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Transformations and Flexible Forms

Where Qualitative Psychology Begins

（柔軟な形式とその変化様式── 質的心理学の出発点）

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Abstract

Qualitative psychology builds its understanding of psychological phenomena on the basis of phenomenologically oriented approaches in psychology (Brentano, Meinong, Ehrensfeld, Külpe, Piaget, Vygotski). Its ontological starting point is unambiguous: **the world consists of different flexible structural forms**, and their corresponding **specifiable sets of conditions under which these forms become other forms**. This perspective is shared between chemistry, biology, and other natural sciences in which the structural nature of the object of investigation is an axiomatic given. Qualitative investigation is primary in all basic sciences, where quantification is used selectively as a technical tool, rather than a symbolic means for public demonstrations of being "scientific." Qualitative psychology branches off from the common ground it shares with its quantitative counterpart── the basic notion of the nominal scale── different trajectory of systemic analyses of single cases. Qualitative psychology can be productive if it reverses the tradition of methods-dominated psychology in favor of an epistemological inquiry where all parts of methodology are mutually related.

Key words

methodology, quantification, quality, systemic approach

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* 日本語要約および解説（サトウタツヤ）は p.54。

Every window must at all times hold its own against the pressure of the material

Heinrich Wölfflin (1886/1994, p.177)

Our world consists of objects that exist on their own. Psychology begins from our perception of the world, and continues with our construction of meanings that become intimately tied to these forms in our human reflection. Hence all psychology as science is dependent upon the reflection upon the whole myriad of forms—immediately perceivable or imaginable. In the case of at least the human species these forms become enmeshed in potentially infinite semiogenesis—meaning construction through signs. Such ever-fluid creation of meaningful forms sets the focus in psychology on qualitative grounds. Quantity becomes one—narrowly circumscribed—aspect of quality (Mally, 1904, chapter 2). My focus in this paper is to suggest some ways in which that unity can further our understanding of psychological phenomena, rather than take sides in the disputes about the adequacy of one or another kinds of methods.

Disuniting Psychology: Two Opposing Perspectives

Due to its own historical reasons (Benetka, 2002) our contemporary psychology is not deeply involved in the philosophical nuances of what quality and quantity mean, and how they are related. Instead, psychology creates oppositions between groups of researchers on the basis of allegiance to different kinds of methods—labeled quantitative and qualitative. As the wider repercussions of methodology (Branco & Valsiner, 1997) are downplayed, psychology's epistemological perspective becomes phrased increasingly in terms of consensually established methods and operations with the data. For instance, a major presentation on qualitative methodology explains the focus of qualitative psychology through such operations:

> Qualitative and quantitative approaches are clearly different in the principal forms of data employed in analysis. Quantitative research depends on the ability to **reduce phenomena to numerical values in order to carry out statistical analyses**. Thus while much quantitative research begins with verbal data (e.g., in the form of questionnaire responses), this **verbal material must be transformed into numbers for a quantitative analysis to be performed**. By contrast qualitative research involves collecting data in the form of verbal reports—e.g. written accounts, interview transcripts—and the **analysis then conducted on these is linguistic and textual**. Thus the concern is **with interpreting what a piece of text means** rather than finding a way of capturing it numerically.
>
> (Smith & Dunworth, 2003, p.603, added emphases)

This very realistic account of the research practices of contemporary psychology is symptomatic in its immediate acceptance of the operationalist mindset—what matters are what kinds of operations are performed with "the data", rather than—what are the data and why are they produced? No theoretical goals are mentioned—the phenomena are either "***captured*** numerically" or ***interpreted*** as to "what they mean."

The dispute between qualitative and quantitative perspectives in psychology is an artifact of the discipline's moving away from the phenomena it attempts to study (Cairns, 1986), as well as of turning existing methods into ***de facto*** theories (Gigerenzer, 1991). If these phenomena become restored in the discipline it becomes obvious that the forms of the phenomena have spatial and temporal spread that cannot be represented by numerical signs in most of the cases. This axiomatic premise resolves the opposition between numerical and interpretational data derivation as it views different kinds of data as differently fitting to represent different phenomena.

The Data as Signs

All data are signs (Valsiner, 1995, 2000a) —in the semiotic sense of that concept. These signs (data signs) stand in to both re-present theoretically relevant facets of the phenomena, and to present these aspects for further theoretical elaboration. The data are not "given" entities that exist independently of the conceptual framework that led to their construction. Instead, **the data are signs constructed out of the phenomena** on the basis of theoretical and meta-theoretical abstract constructs (Valsiner, 2000b, chapter 5). The data function in a double relationship to our knowing—on the one hand, they are subdominant to the theoretical creativity in a science, but simultaneously they dominate over that theoretical world because they establish the crucial link of that world with the empirical reality. Hence the data are a crucial part of the ever-alive process of making sense of the World—but in relation to the different stories that scientists want to create[1].

Implications of The Data-as-signs View

The semiotic view of data as signs makes it possible to address a number of issues that are crucial for construction of new ways of knowing. First, the data-as-signs view introduces the theme of relative distancing of the data from their underlying phenomena into our discourse. Such relative distancing allows the researcher to accept one's limits- no data can ever fully represent the phenomena. They do not need to, either—it is the inductively over-determined view of science as progressing through data accumulation that idealizes the massive collection of data. In contemporary qualitative orientation in psychology this may have its equivalent in the idealization of "rich descriptions" of the phenomena through ethnographic methods, creation of qualitative "data banks", and the like. A qualitative turn in the social sciences that merely replaces a quantified form of empiricism by its qualitative (ethnographic, narrative, or any other) counterpart may change a fashion in the social sciences. Yet it can not advance the knowledge of these sciences.

Secondly, issues of validity of the data become resolved in the analysis of whether the sign adequately represents those aspects of the phenomena that the researcher's theoretical orientation has highlighted. As signs, **the data are qualitative in their normal form**—quantification is but one of the possible operations for the making of data when it is theoretically substantiated (Valsiner & Diriwächter, 2005).

Different Forms of Data Signs

Data signs are of different quality—points and fields. The latter can be structured, semi-structured, or random. All of these are abstract signs that stand in for richness of original phenomena that are rich, fluid, and constantly transforming as a flow of experience. As signs, our point or field terms create a relative abstracted stability of our depiction of fuzzy real phenomena. Such signs can be constructed in terms of homogeneous point-type signs—be those graphic points, alphabetic designations, or numbers—of the nominal scale. (Figure 1)

Each of the choices preserves some selected aspect of the original phenomena—and creates a potential for further abstracted manipulation with the knowledge captured by the signs. Thus, the field-signs (A B, and C in Figure 1) preserve the spatial extension of the original phenomena (while losing the temporal one). The field nature of the signs allows for abstract depiction of the holistic nature of the phenomena (C). In contrast to the field-like data signs, the point-like signs lose both the spatial and temporal features of the original phenomena—while allowing for algebraic ("X") or quantitative ("5") transformations of the data. The use of quantifications as signs—e.g. attributing number "5" to some segment of the flow of experience (e.g. in a rating task—see further Wagoner & Valsiner, 2005) — is at first step similar to its graphic or alphabetic (categorical—"X") depiction. The adequacy of

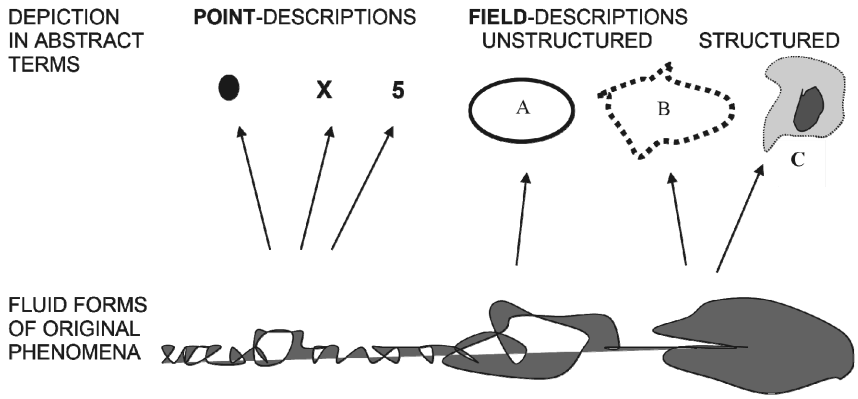


Figure 1 Theoretical terms (data signs)—point or field kind—used to represent the fluidity of phenomena (modified from Valsiner & Diriwächter, 2005)

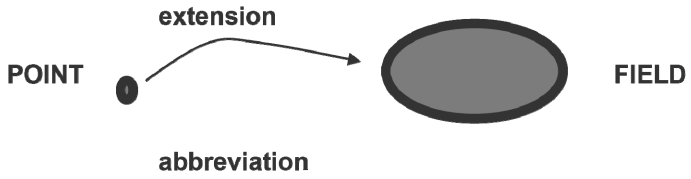


Figure 2 Transformation between point- and field-type signs.

either depends upon which aspects of the phenomena are highlighted for further knowledge construction. Some categorical signs ("This is X" kind) are used as a shorthand for field-like signs (e.g., "the person ***is in grief***", "***sorrow*** has overtaken him")

It is also easy to see how the point-like signs are a special case of field-like signs. They can be viewed as abbreviated forms of the latter (see Figure 2). Processes of abbreviation are of central importance in human psychological functioning (Lyra, 1999), and signs are semiotic vehicles for human ***psyche***—including that of the thinking social scientists.

As is obvious, each of the routes taken for abstractive extraction of data from the phenomena entails selective retention of some features of the original together with the loss of others. Making of data as signs entails abstractive generalization—some features of the phenomena become lost in that process, while others become highlighted through the abstraction process. What is being gained by abstraction is the set of possible further operations with the data—which can be of epistemological value if the theoretical system they are in give them meaning. Thus, the data of any kind—qualitative or quantitative alike—are selective, abstracted representations of those sides of the phenomena that is of interest for the particular researcher.

Historical Roots: Psychology as Qualitative Science

For anybody well versed in the history of psychology it is only natural that the target phenomena of the discipline are axiomatically viewed as qualitative, and quantification might be

acceptable as an elective operation of purely technical nature. Both intra-psychological phenomena (feelings, thinking, etc.) and extra-personally observable parts of human life (behavior, conduct) are best described by reference to their forms. Early psychology as it became established in the European context recognized that well (Benetka, 2002).

It has become customary to date the emergence of psychology by an administrative event—the 1879 opening of Wundt's laboratory in Leipzig. That conventional description shows the crucial overlook of much of actual history of psychology—both in administrative terms (the very first psychology-name-bearing professorship was established in Bern in 1860—Diriwächter, 2004), and it terms of substance. In the latter case, the year 1874 could be a more appropriate milestone.

In 1874, two major books that framed much of the later development of the discipline. The one that has been better known is Wilhelm Wundt's ***Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie***. Yet the other—Franz Brentano's ***Psychology from an empirical standpoint*** (Brentano, 1995) was of similar importance. From Brentano the historical links of ideas led to Alexius Meinong at Graz, Edmund Husserl, and Carl Stumpf. Christian von Ehrenfels led the formulation of Gestalt perspectives in the 1890s, influentially both in the Northern German (Kant-dominated) and Austrian contexts.

The Graz tradition of production of psychological configurations entailed the active role of the agent (Albertazzi, 2001) —similarly to *Ganzheitspsychologie* in Leipzig (Diriwächter, 2003). That active role entailed the act of production—the subjective mental activities that create the presentation (***Vorstellung***). This creativity leads to the creation objects (***Gegenstände***) of higher-order. The substantive focus on the content of human psychological activity was another feature characteristic of the "Graz School" (Marek, 2001).

Although the relevance of the Meinong tradition has been rarely emphasized in later re-writing of the history of psychology, it has had its branching influence through the role of the "Würzburg School" of Oswald Külpe and Karl Bühler (Kusch, 1999; Lindenfeld, 1972; Valsiner 1998a) and the latter's colleague Heinz Werner (Valsiner, 2005) with focus on thinking processes and the role of language. The "Graz tradition" has had also a direct impact on the psychology of second half of the 20th century through the work of Fritz Heider (Baumgarten, 2001). The crucial impetus of the "Graz tradition" for psychology is its profoundly qualitative orientation—which of course is not surprising in the case of phenomenological and philosophical—yet empirically extended—tradition. Quantification was used in Graz (cf. Benussi, 1904, 1913) as a means for demonstration of qualitatively relevant experimental interventions (Mally, 1904). It remained equally secondary to qualitative (structural) analysis of psychological functions in other prominent directions of science in the 20th century—that of the efforts to construct a "genetic logic" (Baldwin, 1906) and fill it with relevant empirical work on the development of human mental processes (Piaget, 1922, 1970). Most crucially, building upon the quick development of psychology in the 1920s, Lev Vygotski's cultural-historical perspective was decidedly qualitative in its focus (van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991; Vygotsky, 1971).

All of these historical predecessors to our contemporary renewed interest in qualitative psychology had one major common feature—they all accepted the multi-level hierarchies of qualitatively different organizational forms of psychological functions. They emphasized the need to consider the organization of the whole—through the relations of the parts that make up such wholes. Hierarchical organization is a form of heterogeneity of phenomena of various levels of regulation.

In the beginning of the 21st century, the re-invention of qualitative psychology has to face the impacts of the ideology of "naïve equality" that has come to prominence in the social sciences. Hierarchies of social order are shunned upon, and eliminated. The structure of real social and psychological structures is emulated into formal models of immersion of the person in the socio-cultural environments. As a result, psychology as a discipline may lose the centrality of the person—the agent in any action, and the one who creates the interpretations of the world.

Figure 3 The emergence of a form.

Flexible Structural Forms: The Key to Qualitative Theorizing

All of our experiences as human beings are with forms—spatial and spatio-temporal configurations. First and foremost—the bearers of our experiencing—that is, ourselves—are capable of them because of our own species-specific bodily configurations. The specific forms of our sensory systems afford our experiences.

The forms are guaranteed by the co-genetic nature of the work of our psychological processes (Herbst, 1995). A perceived form emerges as a result of making a distinction (Figure 3).

Together with the drawing of a line its context (non-line) creates the form of the given line, and the form is emerging. A finished contour—emerged form—creates the triplet {<inside> <boundary> <outside>}.

The co-emergence of parts as the whole is created operates similarly within the domain of meanings:

> For suppose we say "I am hungry." Can we separate the "I" from the "hungry" and then put them together again? Or, if we have a wife and a husband, do we first and independently have a wife and a husband, and then link them together by marriage?
>
> (Herbst, 1995, p.69)

Form emerges also without the actual contours being drawn or detected, as in the following classic case (Figure 4). The various ways in which the dots in the figure can be connected leads to emergence of forms—some of which are visual illusions (e.g., the Müller-Lyer illusion).

Our psychological systems can generate many perceptual forms in the relating with the world. Some of the forms we create by our mental synthesis provide us with conceptual puzzles—like the impossibility of the "round square" or the metaphoric irreality of "the golden mountain" (Meinong, 1907, pp.14-16).

All human psychological adaptation takes place in irreversible time that sets up constraints upon the making of forms. All forms—both static and dynamic—are forms in motion. The human psychological system integrates different events encountered at any present moment into a form that transcends that moment, and unites the past and the future (Benussi, 1913). Hence, forms are time—gestalts—and the most fitting everyday example of forms is that of a melody—be this in the form of rhythmically moving bodies (dance), illusions of movement of stationary dots (the Phi-phenomenon), classical or rap music (Abbey & Davis, 2003), or language (Wildgen, 2004).

Musical forms have been the core phenomenon for developing psychology at the end of the 19th and beginning of 20th century (Ash, 1995). They served as the basis phenomenon for the development of the idea of transposable wholes—configurations of various orders of generality (Ehrenfels, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c; Smith, 1988). A melody is possible only if it becomes unified across the irreversible time—thus requiring configurational memory:

> …in order to apprehend a melody, it is not sufficient to have in one's consciousness at each stage the impression of the note that is then sounding. Rather—leaving aside the

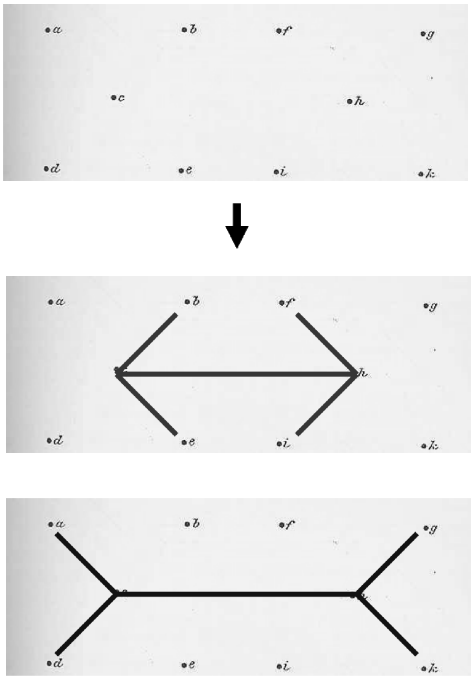


Figure 4 Gestalt formation base. (from Benussi, 1904, p.305, with added in-drawings)

> initial tone—the impression of at least some of the preceding tomes must also be given in memory. Otherwise the concluding impression of all melodies having an identical final note would be the same.
>
> (Ehrenfels, 1988a, p.84)

That configurational temporal memory is a generalizing one—allowing for "filling in" missing notes and transposing the melody across keys. Thus human psychological functioning takes place at the level of generalized Gestalt qualities—flexible configurations of intermediate abstractness that may change their location, exchange particular elements within the whole, and be only partially available in perception.

As patterns of generalized kind, Gestalt qualities are the basis for innovation. The process of completion of the Gestalt is always open-ended (as the person faces the uncertainty of the impending future) and hence calls for "free generation by the creative activity of imagination" (Ehrenfels, 1988a, p.109)[2]. The result of such creativity was the recognition of emergence of Gestalt qualities of "higher order"—new qualities that may defy description in verbal terms, yet operate precisely in our relations with our environments. Thus, we may recognize the composer of a melody we hear for the first time—obviously by way of some generalized image of the similarity of the new tunes with others we have heard before. Yet we cannot explain how we succeeded in doing it.

Together with the emergence of qualitatively higher forms of Gestalten comes the question of their maintenance, and dissipation. The hierarchy of Gestalt qualities could be tested by how they preserve interventions that might eliminate them—how enduring are the particular level of Gestalt qualities:

> A rose is a Gestalt of higher level than a heap

> of sand: this we recognize just as immediately as that red is fuller, more lively color than grey. … For a fixed degree of multiplicity of parts, those Gestalten are the higher which embrace a greater multiplicity of parts…. One imagines the given Gestalten (a rose, a heap of sand) to be subject to gradual, accidental and irregular interventions. Whichever of the two Gestalten thereby survives the wider spectrum of changes of the higher level.
>
> (Ehrenfels, 1988b, p.118)

The resistance to dissipation is thus the proof of the higher order nature of Gestalt qualities. This idea is in line with the notion of **flexible nature of forms**—all organismic forms exist as inherently transforming themselves, or as adaptable to external demands. Both the flexibility of forms and the hierarchical nature of Gestalt qualities set up the basis for qualitative methodology in psychology.

Thinking of Forms and Their Relationships

We have established by now that any object of psychological sciences is qualitative at its detection (or inception), and may become quantifiable only under strictly set limits. This focus on the operation of quantification as a special case of qualitative-psychological analysis needs further specification.

Let us consider a set of abstract forms (A):

(A) { ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ }

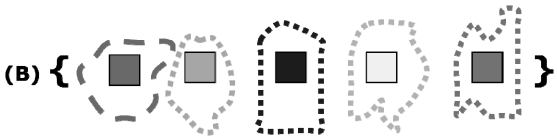
All of these forms in series A are specimens of a homogeneous class, and are rigid in their ontological state. It is not difficult to assign a category label ("square") to them. The number of such specimens can be counted, their height and width can be compared to some length standard—"measured" in some units. Each square has quantifiable properties (Mally, 1904) — dimensions of "width" and "height". Yet note that their quality attributed by way of class membership ("squares"→a each square entails "squareness" in it), nor their quantitative measurement of "each square is X mm wide and X mm high") tells us anything about

(a) how these squares were generated,
(b) how they function in their environment (in fact they are abstracted from any form of environment); and
(c) how they may be related with one another (that possibility is also ruled out from the act of class formation).

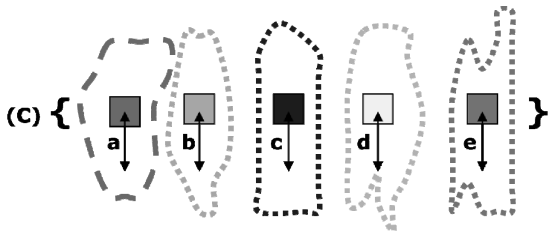
Since (a) is unknown, we need to assume that these squares resulted from some version of sampling from some "population" of squares, by the criterion of their form-quality ("squares" rather than "triangles"). In any sampling of this kind there is no trace of the history of the contact of the researcher and the past history of the objects (Sato, Yasuda & Kido, 2004). This limitation may be sufficient for our research on these squares only if the crucial features of their existence are strictly limited to the sampled internal character of the objects.

The rigid forms in (A) are also freed from their immediate environmental contexts (b). Since psychological phenomena are—by axiomatic acceptance of them as open systems (Valsiner, 1997, 1998b) —the elimination of the environmental information of the phenomena in the data set (A) eliminates from the outset the possibility of studying the relations of each specimen with its environment. It is at this junction of our analysis where we need to agree with Wittgenstein's (1958, p.232) sharp remark, made half a century ago, that in psychology "problem and method pass one another by."

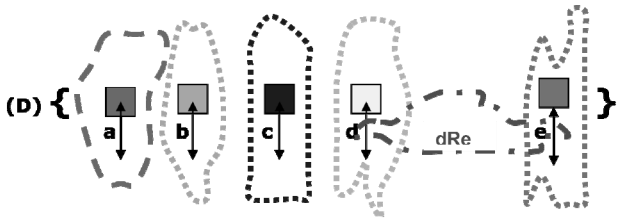
Yet these problems can be fixed—by sampling the specimens together with their contextual surroundings as in Sample (B):



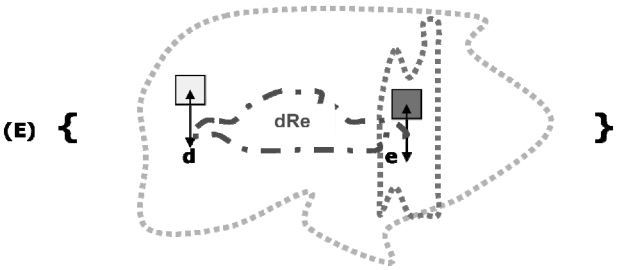
While the environmental links have been preserved in this set, these are not specified in the description. If we needed that relation, we need to re-draw the set in the way (C).



Even in C, where the focus is on particular relationships (a,b,c,d,e), the information about how the different specimens may be related with one another is not available. Different specimens are assumed not to be related in the first place (i.e., the assumption that makes the notion of sampling—of specimens, or of individual relations specimen<RELATED WITH> environment—possible). So, if we do assume that at least one of the specimens is linked with at least one another, we need to know that as a crucial part of our—pointedly non-random—sampling. Scheme D gives the picture of such case.



Picture (D) depicts merely the interwoven relation between the relations with our environments between two systems (d, e). So what we depict here is **relationship of the relations**. In human psychological phenomena such interwoven nature of person-environment relations is a given—the very moment we accept the assumption of the sociogenetic nature of human psychological functions (Valsiner & van der Veer, 2000). Parents relate with the same home conditions that their children do—and each person is simultaneously an active agent in such relation, and a part of the environment for the others. The relations of the powerful to their environments are dependent upon those of the powerless—or, more precisely, the power of either depends upon that relationship (Meigs, 1990 on male/female power circularity). And—human beings make up an imaginary "social other" who is projected into one's environment—and treated as an agent whose environment the creator of the "social other" inhabits. The person invents a deity to whom omnipotence is projected—and hence the person becomes the "servant" to the deity—yet the deity is but the person's mental construction (Valsiner, 1999). Our example of the relation of the relations (dRe in C) obtains a new structural form (E):



In case E we see a **unilateral takeover** by the environment of one of the specimens of **all** of the environment of the other. The result is the "framing" of the relationship **dRe** by that unilaterally set-up encompassing of the environments. The relationship is set up in ways that is guided by meta-communicative framing (Branco & Valsiner, 2004). Whatever (e) does—in one's "life space" (Lewin, 1943) —is guided and provided meaning for by (d) by the mere fact of unilateral take-over of the environment.

Examples of such relations abound in human societies. Any ideology, religion, fashion, or political creed is oriented towards "capturing" the full "life space" of persons, hoping to make them **dependently independent** (Valsiner, 1984). Dependent independence is a form of independence (in the façade) behind which the social world of the persons guides their

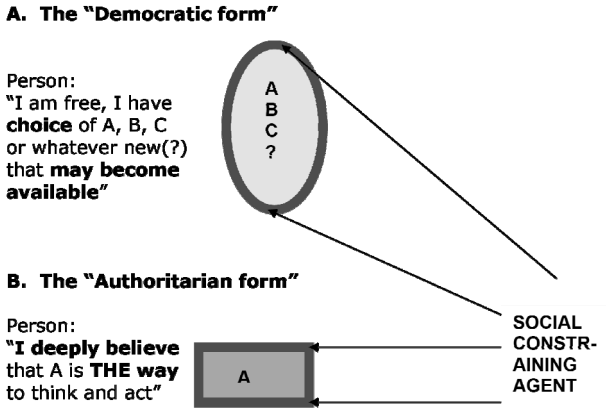


Figure 5 The "Democratic form"

independence into a socially acceptable **range** (=dependency). Since it is a range of possible independent actions—even to be seen as fiercely opposed to one another—the illusion of their independence is the first observable feature for an external observer (Figure 5). The contrast between the two forms given in Figure 5 is an elaboration of the general example of transformation of forms given in Figure 2 above. It also elaborates the ways in which selection of research participants proceeds in cultural psychology (Valsiner, 2003, especially Figure 2) where the interdependence of the person with multiple social institutions is valued.

A careful consideration of Figure 5 renders many of our usual opposites that seem to be observational givens ("individualism" versus "collectivism", "restrictive parenting" versus "Laissez-faire parenting") to be but versions the same—albeit flexible—form. What matters for making sense of that generic form is the set of conditions under which the two opposite specimens are examples of the same system. The **social forms we can observe are flexible**—they can transform into one another, adjust to new conditions within the system that generates those (and others—that have not yet been observed—van Geert, 1998).

Psychological phenomena form heterogeneous classes (Valsiner, 2000b) because of the constant needs for pre-adaptation to new circumstances. The result is reliance upon flexibility of the means for such adaptation—quick change of the meaning complexes, flexibility of action schemes, and speedy re-alignments in social coalitions. Rituals that seem well established become constantly re-constituted (Köpping, 1999), and communicative messages re-interpreted. What we seem to take as irreconcilable opposites may become two extreme states of a mutually transforming form.

Such mutual transformability of psychological structures makes it rather difficult to "capture" by way of any fixed sign—be it a number, a category label, or a graphic node (see Figure 1, above). Field-like signs afford the description of the plasticity of the structures. Yet the crucial feature that psychology is to understand is the **emergence of new qualitative order** out of the dynamics of the existing ones.

Hierarchical Structures: The Question of Synthesis

The whole issue of investigation of qualitative kind is that of the study of various versions of structural transpositions—from one context to another, and from one form of a structure to an altered (developed—progressed or regressed) form. The unit of analysis is systemic—in ways that allows for emergence of new quality under specifiable circumstances.

Lev Vygotsky formulated the dialectical systemic unit of analysis:

> Psychology, as it desires to study complex wholes… needs to change the methods of analysis into elements by the analytic method that reveals the parts of the unit [literally: breaks the whole into linked units— *metod… analiza, ...**razchleniayushego** na edinitsy*]. It has to find the further undividable, surviving features that are characteristic of the given whole as a unity— **units within which in mutually opposing ways these features are represented** [*Russian: edinitsy, v kotorykh **v protivopolozhnom vide** predstavleny eti svoistva*][3]
>
> (Vygotsky, 1982, p.16)

Since the 1870s the leading metaphor used to explain the need to consider different qualities at different analytic levels has been the contrast between water (H_2O) and its components (oxygen and hydrogen). As Kinji Imanishi (2002/1941, p.22) remarked, "…it is nonsense to explain why birds fly and fish swim in terms of cells which cannot fly or swim." The explanation can come from an organizational level that synthesizes the work of cells—some form of network of cells in the nervous system, catering for the swimming and flying. Yet such network includes cells as parts.

The focus on synthesis makes the qualitative investigation operate at the level of single cases—any specific episode where a new—previously unencountered—form is observed to come into existence is by definition a single case. It is the systemic re-composing operation that allows qualitative psychology to study the single case. The quantitative direction—by its axiomatic dependence upon recurrence of similar cases and their homogenization (as similar cases, "specimens of X") is conceptually blind to the study of single episodes of psychological phenomena.

Two Pathways to Generalized Knowledge

It can be argued that there are two trajectories to generalized knowledge in the social sciences. One is built on the assumption of repetition of the same classes of events—even if these classes comprise fuzzy sets—and allows therefore quantification as an operation of turning phenomena into data. The other builds on the assumption of uniqueness of events—hence the principles by which the unique events occur may be universal, but the events themselves are not. This perspective leads to the systemic analysis of the events.

These two trajectories have the same goal—knowledge about the phenomena. That generalized knowledge is itself qualitative—and systemic. The results of quantification of the data that begin from some qualitative description (nominal scale) end up—after one or another kind of quantitative operations—making sense of the phenomena in terms of **qualitative** generalizations. Thus—our knowing may move through quantificational operations in order to arrive at a qualitative abstraction about the issues we want to understand.

Recently, Laird (2004) has pointed out that all four measurement scales in the social sciences—nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio scales—can be ordered into one ascending developmental sequence that raises from the one with least axiomatic restrictions—the nominal scale. He also points out that the weakness of the qualitative perspectives in psychology is the underdevelopment of the formal inference techniques—while the quantitative perspective has varied ways of analyzing data at the ordinal, interval, and ratio scale levels.

In Figure 6 the two trajectories to knowledge construction are provided. The upper trajectory is the ascending "developmental staircase" model that Laird has posited. Its internal logic requires the detection of categories, treating them as represented by quanta, and accumulating them before the data can be analyzed. The lower trajectory is that of qualitative analogs of the others. It operates as a step-wise elaboration of the systemic organization of the nominal scale (detected) representation of the phenomena. Its operation follows the rule of "first analyze—then

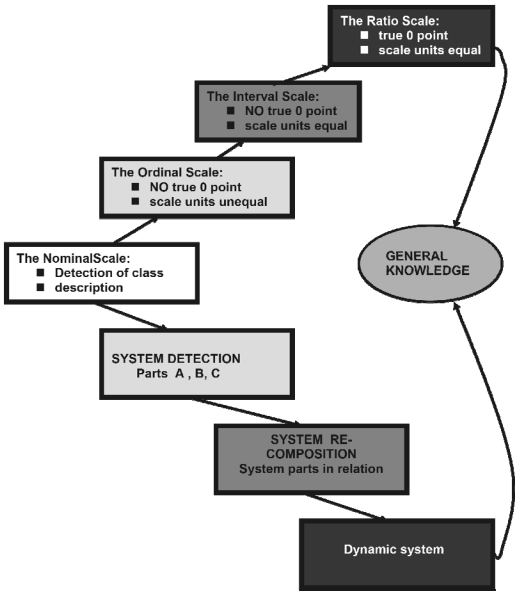


Figure 6 The quantitative and qualitative trajectories in knowledge construction.

aggregate" (Thorngate, 1986). First the systemic operation of each individual data sign needs to be elaborated, and only later does it become relevant to accumulate the data.

Both of the two trajectories are supposed to end in the same result—new qualitative abstract knowledge of the phenomena. Both trajectories involve analysis and synthesis of knowledge—albeit in different ways. These differences cannot—and need not—be reconciled in the middle stages of the two trajectories—only in the beginning (agreement upon the nominal scale data) and at the end (abstract generalization).

How do researches in their practice elect to proceed to the same outcome (general knowledge) through these different trajectories? Their choices are—in the ideal version of "vertical consistency" in their methodological thinking (Branco & Valsiner, 1997) guided by the estimation of fit between theoretical perspectives they take, and the nature of the phenomena.

Dependent independence of sciences.

A science—like any other area of social life—is open to social guidance by prevailing social representations. As a social interest group (scientific community) it negotiates its role and conditions of work within the given social context—be it a time of war, or peace, a time of economic expansion or constriction, or a time for joining in with corporations in their "gold rushes".

The social negotiations involved are based on meta-signs—meanings that frame the values of science. For example, the superimposition of the **OBJECTIVE** ("hard", "precise") **<versus> SUBJECTIVE** ("soft", "anecdotal") oppositional social representation over the quantitative < > qualitative psychologies (as two trajectories to the same end) sets up the field of social values for creating new research perspectives in ways that prioritize the quantitative perspective as "objective", "precise", and "hard". Nothing can be further from reality[5]—but in the social construction of the role of a science within the socio-historical context of a society that does not matter. In the social discourse about science we

can see the process of canalization of what kind of knowledge is socially legitimate to create and how it is expected to be usable by the social institutions. In the Middle Ages, that social legitimization of different kinds of knowledge was the privilege of the rulers—and needed little if any public discussion. In our time of proliferation of the public discourse about what science can do "for the society" the openness of this social canalization to overwhelming field-like evaluative signs[6] is enhanced. The result might not be greater "social accountability" of the sciences (which, by their nature of working on the forefront of knowledge, necessarily include perspectives and directions of little usefulness), but rather—mass media-amplified pre-emptive selection of the research directions that are in the interests of the given social institution (government agency or corporation). The ritualistic form of announcing new scientific discoveries at press conferences to the media **before** these results have been published in scientific communication media[7] indicates that the emergence of new forms of social regulation of sciences. The fate of the public role of qualitative psychology of course stays inescapably within the frame of these social negotiation processes. Yet the conceptual core of qualitative psychology cannot be made hostage to such orchestrated "public hearings" but needs to follow from the internal consistency of researchers' scientific—as contrasted with public—thinking.

General conclusions

Qualitative psychology is becoming increasingly popular, as many new treatises and discussions by many fascinated (by richness of its promises) or disillusioned (in traditional psychology) researchers indicate (Mey, 2004; Murray & Chamberlain, 1999; Smith, Harre & van Langenhoeve, 1995). From my standpoint as is evident from the coverage above, this new development in the social sciences is a blessing in disguise. On the one hand, it does open the opportunities for innovative ways of developing new approaches to complex psychological issues that were not approachable since the avalanche of "the Empire of Chance" (see Gigerenzer et al, 1989) in the social sciences. On the other side, however, it runs the risk of being "managed" by the social regulatory system of the sciences-in-societies that can easily make the new opportunity into a regular practice of mindless accumulation of "good qualitative data"—to replace the presently prevailing practice of equally mindless accumulation of "good quantitative data". The issue at stake is not the kind of data either perspective generates, but the **focus on discovery** (rather that socially positioned interpretations—see Kleining & Witt, 2001) of the whole discipline.

When the focus is on discovery, there is no difference between the natural and social sciences. Looking at qualitative psychology it becomes clear that its commitment to the structural-dynamic trajectory outlined above is similar to other sciences. Qualitative investigation is primary in all basic sciences, where quantification is used selectively as a technical tool, rather than a symbolic means for public demonstrations of being "scientific." There is no ideological separation of quantitative and qualitative perspectives—the kind of mathematical systems that fit either are applied in accordance with the research questions.

In this paper I have outlined the substantive complementary nature of the two perspectives. Qualitative psychology branches off from the common ground it shares with its quantitative counterpart—the basic notion of the nominal scale—on a different trajectory of systemic analyses of single cases.

Our contemporary move towards qualitative psychology can be productive in a way that may be somewhat unexpected. It may—because of its facing of complex conceptual challenges—reverse the tradition of methods domination in psychology. The question of what kind of data represent the theoretically relevant features of the phenomena brings back the centrality of theoretical, abstract thought. The realities of feeling, thinking, acting, and suffering in human lives deserve to be understood in terms of basic science.

Notes

1. Recent work in the area of sociology of science practices has revealed most crucial differences between disciplines in their ways of linking the making of the data with the knowledge advancement enterprise (see Knorr Cetina, 1999, for elaborate accounts). All scientific discourse about the role of the data is filled with a tension that emanates from its abductive nature—aside from breakthroughs in our thinking we also get fights between deductively-based and inductively-oriented researchers (see Brush, 1996 on accusations against Mendeleev for bringing alchemy to chemistry under the label of theory).
2. Aside from leading to different holistic perspectives in psychology of the 20th century, Ehrenfels' notion of Gestalt quality set the stage for considering the processes of development in the psychological domain:

> "Psychic combinations never repeat themselves with complete exactness. Every temporal instant of every one of the numberless unities of consciousness therefore possesses its own peculiar quality, its individuality, which sinks, unrepeatable and irreplaceable, into the bosom of the past, while at the same time the new creations of the present step in to take its place." (Ehrenfels, 1988a, p. 116)

3. It is important to note that the intricate link with the dialectical dynamics of the units—which is present in the Russian original—is lost in English translation, which briefly stated the main point: "Psychology, which aims at a study of complex holistic systems, must replace the method of analysis into elements with the method of analysis into units" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 5).
4. This metaphor has been used in scientific discourse at least since 1872—when J. S. Mill used it in his Logic (p. 371): "Not a trace of the properties of hydrogen or of oxygen is observable in those of their compound, water." —R. Keith Sawyer, personal communication, February, 20, 2002.
5. The belief in the "objectivity of numbers" in ways separate from what the numbers mean (their sign function) has been disputed long before psychology emerged as a separate discipline in the 1870s. That dispute was an outgrowth of social disputes about the role of individuals in society, and of society's administrative control of individuals (cf. Porter, 1986, chapter 6). Quantitative data are as "objective" as public accounting records (Porter, 1992), and their presumed "precision" is an example of social construction of value out of consensual images (see Kuiken & Miall, 2001, paragraph 6).
6. Examples of such vulnerability of sciences to such hyper-complexes of value-laden meanings used in the discourse abound: current disputes in the US about evolution, stem cell research, and the wide use of social regulation of what social scientists can do through the "human ethics committees" ("internal review boards" carry function similar in former USSR in the 1930s in stigmatizing "bourgeois science" and getting rid of genetics and psychology through that for a number of decades.
7. or—the pre—view of what will be published next week in a medical journal can be known to wide readers on the web, or in a local newspaper, this week.

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解　説　　**サトウタツヤ**

タイトルの日本語訳

柔軟な形式とその変化様式
――質的心理学の出発点

（人間の経験や環境の形式は柔軟なのであり，その変化・変動・変換を扱うことが質的心理学の出発点なのである）

要約の日本語訳

質的心理学はその心理的現象の理解を，心理学にお

ける現象学志向アプローチ（ブレンターノ，マイノング，エーレンフェルス，キュルペ，ピアジェ，ヴィゴツキー）の上に築いている。質的心理学の存在論的出発点は以下のように明確である。世界が，いくつかの互いに異なる柔軟な構造的な形式，及び，それに対応して，その形式が他の形式に変容していく際の特定可能な条件とから成り立つのだということである。こうしたパースペクティブ（ものの見方）は，研究対象の構造的性質が公理的に与えられているところの，化学，生物学，及び他の自然科学とも共有されている。質的調査は全ての基礎科学において第一義的に重要である。これらの基礎科学において量化（の手法）は使われるが，それは「科学」的であることを公衆の面前に提示するための象徴的手段などではなく，技術的な道具として意図的に用いられるものである。質的心理学は，量的な心理学との共通土壌から分岐してきた。名義尺度という基本的な概念がまさに，研究者が単一事例のシステム的分析（systemic analysis）というもう一つの筋道を進むことを可能にしているのである。質的心理学は，方法に支配されている心理学の伝統を逆転させ，心理学方法論における全てのパートがお互いに関連づくような認識論的な探究を進むようになるならば，生産的になりうるだろう。

解　説

この論文は，クラーク大学教授ヤーン・ヴァルシナー（Jaan Valsiner）氏（以下敬称略）によって第 1 回日本質的心理学会（京都大学：2004 年 9 月）で発表されたものである。氏は 1951 年エストニア生まれで，ノース・カロライナ大学を経て 1997 年から現職。文化心理学，発達心理学の世界的理論家の一人であり，『カルチャー・アンド・サイコロジー（Culture and Psychology）』主幹を務める。本職のほか，集中講義や学会などで世界中を飛び回っているが，日本を含むアジア地域にはその食文化を含め特に親和性を感じているようである。

さて，氏は歴史的知識を駆使して質的心理学の意義を説き，その理論化を促進しているため，その内容は心理学に不慣れな読者にとっては難解である点は否めない。そこで，論文内容について若干の解説をしておきたい（以下敬称略）。なお，タイトルの訳は直訳では「変換（transformation）と柔軟な形式：質的心理学の出発点」ということになるが，内容からすると「人間の経験や環境の形式は柔軟なのであり，その変化・変動・変換を扱うことが質的心理学の出発点である」というような意味であろう。日本語訳も「柔軟な形式とその変化様式」としておいた。

ヴァルシナー（Valsiner, J.）は，質的心理学の起源を歴史的に検討するのを常としている。ここでは，ブレンターノの現象学的アプローチにその起源を求め，さらにマイノング，エーレンフェルス，キュルペ，ピアジェ，ヴィゴツキー，といった学者達の仕事を心理学における現象学的アプローチとして捉え，質的心理学の基盤であるとする。ブレンターノはヴントと同時代の哲学者で，経験的心理学などを唱え心理学の近代化を推し進めようとした人である。しかし，ヴントたちの実験心理学の方法による意識の理解では，意識の志向性が捉えられないと批判して，哲学における現象学の発端の一人ともなった人である（現象学はブレンターノの弟子・フッサールによって大いに発展する）。マイノングも同時代の哲学者であり，弟子のエーレンフェルスは音楽研究を行いメロディーは単なる音の集まりではない新しい何かであるとして「ゲシュタルト質」という概念を提出し，ゲシュタルト心理学の源流となった人である。キュルペはヴュルツブルグ学派の創始者。やはりブレンターノの考えに共感し，被験者には問題解決に向かう構えが生じるということを提唱した。ヴュルツブルグ学派にはカール・ビューラーがおり，その同僚としてのウェルナーへと連なっていく。

奇しくも同じ年（1896）に生まれたピアジェとヴィゴツキーは，ブレンターノたちよりは後の世代に属しており，ドイツとは異なる地で発達という現象から心理学を展開しようとしたことにおいて共通点を見いだせる。ピアジェはスイスの心理学者で認知発達に興味をもち，独自の実験を工夫して丁寧な実験的観察を行い発生的認識論を提唱。彼は人間の知識を構造とその変化という観点から検討し，構造主義のラインにも連なっている。ヴィゴツキーはロシアの心理学者で文化的歴史的アプローチの祖とも言

え，発達の最近接領域という概念で有名である。

このように見てみるとヴァルシナーがどのような歴史的文脈の上に質的心理学をおこうとしているのかがわかるだろう。心理学が対象とする精神機能について，その全体性を捉えること，その構造（形式，または，かたち）を捉えること，そしてその変容の様（さま）を捉えること，が重視されるのであり，そこにおいて現象は量的にではなく質的に把握されるべきなのである。

ヴァルシナーは，質的心理学の考え方の基本として「形式」と「構造」をあげる。だだし，ここでいう構造は柔軟で変化するものである。彼が構造の変容を重視することは論文タイトルからも分かる。そして，構造が変化する際には，その変化を導く（あるいは媒介する）ような条件があるとする。彼が用いる systemic という語は systematic と混同されやすいが，systemic analysis と言った場合には，「対象をシステムとして分析する」というような意味である。こうした見方は，化学や生物学など他の自然科学にも見られるものである。たとえば光合成のシステムなどを思い出してみてほしい。日光を受け，二酸化炭素を取り入れ，栄養を作り出し，酸素を排出する，というようなシステムとして対象を分析していくべきだという考え方は，人間を単体として捉えその内部のみを細かく見ていこうという考え方とは異なる。

質的調査は全ての基礎科学において第一義的に重要だとヴァルシナーは言うがそれはどのような意味かといえば，観察や観察データの質的分析が重要だということであろう。よく誤解されることであるが，科学を科学たらしめているのは実験ではなく，観察である。観察の精度向上が科学の内容を更新してきたのである。実験は対象を実験者の手中に収められるときに最善の観察を行う手続きのことであり，実験をすれば「科学的」を装えるというようなものではないのである。心理学の歴史をひもとくなら，心理学はどちらかというと，量化することで発展を遂げてきたと言える。このことは争えない。

データは記号だとヴァルシナーは言う。現象そのものではなく記号なのだ，と。現象の記号化はいろいろあるが，記号化の過程それ自体は質的なものである。実験や質問紙のデータを数字に変換するということは「量化」と呼ばれるが，その量化自体は質的な変換なのである。対象とする現象を何らかの形でカテゴリーにすることなしには，数値化はできないのである。データは記号である，と考えることは量化する心理学と質的心理学に共通な基盤があることを気づかせてくれるのである。

質的心理学は量的（心理学）と共通土壌をもっているし，論文中の Figure 6 のように名義尺度という基本的な考え方を扇の中心におくなら，上に向かう軌跡（trajectory）と同様に下に向かう軌跡を描くことができる。前者は，名義尺度（Nominal Scale）から順序尺度（Ordinal Scale），間隔尺度（Interval Scale），比例尺度（Ratio Scale），という尺度水準の展開であるが，それと同様に，名義尺度から出発して，システム精査（部分の同定）→システム再構築（部分間の関係の同定）→ダイナミックシステム，という展開をすることで一般的知識へ向かう道筋をつけるのである。このような方法論の明確化によって，単一事例研究が一般的知識を生み出すことを理論的に援護できるのである。

ヴァルシナーは最後に，心理学は方法に束縛されてはならず，むしろ，解くべき重要な問いをたてて，そのために必要な方法を総動員するようにすべきであるとする。そのことが心理学を生産的なものにするのだ，と言うが，このことは心理学のみにあてはまることではない。看護・福祉・教育その他の人間生活に関する学範（ディシプリン）は客観的普遍的知識を求めることに忙しく，質的研究の方法論を許容することが難しかった。心理学同様，こうした分野でも，方法に束縛されないで人間理解を進めることが，それぞれの分野の研究を生産的かつ意味のあるものにするだろう。

2004 年 12 月，ヴァルシナーから『インターナショナル・ジャーナル・オブ・イディオグラフィック・サイエンス（International Journal of Idiographic Science）』を創刊するという知らせがきた。

この雑誌の目的は，事例の質的研究から一般的総合的な知識を構築していくということにあり，国際的な学者（心理学のみならず人類学や教育学など多

数）が賛同している。今回新たに「イディオグラフィック・サイエンス（Idiographic Science）」という名称を旗印にしており，ここでは個性記述的科学と訳出するが，その定義は以下のようである。

個性記述的科学は，複数の単一事例の質的及び量的な調査を通して総合的な知識を構築する領域である。これらの諸事例はシステムとして取り扱われ，時間的なありかた（オーダー）の観点から分析される。「単一事例のシステム的な機構（体制）」と「時間」の双方に焦点をあてることで，個性記述的科学は諸システムの機能的な歴史に焦点を合わせることになるのである。

こうした流れと本誌『質的心理学研究』も共同歩調をとっていきたいものである。