to be progressive in politics but to employ bourgeois psychology. In many university departments critical psychology is not simply a marginal approach but a quasi-clandestine enterprise. In the university of Crete the words "critical" and "psychology" together caused such incongruence when pronounced together, when it happened for first time the students made sense of it by understanding *Crete-ical* psychology, the psychology of Crete (the adjectives for critical and for Cretan sound the same in Greek). In general, and this is again an experience shared by many teachers and students all over the world, the continuous effort is to stay in the dark so that one will not face the disbelief and incredulity of the mainstream establishment, to constantly attempt to dress up research proposals so they will not appear too radical or too "unscientific". This overall climate of hostility tends to turn away committed students and professors, discourage bright and interested students, and nip in the bud their radical spirit, inspiration and passion. Disappointment and cynical conformism become apparent everywhere.

Faced with this situation, it is essential for a critical psychological agenda to plan its move beyond the present state of academic suffocation and bring about a major change in the fragmentation and division of social and human sciences. The latter, as we know, are not trans-historically stable entities with clearly defined boarders. On the contrary, they constitute historical divisions and configurations which correspond to the defined "needs" of given societies and epochs (see A. Marvakis in this volume). Thus, even if it appears an impossible task for the time being, we should work towards a major break in the discipline of psychology, a rupture in the way the psychological is understood and researched: on the one hand a mainstream mainly quantitative psychology, and on the other a critical, properly social and mainly qualitative, psychology. Such critical psychology should not be another "critique commodity" for academic careerism, and should not limit itself to a critique of mainstream psychological theories and the past. At the same time, a properly critical psychology should be careful to avoid the pitfalls of tradition and indigenism. It is often the case that in order to fight the hegemonic position of Western forms of psychology – the TINA of psychology – and confront Western psychological totalitarianism, some critical psychologists around the world find recourse to the security and safety in indigenous and local psychologies. Despite the understandable political nature of such moves, this strategy runs the risk of an idealization of the past, the local and the reproduction, in the name of liberation, of traditional hierarchies and relations of power endemic in native, local psychologies (see also M. Dafermos in this volume). Coming back to what we said in the previous section then, what we need to do is to take the risk for new radical psychologies. Of course, "the new", as Marazzi (2011) argues, "does not erase the past, but only that which makes the past a kind of ballast, a dead weight preventing us from facing the future with intelligence and with the capacity for producing new affects and new political struggles" (p. 69). Here the Zapatistas' psychology can be a useful example, for the *nagual* (animal co-essence), the main category of the indigenous psychology, is wrenched from a system of hierarchies and fear and is transformed into constituent power, into a radical opening to the future (Mentinis, 2005). In contrast to contemporary new age styles of magic that promote a-political, self-contained calmness and happiness oriented servile selfhoods for the exploited working and middle classes, in the Zapatista indigenous psychology we witness the sorcery of a "tender fury" in what is, according to Taussig (1999), the manifestation of sorcery in the international politics at the

end of the twentieth century. A properly critical and properly social psychology then must go beyond a return to tradition, must go beyond critique and deconstruction, and develop theoretical frameworks that will allow it to be seriously engaged with the subversion of the present, and the prefiguration of the future.

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