7th International LAB Meeting - Winter Session 2007

European Ph.D. on
Social Representations and Communication
At the Multimedia LAB & Research Center, Rome-Italy

Social Representations in Action and Construction
in Media and Society

"Anthropological Approach to Social Representations
and Qualitative Methods"

From 20th – 28th January 2007
http://www.europhd.eu/html/_onda02/07/09.00.00.00.shtml

Scientific material

European Ph.D

on Social Representations and Communication

International Lab Meeting Series 2005-2008

www.europhd.psi.uniroma1.it
www.europhd.net
www.europhd.it

11

INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGIES AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE BODY AND SELF

DENISE JODELET

The aims of this chapter are to extend the concept of indigenous psychologies to numerous varieties of everyday psychological interpretation and to discuss the application of the social representation paradigm as an alternative to cognitive models. This paradigm allows for a complete account of the social psychological and cultural character of the construction of self- and other-related knowledge.

Since Heider's seminal work *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (1958), social psychological research has focused constant and ever-increasing attention on "lay" or "naive" psychology, referring to commonsense knowledge or everyday understanding of oneself and others' behaviors. People are studied as "intuitive scientists," practicing psychology in a spontaneous manner without the support or basis of scientific information and training (Gergen, 1989; Gergen & Gergen, 1986). This concern with naive psychology is a focus of different research trends bearing on categorization (e.g., Rosch & Lloyd, 1978; Tajfel, 1982), attribution (e.g., Jones et al., 1972; Kelley & Michela, 1980), interpersonal knowledge, impression formation and implicit theories of personality, and self-perception (e.g., Bem, 1972; Bruner & Tagiuri, 1954; Chapman, 1967; Leyens, 1983; Passini & Norman, 1966; Shweder, 1980). This position has been reinforced since the "cognitive revolution" of the 1960s. Social cognition, which deals with how people perceive, process, and organize information about themselves and others, has become a dominant field in social psychology. But according to several social psychologists, this discipline, which produced some of the earliest and most appropriate approaches to cognition (Zajonc, 1980), now suffers from the

shift toward a restrictive cognitivist perspective (Forgas, 1981; Gergen, 1989; Moscovici, 1982), losing its anthropological and social scientific character (Moscovici & Farr, 1984).

One of the consequences of this situation is that dominant models existing in psychology that are designed to account for everyday perception and understanding of people's behavior, traits, motives, and so on, overlook their cultural and social dimensions. Focusing on the intraindividual processing of information, studied in the vacuum of the laboratory, and compared with logical standards of rational reasoning, they most often tend to equate naive psychology with a lower or false form of scientific knowledge, insofar as it departs from the inference rules used by scientists. Forgetting Heider's (1958) advice to "bear in mind that these processes are within one encompassing situation" (p. 14), they neglect the social relationship and context within which naive psychology is embedded. They are thus led to ignore the collectively created and shared symbolic meaning systems that control this type of cognition (Pepitone, 1986).

Along with other social psychologists who criticize this cognitive reductionism, I assert in this chapter is that lay or naive psychology must treated as an "indigenous" one, even in cultures where scientific information is widely diffused via scholarly or mass media channels. The following six reasons support this assertion.

First, as everyday knowledge, naive psychology is socially regulated. It informs the construction of a social reality as shown by the work of phenomenologists, symbolic interactionists, and ethnomethodologists (see, for example, Berger & Luckman, 1966; Cicourel, 1973; Schutz, 1962). Second, with its commonsense dimension, it is a "cultural system," historically elaborated and regulated by historically defined norms of judgment (Geertz, 1983). Third, naive psychology belongs to the domain of "folk psychology," proposed by Wundt as one of psychology's two principal fields, which emphasizes the social aspects of mental processes (Farr, 1983). Its underpinnings are found in language, collective values, morals, customs, codes of behavior, and social conceptions of humankind that are specific to a given social group or cultural entity. Fourth, it bears the marks of social communication by which it is spread (Sperber, 1985). Thus it is a sort of "folk model" or "cultural model," defined in cognitive anthropology as a model of the world that is taken for granted, widely shared, and plays a role in understanding and action (Holland & Quinn, 1987). Fifth, it has social functions: the management of verbal and behavioral interactions with others and the mastering of social and personal life. Sixth, it is linked to the elaboration and expression of social identity and membership, and it depends on group links.

This claim and its implications have a twofold consequence for the study of lay psychology. First, it is necessary to take into account the social content as well as the context of this kind of knowledge, which is practical and deeply rooted in social life. This practical knowledge is based on own experience and oriented toward the mastering of this world by means of *declarative* (knowing that) and *procedural* (knowing how) knowledge, that is to say, through propositional statements on states of the world and practical, concrete manners to act on these world states. Second, this claim also necessitates a conceptual framework for coping with aspects related to the construction, circulation, and uses of everyday-life knowledge. Such a model is proposed by the "social representations" approach introduced by Serge Moscovici in 1961, which he further developed along with several other social psychologists in Europe (see Jodelet, 1989). This approach allows us to treat the "naive psychologist" not as an erroneous scientist, but as an "amateur" scientist. He or she is considered a fabricator of knowledge or a "mental craftsman." This also allows us to study different indigenous psychologies from the perspective of a common framework, thus permitting the analysis to transcend the specificity of each group. Such a framework leads to truly cross-cultural comparison, encompassing psychological processes, cultural values and beliefs, ecological and social constraints, and their interweaving. This perspective promises to advance the debate on universality/viability of psychological phenomena (Jahoda, 1982; Triandis, Malpass, & Davidson, 1973).

I will examine these two points successively. But first, let me begin with an anecdote that will facilitate the discussion of the shortcomings of cognitive models in accounting for indigenous psychologies, taking attribution theory as a prototypical case. While traveling by train in southern France, I was seated facing two women returning from the burial of a mutual friend. They seemed quite perplexed by the fact that there had not been any religious ceremony; even more so that this was apparently upon the request of the deceased. Consequently, these ladies were searching for an explanation of this fact. One of them proposed a hypothesis that seemed satisfactory:

> It cannot be *him*. It *must* have been his wife's fault. Don't we have the saying "*Sans foi ni loi*" (Faithlessness is like lawlessness) and *he* was a regular, orderly, disciplined sort of man. Certainly, then, he *must* have had faith. Surely, he had wanted a religious funeral.

Here we have an example of the reasoning of everyday-life psychology, which calls for a popular saying that will account for an unusual event and allows for the identification of a locus of responsibility. Our faithful travelers refuse to "blame" their friend or to besmirch the integrity of their memories of the deceased. They are thus obliged to find an explanation that conforms with their values. So they recall a proverb—that is, a principle of social regulation—drawing upon their own social background.

INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGIES

Would the models that formalize the causal explanation process such as those of scientific psychology be useful in analyzing this sort of reasoning? I don't think so. This is a case of finding the explanation for a given decision or behavior, as studied by attribution theory. It is a case of locating responsibility in one person (the deceased or his wife) as part of a personalizing process. But the logic used here is completely different from that described in social attribution or personalization processes. We can observe an interpretation following a deductive process based on a representation of humanity. This representation is carried through social communication, by a proverb from universal wisdom, and thus infused with value. This process illustrates how commonsense thinking works. Commonsense thinking, which we can equate with indigenous thinking, calls for an analytic model other than those normally evoked by psychologists.

These cognitive-type models postulate that all our psychological knowledge is composed of inferences based on the observation of the outside world and on information processed over the course of past experience. Needless to say, this vision of the lay psychologist as a scientist or statistician, functioning in a linear or mechanical way, cannot be appropriate to the degree of complexity involved in our interpretations of everyday understanding. Another aspect of this cognitivist perspective deserves mention: the use of singular and plural forms in the qualifying of psychologies. *Indigenous psychologies* is plural in form; one reason for this is that scientists conceive of indigenous psychologies and knowledge as being linked to group cultures that are considered unique and closed, without any possibility of community or communication between each other. On the contrary, *naive psychology* always appears in the singular form. Maybe scientists believe they are studying a universal rationality in their Western-world subjects. This ethnocentric rationality hypothesis joins the fundamental issue of variability/rationality raised in anthropology. Without entering into the debate, suffice it to say that this issue is quite relevant to the scientific status of indigenous psychologies (Pepitone & Triandis, 1987). What is particularly interesting about this vision is that it leads to a pessimistic portrayal of the rational lay psychologist. In order to overcome the contradiction implied in this portrayal of the rational lay psychologist, we must call for a more social approach.

Asch (1959) stresses the idea that the psychology of the specialist comes from lay knowledge. Heider wants us to draw on the richness of this spontaneous psychology in order to learn from it. We are confronted with the paradox of treating as inferior something that is assumed to be itself the source of scientific knowledge. In their quest for universality and rationality, scientific psychologists fail in their analysis of commonsense psychology, applying schemata that ignore its many dimensions. And then having lost the true matter of the issue (which is social and symbolic), they postulate an inaccu-

rate cognitive functioning. There is not one but many lay psychologies elaborated in ways that are specific to social groups or derived from more general backgrounds, be they ideological, scientific, or traditional. As indigenous psychologies, they are anchored in cultural or social contexts that ensure their practical validity, their cognitive specificity, whether or not they are "true" in a purely dualistic way.

If we look at the naive psychologist as depicted by numerous studies, he or she appears to be a "poor scientist," characterized by imperviousness to information, a tendency to seek behavioral confirmation of his or her conceptions of others, and a propensity to explain behavior by personal causes; as Moscovici (1982) points out. When, at the same time, scientists say that this knowledge is necessary for control over and mastery of the environment, we cannot avoid being astonished by the effectiveness of such erroneous and biased functioning, unless we recognize that this functioning is embedded in the process of a social construction of reality and that the world where information is selected and processed is itself shaped by social representations.

Here are two examples. The first concerns what Ross (1977) has called "the fundamental error," the tendency of observers to underestimate the role of situational factors in the explanation of others' behavior, thus relying on dispositional, internal traits—the case being the reverse for the actor. The generality of this bias is presented as reflecting a law of the human mind. Nevertheless, it has been shown that the search for personal explanations for events occurring to people can be easily related to historical, legal, ideological, and religious prompting of individual values and responsibility in Western societies. There is an "internality norm" (Beauvois & Dubois, 1987) that serves as a guideline for our judgments. This norm is not only linked to social desirability (Jellison & Green, 1981), it also expresses a social regulation within evaluative contexts and reflects the individualism dominant in Western culture. So attributing a personal cause instead of an external, situational one is not an error of logic, inherent to the poor scientist. On the contrary, such judgments are the result of correct application of premises given by our cultural background. In this sense, our psychological knowledge is derived from more general systems and changes according to the type of reference system involved.

Going further along this line of thinking, studies conducted in France and Switzerland have established that specific social groups are more inclined than others to make internal judgments that can be associated with a Manichean view of the social world. In matters of justice, conservative and conformist groups occupying established and wealthy positions, as well as some religious groups, explain criminality mainly by psychological factors and individual guilt, whereas leftist, upper-middle-class, and young people strongly advocate the role of social conditions of deviance (Robert &

Faugeron, 1978). According to studies on xenophobia, it appears that people who are against immigration for nationalistic reasons tend to see it as the result of voluntary choice owing to loss of solidarity with the native country. Inversely, people who oppose xenophobia for humanistic reasons emphasize economic constraints as a principal incentive for immigration (Windish, 1980).

Judgments of others as well as self-judgments are based on representations of human nature and society that express the interests, values, and norms of the group (large or restricted) to which we belong. Also intervening in this process is the expression of people's social identities. This is clear in the second example concerning implicit theories of personality. The matching of physical and behavioral traits and psychological characteristics or dispositions has been found to be dependent on the representation one has of personality. It has been found that this representation and the type of matching are susceptible to change between groups and over the course of time (Paicheler & Beaufils, 1984).

In a study of social representations of the body, I have shown that links between physical appearance and psychological characteristics are not recognized in the same manners among social groups that differ in the ways they manage their self-presentation (Jodelet, 1983). In brief, there is a drastic difference observed between those who have opportunities to care for their physical appearance (rendering it attractive and conforming to the norms of a well-trained body and pleasant look, as in the upper classes) and those who do not have such opportunities because of time and financial reasons (as in the lower and middle classes). Subjects were asked if physical aspects allowed inferences either on psychological traits, such as intelligence and character, or on health and moral states, or, finally, on social status and lifestyle. Upper-class subjects generally agreed that such inferences are possible, taking physical traits as good indicators of character, intelligence, and life-style, but not of social status. Subjects in the lower- and middle-class group rejected the possibility of these inferences, conceding that in a few cases bodily appearance reveals social status or state of health, but in no case does it indicate anything about psychological dimensions. Something of social identity and status acts to determine psychological reasoning according to the image one wants to present or defend in a social context more or less favorable for self-expression. The individual not only applies this reasoning to him- or herself, but also generalizes it with regard to others. Similar results have been found concerning ethnic and religious membership.

In earlier work, I found evidence of the dependence of body images and representations vis-à-vis cultural models and cultural change (Jodelet, 1984). I studied these images and representations by comparing two groups of subjects (men and women) interviewed at two different periods in history (1963 and 1975), situated around a period of social change at the end of the

1960s. It appeared that feminism and sexual liberation, diffusion of new corporal techniques, and psychoanalysis provoked a strong transformation in the feelings people had about their bodies. In 1975, people felt freer, more experience oriented, conscious of pleasure sensations, and conscious of their physical being. Conversely, for the group interviewed 15 years earlier, the relation to the body was distant and abstract, and bodily experience was limited to feelings of pain, tiredness, and illness. In terms of knowledge, the first group was interested in psychological and social factors affecting their state of well-being. The other group focused only on medical knowledge and normative principles concerning the body. These positions have an effect on the attention paid to health and illness, and are related to a normative stance. In the former group, subjects were preoccupied by moral and technical control of their bodies, adhering to norms of respectability and good presentation. The second group insisted on the necessity of keeping the body at ease rather than controlling its postures. If they did try to exercise control over their bodies it was in the name of their functional well-being, pleasure, or seduction. Adherence to one of these two norms is correlated to body feeling associated with either illness or pleasure and activity. The interiorization or refusal of a normative model suffices to change the bodily experience radically, from morbidity to an open and healthy relationship with the body.

Similar results were observed with reference to people's conceptions of their bodies' "capacity to resist illness" and their capacities to "control the influence of their mental state on the state of their bodies." According to a modernist conception, the body is autonomous, self-defensive, and regulated by a moral and psychological state of will. Those in this group oppose the effectiveness of medicine and reject the idea of a biological determinism on the state of their bodies. These conceptions are associated with a distant but rational relation with medical assistance. The other group is characterized as being medically dependent. These results illustrate the correlation between actions and representations that are sensitive to cultural change.
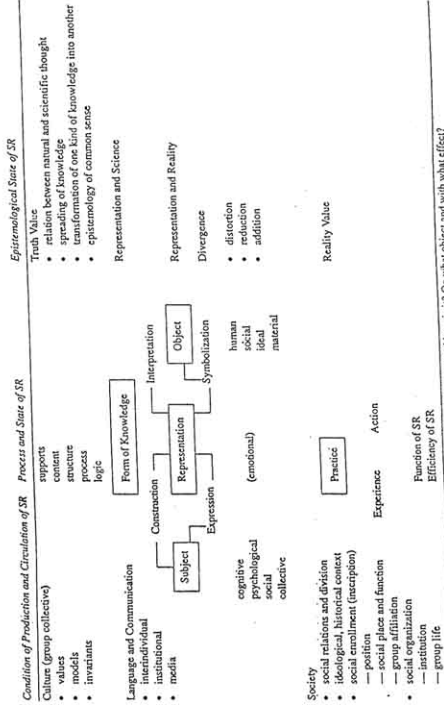
Even if one agrees with the existence of general processes and modes of reasoning in everyday-life "psychologizing," one can avoid considering neither the qualitative content on which these processes operate nor the social context within which they are embedded. There is no "pure" lay psychology, processed in a social vacuum. There are rather multiple lay psychologies nourished by different social elements: (a) the information resources available within a given social framework, (b) the values associated with the objects of focus of psychological thinking, (c) the projection of social identity connected with the social position of groups and individuals, and (d) the goal pursued through acquisition and application of a psychological knowing "that" and knowing "how."

When we pursue the exploration, interpretation, and prediction of our own or others' psychological states, traits, and behavior, three main features emerge. First, we use an arsenal of notions, criteria, and hypotheses that we share with others. This shared arsenal has a social origin and relevance, belonging to a common culture. Second, in using this arsenal we aim less at a speculative knowledge than at a concrete one. We try to orient our communications toward partners in interaction, to understand what is occurring to us in the course of our life span, or in response to our behavior. Knowledge of this sort needs to have concrete relevance to our social life. Third, as this arsenal is a practical knowledge, its functions have specific and direct impact on its construction and its application in everyday life.

Based on a common stock of knowledge, oriented toward fitting into our environment and structured by its functional relevance, lay psychologies cannot be isolated from social content and context. They must be treated as forms of social thinking. How can we proceed to weave together knowledge and its conditions? The trail is blazed in this direction by the approach of social thinking and commonsense knowledge in terms of social representations. The number of studies undertaken under this heading renders it difficult to give a strict definition of *social representation*, but I will try to cover what could be considered nowadays a consensual description and analysis of it.

Social representations are forms of social thinking used to communicate, understand, and master the social, material, and intellectual environment. As such, they are analyzed as products and processes of mental activity that are socially marked. This social marking refers to conditions and contexts where representations emerge, to communication by which they circulate, and to the functions they serve. This form of knowledge is construed in the course of social interaction and communication. It bears the mark of the subject's social insertion. Collectively shared, it contributes to the construction of a vision or version of reality that is common and specific to a social or cultural entity. This form of knowledge has practical aims and social functions. It operates as a system of interpretation of reality, serving as a guideline in our relation to the surrounding world. Thus it orients and organizes our behavior and communication.

In order to give a view of the conceptual analysis of the representational phenomena, I have tried to formalize this field of study, taking into account the numerous research contributions developed since the seminal work of Serge Moscovici. Figure 11.1 presents the different aspects and problems tackled by social representation studies that consider in different manners a threefold central question: Who knows and from what place? What is known and how is it known? On what object and with what effect?

Figure 11.1. The Sphere of Study of Social Representations

At the center of the figure, a basic schema depicts the representation as a practical form of knowledge linking a subject to an object. The representation must always be studied as the representation of an object and a subject. The object can be in the material, social, human, or notional field. The nature of the representation is dependent on its specificity. Thus the representation is, along with its object, in a symbolic relation: It stands for its object and, at the same time, confers meaning upon it. These meanings are the result of an activity by which the representation appears as a construction made by the subject, expressing him- or herself. The subject may be either an individual or a group. Its representational activity is multifaceted: It can imply cognitive processes or psychological mechanisms (emotional investment, identity, motivation, and so on), but in all cases the social representation approach integrates the analysis of these processes and mechanisms of the social dimension with the analysis of the social or cultural membership or participation of the subject. From this perspective, we must take into account the position of the subject in the social context or culture, the effect of social interactions and communication, or the influence of ideological trends pervading certain social groups. The social factors controlling the production and circulation of representational phenomenon are listed on the left side of the figure.

The upper right of the figure shows relations between lay and scientific knowledge. These relations have to do with scientific diffusion and vulgarization and with assimilation and transformation of scientific knowledge. This is a basic aspect to take into account in modern societies, where media channels ensure strong circulation of information. Now, turning to the practical functions of representations, we can find their root in everyday practices. They can act as versions of local theories defining a state of the world. As such they intervene, borrowing the expression of Bourdieu (1982), as "programs of perception," sculpting form out of the material, mental, or social environment.

Because a representation must be a representation *of* something, we must begin with an object socially valorized or controversial (a theory such as psychoanalysis or Marxism, an idea such as health or creativity, an event such as unemployment or nuclear hazard, and so on). We try to elicit the representation of this object by recollecting the system of beliefs, images, values, opinions, attitudes, semantic meanings, and behaviors associated with it. This system is analyzed in order to isolate a structural organization resulting from two main processes: *objectification* and *anchoring*. These processes reflect, at a formal and practical level, the social dimension involved in the construction of the representation.

Objectification explains the representation as a *selective construction, structuring schematization,* and *naturalization*—that is to say, as a cognitive whole that retains from the information provided by the external world a

limited number of elements linked by relationships that form them into a structure responsible for organizing the field of representation and that is accorded the status of an objective reality. The process of anchoring comprehends a *grounding in the system of thought, allocation of meaning,* and *instrumentalization* of knowledge. This process explains how new information is first transformed and integrated into the ensemble of socially established knowledge and into the network of signification available to society for the interpretation of the real, and then reincorporated in the form of categories that serve to guide both understanding and action.

By the comparison of specific systems elaborated in different groups (the comparative study is crucial in this analysis), we are able to designate and reconstruct the social dynamics that lead to a representation characteristic of a given social situation or membership. Today, anthropologists make similar use of this notion. Social representations serve to account for the process by which, in a traditional society, interpersonal relations, power relations, and sex relations are articulated with the cultural order underlying the social organization. Representations of the person, the body, of health and illness appear as a means to particularize this cultural order for a given social entity. In the same way, we can read in social representations the expressions of a group, its values, needs, aspirations, taboos, and so on. We can also discover how a representation, with its anticipatory, legitimating, and rationalizing functions, serves the maintenance of social order and of intra- and intergroup relations.

In this manner, we can point out even at an individual level the existence of collective and shared contents of thought and social marking of cognitive activity. We can also demonstrate that this activity, a creative and generative one (designed to integrate and respond to novelty), is a process that assimilates information to an existing background. By this very mechanism, new data and the background itself are transformed.

I will now illustrate these points regarding psychological knowledge. Two examples will show how socially transmitted knowledge is used by individuals and groups to construe their interpretations of the psychological world. The first example of this process is Moscovici's study of the social representation of psychoanalysis. The diffusion of Freudian theory in society has provoked its transformation under the influence of surrounding values. The lay model of the theory identifies pathological symptoms with "complexes" resulting from "repression" situated between the opposite and conflicting forces of the "conscious" and "unconscious" mind. But in doing so, it eliminates an essential part of Freudian theory, the "libido," because of moral taboos regarding sexuality. At the same time and for the same reasons, psychoanalysis is rejected, as it is perceived to be emblematic of sexuality. Moreover, groups characterized by different cultural levels, political orientations,

or religious doctrines give distinct meanings to the treatment, the patient, or the psychoanalyst, finding a way to incorporate the new science into their various preexisting mental systems. Thus for Catholics the treatment is analogous to confession and the analyst is perceived as a priest.

All these results allow the meandering of the scientific theory as it penetrates into the public sphere. One can also notice a fusion effect between old psychological notions and those taken from psychoanalysis. New concepts are used to interpret well-known psychological states and behavior: Blushing becomes the sign of a "timidity complex," submission to a professional hierarchy becomes the sign of "dependency on parental authority," and so on. In this venture the lay psychologist acts as an "amateur scientist," seeking to renew his or her knowledge to deduce and test clinical hypotheses. So on the one hand scientific knowledge becomes a lay knowledge. Is it not the fate of all scientific theory to become naive knowledge? On the other hand, lay psychology appears as a derivation from a scientific field, and not only as an algorithmic calculus based on direct observation.

I will now turn to another case of derivation, with the representation of mental illness in a peasant community in which there is a system of foster family care (Jodelet, 1991). Under the auspices of a psychiatric hospital, mentally ill patients, housed on farms, live and circulate freely among the population. Several aspects of the psychology developed by the peasants who live with the mental patients are of striking interest. For institutional reasons, the peasants do not have access to psychiatric information concerning the mental patients in the community. Obliged to interact closely with these patients, those in the peasant population were left to draw up their own theory of the significance of mental illness. In order to do so, they used data furnished by direct observation of the patients. They also borrowed from a core of traditional knowledge and notions, some of which are rooted in ancient beliefs and superstitions. Thus this peasant community fabricated a true form of indigenous psychology. Two types of illness are distinguished: one attacking the brain and another attacking the nerves. Whereas innocence is attributed to the first type, the second is perceived to be invested with a sort of natural violence, meanness, and sexuality. This model has existed from time immemorial and is found in different countries.

People imagine that the process at hand in both cases is analogous to the breakdown of natural liquids, such as blood or milk, as observed in daily farm work. One speaks of the "turning" (curdling) of the brain and nerves. With regard to the brain/nerves opposition, the causes of sickness are conceived differently depending upon the period of occurrence of the illness: childhood, adolescence, or adulthood. In the first case, the illness is perceived as caused by an innocuous brain deficiency. The second case indicates a dangerous affliction of the nerves and is attributed to "bad blood." In con-

trast, sickness declared during adulthood can only have an external cause, which is deduced from the value system of this rural group: All that goes contrary to local morality and life-style produces mental disorder (this includes urban life, noise, speed, schooling, and divorce).

Despite reassurances of noncontagiousness given by hospital personnel, peasants continue to think like their ancestors, believing that sickness is transmitted via bodily liquids (sweat, mucous, saliva). This belief has been reinforced by the introduction of psycholeptic drugs that redirect the illness exclusively toward the blood and the nerves. In order to protect themselves from contamination, the peasants elaborate certain rituals concerning physical contact with mental patients. They refuse to touch objects that have been in contact with the bodies of the patients, such as clothing and dishes. These objects must not be washed in the same water as those belonging to the host family. Within the family living space, they establish nontransgressible barriers. This segregation is extended to those who keep close proximity with and/or have friendly relationships with the mentally ill. The archaic representations help to recall the need to defend the group's identity and image by preventing the integration of the latter in private life. In this case, and for reasons of group survival, the rural population has shown itself to be a mental fabricator, using the cognitive elements at its disposal to derive a "knowing that" and a "knowing how."

An example concerning the knowing how (savoir faire) illustrates the subtlety of naive psychology. In order to familiarize the mental patients with household habits, the peasants have established a complex educational approach. For this they use handling techniques based on reinforcement: One acts on the patient through "tenderness" or through "fear," with a varied repertoire of incentive or dissuasive techniques. When confronted with unwanted behavior, one must first see if this behavior is susceptible to modification. This depends on the cause of the behavior: education, which itself suggests the possibility of correction; mentality, against which the peasants feel powerless, given the divergences between the patients' values and their own; the person's character and illness. Observation permits the peasants to distinguish these causes. For example, in order to choose between character or illness as a cause, one has to take into account how the patient relates to people. "Relating" behavior suggests a character trait, in contrast to illness, which causes the patient to withdraw in an autistic manner. Character is considered unchangeable, whereas illness is manageable. However, here too another criterion comes into play in the choice of technique. If one believes that the patient has a nerve problem, one will not use "fear" or "threat" techniques because of the danger of eliciting a violent automatic reaction. If the patient if "innocent," the punishment and reward repertoire can be used with more flexibility. This complex process mobilizes a whole theory concerning

psychological functioning and effects of pathology on behavior, in order to choose an adequate and risk-free manner of relating to the mental patients. We see here that attribution processes rely on a set of conceptions of human nature, illustrating the remark of Farr and Moscovici (1984):

> The study of the mechanisms of attribution in isolation from the social contexts in which they normally operate is a serious impoverishment of the subject matter of social psychology. The antidote to this impoverishment is to study social representations as they operate in the social world outside the laboratory. (p. 24)

These findings give evidence that naive psychologies are the product of a long and subtle process of reflection and manipulation of notions taken up from diverse areas of daily life, tradition, and science. These psychologies are directly affiliated with indigenous psychologies. We must treat them as such and find the means to compare these various commonsense psychologies. In this way we are able to advance toward an anthropological psychology.

I would like to conclude by underlining how the social representation approach can contribute to this direction. This approach allows us to go well beyond interpersonal psychology, social perception, and so on. The social representation approach brings out whole knowledge systems, rooted in our cultural background and directly relevant for our daily life and *Dasein*. In this way we are able to understand adherence to a system of thought and persistence of beliefs. We can also link everyday-life psychology to a range of knowledge from other domains (traditional, social, medical, scientific) and follow the development and change in our interpretations of psychic life.

Moreover, the social representation approach allows a change in the treatment of indigenous psychologies, generally considered as by-products of closed cultural systems. Social representations do not provide us only with a means of articulating psychological constructs with their social and cultural foundations. Taking into account the social structures and relations that have an effect on the construction of specific groups' worldviews, they also allow us to escape from the risk of underestimating social aspects of cultural mental productions (Keesing, 1987). They also provide the means for comparing constructs among particular groups or cultures. Finally, the social representation approach is the key to examining transformations that affect indigenous psychologies because of intercultural contact, the diffusion of scientific knowledge, and the circulation of ideas that multiply the number of models available for thinking about the psyche.

I will close by asking the following questions: What if we, as researchers, were to study and compare the social representations of our own respective societies? Wouldn't this be a good way for the scientific community to communicate and enrich our own native and scientific psychologies?

REFERENCES

Asch, S. (1959). A perspective on social psychology. In S. Koch (Ed.), *Psychology: A study of a science* (Vol. 3). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Beauvois, J. L., & Dubois, N. (1987). The norm of internality and the explanation of psychological events. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 18*, 299-316.

Bem, D. J. (1972). Self perception theory. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology.* New York: Academic Press.

Berger, P. L., & Luckman, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Bourdieu, P. (1982). *Ce que parler veut dire: Véconomie des échanges symboliques.* Paris: Fayard.

Bruner, J. S., & Tagiuri, R. (1954). Person perception. In G. Lindsey (Ed.), *Handbook of social psychology.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Chapman, L. J. (1967). Illusory correlation in observational report. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, 6*, 151-155.

Cicourel, A. V. (1973). *Cognitive sociology.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Farr, R. (1983). Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) and the origin of psychology as an experimental and social science. *British Journal of Psychology, 22*, 289-301.

Farr, R., & Moscovici, S. (1984). On the nature and the role of representations in the self's understanding of others and of self. In M. Cook (Ed.), *Issues in person perception.* London: Methuen.

Forgas, J. P. (Ed.). (1981). *Social cognition: Perspectives on everyday understanding.* London: Academic Press.

Geertz, C. (1983). *Local knowledge: Further essays in interpretive anthropology.* New York: Basic Books.

Gergen, K. J. (1989). Social psychology and the wrong revolution. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 19*, 463-484.

Gergen, K. J., & Gergen, M. M. (1986). *Social psychology.* New York: Springer-Verlag.

Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations.* New York: John Wiley.

Holland, D., & Quinn, N. (1987). *Cultural models in language and thought.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jahoda, G. (1982). *Psychological anthropology: An psychological perspective.* London: Academic Press.

Jellison, J. M., & Green, J. (1981). A self presentations approach to the fundamental attribution error: The norm of internality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 40*, 643-649.

Jodelet, D. (1983). La représentation du corps, ses enjeux privés et sociaux. In J. Hainard & R. Kaehr (Eds.), *Le corps en jeu.* Neuchatel: Musée d'Ethnographie.

Jodelet, D. (1984). The representation of the body and its transformations. In R. Farr & S. Moscovici (Eds.), *Social representations.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jodelet, D. (Ed.). (1989). *Les représentations sociales.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Jodelet, D. (1991). *Madness and social representations.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jones, E. E., Kanouse, D., Kelley, H. H., Nisbett, R. E., Valins, S., & Weiner, B. (Eds.). (1972). *Attribution: Perceiving the causes of behavior.* Morristown: General Learning Press.

Keesing, R. M. (1987). Models, "folk" and "cultural": Paradigms regained? In D. Holland & N. Quinn (Eds.), *Cultural models in language and thought.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kelley, H. H., & Michela, J. L. (1980). Attribution theory and research *Annual Review of Psychology, 31*, 457-501.

Leyens, J. P. (1983). *Sommes-nous tous des psychologues?* Brussels: Mardaga.

Moscovici, S. (1981). Foreword. In P. Heelas & A. Lock (Eds.), *Indigenous psychologies: The anthropology of the self*. London: Academic Press.

Moscovici, S. (1982). The coming era of social representations. In J. P. Codol & J. P. Leyens (Eds.), *Cognitive approaches to social behavior*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Paicheler, H., & Beaufils, B. (1984). *Les théories implicites de la personnalité: mode personnologique ou social*. Paris: Société Française de Psychologie.

Passini, F. T., & Norman, W. T. (1966). A universal perception of personality structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 4,* 44-49.

Pepitone, A. (1986). Culture and the cognitive paradigm in social psychology. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 38,* 245-256.

Pepitone, A., & Triandis, H. C. (1987). On the universality of social psychological theories. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 18,* 471-498.

Robert, P., & Faugeron, C. (1978). *La justice et son public: les représentations sociales du système pénal*. Paris: Masson.

Rosch, E., & Lloyd, B. B. (Eds.). (1978). *Cognition and categorization*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his short-comings: Distortions in the attribution process. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*. New York: Academic Press.

Schutz, A. (1962). The problem of social reality. In I. M. Natanson (Ed.), *Collected papers*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Shweder, R. A. (1980). *Fallible judgment in behavioral research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sperber, D. (1985). Anthropology and psychology: Towards an epidemiology of representations. *Man, 1,* 73-89.

Tajfel, H. (1982). *Differentiation in social groups*. London: Academic Press.

Triandis, H. C., Halpass, R. S., & Davidson, A. R. (1973). Psychology and culture. *Annual Review of Psychology,* 355-378.

Windish, U. (1980). *Zenophobie*. Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme.

Zajonc, R. B. (1980). Cognition and social cognition: An historical perspective. In L. Festinger (Ed.), *Retrospective on social psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.