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The Psychology of Worldviews

Toward a Non-Reductive Science of Personality

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2013

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):
Nilsson, A. (2013). *The Psychology of Worldviews: Toward a Non-Reductive Science of Personality*. [Doctoral Thesis (compilation), Department of Psychology]. Lund University.

Total number of authors:
1

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The Psychology of Worldviews

Toward a Non-Reductive Science of Personality



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Artur Nilsson



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Social Sciences Faculty, Department of Psychology
ISBN 978-91-7473-553-6

Printed in Sweden by Media-Tryck, Lund University
Lund 2013

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Abstract

Persons are not just mechanical systems of instinctual animalistic proclivities, but also language-producing, existentially aware creatures, whose experiences and actions are drenched in subjective meaning. To understand a human being as a person is to understand him or her as a rational system that wants, fears, hopes, believes, and in other ways imbues the world with meaning, rather than just a mechanical system that is subject to the same chains of cause and effect as other animals. But contemporary personality psychology has, to a great extent, focused on the behavioral side of personality, while neglecting its meaning side, failing to realize that subjective meanings are part of the very constitution rather than just causes of personality. My overarching purpose with this dissertation is, consequently, to contribute to the establishment of a genuinely non-reductive science of personality that systematically studies the systems of meaning that comprise a person's worldview in their own right, as sources of meaning in personality. I both establish conceptual and theoretical foundations for the psychology of worldviews and present empirical research on worldviews.

The conceptual and theoretical issues are addressed in the introductory chapters and the first paper. I begin by explicating a non-reductive realist philosophy of personality that steers between reductionism and social constructionism, and by suggesting that we need a more coherent understanding of personality and a richer study of it, rather than a radically new methodology. I continue by discussing the limitations of, and conceptual issues with, previous approaches to personality, and by outlining the conceptual foundations for a psychology of worldviews to remediate their weaknesses, demarcating worldview constructs as referring to presuppositions, concepts, and narrative scripts that, by working as the substrata, or background, for intentional thought, feeling, and action, form the most central sources of meaning. I continue by discussing the structure and dynamics of worldviews in terms of the relationship between innate meaning-making mechanisms and the universal features of the existential condition that they address. I conclude the introductory chapters by describing the background of the empirical research and by discussing limitations with the present thesis and directions for future theory and research. I continue, in the first paper, to argue that the study of traits (objective behavioral regularities) and the study of worldviews (subjective meanings) form mutually irreducible parts of personality psychology and that worldviews are not inherently less universal in terms of structure, or in other ways less basic, than traits. I conclude this paper by emphasizing the need to address coherence not just in behavior, but also within

worldviews and between traits and worldviews, and to complement traditional individual differences research with personalistic methodology.

The empirical research is presented in the second and third papers included in this thesis. This research addresses Humanism and Normativism, which are arguably the two broadest and potentially most important worldview constructs in the research literature today, representing whether human beings are thought of as intrinsically valuable and ontologically important (humanism) or as acquiring value and reality only through the attainment of external norms and ideals (normativism). Although originally thought to be opposites, previous research has suggested that they are uncorrelated. In the first empirical paper, I introduce a hierarchical model of their structure, develop scales to measure their facets, and demonstrate through confirmatory factor analysis that they are, contrary to previous wisdom, negatively related in terms of view of human nature, attitude to affect, and interpersonal attitude, but unrelated in terms of epistemology and political values. I present evidence also of discriminant and predictive validity in relation to other worldview variables, life goals, educational field, political and religious orientation, and the Big Five aspects. In the second empirical paper, I use humanism and normativism to explain the broad systems of meaning that potentially underlie, and intersect with, variables from the most important models of the underpinnings of political ideology today, through path modeling. The results suggest that humanism is related to political ideology through preference for equality, as mediated by moral concern with fairness and the avoidance of harm, emotionality, and honesty-humility, and that normativism is related to political ideology through conservative attitudes in general, as mediated by system justification, moral concern with authority, loyalty, and purity, and low openness. Both of the empirical articles provide ample evidence of broad systems of meaning cutting across different aspects of the worldview and of their explanatory power with regards to other psychological phenomena. These studies thereby help to substantiate the viability of the psychology of worldviews.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation has a long background, initially rooted in ideas that started to develop almost ten years ago, when I began to work on my Master Thesis in psychology. As such, it has benefited greatly from the aid of those who have supervised my work at various stages of this journey, providing invaluable encouragement, advice, and critique, while allowing me to pursue my own interests. I will list them here in chronological order. Bert Westerlundh, first, was a key source of original inspiration, supervising my Master Thesis, and thereby introducing me to Tomkins' Polarity Theory and to his own research on this topic. Fredrik Björklund, who was part of the original social cognition and emotion team led by Bert and who later took on the role as one of my secondary doctoral supervisors, has also been pivotal, providing a reliable source of insightful comments, encouragement, and advice through the years. When it comes to my pre-doctoral studies, I also need to mention Jan Hartman, who supervised my philosophical theses and thereby had a decisive impact upon my development of knowledge and skills put to use in this dissertation. I am grateful, moreover, to Carl-Martin Allwood, who originally was my intended doctoral supervisor, before moving to Gothenburg, and later gave me a thought-provoking critique at the half-time review seminar. Lars-Gunnar Lundh, who instead became the one taking on the role of main doctoral supervisor, has contributed tremendously to sharpening especially the theoretical elements of this dissertation and to making it better overall, through his wise counseling and meticulous attention to lack of clarity in reasoning. Completing the trio, my third doctoral supervisor, sharing the role of secondary supervisor with Fredrik, was Martin Bäckström, who has also contributed greatly through his statistical expertise, astute critical comments, and involvement in discussions about personality. I am, finally, grateful to John Jost, for letting me spend my Fulbright year in his vibrant and stimulating political psychology lab at New York University and for all his ideas and illuminating comments and discussions.

In addition to this, I would like to thank those who have provided comments on my papers and discussed my work, including Henrik Levinsson at the half-time review seminar, Henry Montgomery at the final review seminar, and Arvid Erlandsson. Last, but not least, I would like to thank the doctoral students at the Lund University psychology department, including especially the floorball team, and those who I got to know in the Jost lab at New York University, including my research assistants, who all made it much more enjoyable and stimulating to be a doctoral student.

List of Papers

This thesis is based upon the following three papers, which will be referred to by their Roman numerals:

I: Nilsson, A. (forthcoming). Personality psychology as the integrative study of traits and worldviews. *New Ideas in Psychology*.

II: Nilsson, A. (2013). Measuring Humanistic and Normativistic worldviews: Distinct, hierarchically structured, and negatively correlated. *Manuscript submitted for publication*.

II: Nilsson, A., & Jost, J. T. (2013). Revisiting Tomkins' Polarity Theory: How Humanism and Normativism shape political ideology. *Unpublished manuscript*.

1. Introduction

> Every man, whether he is religiously inclined or not, has his own ultimate presuppositions. He finds he cannot live his life without them, and for him they are true. Such presuppositions, whether they be called ideologies, philosophies, notions, or merely hunches about life, exert creative pressure upon all conduct that is subsidiary to them (which is to say, upon nearly all of a man's conduct).
>
> Gordon W. Allport (1955)

Contemporary personality psychology has, in its zeal for mechanistic explanation, lost track of those very characteristics that make us *persons*, rather than mere mechanical and biological systems, in the first place. As persons, we have the uniquely human capacities for complex, symbolic thinking that enable us, or even propel us, to reflect upon our own existence, including our historic, cultural, and social worlds, and the transitoriness, corruptibility, possibilities, and purpose of our lives. These capacities propel us to form a personal *worldview*, or *weltanschauung*, in order to imbue our physical, social, and existential predicament with meaning, and rise above our immediate sense impressions and biological instincts. Personality in its most distinctly human expression thus resides in a person's characteristic ways of dealing with the ultimate questions, dilemmas, and mysteries of life, such as: *Who am I? Is human nature basically good or bad? Should action be guided by the heart or the intellect? Is the universe ultimately subject only to blind, material, and deterministic forces or is it imbued with transcendent being and purpose? What do I really want from life?*

Numerous scholars have provided fascinating accounts of the worldviews that people form (Coan, 1974; Dilthey, 1890/1957; Jaspers, 1919; Royce, 1964; Spranger, 1914/1928; Tomkins, 1963, 1965) out of the dialectical tensions between their needs to *know* physical, social, and existential reality and their needs to *protect* the self from feelings of anxiety, fear, and guilt that such knowledge may provoke (Becker, 1971, 1973; Dilthey, 1890/1957; Jaspers, 1919; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Maslow, 1968; Rokeach, 1960; Royce, 1964). It has also long been clear to philosophers, novelists, poets, and philosophically-minded psychologists alike that a person's characteristic way of viewing in the world is, to a great extent, what makes him into the unique person s/he is. But many of these writings are notoriously impenetrable, vague, and sometimes outright anti-scientific, and they have hitherto not coalesced into a

unified theory of worldview as an aspect of personality nor into a comprehensive and rigorous research program on personal worldviews. The problem is not that there is a lack of theories and research on particular aspects of worldviews. There is indeed a plethora of research on worldview constructs, covering values (Schwartz, 1992), moral beliefs (Forsyth, 1980; Haidt & Graham, 2007), view of human nature (Wrightsman, 1992) and the social world, and free will and other cosmological beliefs (Paulhus & Carey, 2011; Rakos, Laurene, Skala, & Slane, 2008). The problem is rather that previous research on worldviews is highly fragmented across different research fields, engendering an arbitrary, a priori segregation of different aspects of the worldview that are in reality, in the constitution and functioning of the worldview and thus of personality, deeply interweaved, with no theoretical framework unifying this scattered body of research on worldviews in a compelling way. Few researchers, with a number of notable exceptions (Allport, 1924, 1955; Coan, 1974, 1979; Johnson, Germer, Efran, & Overton, 1988; Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Tomkins, 1963, 1965), have addressed the worldview as a phenomenon worth studying as a topic in itself. But a personality psychology that truly aims at understanding the human being *qua person* must, I will argue, elevate the worldview to a position where it is worth studying as an aspect of personality *in its own right* and not as a mere antecedent or consequence of traits or behaviors.

My project is, in the broadest sense, an attempt to reconcile a desire to understand the human being fully as person with the principles of rigorous science. To this end, I will challenge some widely held assumptions about personality. I will, however, not go as far as to claim, with some critics of the field (e.g. Harré, Clarke, & DeCarlo, 1985; Lamiell, 1987, 1997, 2003), that the contemporary study of personality is completely flawed and in need of a thorough paradigm-revolution. I will take a conciliatory and pluralistic approach, aiming at clarification and enrichment of personality psychology rather than revolution, by portraying the psychology of worldviews and the psychology of traits, alongside, as providing equally basic perspectives on personality, but with the psychology of worldviews more specifically tailored to capturing what is uniquely human about personality. What I am opposed to is thus neither the study of traits nor mechanistic explanation per se, but rather the impoverished reductionist approaches that assert that personality can be *completely* understood in terms of traits or mechanisms. Although I am far from the first to propose such a non-reductive approach to personality psychology, I will try to address some of the limitations of previous approaches, which include the failure to take the full leap from eclecticism to a unified conception of personality (Allport, 1955, 1964; McAdams & Pals, 2006), neglecting aspects of meaning-making not directly related to instrumentalist prediction and agency (Kelly, 1955; Little, 1998, 2005; Rychlak, 1981, 1988), and eschewing systematic a priori conceptualization of personality altogether (Binswanger, 1963; Rogers, 1961).

The overarching purpose of this dissertation is, consequently, to contribute to the development of a non-reductive science of personality that studies personal worldviews systematically, in their own right, as sources of meaning in personality. To this end, I both seek to establish a philosophical and theoretical foundation for the psychology of worldviews and present empirical research on worldviews that, hopefully, will help to substantiate and propagate this approach to the study of personality along with the worldview constructs it addresses.

The dissertation is divided into nine introductory chapters and three papers. I begin by outlining a non-reductive realist philosophy of personality (Chapter 2) and methodology (Chapter 3), discussing limitations with previous theory and research on personality (Chapter 4), and addressing these limitations by setting up a conceptual foundation for the psychology of worldviews (Chapter 5) as well as a theory of the motivational structure and dynamics of worldviews (Chapter 6). I conclude the introductory chapters by describing the theoretical and empirical background of the current empirical research (Chapter 7), providing an overview of the three included papers (Chapter 8), and discussing the limitations of the dissertation as a whole while suggesting directions for further research (Chapter 9). In the first paper, I argue that the study of traits and the study of worldviews form two equally basic, and mutually irreducible, parts of the study of personality, and that we need a more systematic study of worldviews and their relations to traits. In the second and third papers, I present research on two broad worldview dimensions, called *Humanism* and *Normativism* (Tomkins, 1963, 1965), which permeate worldview aspects such as view of human nature, interpersonal attitude, political values, attitude to affect, and epistemology. The second paper presents the development of improved measures of these constructs, and the resolution of theoretical questions regarding their structure, and the third paper addresses how they can contribute to contemporary explanations of the psychological underpinnings of political ideology.

2. What is personality? A non-reductive realist account

I will try to provide the conceptual foundations for a non-reductive personality psychology in this chapter and the next one. My methodological approach will be conciliatory, defending the useful parts of contemporary personality psychology against scathing philosophical critiques (Harré, Clarke, & DeCarlo, 1985; Lamiell, 1987, 1997, 2003) by reframing them, and enriching them with a consideration of worldviews and personalistic methodology; while raising important points, I believe that the most radical critiques go beyond what the arguments warrant, provoking polarized and unnecessary polemics (Fay, 1996; Nilsson, 2006). I hold that scientists *can* solve specific problems within the field without a sophisticated philosophical understanding of personality, because they are, like everybody else, thoroughly enmeshed within an interpersonal world, as competent users of folk-psychological personality constructs, and they additionally have, at their disposal, a range of sophisticated scientific methods. What the field nevertheless needs a reinvigorated discussion of its philosophical and theoretical tenets for is: (1) providing conceptual groundwork (Kukla, 2002; Searle, 1992, 2010) for helping us to ask the right questions, to integrate the field, and to avoid becoming entangled in pseudo-problems (e.g. the "person-situation" controversy, Fleeson & Noftle, 2008; Funder, 2001, 2006) that require dissolution rather than resolution (Wittgenstein, 1953), and deluded by fallacious theoretical reasoning (e.g. "Five Factor Theory", Boag, 2011; Harré, 1998), and (2) counteracting the tendency to reduce personality to whatever personality psychologists currently happen to study – that is, the tendency to *reify* the study of personality – by helping us to see important research paths that have been ignored due to historical contingency (viz. the psychology of worldviews).

I begin this chapter by trying to explain why we need a non-reductive psychology of personality and by clarifying my use of the key concepts of personhood and rationality. I continue by trying to chisel out a middle way, navigating between the Scylla of reductive realism (e.g. McCrae & Costa, 2008), which portrays personality as a perfectly real and objective causal structure, and the Charybdis of social constructionism (e.g. Burr, 2003; Harré, 1994; Harré, Clarke, & DeCarlo, 1985), which portrays personality as a social or discursive phenomenon that derives any reality it has only from being perceived in a particular way and treated as real. I reject reductive realism as unable to account for those characteristics of persons that make them uniquely human; I reject social constructionism because it would force us to give up the idea of having a

psychological science of beliefs, conative-volitional states, and behavioral regularities and to instead replace it with the study of linguistic conventions and social role plays. Instead, I portray personality as real yet reducible neither to internal causal structure nor to external socio-linguistic structure, drawing on contemporary non-reductive realist philosophy of mind (Davidson, 1963, 1970, 1977; Dennett, 1987, 1991; Searle, 1992, 2010),

2.1. A non-reductive notion of personhood

Scientific psychology is caught in a fundamental dilemma, between studying human beings as *mechanical systems*, which are subject to the same chains of cause and effect as all other objects in nature, and studying them as conscious and rational *persons*, whose actions are imbued with meaning and intentionality. This dilemma is the prime source of genuine philosophical conundrums in psychology (to which I count neither the classical "person-situation" debate nor the attempt to determine the correct number of "basic" personality factors). Searle (2010) also describes it as "the fundamental question" in contemporary philosophy:

> How, if at all, can we reconcile a certain conception of the world as described by physics, chemistry, and the other basic sciences with what we know, or think we know, about ourselves as human beings? How is it possible in a universe consisting entirely of physical particles in fields of force that there can be things such as consciousness, intentionality, free will, language, society, ethics, aesthetics, and political obligations?

Consider the problem of consciousness. This problem is rooted in our experience of consciousness as having a subjective, first-person ontology rather than an objective, third-person ontology (Maslin, 2001; Searle, 1992). For example, if you truly experience a pain, then your pain is real, regardless of whether or not a scientist could detect it by studying your brain or behavior –in the case of consciousness, the experience makes it real. A consequence of this is that the ways a person thinks about his or her own consciousness, and the concepts s/he uses, are in some sense also real, even if they are not objectively observable properties of the brain. But we normally describe consciousness as consisting of beliefs, desires, emotions, goals, and so on – that is, in terms of what philosophers

call the language of *intentionality*[1](Searle, 1983). For example, we do not say that we feel some neurons firing in the orbitofrontal cortex, an increased activity in the amygdala, and a contraction of our skeletal, upper-body muscles; we say that we feel anger at another person for breaking a promise and that we yearn for revenge. Even if it were possible to know the exact neuro-physiological substrata of any mental state or event, this would not automatically make us understand the conscious experience or subjective meaning of such a state or event. A further consequence of this is that human beings possess a freedom of will in that sense in which they experience themselves as able to choose between alternatives, initiate actions, and take moral responsibility for these actions. The problem with this is, however, that if we look at human beings from a more abstract, impersonal perspective, our uniquely human consciousness appears to be nothing more than the product of an embodied brain that is subject to the same physical forces, bodily processes, genetic mechanisms, and environmental conditioning as all other organisms. In what sense then do our subjective experiences signify something that is real and not reducible to mere brain-body-environment dynamics as opposed to illusory, reducible, and epiphenomenal? These questions have proven so mysterious and confusing that some philosophers have even adopted a "mysterianist" position, arguing that human beings just do not have the requisite cognitive equipment for comprehending the relation between subjective experience and objective reality (McGinn, 1993; Nagel, 1974; Van Inwagen, 1983), while others have suggested ways to reconcile the two perspectives (Chalmers, 1996; Davidson, 1963, 1970; Dennett, 1987, 2003; Searle, 1992, 2008).

Psychologists neither can nor need to solve these metaphysical riddles. What is essential for psychology is that we are clear about exactly when each level of description is used and about what this entails. Looking at contemporary personality psychology, after the demise of those most radical forms of behaviorism that sought to banish all talk about the mind, it is very clear that it makes ample use of the language of intentionality, or what we might call "person talk". Even the most ardent reductionist would have to admit that an "ideal" psychology, that translates all that we know today about persons into purely mechanistic language, is so far away that it is science fiction, and that the person

[1] This term has sometimes taken on a narrower meaning in psychology, as referring to intentions (e.g. Bandura, 2001). But in the philosophical literature, intentionality is a broader concept that describes mental states and events as being about, directed at, or *representing* different aspects of the world, which includes both beliefs about what the world is like and conative-volitional states about what the person wants the world to be like or intends to make it. It is also broader than the concept of *propositional attitude*, because the content of an intentional state or event need not be a proposition (Searle, 1983).

level of description therefore is, at the very least, a useful fiction (Dennett, 1987). Even trait psychologists who construe personality as basically inherited and biological make ample use of person vocabulary within their questionnaire items (e.g. "I tend to dislike soft-hearted people" and "I use others for my own ends") and explanations, I will argue. At the very least, a coherent reductionstic science of personality would have to rely on behavior-independent (Boag, 2011), self-report independent (Srivastava, 2010), and individual- rather than group-level (Lamiell, 1987; 2000) evidence, as I will come back to later. The elimination of person talk from psychology would, in other words, lead to the elimination of personality psychology as we know it, whatever the ultimate metaphysical interpretation of this may be.

The problem with reductionism is, however, not just a practical one. Its deeper problem is that we all exist in a psychological and social world in which we have consciousness, free will, and responsibility for our actions at least by virtue of our understanding and treating ourselves and each other as conscious, free, rational, and responsible agents, regardless of whether consciousness and free will have independent metaphysical reality or not. Even if these folk-psychological presuppositions should form a folk-psychological myth with no independent metaphysical substance, it is a myth that we live in psychologically and socially, that is firmly entrenched in the fabric of our discourses and worldviews, and, subsequently, in our experiences and behavior as well, thus forming part of our shared psychological and social reality (Davidson, 1970; Dennett, 1987; Hacking, 2002; Searle, 1992, 2010); there just appears to be no way we could get rid of all person talk without losing ourselves in the process. The only way that we could have a reductionist science of personality that could speak to us as persons would be if human beings changed, biologically or culturally, in such a way that all everyday person talk was replaced with some form of neuro-physiological vocabulary, which is, again, science fiction rather than current science. Even though personality theories are sometimes thought to differ in terms of paradigmatic assumptions about consciousness, free will, and rationality, their disagreements are not genuinely metaphysical, insofar as they really are theories *of personality*. We cannot even begin to discuss to what extent persons are self-aware and able to make choices that are deliberate, rational, and free from biological, social, and psychological constraint without presupposing the utility of the intentional level of description, because only a creature that has the capacity for consciousness, free will, and rationality, in the first place, can display irrationality, unconsciousness, and un-freedom, as opposed to non-rationality, non-consciousness, and non-freedom (Davidson, 1982).

Let us now, having established the need for a non-reductive notion of personality, more closely spell out the defining features of the concept of personhood. Persons are, first of all, linguistic beings, with the capacity to form

abstract representations of the world and let them be symbolized by arbitrary, complexly combinable, signs. This in turn enables them to reason, to act upon reasons, and to become aware of themselves and their existential predicament (Davidson, 1973; Becker, 1971, 1973; Hacker, 2007; Tissaw, 2013). In addition to these capacities, persons necessarily have, as I will elaborate further in Chapters 5 and 6, a worldview that grounds their abstract thinking and intentional engagement with the world, and psychological needs to create, and sustain, meaning and to assuage the anxieties and fears that are born out of their existential awareness (Becker, 1971, 1973; Jaspers, 1919; Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006). This is not to suggest that all persons are lay philosophers, with coherent and highly articulated perspectives on existence and deliberate concern with existential questions; it is just to say that all persons have concepts, presuppositions, values, and narrative scripts, and so on, guiding their intentional thought, feeling, and action (Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Naugle, 2002; Stern, 1938; Tomkins, 1965) whether innate, internalized, and unconscious or intellectual and deliberately chosen. Persons are, furthermore, as stressed by numerous theoretical psychologists, social and cultural beings, positioned within a moral order through rights, duties, roles, personae, and relationships, rather than self-contained entities (Bickhard, 2013; Hacker, 2007; Harré, 1994; Martin & Gillespie, 2013; Tissaw, 2013). It is, however, crucial to qualify this claim by noting that an individual attains a degree of autonomy from his or her social and cultural world, enabling him or her to question, refuse to participate in, and change it, *once s/he has developed personhood* (Martin, Sugarman, & Thompson, 2003; May, 1981), even though the development of personhood is "socially emergent" (Bickhard, 2013), in ontogenetic perspective, and contingent upon cultural discourses, in a historical perspective (Danziger, 2013); persons are cogs neither in a neuro-physical machinery nor in a socio-cultural one, I will argue.

At this point, you might want to object that the dichotomy between persons and non-persons obscures the findings of similarities between the personalities of human and non-human animals (Weinstein, Capitanio, & Gosling, 2008). This objection is relevant with regards to our understanding of the phylogenetic and ontogenetic origins of personality (Becker, 1971; Bertelsen, 2006**;** Gabora & Aerts, 2009; McAdams & Olson, 2010), which could very well be divided into stages, with some animals, such as apes, dolphins, whales, crows, and elephants, coming closer to full personhood than others. But the current thesis is focused primarily on personality per se, and on how our knowledge of it can be used to shed light on other psychological phenomena, rather than on its phylogenetic and ontogenetic origins. It just so happens that, even though the possibility is not conceptually precluded, we know of no non-human animal that can fully attain personhood, which is unsurprising given that the person concept has emerged in reference to our human reality (Hacker, 2007). Hence, the current vogue of research on animal "personality" (Buss, 2008) notwithstanding, non-human

animals, and human infants who have not yet developed personhood, do not genuinely have *person-alities*; what they do have are *temperamental* (Allport, 1937; Piekkola, 2011) traits, as well as episodic, associative or, at most, rudimentary symbolic representations of the world (Gabora, 1999; Gabora & Aerts, 2009), which serve as the phylogenetic and ontogenetic *precursors* of personality traits and worldviews.

Another potential objection is that our increasing knowledge of how human decisions are often driven by cognitive and affective mechanisms, involving, for example, intuitive gut-level moral responses (Haidt, 2001) and cognitive heuristics and biases (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), rather than deliberate reasoning, suggests that we are really not as rational as we think. This objection is, however, based on a more specific and demanding notion of rationality than the one relevant to the present context. The more general notion of rationality used in the present context has three important features:

The first one is that it is what we might call a *subjective*, rather than *objective*, notion of rationality, assuming only that persons form reasons and act upon them, and that their experiences and actions, consequently, can be understood as reasonable on the basis of *their* reasoning processes, beliefs, values, cognitive judgments, gut reactions, traits, and so on, rather than in relation to *our* beliefs, values, norms, and factual knowledge. The objective and subjective notions of rationality are, however, although not equivalent, also not completely independent of each other, because we can understand a creature as subjectively rational only to the extent that we can establish some common ground with him or her – a point made forcefully by Davidson (1982):

> We start by assuming that others have, in the basic and largest matters, beliefs and values similar to ours. We are bound to suppose someone we want to understand inhabits our world of macroscopic, more or less enduring, physical objects with familiar causal dispositions; that his world, like ours, contains people with minds and motives; and that he shares with us the desire to find warmth, love, security, and success, and the desire to avoid pain and distress. As we get to matters of detail, or to matters in one way or another less central to our thinking, we can more and more easily allow for differences between ourselves and others.

According to Davidson (1973, 1974, 1977, 1982), we can make sense of disagreements between ourselves and others only against a background of tacit agreements that are too numerous and uninteresting to be noticed. Without this background, we are talking about different things, and misunderstanding each other, rather than disagreeing; the more underlying agreements we can find, the

more precise and clear are our attributions of disagreement (see also Dennett, 1987; Nilsson, 2006). Consider the example of trying to understand the deeds of the Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik. Was there any rationality in Breivik's actions? One natural reaction would be to say that Breivik's atrocities were just completely incomprehensible and absurd, because no normal, sane human being – no one *like us* – would ever commit such an act. Regardless of how understandable this reaction is, if we want to understand the psychological reasons of Breivik's actions, we have to entertain the thought, however repugnant, that his actions were the product of normal psychological motivations and capacities that exist in all of us, albeit in a very unusual and unfortunate extremity and combination in Breivik's case, and that his beliefs about multiculturalism and so on, however delusional, are based upon more basic beliefs about the world that are true; we have to try to understand how his powerful, yet very human, need to create and sustain meanings, and to assuage concomitant fears and anxieties, along with his actual developed worldview, which is extreme but perhaps not uniquely so, and his extreme narcissism, decisiveness, tough-mindedness, cunningness, and other personality traits, made it *subjectively* rational for him to act the way he did.

The second feature of our notion of rationality is that it requires only that the beliefs, values, desires, intentions, intuitions, and so on, that are invoked to rationalize an action cohere with it, such that an agent with the given mental states *ought to* perform the action in question; not that the reason is deliberatively constructed, through some cognitive task of weighing costs and benefits, or even that it is conscious to the agent. Many reason-forming processes occur routinely, without conscious awareness or intention, and sometimes the rationales for actions are too complex or threatening to be completely understood by the agent him-/herself (Davidson, 1982; Fay, 1996; Searle, 1983). In this sense, psychoanalytic thought, which is often thought of as exposing the irrationalities of human beings, actually broadens our understanding of the rationality of persons, insofar as it gives us conceptual tools for discovering unconscious, previously unintelligible, rationales for behavior (Davidson, 1982).

The third feature of our notion of personality is that the assumption that persons are rational is an *idealization* inherent in the stance we take toward persons to make them intelligible and predictable, rather than necessarily reflecting perfect rationality in nature. To "impose conditions of coherence, rationality, and consistency" is, as Davidson (1977) has pointed out, simply the only way of taking more and more of the unfathomably complex mental life of the person into account, and thus of "increasing the accuracy and power of a theory of behavior". Dennett (1987) also offers a number of astute observations on this topic:

> We treat each other as if we were rational agents, and that myth – for surely we are not all that rational – works very well because we are *pretty* rational [..] Recent research in social and cognitive psychology (e.g., Tversky and Kahneman 1974; Nisbett and Ross 1980) suggests we are only minimally rational, appallingly read to leap to conclusions or be swayed by logically irrelevant features of situations, but this jaundiced view is an illusion engendered by the fact that these psychologists are deliberately trying to produce situations that provoke irrational responses – inducing pathology in a system by putting strain on it – and succeeding, being good psychologists [..] A more optimistic impression of our rationality is engendered by a review of the difficulties encountered in artificial intelligence research. Even the most sophisticated programs stumble blindly into misinterpretation and misunderstandings that even small children reliably evade without second thought [..] However rational we are, it is the myth of our rational agenthood that structures and organizes our attributions of belief and desire to others and that regulates our own deliberations and investigations. We aspire to rationality, and without the myth of our rationality the concepts of belief and desire would be uprooted. Folk psychology, then, is *idealized* in that it produces predictions and explanations by calculating in a normative system.

One implication of this line of thought is that we never understand personality perfectly, but always as to some extent simplified and idealized. We are able to accommodate irrationalities against a background of basic rationality, but sometimes we might nevertheless neglect systematic irrationalities. The bottom line, however, is that we have no choice but to partake in the attribution of rationality to persons if we want to have a psychology that provides insight into our psychological reality as linguistic beings and that utilizes the powerful predictive tools of folk psychology. In addition to this, it is, in fact, arguable that scientific explanations in general explain not in spite of their idealizations but *because of them* (Strevens, 2007).

2.2. The received view in psychology: Reductive realism

The idea that personality is a causal system underlying regularities of thought, feeling, and behavior, rather than (e.g. Larsen & Buss, 2005), or as well as (Funder, 2004), these regularities per se has gained wide currency within personality psychology today. Mayer (2007) has even suggested, upon reviewing key definitions of personality, that there is consensus in the field, on the notion of personality as a "psychological system, composed of a group of parts that interact, and develop, and *that impact* [italics added] a person's behavioral expression".

Although some personality theorists try to combine both causes and effects in their definition of personality – for example, "Personality refers to an individual's characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms – hidden or not – behind those patterns" (Funder, 2004) – such definitions are difficult to understand as anything else than as incoherent eclecticism, given that material structures or events must exist independent of each other to be able to stand in a causal relation. Either personality consists of causal mechanisms or it consists of the phenomena the mechanisms are invoked to explain (see Chapter 4.1; Boag, 2011; Harré, 1998). As Mayer (2007) suggests, personality psychologists today seem to generally opt for the former alternative when provoked to take a stand (e.g. McCrae & Costa, 2008).

One problem with this mechanistic definition of personality is that it is, as discussed further in Chapter 3, difficult to reconcile with a methodology that infers personality from behavioral evidence (Boag, 2011; Harré, 1998; Tissaw, 2013) and from differences between persons rather than properties existing at the level of the individual (Lamiell, 1987, 2000). For now, let us however grant the possibility of coherently conceiving of personality as a unique psycho-physiological structure within the person (Allport, 1937; Stern, 1938) and set aside the question of what methodology would be required to study this structure. The more fundamental problem with this definition is that it seems to leave out those kinds of explanations that are crucial for understanding a creature *as a person*, which explain in terms of rationality rather than causal mechanisms. When we explain human behavior from the personality perspective, are trying to understand why it would make sense for a particular rational being to choose the given course of action over other alternatives, by incorporating it into a logical pattern that endows it with meaning and makes it easier to accept as sensible (Davidson, 1963; Dennett, 1987; Rychlak, 1988; Wittgenstein, 1953). In Dennett's (1987) succinct words, we assume that the "system's beliefs are those it *ought to have*, given its perceptual capacities, its epistemic needs, and its biography", its "desires are those it *ought to have*, given its biological needs and the most practicable ways of satisfying them", and its "behavior will consist of those acts that it *would be rational* for an agent with those beliefs and desires to perform".

Let me give you a concrete example from the empirical research on the explanation of political ideology that I am presenting in Paper III. Persons who have humanistic worldviews are more inclined to support left-wing ideology and vote for left-wing parties than those with non-humanistic worldviews, and the opposite pattern holds for normativistic worldviews. But why is humanism connected with left-wing ideology and normativism with right-wing ideology? It is clearly not enough to just enumerate a number of variables that cause an ideological phenomenon to say that we have explained it, because the causal links

in themselves cry out for explanation. In the present example, humanism is based upon the idea that human beings are valuable in themselves, which coheres with the left-wing notion of social and economic equality, and normativism is based upon the idea that human beings can achieve value only in relation to external norms which coheres with the right-wing justification of inequality and preservation of traditional norms (Jost et al., 2003). Therefore, it would make sense for a humanist to endorse left-wing ideology and it would make sense for a normativist to endorse right-wing ideology. The empirical study provides support for the links between humanism and normativism and ideology, which is needed in order to justify the explanation, but it is the conceptual analysis that is really doing much of the explanatory work insofar as we are trying to explain human beings as persons. As Rychlak (1988) put it: "sometimes we can observe a controlled sequence of events (experimental design) and even predict its eventual outcome without understanding what is taking place, how it achieves its predictable outcome, or why it would work under certain circumstances and not others". Accounting for a high degree of variance in an outcome variable does not necessarily mean that we have explained that variable at all.

This holds true also for traits, to the extent that they are used to explain in personality terms. Despite the rhetoric of some trait theorists (McCrae & Costa, 2008), traits are infused with meaning through theoretical descriptions of the characteristics of people who have the traits in question, and trait explanations also invoke assumptions about rationality, insofar as they explain at all – that is, trait psychologists think in terms of what it would make sense for persons that are extraverted, neurotic, open, and so on, to do in a given situation, according to the theoretical understanding of what such persons are like. For example, if emotional and open persons tend to support left-wing parties in Sweden, as my empirical data suggest, then we need to explain why it would make sense for emotional and open Swedes to be left-leaning. We might reason that emotional persons are, in comparison with unemotional persons, more sensitive to other people's suffering and therefore should be more concerned with improving the situation of the most disadvantaged people in society and that open persons have a more favorable attitude to change than close-minded persons. It may, however, often be more difficult to construct this type of intentional explanations invoking traits rather than worldviews, because traits are generally compatible with more different rationales for action and thus invite a lot of indeterminacy (or "equi-potentiality", Pervin, 2002) in the choice of explanation. Worldview variables may thus be useful as a mediating link between traits and actions by clarifying the types of meaning systems that different traits tend to "resonate with" (Tomkins, 1963, 1965), as exemplified in research on political ideology (Lewis & Bates, 2011; Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007).

Although we could very well use knowledge of mechanisms to explain why a rational creature with a particular mechanism would behave a certain way (e.g. to avoid pain evoked by a given mechanism), this would not make the explanation reducible to the mechanistic link, because it is still the rationalization – what it would make sense for persons with the mechanism in question to experience or do – that is doing the explanatory work. This does however seem to create a new difficulty, threatening to make explanation just a socially constructed rationalization of behavior, rather than a description of the real causes behind behavior, because reasons and actions are logically related to each other – the action is defined in terms of the reason cited to explain it (e.g. if I told you something in order to make a promise to you, that is what makes my action a promise) – but cause and effect are logically independent, related only as a contingent and empirically testable matter of fact (Davidson, 1963; Wittgenstein, 1953). This leads us to a view diametrically opposed to reductive realism, namely social constructionism.

2.3. A radical alternative: Social constructionism

On social constructionist accounts of personality (Burr, 2003; Gergen, 1991; Harré, 1994, 1998; Harré, Clarke, & DeCarlo, 1985), which are highly critical of the essentialism and reification of personality constructs common in mainstream psychology (e.g. McCrae & Costa, 2008), personality language does not really refer to any intra-psychic structure at all, because personality is really indistinguishable from what a person does – that is, from a person's, socially embedded, private and public actions, and the varied personae that they constitute. Social constructionists also criticize the idea of unity in personality (e.g. Gergen, 1991), claiming that personality is really fragmented across social context, fluctuating with the availability of culturally shared discourses, and that our feelings of unity can be explained in terms of the stories we make up to make sense of ourselves and our own lives (cf. McAdams, 1996). The commonsense view of personality as a unified and internal psychic structure does, on the constructionist account, derive any reality it has from being accepted as real and treated as real within the diverse role plays, language games, or discourses, people continuously engage in, and thereby functions to constitute and perpetuate the social reality we live in rather than to represent internal psychic structures. This makes personality discourses contingent upon historical and cultural factors and upon the social, moral, and economic interests that they serve rather than carved into the joints of nature, and therefore ultimately modifiable and replaceable.

The question is whether social constructionism can be used not just destructively, as a critique against personality psychology, but also constructively,

so as to provide us with a better personality discourse and research methodology than the traditional one, while avoiding to construe persons mechanistically, as the mindless cogs of an intricate social, as opposed to biological, machinery. Harré (1994, 1998; Harré, Clarke, & DeCarlo, 1985), for example, thinks that it can. He portrays persons as actors in a play, who follow tacit scripts and rules, and adopt culturally prescribed metaphors, images, ways of speaking, and self-narratives that fit with their part, but who also have an active role in negotiating, accepting, and resisting, so to speak, what plays to take part in, what roles to play, how the plays should be scripted and directed, and who have, above all, an individual style in enacting their roles.

The fundamental problem with this account is that even if personality discourses may serve the function of constructing social reality, this does not imply that they serve no explanatory and predictive function – in fact, it is difficult to see how they could hold the fabric of social reality together if they did not genuinely help us to understand why people do things and predict what they will do next (Dennett, 1987). As Davidson (1963) has shown, the Wittgensteinian bifurcation between reasons and causes is misleading, because it does not distinguish between reasons per se, as abstract linguistic entities, and the actual psychological processes through which a person forms reasons. People form reasons all the time, both through active deliberation and through habitual processes that do not require much deliberation, awareness, and verbalization, and all these reason-forming processes are causally, rather than logically, related to their effects, although they can be described as logically related in an intentional vocabulary. The intentional level of description helps us to understand why a rational being would act in the given way, but it must, in order to be truly explanatory, pick out the reason that best describes the psychological process that actually caused the behavior. Reason-explanation is therefore a sub-species of causal explanation that specifies a reason-forming process as the cause (i.e. "intentional", "final", or "teleological" causation, Davidson, 1963; Fay, 1996; Rychlak, 1988; Searle, 1983). If we, for example, try to explain Jane's reluctance to let her husband go on a business trip in terms of her fear of being lonely, this is only genuinely explanatory to the extent that it is true that it is this particular fear, rather than some other factor, that made her reluctant to letting her husband go away; the fact that Jane and her friends accept that she plays the role of the insecure girlfriend and that they competently construct a presumed explanation that could be deduced from the rules inherent in an insecure-girlfriend discourse, or "language game" (Wittgenstein, 1953), does not in itself make it genuinely explanatory.

It is thus not necessary to adopt social constructionism once we give up reductive mechanism. The extra step that Harré and other constructionists take appears, in fact, not only unnecessary, but also to commit the opposite form of

reduction, because it leads to a focus on the study of the personality discourses per se, the processes through which they are maintained, and the competencies and rules people draw on in participating in the discourses, and portrays individuals' personalities as only indirectly and derivatively interesting insofar as they shed light on these other questions. Instead of reducing the person to internal, biological structure, constructionists end up committing the mirror image of this error – reducing the person to external, social structure.

It is, however, notable that social constructionism forcefully illuminates a point that is important also to a non-constructionist philosophy of personality: that personality is socially molded over time, in the sense that elements of socio-cultural discourses and narrative forms are weaved into the personal worldview (e.g. McAdams, 1996, 2008), the display of public personae and participation in social role playing form behavioral habits (e.g. Harré, Clarke, & DeCarlo, 1985), and actions are enabled by socially emergent conceptions of possible forms of life and narratives through which the person projects his/her self into the future (Carr, 1986; Fay, 1996; Martin, Sugarman, & Thompson, 2003). Social constructionism draws our attention particularly to the importance of how the self-concept, and sense or personal identity, is shaped by how the person is described and acted upon and how this, in turn, shapes personality. Human ontological categories do, in Hacking's (1999, 2002) terms, "interact" with their labels, by changing in response to how they are described, which, in turn, changes the descriptions over time. This means that social constructionist research has a place in personality psychology, studying how personalities are socially, discursively, and narratively shaped over time (Harré, Clarke, & DeCarlo, 1985; Martin, Sugarman, & Thompson, 2003; McAdams, 1996, 2008), even though personality is reducible neither to internal causal structure nor to external socio-linguistic structure.

2.4. Beyond the dichotomy: Defining personality in non-reductive realist terms

Let me now suggest a philosophical definition of personality that tries to retain realism while giving up reductionism, divided into five parts:

> *Personality is (a) an abstract pattern (b) consisting of those trait and worldview characteristics that (c) make the individual intelligible and predictable as a rational system (d) as compared with other individuals (e) to other rational agents*

The idea that persons are understood as rational rather than mechanistic systems, captured by (c), has already been explicated above. But the other parts need more explanation. Consider first the novel notion introduced in (a), which alludes to a distinction Dennett (1987, 1991) has adapted from Reichenbach (1938), between two sorts of referents of theoretical terms – *illata*, which refer to posited theoretical entities, and *abstracta*, which refer to calculation-bound entities or logical constructs. Dennett's (1987, 1991) paradigmatic examples of abstracta are centers of gravity, which clearly do not denote any entity yet still exist as observer-independent patterns that sustain prediction and explanation. Traits, most prominently, cannot possibly be illata, for reasons discussed in Chapter 4.1. Whether beliefs, desires, and other intentional states that make up the worldview are illata (Searle, 1983, 1992) or abstracta (Dennett, 1987, 1991) is a matter of controversy. But a pattern involving both traits and worldviews, and, in addition to this, their differences to the traits and worldviews of other persons (differences are relational properties; illata are non-relational entities) can clearly not be anything else than abstracta. The important point to note is, however, that they are still real and open to empirical scrutiny in the sense that there is a fact of the matter as to how, for example, Jake tends to behave around strangers and whether he believes in God or not, and about how he differs in these regards from other Americans. This is all we need to sustain a science of personality; we do not need reductionism.

The addition of (e) – intelligibility and predictability *to other rational agents* – does however seem, at first blush, to invite social constructionism right back in, making personality an overly subjective, fluctuating, and local phenomenon. But notice that the traits and worldviews, and their differences to those of others, are observer-independent (Searle, 1992, 2010), being what they are independently of how they are described from any third-person perspective (albeit being dependent upon the person's own first-person perspective). Our historic-cultural and subjective vantage-points, and the forms of intelligibility they provide, determine not what personality is, but rather what aspects of a personality we can discover and how we conceptualize them (Dennett, 1991). Intelligibility to other rational beings, in our definition, does not refer to any particular perspective, but rather to any perspective that could be taken by a rational being. There may, therefore, always be hidden layers of meaning visible to some rational agent yet invisible, or ineffable, within our horizon of understanding (cf. Gadamer, 1975), which is limited by what ways of thinking, acting, living, and interpreting others are enabled by our historical, cultural, social, and technological conditions. Because personality is infused with intentionality and intentional states depend upon each other (Davidson, 1977), and upon the world (Fay, 1983, 1996), in complicated ways, personality can, furthermore, never be grasped or pinned down in its entirety, nor given a definite, non-negotiable partitioning and description – we zoom in on some aspects while ignoring, or even failing to detect, others, and we

simplify what we can see in order to make it intelligible in rational terms (Davidson, 1977; Dennett, 1987). Although we try to invent "independent" personality constructs for instrumentalist reasons, the personality features themselves are not truly ontologically independent. It is, however, important not to overstate the case and portray the interpretation of personality as a Gadamerian (1975) process of "fusion" of interpretive horizons with infinite potential for reinterpretation, which would lead us back to social constructionism (Nilsson, 2006). Personality is still observer-independent, and because we, in practice, share a great deal of our existential, social, cultural, biological, and physical predicament with those persons we interpret, there are also practical limits as to how many alternative interpretations may exist that are both intelligible to us and empirically adequate.

Now let us turn to (b) – that personality consists of traits and worldview aspects – which I develop in more detail in Paper I. As already noted, I do not portray traits as concrete structures, or theoretical entities or mechanistic causes, but rather as behavioral regularities, or as behavioral dispositions at most. As I will discuss later (Chapter 4.1), it is conceivable that some traits could be thought of as mechanisms, *if and only if* by that we mean just that a 'mechanism' is an objective regularity or events, or a *disposition*, such that every time the person is in a particular situation s/he will tend to respond (mechanically) to it in a particular way, and not that the mechanism is some internal property that *causes* the regularity (see also Boag, 2011; Harré, 1998; Tissaw, 2013). I am, however, in line with its ubiquitous connotation in psychology, using 'mechanism' and 'mechanistic' to imply *material* (i.e. material structure) and *efficient* (i.e. material event) causation (Hacker, 2007; Rychlak, 1988).

On a non-reductive account of personality, it follows, furthermore, that the worldview is an aspect of personality itself, rather than a cause or effect of it, because a person's actions and experiences are in part *constituted* by his or her worldview. For example, if I am angry at my friend for breaking her promise to me and therefore punish her in some way, this emotional state and action is what it is partly because of my beliefs about my friend and her behavior, partly because of my beliefs about human nature in general and its capacity for trust and loyalty, and partly because of my ideas about morality, and so on; my action would not be a punishment unless I saw my friend as blameworthy in some way and performed the action with a particular purpose in mind. The reason that my experience and action in this example is not just constituted by a particular set of situation-relevant beliefs and purposes, but also by more foundational worldview beliefs, is that the constituents of the mind do, from the person perspective, not present themselves as atoms. Rather, they are deeply interweaved, depending logically upon each other – a property philosophers refer to as *the holism of the mental* (Davidson, 1977; Maslin, 2001) – and ultimately they must hinge upon a

background of ultimate, or foundational, concepts, presuppositions, and experiences, upon which more particularized meanings are built. Particular goals, values, desires, and other motivational states are simply not free-floating, atomic entities; they form integrated systems that are expressions of how the person ultimately infuses the world with value and meaning (Allport, 1955; Jaspers, 1919; Spranger, 1914/1928) and they hinge upon beliefs about what the world is like and what it could possibly be like (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). An example of this is that researchers studying people's lay theories about the social world – whether we believe intelligence, personality, moral character, and entire societies are essentially static and immutable or dynamic and mutable – have come to the conclusion that particular attitudes and beliefs that influence how a person acts in social situations are embedded within broader "systems of meaning" (Chiu, Dweck, Tong, & Fu, 1997; Levy, Stroessner, & Dweck, 1998). Because of this holistic, or systemic, character of the mental, the study of worldviews must have an especially crucial role in a non-reductive science of personality.

Now consider (d) – the idea that an individual's personality is understood *as compared with others*, which might be called a *differential* rather than *individualistic* notion of personality. This speaks to the idea that personality is what is *characteristic*, or *unique*, about an individual, rather than just what the person is like as a whole – that is, his or her *individuality* – because something can be understood as characteristic or unique only *in relation to* something else (Allport, 1924, 1937; Lamiell, 1987, 1997, 2003). Without this clause, our definition of personality would be unable to distinguish personality explanations from rational explanations that explain in terms of the common rationality of human nature, culture, social groups, or the like. In the case of personality, it appears that we ask why one personality rather than another would perform a particular action, regardless of variations in culture – for example, John feared criticizing others because of his characteristic beliefs (personality) rather than his Japanese upbringing (culture). Personality psychology has, however, historically been concerned with the study of the whole person (McAdams & Pals, 2006), which suggests that it needs to account not just for variation in individuality and uniqueness but also for human nature, culture, social being, and everything else that constitutes the person. But in practice, the study of human nature and culture is important to personality only insofar as it provides the backdrop against which personalities can stand out as unique, by helping us to make differences and uniqueness intelligible through a common coordinate system anchored in common axes of comparison (Davidson, 1973, 1974, see Chapter 3.1). For example, assume that Jack is more extraverted than the average Japanese person but more introverted than the average American. Given that Jack is American we would probably think of him as an introverted personality, and would explain his relative extraversion in Japan in cultural terms. This does, however, mean that personality becomes dependent upon what norm, idealization, or group it is, or could be,

compared with, which would seem to make personality somewhat fluctuating after all. On the other hand, the context is generally likely to be reasonably stable, given that we study individuals who, to a great extent, share an existential, cultural, and physical predicament – for example, the fact that a person who was an introvert last year is an extravert today can most likely not be explained in terms of a sudden change in extraversion of persons in general. In addition, relations (e.g. the gravitational attraction between two bodies) are as real and open to empirical scrutiny as any abstracta, whether fluctuating or stable. For these reasons, a differential conception of personality cannot be dismissed as a lapse back into relativism. That personality is a relation between the person and the context of comparison does not make truth claims about it into a relation between personality and epistemic vantage-point. Different kinds of rationalistic explanations, focusing on human nature, culture, or personality, can thus be seen as genuinely distinguishable, by illuminating different aspects of the person's traits and worldview, so as to extract different layers of meaning from them (cf. D'Andrade, 2006).

3. How should personality be studied? A holistic approach

Rational systems are *holistic* wholes that do not have parts in the same way mechanistic systems do, because their constituents are what they are in part because of their relations to each other – they are constitutively rather than just causally interrelated. Although this, given the indeterminacy (i.e. the possibility of inconsistent descriptions that are equally empirically adequate) in conceptualizing personality, does not necessarily mean that personality is unified in itself, it does mean that we have no choice but to understand persons as holistic unities, by "imposing conditions of consistency" (Davidson, 1977) upon them, as discussed in Chapter 2.1 and Paper I. We can understand disunity in special cases, but only against a background of general unity, because we simply do not have the epistemic capacity to understand persons as largely inconsistent or disorganized (Davidson, 1973, 1977, 1982; Dennett, 1987), for example, as a fragmented cacophony of voices (Gergen, 1991). This does, however, not mean that the unity must always be what it would appear to be on the surface – for example that we must assume that a person's moral beliefs match his/her actual moral behaviors – because all that matters is that we find an empirically adequate way of making sense of why a rational being would say that s/he believes something is good or desirable yet systematically do something else.

Given the centrality of the pursuit of unity as an interpretive strategy, it seems appropriate to substitute the metaphor of a complexly organized system (Allport, 1937; Pervin, 2001; Mayer, 2007), which may be appropriate for the causal substrata of personality, to one that portrays personality as a holistic whole that can be illuminated from different perspectives but not disassembled in a definite way into discrete parts cutting nature at its joints. Different constructs focus on different aspects of personality, yet often have greatly overlapping referents. As I will argue in Paper 1, the division between trait and worldview constructs is basic in the sense that it corresponds to whether information is sought about *objective* regularities of thought, feeling, and behavior (traits) or about the *subjective* meanings (worldview) that imbue experiences and behaviors with intentionality and rationality, yet even trait and worldview constructs often overlap in terms of what they refer to.

The same personality aspects can, furthermore, also be addressed with different kinds of methods that vary in the extent to which they take the

idiosyncrasies of individuals and the cultural embedment and situational variability of personality characteristics into account, versus stripping such contextual nuances away for purposes of generalization – that is, in terms of *individual-* versus *variable-centeredness*, *universalist* versus *historic-cultural* approach, and *situational globalism* versus *interactionism*. The following sections will focus on these three distinctions. Although personality psychology has sometimes been criticized for its excessive and inappropriate reliance upon de-contextualization of phenomena that are inherently contextual (e.g. Bandura, 1999; Lamiell, 1987, 1997, 2000; Piekkola, 2011), I will take a pluralistic and integrative approach (see also Paper 1), defending the utility, and necessity, of both types of methods, by emphasizing their complementarity and interdependence, and the tradeoff between scope (i.e. "computational" power to generate explanations) and accuracy and richness (Dennett, 1987; Kukla, 2002) and discussing ways to bridge the gap between them. I conclude by comparing my own integrative framework to that of McAdams (1992, 1995, 1996; McAdams & Pals, 2006; McAdams & Olson, 2010).

3.1. Variable-centered versus individual-centered approaches

A crucial issue that confronts us when we give up reductionism is whether personality psychology should rely upon *idiographic* methods (i.e. the pursuit of contextualized understanding), which have commonly been thought of as appropriate for the social/human sciences, rather than *nomothetic* methods (i.e. the pursuit of general principles), which have commonly been thought of as appropriate only for the natural sciences (Dilthey, 1883/1989; Windelbland, 1894/1998). The nomothetic study of personality has often been seen as inherently wedded to a reductionistic conception of personality that reduces real flesh-and-blood individuals to empty, lifeless shells, represented by abstract variables and regularities (Carlson, 1971; Allport, 1937, 1962; Lamiell, 1981, 1987, 1997; Piekkola, 2011). Lamiell (2000) has gone as far as claiming that contemporary personality psychology cannot rightly be called the study of "person-ality" at all, given its focus on groups rather than persons.

Critics are right to point out that personality psychology cannot plausibly aspire to be nomothetic in the sense of sustaining laws that hold true across all historical and cultural contexts, which was the original meaning of the term 'nomothetic' (Windelband, 1894/1998), because the intentional vocabulary is not compatible with nomological description. Although it may be untrue that social reality is in itself more dynamic and complicated, and thereby less causally closed

(fully characterized in terms of a limited number of parameters), than other aspects of nature (Kincaid, 1990), the intentional vocabulary that describes and constitutes it is more complex than those used to describe natural phenomena (McIntyre, 1983). The difficulty is two-fold. First, because intentional states and events are in part constituted by what aspects of the world they are directed at (the externalism of the mental, Fay, 1996; Maslin, 2001), and the social world is changing in unpredictable ways, as new concepts and discourses are invented, current forms of intentional thought and action become outdated and updated, which forces us to change our intentional concepts as social reality changes (Fay, 1983, 1996). Psychological constructs and regularities can therefore, insofar as they are described at the intentional level of description, not be non-historical. Second, because each intentional state or event is what it is by virtue of its relations to the rest of the mental (the holism of the mental, Davidson, 1977; Maslin, 2001), mental states and events can therefore not be isolated and ascribed fixed meanings or nomological relationships to behaviors and to each other – the exact same intentional state could, for example, be expressed in any of an indefinite range of different behaviors, depending on the presence of other intentional states (Davidson, 1970, 1977). Our theoretical terms would, in other words, have to define their referents in terms that make their meanings isolated from the world and from each other, in order to be amenable to nomological description. The intentional level of description is, therefore, unsuitable for nomological description, even though it is suitable to capture our experience of ourselves as persons (Fay, 1983, 1996).

One move would be to opt for re-description in non-intentional vocabularies, such as those of evolutionary psychology and cognitive science (McIntyre, 1983), which may, in principle, enable nomological description. But this would render us unable to fully account for the uniquely human aspects of personality, as I have argued already. Rather than pursuing laws, personality psychologists have, however, typically opted for another strategy that is compatible with a non-reductive conception of personality, namely focusing on statistical regularities that strip away the idiosyncracies of individuals and historic-cultural contexts. They often use a universalistic rather than historic-cultural approach, stripping away layers of cultural meaning so as to make constructs and regularities as universally applicable as possible, as will be discussed below (Chapter 3.2; Paper I). They also typically use an individual differences approach, deriving personality constructs from factor analysis of differences between persons and explaining at the level of variables that represent group averages. The distinction between nomothetic and idiographic, which was imported into psychology by Allport (1937), commonly refers to this distinction between individuals and variables today. Although the examples of rational explanations provided so far have applied to individuals, rational explanations can also be used at the level of variables. Let *P* be a psychological property, *B* a behavior, and *C* a set of circumstances (culture, social

situation, experimental manipulation, etc.), then explanations that are nomothetic and rationalistic – that is, the vast majority of explanations provided by contemporary personality psychology – have the following generic structure:

1. Theory: It would be rational for individuals with P in C to do or experience B.
2. Empirical evidence: Individuals with P in C tend to do or experience B more often than individuals without P in C, ceteris paribus.
3. Conclusion: P in C helps to explain B.

The term 'helps' signals that the explanation is not nomological – P in C is not always followed by B, and there are also other factors that help to explain B. One example, derived from Paper III, is that it would be rational for humanists (P) to protest against inequalities (B) in societies that are strongly hierarchical (C). Assuming that U.S. society satisfies C and that we find evidence that P correlates with B in the U.S., we can conclude that humanism may be one factor, among others, explaining the occurrence of protest against inequality, and we can predict that humanists will be more likely to protest against inequality than non-humanists.

This type of explanation does, however, apply at the level of variables; we do not really know whether it applies to any particular humanist's behavior or whether any particular instance of protest against inequality can be explained in terms of humanism, or even whether the variables "fit" the individual's worldview and behavior, and we seem to also have a quite weak basis for making predictions about how the particular individual will behave. Lamiell (1981, 1987, 1997, 2000, 2003) has therefore, in a provoking series of essays, criticized contemporary psychology violently for its reliance upon the study of individual differences, claiming that such an approach is unsuitable for personality psychology because it can yield knowledge only about what people are like *on average* within a particular group, which tells us nothing about any particular individual, unless all investigated persons would happen to be exactly alike (e.g. $r = 1.0$), and therefore nothing about individuals *in general* either. According to Lamiell, personality must be studied at the level of individual because it exists *within* the person, whereas individual differences exist *between* persons.

Lamiell's arguments have however, despite their revolutionary intent, failed to impress personality psychologists and to change the field, and even to foster critical dialogue about the study of personality according Lamiell's (2007, 2010) own assessment. Although I do concur that Lamiell's arguments *do not* show that the study of individual differences is unsuitable for personality psychology and

unable to produce knowledge about individuals, I believe that it is important to see why. He, for starters, seems to be right in pointing out that personality must, if it is defined in terms of what is characteristic or unique about the individual, be a *relation* between the person and the norm, group, or idealization s/he is compared with, rather than a *non-relational property*, causal or not (see Chapter 4.1). But once we give up our mechanistic impulse to define personality in terms of causal properties, this does, as I have already argued, open up the option of defining personality in relational terms. Personality is, in fact, given that intentional thought, feeling, and action is what it is partly by virtue of what it is about (Searle, 1983), what we might call *doubly relational*, being constituted by how the person relates to his world and by how this in turn relates to how other persons relate to their worlds – far from being the non-relational causal property, within the person, postulated by reductive realism. Lamiell's arguments do thus, in this sense, correctly identify a difficulty to reconcile reductionist definitions of personality with individual differences methodology rather than a problem with the individual differences approach per se.

Another potential problem with Lamiell's argumentation is that it does not clearly distinguish knowledge of scores on variables with knowledge of personality. Take one of Lamiell's (2003, p. 135) examples: If 80% of all university students with SAT scores of 1200 graduate with a GPA between 3.25 and 3.75, our uncertainty regarding the GPA of one particular student with an SAT score of 1200 "remains complete until his or her final record is in. Then, and only then, does the uncertainty vanish instantly and entirely." But the problem with this is that GPA and SAT are operationally defined variables rather than abstract constructs like personality. If we would treat GPA as a measure of say academic aptitude, we would be confronted with the question of how to make inferences from measurement to construct. But the only thing we can know for sure from studying an individual is how that individual has manifested his individuality at that particular point in time, in that particular situation, through that particular measure – we cannot possibly know all random factors, such as fatigue, stress, demand characteristics, etc. that may have affected this expression; measurement error does not disappear just because it cannot be statistically estimated. When we make inferences from measurement to theoretical construct, and when we generalize beyond that which we have measured, we thus always have to add auxiliary assumptions, infused with uncertainty, whatever data we have (Goodman, 1955). There is additional uncertainty when we apply individual differences explanations to the level of the individual, about whether the relationship between the hypothesized explanatory factor and the explanandum is sufficiently similar to that of the average case to be explanatory, and this uncertainty may be even greater as we move from ex post facto explanation to prediction. But this nonetheless makes the difference between variable-centered and individual-centered approaches a matter of degree of certitude rather than

dichotomy between knowing with certainty and knowing nothing at all about individuals. The group-level explanation does indeed explain also in the individual case provided that the individual's deviation from group average is *not big enough* to change the actual conclusions that are drawn *about personality*. As argued earlier, rationalistic explanations are always approximate and simplifying – good enough for our purposes of making the social world meaningful and predictable (Davidson, 1977; Dennett, 1987) – rather than exact and certain (see also Paper I).

Lamiell's arguments do, nevertheless, illuminate the risks of relying excessively on the study of individual differences variables without due investigation of how well the variables capture individuality. That the meaning of a variable is fixed in an operationalization does, fortunately, not mean that it could not have been designed in a way that paid careful attention to individuals' idiosyncrasies. Socio-cognitive theorists have, for example, designed many new group-level constructs by studying people's individual profiles of variability across situations and their actual cognitive-affective origins (Bandura, 1999; Higgins & Scholer, 2008; Mischel & Shoda, 2008). New cutting-edge methods have also been developed for evaluating the fit of traditional trait constructs in relation to idiographic trait structure and for "tuning" them accordingly (Grice, 2004; Grice, Jackson, & McDaniel, 2006; Nesselroade, Gerstorf, Hardy, & Ram, 2007; Zhang, Browne, & Nesselroade, 2011). In these ways, individual-centered research can help us to boost the certainty and accuracy with which we can make inferences from variables to individuals, thus bridging the gap between nomothetic and idiothetic approaches. "The most promising approaches to psychology may" thus, as Molden and Dweck (2006) put it, "be those that closely marry the pursuit of universal principles with a careful consideration of personal meaning".

It is, furthermore, worth asking whether it is, as Lamiell (1987) claims, possible to understand individuals on their own terms, without comparing them to each other. This brings us back to the very root idea of idiographic psychology, from early hermeneutic and phenomenological thinking (Dilthey, Husserl, Schleiermacher, see Schroeder, 2005), that it is, because of the subjective ontology of consciousness, necessary, in order to acquire knowledge about a person's experiences, to set aside your own pre-conceptions and indwell into the other person's perspective. In the idealized case, you would, by immersing yourself in the other person's situation, empathize so deeply with him that you would understand what it is like to have his experiences and re-enact his behavioral expressions – or, in a sense, what it is like to be this other person. This is of course a normative ideal, because it is not possible to understand another person's experience in its full complexity and temporal flow. More important, it is simply not possible to interpret any creature as being a person at all without what Gadamer (1975) called an initial set of "prejudices", or what Davidson (1974, 1982) called a "theory of interpretation", that enables us to get the interpretative

process started, and we must also be able to effectively communicate the resulting understanding to the scientific community for it to be scientifically useful. Concepts and knowledge applying to what people are like on average can help to provide a richer and more grounded conceptual and theoretical base to start from and to anchor the communication of the resulting ideographic understandings within a common conceptual background that makes these understandings intelligible to others. Knowledge of average relations between potential explanatory factors and that which is to be explained can, for example, help us to identity what, among the myriad differences between singular cases, is the true explanatory factor. The general concepts do, furthermore, provide axes along which different persons can be compared. Even though the most general concepts may in themselves not amount to much more than a "psychology of the stranger", as McAdams (1992) sarcastically put it, they still form a background and anchor for explanations that are more tailored to cultural settings and ideographically nuanced, because even if the resulting idiographic descriptions do end up very different from the general categories, knowing exactly how they deviate from the more general concepts helps us to make them intelligible (Davidson, 1974). The operationalizations of the general constructs do, in addition, provide units for measuring within-person variation across variables (Bergman & Trost, 2006; Magnusson, 1999), items (Stephenson, 1953), and situations (Heller et al., 2007; Mischel & Shoda, 2008).

It is, moreover, as Davidson (1973, 1974, 1982) has persuasively argued, impossible to interpret another person as being radically different from yourself, because differences can only be made intelligible against a background of assumed similarity between the self and the other. In other words, it would not be possible to understand individuals as atoms that are all radically different from each other, and even if it would be possible, this would not imply that they a person would be best described in his own personal language, because the outside perspective can sometimes, as all psychotherapists are surely aware of, provide useful distance to the experiences (Fay, 1996; Nilsson, 2006). Allport (1955) expressed this problem eloquently: "Each person is an idiom unto himself, an apparent violation of the syntax of the species [..] Yet at the same time, idioms are not entirely lawless and arbitrary; indeed they can be known for what they are only by comparing them with the syntax of the species." He also captured this insight in his appealing idea that persons can be compared in terms of common traits, but that some of these traits are especially central, or "warm", for each person, thus forming part of the person's "proprium" (Allport, 1955).

These observations thus provide a further bridge between nomothetic and idiographic methodologies. We are led to concur with Allport (1955) that there is no good reason when interpreting individuals to disregard "background laws and common methods in so far as these are helpful for comprehending uniqueness"

and even to emphasize the importance, and perhaps necessity, of anchoring idiographic explorations in nomothetic frameworks of general principles, average regularities, and individual difference variables. But there are nevertheless caveats raised by the critique of the individual differences approach, about the risk of letting individual differences taxonomies and explanations become sterile, rigidly enforced, and allowed to exercise hegemony of our theories of interpretation, as though they cut into the joints of nature and thereby automatically apply at the level of the individual. Nomothetic knowledge provides a natural starting-point, and scaffolding, for idiographic explanation, whether in the social or natural sciences, but not the end-point; it is neither irrelevant nor sufficient for idiographic explanation. It does not, in itself, provide the certainty, accuracy, and richness that we often desire when interpreting real flesh-and-blood persons and making decisions that affect their lives, but it does provide a set of conceptual and theoretical tools that indirectly foster knowledge about individuals by improving our interpretive capabilities.

3.2. Universalistic versus historic-cultural approaches

From a non-reductive notion of personality as a rational whole imbed with intentionality, rather than a mechanical system, it follows that personality is in part *constituted*, rather than just *caused* by, the person's relations to those aspects of the world that s/he thinks and feels about and acts upon, including discourses, institutions, ideologies, and other cultural phenomena (Bishop, 2007; Davidson, 1977; Fay, 1997; Searle, 1983). As noted above, the intentional level of description cannot sustain nomological descriptions that are entirely independent of historical and cultural contingencies, partly personality is dependent upon the world – the person, so to speak, lives within, and acts upon, a symbolic, culturally constituted world. Yet personality is, as already suggested, not reducible to culture, because each person does, to some extent, inhabit a unique cultural world, encountering a unique set of cultural expressions and relating to them in a personal way, personality is shaped also by internal culture-independent causal forces, and agency may, once it has developed, foster a degree of autonomy from the influences of the socio-cultural world.

We nevertheless need to adopt a stance toward culture in our research. At the individual-centered level of analysis, we are automatically led to focus on the person's idiosyncratic participation in culture. But at the variable-centered level of analysis, there are two different options: either we choose a *universalistic* approach that tries to look for commonalities across cultures, stripping away layers of culture-specific meaning to make the cultures comparable, or we can opt for a *historic-cultural* approach that studies personality in its cultural embedment,

focusing on culture-specific meanings and emphasizing cultural differences over similarities (see Paper I). Even though personality is inherently culture-dependent, it can indeed be useful to adopt a universalistic stance to personality, because, just like we cannot understand individuals as atoms, we cannot understand cultures as radically different; if different cultures had their own indigenous definitions of personality (Allwood, 2011) and their own mutually incommensurate personality languages, other cultures would be unintelligible to us (Davidson, 1974), and this would drive down a wedge between cultures rather than fostering inter-cultural understanding. This does not necessarily mean that we have to apply the same personality constructs to all cultures, because we can make culture-specific constructs intelligible in more primitive terms (e.g. the Chinese "renqing" as a form of relationship orientation, Church, 2000; Piekkola, 2011). But it is, just like in the case of interpretation of individuals, helpful to adopt universalist personality concepts, such as the Big Five, as starting-points, and then investigate how a given culture deviates from the universalist scheme. Cheung, Fan, and To (2008) have, for example, argued that Chinese culture contains forms of interpersonal relatedness that cannot be reduced to the Big Five, clarifying how it differs from other culture. If I, furthermore, would plan to study a group of Chinese persons, I would be wise to read up on this research, so that I, in turn, can understand them as unique individuals against their own cultural background.

Most of the Big Five trait constructs have, however, proved to work fairly well even without cultural attunement (Church, 2000; McCrae, 2001; Triandis & Suh, 2002). This has commonly been interpreted as evidence for the idea that traits are, because of their biological and evolutionary underpinnings, inherently universal, and thus more basic than other, personality characteristics (McCrae & Costa, 2008; McAdams & Pals, 2006). There is, however, plenty of evidence undermining this idea today. For example, research on values (Schwartz, 1992, 1994) and social beliefs (Leung et al., 2002) suggests that their structure is as universal as that of traits, and heritability research on political, religious, and authoritarian beliefs and attitudes (Bouchard, 2004) and values (Schermer et al., 2011), suggests they are, surprisingly, every bit as heritable as traits. There are also good theoretical reasons to study the worldview through a universalistic lens. Although we might intuitively reason that worldviews, unlike traits, are so different from each other because people actually live in different physical, social, cultural, and historical worlds, there are in fact two important senses in which all persons live in exactly the same world. The first one is that we all live in the same universe, with the same physical and biological constraints, and on the same planet earth, which is inhabited by other persons with whom we interact and form groups and societies (Searle, 2010). The second one, which is, because of its centrality to what makes us uniquely human, particularly relevant to the theory of worldviews, is that we all, insofar as we are existentially aware beings, are caught in the same existential predicament, confronting us with the same kind of impermance and

corruptibility of our world, injustice and evil, mind-boggling possibilities of choice, epistemic finitude, and problem of finding meaning and value in life (Becker, 1973; Dilthey, 1890/1957; Jaspers, 1919; Chapter 6). The most general worldview constructs, which deal with such fundamental issues in life, may therefore be as universally applicable, and in that sense basic, as the Big Five, and the Big Five are, conversely, highly universally applicable because they are based upon universalist methodology; not because traits are intrinsically universal (Paper I).

3.3. Situational globalism versus interactionism

Researchers need to take a stance not just to culture, but also to the situation. There are, again, two options: either we adopt a *globalist* approach that strips away intra-individual variation across situations, on the assumption that the person has a global situation-independent level of the given personality characteristic, or we adopt an *interactionist* approach that focuses on within-personality variability across situations, thus portraying the given personality characteristic as partly constituted by the relation, or interaction, between the person and different situations. On globalism, a person has one global level of, say, sociability that does not vary with whether the person is, for example, at home or at work, although it may change over time; on interactionism, one person could, for example, be sociable at home and unsociable at work whereas another person is unsociable at home and sociable at work, which makes sociability conditional upon person-situation interaction.

The globalist approach, which has dominated personality psychology throughout most of the field's history, came under heavy fire in Mischel's (1968) landmark attack on trait psychology, which unlike Lamiell's (1981, 1997, 2000, 2010) critique did leave a lasting mark on the field. Mischel emphasized the strength of situational determinants of behavior, as evidenced by social psychology experiments, as well as the typical finding of low correlations between behaviors that were assumed to express the same trait across situations. His attack initiated the classical person-situation debate, which raged on for years, shaking the very foundations of the field (Pervin, 2002; Swann & Seyle, 2005). The personality field was so strongly associated with trait globalism that it was debated even whether personality exists at all. But trait globalism recovered quickly and traits came out "back on top" (McAdams, 1992) with the development of the Big Five. Today, many personality psychologists acknowledge the power of the situation but maintain that is reconcilable with individual consistency across situations (Fleeson, 2001, 2004; Fleeson & Noftle, 2008; Funder, 2001, 2006; Furr & Funder, 2004; Kenrick & Funder, 1983; Swann & Seyle, 2005). Two points are

particularly noteworthy. First, Funder (2001, 2006) has argued the person-situation dichotomy is false, because the sources of variance in personality are independent of the sources of invariance; that there is a big psychological difference between two situations (e.g. people are more fearful in one than the other), and thus a strong situational effect, does not make behavioral consistency across those situations (e.g. whether the same persons are the most fearful in both situations) any lower than if the situations are psychologically similar. In other words, a global personality aspect may still be highly amenable to situational influence. For example, Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) are highly stable for individuals across time and situations but also highly amenable to situational influences (e.g. education, changes in society, and temporary salience of threat, Duckitt & Sibley, 2010, 2011). Second, personality consistency is in itself a complex notion. Fleeson and Noftle (2008) have distinguished a range of different types of consistency concepts that vary in how consistency is defined and measured (e.g. single enactment versus aggregated enactment, and absolute versus ipsative consistency), arguing that personality may turn out to be consistent in some ways but not in others.

Globalism remains the default angle on both traits and worldviews today even when combined with a historic-cultural approach, as in the case with the measurement of Chinese personality (Cheung, Fan, & To, 2008). Self-reports are used widely to measure traits, because they capitalize upon the human ability to form generalized representations of the self and others across much broader sweeps of situations than it would be practically possible for a scientist to observe individuals in. The breadth of the personality constructs is, on the globalistic approach, reconciled with predictive and explanatory power in particular situations through the use of hierarchical models of a wide range of more fine-grained constructs that are nested within the superordinate traits and embedded in the same parsimonious framework (Costa & McCrae, 1995; Gustafsson, 2001; Paper II). It is, however, difficult to know whether the use of self-report measures makes traits appear more global than they are, both because researchers do not really know today whether the consistencies in people's perceptions of themselves and others reflect consistencies in actual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Funder, 2001; Pervin, 2002; Shweder, 1975; Shweder & D'Andrade, 1979, 1980; Srivastava, 2010) or whether biases such as the fundamental attribution error (Ross, 1977) inflate the estimates of personality consistency, and because people do, at least sometimes, express more complex and contextualized personality judgments in everyday life, when they are not constrained by the globalistic questionnaire format (Kammrath, Mendoza-Denton, & Mischel, 2005).

But global trait measures have, nevertheless, demonstrated their usefulness for predicting and explaining behavior (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008; McCrae & Costa, 2008), and have thus proven to be convenient and effective approximations

of some of the main aspects of people's personalities (McAdams, 1992; McAdams & Pals, 2006). Even if they do turn out to artificially inflate the globality of the personality aspects they target, the resulting simplification may, in fact, be what makes them so useful; the sheer scope of global, conglomerate constructs potentially outweigh the costs of simplification and roughness (Kukla, 2002; McAdams, 1992; McAdams & Pals, 2006). This conclusion must, however, be tempered with an awareness of the fact that all traits – even the Big Five – are limited in their situational reference (e.g. sociability refers to behavior in social situations) and tend to favor some kinds of situations over others (Berge & deRaad, 2002; Denissen & Penke, 2008).

Interactionism, on the other hand, grew out of a behavioristic appreciation of the importance of the situation to behavior (Mischel, 1968). But it would however be misleading to label it "situationism" (Swann & Seyle, 2005), if that would be taken to imply that this angle focuses on the situation instead of the person – such a radical situationism would lead to the rejection of personality psychology altogether. Rather, this approach studies the interaction between the person and the situation – that is, what makes one person rather than another interpret a situation, and act upon it, in a particular way – thereby bridging the traditional gap between personality and social psychology. From this perspective, an individual's personality is found in his temporally stable profile, or "signature", of local, or conditional traits (Bandura, 1999; Doris, 2002; Mischel & Peake, 1982; Mischel & Shoda, 2008).

One central issue for the interactionist is how to define the concept of situation and, consequently, how to classify situations into types. This issue arises for the globalist too, insofar as he tries to demonstrate the cross-situational consistency of a particular trait, but it is more crucial for the interactionist, given that he has built in the situation into the very definition of a trait and can therefore not even describe the trait without describing the situations that it is conditional upon. There is, unfortunately, no consensus today on how to define and classify situations, although numerous researchers have recently emphasized how pivotal this issue is for personality and social psychology (Berge & deRaad, 2002; Cervone, 2004; Funder, 2001, 2006; Reis, 2008; Sherman, Nave, & Funder, 2010; Swann & Seyle, 2005; Yang, Read, & Miller, 2009), some of which have also contributed with theoretical (Reis, 2008; Yang, Read, & Miller, 2009) and empirical (Berge & deRaad, 2002; Sherman, Nave, & Funder, 2010) developments. The most basic distinction, made in this literature is between defining situations in objective or environmental terms (e.g. being in a classroom or at work) and defining them in subjective or psychological terms (e.g. having your ideas rejected). This distinction gives rise to two different forms of interactionism, which we may call objective and subjective interactionism respectively.

Objective interactionism is exemplified by research in which conventional personality traits, such as the Big Five, are measured across objective situations usually defined in terms of social roles or cultures cues, including personality as a student, friend, parent, relationship partner, employee, or American (Heller et al., 2007; Roberts, 2007; Wood, 2007). Contextualized trait ratings are obtained either by simply asking people to report what their personality is like across different situations or, more laboriously but presumably with less response artifact (Heller et al., 2007), by measuring personality online when the person is in a particular situation, occupying a specific social role. This approach forms a quite mild departure from the traditional Big Five approach, in the sense that it portrays interactionist personality assessment as a complement rather than replacement of globalist assessment and that it even compares the predictive power of global versus interactionist measures of traits within the same studies (Slatcher & Vazire, 2009; Wood, 2007). But by retaining the global personality constructs and focusing on the objective situation, it ends up powerless to help us see unity within personality and instead portrays the person as fragmented across different "personalities" (Doris, 2002; Heller et al., 2007; Roberts, 2007).

Subjective or psychological interactionism, on the other hand, which is most pronounced in the socio-cognitive tradition (Bandura, 1999; Cervone, 2004; Higgins & Scholer, 2008; Mischel & Shoda, 2008; Molden & Dweck, 2006), locates the source of consistency in personality to those aspects of the worldview through which people appraise situations consistently across time. The biological, mechanistic, substrata of personality, which form the core source of consistency in FFT, may, on the socio-cognitive account, only influence consistency indirectly through the worldview. Moreover, by urging for the development of a new trait vocabulary, with more conditional and situation-bound traits, subjective or psychological interactionism forms a more radical departure from the conventional Big Five approach than does objective interactionism. But it faces two crucial conceptual problems.

First, the notion of the situation as wholly subjective, and determined by the unique learning history, which has associated stimuli with idiosyncratic meanings (Mischel, 1973), would lead to the annihilation of a personality psychology – our task would be to determine what situations different persons tend to experience rather than how they tend to think, feel, and behave across different situations. Mischel and Shoda's (1995, 2008) move is to instead have traits apply to situations as defined through their active psychological ingredients (e.g. being teased, provoked, or threatened), which are imbued with intentionality. There is, however, an ambiguity in Mischel and Shoda's framework concerning whether the psychological situation is ultimately objective or subjective. Mischel and Shoda (2008) describe the psychological situation as "the situation as perceived and appraised or construed by the individual", but this description does not fit with

their own examples of actual socio-cognitive research and it would render the whole notion of conditional traits nonsensical, because it would not make sense to say that the person varies in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors across his own subjectively defined situations (see also Reis, 2008). The implicit assumption that socio-cognitive research appears to, and probably must, operate on is that the situations denoted by trait constructs are objective, in the sense that they are the same for everybody, albeit defined in terms of intentionality (e.g. to be teased or warned), and that it is important to study both people's behaviors and their subjective experiences (or "subjective situations") across different objective situations (e.g. when teased, threatened, provoked, warned, etc.). In fact, situations that are inter-subjectively ambiguous, in the sense of having multiple plausible interpretations, are treated as especially useful on the socio-cognitive perspective (Higgins & Scholer, 2008) because they allow us to study the intricate ways in which the person's subjective interpretations of the situation, and not just the psychological ingredients per se, shape his thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, which further shapes what type of situations he exposes himself to. But if the situation in itself was subjective rather than objective, it could not possibly be ambiguous – different types of persons would just be in different situations when confronted with ambiguous stimuli.

The second problem is that it is not always clear whether socio-cognitivists ultimately really want a conditional trait vocabulary or just one with global but narrow and situation-specific traits. If we want to retain trait constructs of the conventional sort, which are generated from a folk-psychological perspective, we would surely, according to socio-cognitive theory, need to conditionalize these constructs, because they hide different profiles of variability across different situations. But if the goal is to generate new constructs in a more bottom up way, in order to capture these profiles, then many, if not all, of the conditionalities could ultimately be removed from the vocabulary. For example, if we define romantic rejection sensitivity as sensitivity to the psychological ingredient of being rejected by a romantic partner, then we could invent a new global construct (assuming that a person is equally sensitive to romantic rejection across different situations) to capture the characteristic signature of romantic rejection sensitivity. If this construct still would hide different profiles of variability, then the conclusion would be that it inappropriately aggregates different psychological ingredients and needs to be split into more fine-grained constructs. This process of construct proliferation could in theory go on ad finitum, if the goal is to produce truly ideographic understanding of individuals. But socio-cognitive theorists clearly do have the ambition to generalize, and therefore need to ignore some of the idiosyncrasies of individuals, grouping together similar behavioral profiles within a common construct (Funder, 2008). The goal appears to be to account for as many behavioral profiles as possible, at an appropriate level of detail, and thus to remove the conditionalities from the construct itself, even though this goal may

never be completely realized. On the socio-cognitive perspective it is therefore, ironically, the socio-cognitive traits that are potentially non-conditional and the conventional traits that are conditional. Furthermore, considering that socio-cognitive theorists do in fact often seem to strive toward as much globalism as possible, the only difference left, in comparison with the Big Five trait approach, is that the socio-cognitive traits are generated bottom-up from a consideration of the psychological ingredients of situations, and not from the folk-psychological vocabulary, and that they therefore have a clearly defined, and often more narrow, situational scope (cf. Caprara & Cervone, 2000; see Paper I).

Conceptual issues notwithstanding, it is clear that the interactionist approach can indeed contribute to personality psychology, both through the invention of new useful constructs, of which there are many examples (Bandura, 1999; Dweck, 2006; Higgins & Scholer, 2008; Mischel & Shoda, 2008), and with more in-depth studies of those more fine-grained and conditional patterns of variability that are aggregated in conventional trait constructs. We are today no way near reducing conventional constructs such as the Big Five to an alternative set of constructs, conditional or non-conditional, that captures all the underlying behavioral signatures, and even if that would be possible in theory, which Mischel and Shoda (2008) seem to think, socio-cognitive theorists are yet to demonstrate that such a vocabulary would be able to produce a coherent view of personality and not just a set of disparate, situation-specific constructs (Funder, 2008).

3.4. Toward an integrative framework

There clearly is a risk that methodological pluralism will foster simple-minded eclecticism (Allport, 1964; Slife, 1987) and legitimize, exacerbate, and perpetuate theoretical and institutional fragmentation (Goertzen, 2008) and other problems in the field, rather than promoting holistic understanding of individuals, unless we complement it with strategies for integration. Given that personality psychology provides an epistemic toolbox of conceptual and theoretical resources that its "consumers" can use to develop a holistic understanding of particular persons or solve contextualized research problems, rather than providing complete idiographic theories for particular individuals and settings, one key step is to gather these resources in a coherent framework that facilitates integration of different strands of knowledge about personality. Because portrayals of the field have, traditionally, failed to provide such an integrative conception of the person, whether focusing on the "grand theories" or on contemporary research topics, McAdams (1992, 1995; McAdams & Manzcak, 2011; McAdams & Olson, 2010; McAdams & Pals, 2006) has tried to develop one. But even though McAdams has done an admirable job in explaining how contemporary research findings apply to

the idiographic understanding of individuals, the present analyses point to several shortcomings with his model, at least insofar as it is used to guide thinking about personality research.

McAdams' model divides personality into three different levels. The first level is the *dispositional signature*, which consists of de-contextualized and largely non-conditional traits, such as the Big Five. The second level contains motivational, cognitive, and developmental adaptations that are contextualized in time, place, and/or social role and thus more anchored in the particularities and dynamics of everyday life and more amenable to environmental influence than personality traits, which McAdams has called *middle-level units* (McAdams, 1992), *personal concerns* (McAdams, 1995, 1996), and, most recently, *characteristic adaptations* (McAdams & Olson, 2010; McAdams & Pals, 2006). The third level consists of *life-story narratives*, which people internalize and develop over time, drawing on a cultural menu or narrative forms and contents, in order to make sense of their own lives. Life-story narratives are, according to McAdams (1992; McAdams & Pals, 2006) more strongly contextualized by culture, class, gender, and social factors than constructs at the other levels and implicated in the search for unity, purpose, and meaning that forms a crucial part of personal identity.

Regarding the relationship between the layers, McAdams has suggested that: (1) each level represents a different discourse for personality, with its own nomenclatures, taxonomies, and theories, and that all the levels should be studied in their own right rather than reduced to manifestations of the causal operations of lower levels (McAdams, 1995; McAdams & Pals, 2006), (2) the levels represent a progression in how deeply we know a person, with traits providing only, at best, a broad outline of the first impression one would get upon meeting a person – a "psychology of the stranger" (McAdams, 1992, 1995) – and most recently (3) the levels represent different developmental layers, beginning with the child as social actor with an inherited temperament, through the elementary school years when children become motivated agents with personal goals and projects for their lives, and into early adulthood when the problem of identity-formation emerges on the scene (McAdams & Adler, 2006; McAdams & Manzcak, 2011; McAdams & Olson, 2010).

Let us temporarily set aside the question of what exactly McAdams' model potentially leaves out of personality, which I will return to later (Chapter 4.7). In light of the conclusions drawn so far, one problem with McAdams' model is that it appears to conflate different kinds of contextualization, and theoretical units with methods of contextualization. For example, interactionism about situations is often combined with an ambition to describe personality with universal constructs, both in the case of retaining the Big Five (Roberts, 2007) and in the case of replacing or complementing it with a vocabulary couched in the universalistic language of

cognitive psychology (Bandura, 1999; Mischel & Shoda, 2008), and as I pointed out earlier, globalism about situations is often combined not just with the universalistic study of traits, but also with the study of culture-specific traits and worldviews (e.g. Cheung, Fan, & To, 2008). There is also, as argued in Paper I, no empirical evidence, or theoretical justification, for McAdams' claim that the dispositional signature is inherently more universal in structure than other general worldview characteristics (Leung et al., 2002; Schwartz, 1992). McAdams' framework is therefore unable to provide a nuanced account of the differences between prevailing traditions in the field and reifies conventional divisions between different research traditions, preventing us to see important yet hitherto unexplored possibilities for research (see Paper I); it may be useful as a simplifying tool that helps us to integrate different research findings in idiographic interpretation, but it is less suitable for organizing descriptive and normative thought about research on personality. An attempt to provide a more nuanced conceptualization of previous personality research, on the basis of my own distinctions, is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Conceptualization of research traditions in personality psychology

	Obj.	Subj.	Univ.	Cult.	Var.	Pers.	Glob.	Int.
Big Five	√		√		√		√	
Social-cognitive	√	√	√		√	√	√	√
Social constructionism		√		√				√
Critical personalism	√	√		√		√	√	
Life-narrative		√	√	√	√	√	√	
Interactionism	√	√		√		√		√
Personal construct		√		√	√	√	√	√

Note: Traditions: Big Five (McCrae & Costa, 2008); Social-cognitive (Mischel & Shoda, 2008); Social constructionist (Harré, Clarke, & DeCarlo, 1985); Critical personalist (Lamiell, 1987); Life-narrative (McAdams, 2008); Holistic interactionist (Magnusson, 1999); Personal construct (Little, 1998). Dimensions: objective (trait-focused), subjective (worldview-focused), universalist, historic-cultural, variable-centered, person-centered, globalist, and interactional.

With all these distinctions in place, it is crucial to finally emphasize the role of integration, in terms of showing, as I have tried to do, how different methods are combinable and dependent on each other, and encouraging integrative research

that transcends the conventional divisions between different "levels" of personality and constructs (see Paper I). McAdams (1992, 1995) has, as his critics have pointed out (Little, 1996, 2006; McCrae, 1996), at least originally, been concerned chiefly with establishing his three levels of personality as mutually irreducible and worth studying on their own terms, without due emphasis on the importance of studying how they are integrated with each other – how for example goals (Little, 1996, 2006) and traits (McCrae, 1996) are expressed in, and weaved into, life-story narratives. But personality is not a co-assemblage of disparate parts, each of which comes with its own theory and methodology; it is a complex, integrated totality that can be studied through different methodological perspectives, and this methodological diversity should enable, rather than preclude, theoretical unity. Even though the development of rich, holistic understandings of personalities may ultimately be an idiographic affair, we can, I contend, greatly improve the conceptual toolbox used to anchor and verbalize these understandings, by developing richer, more integrative portraits of personality types as well as general principles and concepts that facilitate idiographic integration of different kinds of evidence.

4. Previous personality theory and research: Problems and limitations

The tensions between the mechanistic level of description, which portrays human beings as causal systems subject to the laws of physics, chemistry, and biology, and the intentional level of description, which infuses human beings with consciousness, intentionality, free will, language, and morality (Searle, 2010), pervade not just philosophy, but also personality psychology, eliciting confusion, and in some cases flat-out contradiction. The confusions are not limited to accounts that aspire to be reductionistic, but, with notable exceptions (e.g. Kelly, 1955; Rychlak, 1988), permeate, and contaminate, the entire field.

A second basic problem is that those approaches that study persons in their uniquely human capacities typically leave out important aspects of personality. They study the person as agent (Kelly, 1955; Little, 2005; Rychlak, 1988), as social actor (Bandura, 1999; Cervone, 2004; Mischel & Shoda, 2008), as self-actualizer (Maslow, 1968; Rogers, 1961), or as autobiographical story-teller (McAdams, 1996, 2008), but not the *person as meaning-maker* in a more general sense that encompasses, and transcends, all these things. I will therefore clarify the confusions and omissions of some of the most important traditions within personality psychology, trying to motivate the need for a new approach to the study of personality.

4.1. Trait theory

The central problem of the trait tradition lies in its reductionistic conception of traits, which cannot be reconciled with its very reasonable attempt to study personality from a human rather than natural science perspective, and therefore engenders conceptual confusion and inappropriate neglect of other ways to study personality. The most extreme expression of contemporary trait thinking is found in *Five-Factor Theory* (FFT; McCrae & Costa, 2008). Although far from all trait theorists today share all the assumptions of FFT, this theory nevertheless epitomizes a way of thinking that is deeply entrenched within the field. I will therefore explicate several interrelated problems with FFT, which apply to different forms of trait theory to varying degrees.

FFT was developed by McCrae and his colleagues (Costa & McCrae, 1994; McCrae & Costa, 1987, 1996, 2008; McCrae & John, 1992) as an attempt to provide the empirically driven trait paradigm with a theoretical framework. The empirical findings that the Big Five trait categories of Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness recurred both across cultures and languages and across methods of measurement, and that they had heritability coefficients accounting for as much as half of the variance in trait levels, led McCrae and colleagues to conclude that the Big Five represent the basic, biologically rooted, constituents of personality. On FFT, these five personality traits are *basic tendencies*, which, along with other abstract potentials such as cognitive abilities and artistic talents, grow, endogenously, from within the person, independently of environmental influence. FFT does acknowledge *characteristic adaptations*, such as habits, beliefs, attitudes, skills, roles, and relationships, as non-basic aspects of personality, which form as the personality traits interact with different environments and adapt the person to cultural settings. But it portrays these characteristic adaptations as reducible to the Big Five, in the sense that they must reflect the operation of the traits in order to be relevant to personality psychology. Although far from all trait theorists today believe that the Big Five have a special status that sharply demarcates them from other traits (Ashton et al., 2004; Block, 1995; de Raad & Barelds, 2008; Eysenck, 1992; Paunonen & Jackson, 2000; Piedmont, 1999; Saucier, 2002), the idea that personality psychology should be built up upon a small, albeit negotiable, number of highly universal traits, presumably rooted in internal causal properties, is still widespread.

First off, the assumption that people exhibit regularities of thought, feeling, and behavior that can be adequately described in terms of the Big Five can be questioned, because the evidence for it, which is based mainly upon self-report and peer-report rather than actual observation (Funder, 2001), does not show that the patterns are necessarily real as opposed to only existing in our perceptions of personality (Shweder, 1975; Shweder & D'Andrade, 1979, 1980; Srivastava, 2010). Even though self-reported traits do correlate predictably with more objective measures of patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, this does not imply that the actual patterns are necessarily structurally isomorphic with the perceived patterns. This potential mismatch is, however, a minor problem in comparison with the others, because the Big Five are clearly global, conglomerate, simplifying constructs that sacrifice accuracy for scope, and trait self-reports do predict behavior well (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008; McAdams, 1992).

A more severe problem, already mentioned (Chapter 3.1), is that the Big Five are statistical idealizations ("the average person") that exist in the relations *between* persons, rather than within any particular person (Lamiell, 1981, 1987, 1997, 2003), with a varying degree of overlap with idiographic trait structure (Grice, 2004; Grice, Jackson, & McDaniel, 2006; Nesselroade et al., 2007; Zhang,

Browne, & Nesselroade, 2011). They can therefore not exist as endogenous structures within the person.

Moreover, even in case they do exist at the level of the individual, as real regularities of thought, feeling, and behavior, this does not necessarily legitimize the inference of underlying causal structure from behavior. The idea behind FFT is that human behavior is *dispositional* – that just like a glass with the disposition of fragility (Mackie, 1977), which corresponds to certain chemical properties within the glass, tends to break every time we smash it onto the floor, persons with, for example, the disposition for sociability tend to behave sociably every time they are confronted with social situations. But whereas the link between the chemical properties of the glass and breaking is purely mechanical, the causes of human behavior are multifarious and intricately interactive, involving not just internal causal structures but learned appraisals of, and reactions to, situations (Cervone, 2004; Mischel & Shoda, 2008), selective choice of, or exposure to, situations (Bandura, 1999), participation in social role plays (Harré, Clarke, & DeCarlo, 1985), project pursuits undertaken to act, for example, in accordance with particular traits ("free traits", Little, 2001), and intentional causes (Rychlak, 1988) and worldviews in general (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). We can therefore not treat human behaviors as though they are simple reflections of internal causal structure.

It is, however, conceivable that some human behaviors are dispositional, in the same sense as the glass, to a very high degree. But even if we assume that the Big Five are dispositional in that sense, which is, due to their breadth, unlikely, there is a yet more fundamental problem with inferring causal structure, discussed at length by Boag (2011): a disposition, or "tendency", is just a tendency for something to occur, or for somebody to do something, in particular situations – a *relation* between a person and an activity – and not a causal property in itself (Boag, 2011; Mackie, 1977). Although there are chemical properties causing the fragility of a glass, the fragility itself is the disposition to break in particular situations, and the chemical properties are just terms standing within the relation between the glass and the breaking behavior; knowing that the glass has a particular disposition tells us nothing about the chemical structure of the glass. In order to have a coherent notion of traits as causal properties, we would have to define trait constructs independently of any behaviors they are presumed to cause (e.g. in terms of biological systems). Trait psychologists have, in Boag's (2011) words, been "seduced by the ease and allure of 'verbal magic'", which allows them to maintain an illusion of explanation by magically turning something into a "cause" simply just by calling it a cause, instead of taking on the empirical task of identifying the causes. "The FFM may", according to Boag (2011), "as well be afforded the same status as the 'soul' or any other causal construct immune to empirical criticism". In line with this, FFT must, in fact, be regarded as falsified in some regards, if formulated in a way that makes it falsifiable, because there is, as

McCrae and Costa (2003, 2008) seem to admit, plenty of evidence indicating that traits are influenced by the environment (Lüdtke, Roberts, Trautwein, & Nagy, 2011; Specht, Egloff, & Schmukle, 2011). The natural move needed to circumvent this issue is to argue that the changes are really just "on the surface" – in how the traits are phenotypically expressed – and not in the genotype (McCrae & Costa, 2008). But this move just shields the theory from falsification, and thereby drains its empirical content (Popper, 1959/2002), unless trait theorists are able to define the Big Five in behavior-independent terms that do permit potential falsification.

Where do these problems leave trait theory? Continuing to exercise "verbal magic", reification of relations into non-relational properties, and other forms of fallacious reasoning that are common in psychology is, as argued by Boag (2011), clearly not an option if personality psychology is to aspire to being a rigorous scientific discipline. Trait psychologists have to either concede that traits are regularities of thought, feeling, and behavior, or dispositions at best, or they have to bite the bullet and opt for a radical revision of the trait vocabulary that replaces the Big Five and other traits with names of causal, perhaps biological, structures. The second option is, however, nonsensical once the conceptual muddles have been cleared, because the entire problem of trait reification is a product of a reductive conception of personality in the first place. The idea is that because trait explanations are circular if traits refer to behavioral regularities, explaining, for example, sociable behavior in terms of sociability (Block, 1995; Epstein, 1994; Pervin, 1994), traits must be causal structures rather than behavioral regularities in order to be explanatory. But trait explanations are, insofar as traits are aspects of personality, explanatory because they are infused with theoretical assumptions about rationality, concerning what it makes sense for a person with a given trait to think, feel, or do, and assumptions about how the person's behavioral dispositions and capacities transfer to new situations; not because they are mechanistic. Rationality-based explanations are circular, because they explain by elucidating the meaning of the action, and defining it, in terms of the reason – by connecting rather than separating explanans and explanadum – and this is exactly why traits can indeed explain behavior, which we intuitively perceive them to be able to do. That the cause and the outcome must be independent existences only means that there is *some* description of them that portrays them as logically independent; not that all descriptions do so (Davidson, 1963). This does, furthermore, not in any way detract from the importance of studying the biological mechanisms causing of traits (e.g. DeYoung, 2010; Digman, 1997); it just means that the causal mechanisms are not a part of personality per se, at least if we mean anything more than disposition with the term 'mechanism'.

4.2. Socio-cognitive theory

At face value, socio-cognitive theory looks very similar to a theory of worldviews, defining personality in terms of systems of mental representations, such as "cognitive-affective systems" (Mischel & Shoda, 2008), "ways of seeing" (Higgins & Scholer, 2008), "knowledge-and-appraisal systems" (Cervone, 2004), or "self-systems" (Bandura, 1999). Like FFT, it defines personality as a cause of regularities of thought, feeling, and behavior, but unlike FFT it actually provides an account of the causes, in terms of the mental representations that make the person interpret, and act upon, situations in a particular way. But even though it seems to have attracted many researchers with non-reductive sensibilities, it is still, in many respects, embedded within a mechanistic paradigm of thought, conditioned by the cognitive behaviorism it has evolved from (e.g. Bandura, 1986; Mischel, 1973).

Like in trait psychology, the main focus in socio-cognitive theory is on accounting for behavior. Constructs denoting mental states and processes are generally seen as derivatively interesting to the extent that they can help to explain the causation of particular behavioral phenomena, and are therefore generated "bottom-up" (Caprara & Cervone, 2000), from the phenomena they are invoked to explain, rather than top-down, from an intrinsic interest in how the person experiences the world. There is, with notable exceptions (e.g. Molden & Dweck, 2006), seldom much interest in studying and explaining the subjective meanings in their own right, which is, I have argued, pivotal on a non-reductive account of personality, and mental phenomena are portrayed as mere causal sources of coherence in personality (Cervone & Shoda, 1999) rather than part of the coherence that is to be explained, even though personality is defined in mental terms (e.g. Cervone, 2004; Mischel & Shoda, 2008). Socio-cognitivists have therefore mainly been concerned with particular beliefs and expectations about the self and the social world that are directly causally relevant to behavior in specific kinds of situations (Bandura, 1999; Higgins & Scholer, 2008; Mischel & Shoda, 2008), while ignoring more general aspects of the worldview, such as view of human nature (Tomkins, 1963, 1965; Wrightsman, 1992), metaphysical assumptions (Johnson et al., 1988; Kramer, Kahlbaugh, & Goldston, 1992; Paulhus & Carey, 2011), and life-story narratives (McAdams, 1996, 2008), which imbue the worldview with meaning and provide a sense of purpose and directionality that forms a necessary background for action. Such more general worldview constructs may also predict behavior (Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Chapter 5) even when not designed in terms of what they are supposed to predict. Socio-cognitive theory consequently also gives a fragmented picture of the person's worldview, depicting it as though it consists of many different domain-specific modules that are partially independent (Bandura, 1999) – which may very well be

appropriate for a mechanistic description of the mental, but not when it is described in terms of intentionality (Davidson, 1977; Searle, 1983) – and therefore provides little insight into those meaning systems that bind different aspects of the worldview together.

Socio-cognitive theories, moreover, generally operate on a mechanistic model of explanation. For example, Cervone (2004) writes that "In a social– cognitive approach, if one wanted to explain an individual's overt dispositional tendencies, one would do so in terms of basic social– cognitive and affective mechanisms." But Bandura (1986, 1999, 2001) is an especially interesting case in point, because he has explicitly professed an "agentic" conception of personality, and has struggled against reductionistic influences in psychology for decades, yet his explanatory model is still difficult to ultimately understand in anything other than mechanistic terms. On Bandura's account, human behavior is understood in terms of "triadic reciprocal causation" between (1) internal properties, such as cognitions, affects, and biological events, (2) environmental events, and (3) behavioral patterns; persons are proactive in choosing and constructing their behaviors and environments, which in turn causes new cognitions and affects as they reflect upon the meaning and soundness of their thoughts and actions, and the environments also, in turn, influence behavior and become influenced by it. But even though this model may very well provide a sophisticated and valuable account of the mechanistic causes of human behavior, it does not live up to Bandura's ambition to provide a non-reductive account of personality, because it portrays reasons (including intentions, self-efficacy beliefs, and self-reflections, which Bandura emphasize) merely as mediating factors in complex chains of mechanistic causality (Martin, Sugarman, & Thompson, 2003; Rychlak, 1988). As discussed in Chapter 2, when we explain something as an *action*, performed by a rational agent, we do by explicating its reason, whether this reason includes the conscious intention or not, so as to show why it would make sense for the agent to perform the action in question. The intention is part of what Aristotle called a "final" cause – the reason, or *purpose*, for which the action came into being – which in itself provides the explanation without reference to further causes; it is not merely a mediating factor in a longer chain of efficient causes (Hacker, 2007; Rychlak, 1981, 1988). We could very well explain the intention in terms of mechanistic (efficient and material) causes, but this would be an explanation *of the intention* rather than the action (Malle, 1999). Moreover, the relations between the person, the world, and the behaviors are not just causal, as in Bandura's model, but also, insofar as we describe the person in intentional terms, constitutive; the action is in part constituted by the intention, the intention is in part constituted by other aspects of the worldview, and the worldview is in part constituted by what it is about (Bishop, 2007; Martin, Sugarman, & Thompson, 2003; Chapters 2 and 3). Hence, Bandura's (1986, 1999, 2001) model takes intentions into account as efficient causes, and does so in a most sophisticated way, but it does not take

intentionality (Searle, 1983), which is crucial for a non-reductive account of personality, into account.

4.3. Personal construct theory

Personal construct theory, which was originated by Kelly (1955), and elaborated through the work of his disciples (Little, 2001, 2005, 2006; Rychlak, 1968, 1988; Walker & Winter, 2007) is one of the most coherently non-reductive approaches to agency in personality psychology. Kelly (1955) wholeheartedly embraced the idea of the person as agent, whose actions are explained in terms of the subjective meanings they *presently* have for him or her – that is in terms of his or her "personal constructs", as final causes, rather than in terms of any historical factors in his past. Similar to this, Little (1996, 2001, 2005, 2006), who is a key champion of a Kellian approach in personality psychology today, conceptualizes behavior, in his research, in terms of the projects the person sees himself as pursuing, and has emphasized the role of these kinds of "personal action constructs" (Little, 1996, 2006) in theoretical integration between trait psychology and meaning-focused approaches to personality.

But even though personal construct theory does have a non-reductive conception of agency, its insistence on the primacy of agency leads to a neglect of other aspects of meaning-making that are not readily reducible to the person's attempts to instrumentally master his world. Kelly (1955) portrayed persons as lay scientists who are constantly trying to anticipate the future, by asking questions and testing hypotheses that lead them to better be able to improve their personal constructs so that they can better predict future events, and rationally choose those constructs that enable them to best predict the future. The problem with this is that persons are not just calculators of the future, but also emotional and existential beings, whose constructs and actions are swayed by motivated reasoning (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Kunda, 1999), whose curiosity for knowledge is tempered by the existential fear and anxiety of knowing (Becker, 1973; Dilthey, 1890/1957; Jaspers, 1919; Jost et al., 2003; Maslow, 1968; Rokeach, 1960; Royce, 1964), and whose attempts to grapple with unintended, unanticipated, perhaps traumatic events, and with their existential and social world, personal identity, and purpose in life represent a pursuit of a sense of meaning in life rather than, primarily, an attempt to anticipate the future (Dilthey, 1890/1957; Jaspers, 1919; Janoff-Bulman, 1992; McAdams, 2008; Wong, 2012). Moreover, Kelly (1955) appeared to have a quite atomistic view of the personal constructs, claiming that persons are completely free to choose to view things in the way that they think will best allow them to predict future events, thus ignoring the fact that not just actions are partly constituted by their relations to meanings, but that also meanings are partly

constituted by, and constrained by, their relations to each other (Davidson, 1977; Searle, 1983). It is therefore no wonder that the Kellian tradition, like the socio-cognitive tradition, has generated little research on those most general aspects of meaning-making that are not necessarily directly related to predictions of, and actions toward, specific persons or things (Johnson et al., 1988; Kramer, Kahlbaugh, & Goldston, 1992; McAdams, 1996, 2008; Paulhus & Carey, 2011; Tomkins, 1963, 1965; Wrightsman, 1992) and upon how they are interweaved so as to form broader meaning systems.

4.4. Existentialistic theory

Existentialism is a complex and amorphous movement, covering partially intersecting and partially inconsistent systems of thought (Cooper, 2003; May, Angel, & Ellenberger, 1958). There are common themes, however, and one that is of particular importance here is the reluctance to pin down personalities with scientific constructs and typologies (Binswanger, 1963; Lamiell, 2003; Rogers, 1961; Sartre, 1946/2007; see also Rychlak, 1981). This reluctance is rooted in several different ideas. One of these ideas is that persons are complex, dynamic, and idiosyncratic wholes, defined in terms of their subjective "lived experience" (Dilthey, 1890/1957), which cannot be known from any objective, scientific perspective or pinned down into static categories but can only be understood hermeneutically. A second idea is that it is only the person him-/herself who can decide what person s/he is, which is epitomized by Sartre's (1946/2007) famous expression "existence precedes essence". A third idea is that scientific description of persons is not just epistemically problematic, but also morally reprehensible, because it depersonalizes and objectifies the person, making him or her, in accordance with the ideal of instrumental rationality (Bishop, 2007; Habermas, 1971), into a mindless, manipulable cog within a social machinery, and thereby stifling his or her opportunities for free choice and growth (Lamiell, 2003; Rogers, 1961). On this perspective, we should instead foster conditions in which persons can be open to, and engage with the world, on their own terms, and develop in whatever direction they autonomously choose, without pigeonholing them with our objective scientific constructs or trying to manipulate them, however good our intentions are (e.g. Binswanger, 1963; Rogers, 1961).

The existentialists are, I believe, right to point that personality cannot be reduced to a set of scores on any number of scientific variables. Personality is not in itself a measurable construct that can be operationalized in its totality, but rather an unfathomably complex whole that we can hope, at best, to partially illuminate through our constructs. Personality constructs are, as argued earlier (Chapter 2), simplifying tools use to anchor our understandings and communications rather

than classifications of the joints of nature, and the interpretations are always partial and temporary, describing the evolving relation between the person and his world rather than any internal non-relational essences. In this sense, existentialism provides us with a powerful reminder not to fall into the trap of instinctually reifying and essentializing human attributes (Boag, 2011; Hood, 2008; Ross, 1977). The existentialists are, furthermore, right to insist that we cannot have a natural science of personality, because meanings are subjectively constituted and therefore ultimately knowable only through the subject's first-person perspective, and they are not amenable to nomological treatment (Davidson, 1977; Fay, 1983; Searle, 1983; Chapter 3).

The existentialists do however go too far, insofar as they reject all attempts to systematically describe and compare different persons. There is no good reason to reject the idea of a systematic science of personality once we have abandoned reductionist dogma and adopted a more humble and pragmatic conception of our scientific descriptions. The exaggerated claims are understandable from a historical perspective, as a reaction, and counter-weight, to currents of reductionist, essentialist, and cynical thinking in psychology (e.g. Binswanger's, 1963, critique of Freud's imposition of contingent existential a priori assumptions on human nature). But on a non-reductive philosophy of personality, the prospect of a systematic science of personality should, hopefully, be less offensive to existentialists. As Rogers (1961) concluded from his reflections on this topic: "'science' will never depersonalize, or manipulate, or control individuals. It is only persons who can and will do that."

Some prejudicial constructs and classifications will, furthermore, always be present, at least implicitly, in the process of interpretation, because they are necessary for making other persons intelligible (Davidson, 1973; Gadamer, 1975); even existentialist theorists have their own implicit classifications of personality (Rychlak, 1981). The explication of those classificatory schemes and theoretical assumptions at least make them open to scrutiny and scientific improvement. The existentialist discouragement of systematic personality psychology may thus, insofar as we reject reductionist dogma, ultimately impede rather than safeguard our understandings of lived experiences, by removing precisely that descriptive concreteness, about different kinds of worldviews, that is crucial to fostering understanding.

4.5. Humanistic theory

Humanistic psychology, which intersects with existentialist thought, is genuinely concerned with those aspects of persons that make them uniquely

human, including their subjective meanings and their potential to grow and self-actualize (Allport, 1937, 1955; Maslow, 1968, 1970; Rogers, 1961; Stern, 1938). It formed a vital counterweight to reductive psychologies, especially in a clinical context, in the second half of the 20th century, opening up a new way of thinking beyond mechanistic behaviorism and psychoanalysis. In contrast to personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955; Little, 2001, 2005), several of the humanists showed a more explicit concern with aspects of meaning-making that go beyond the instrumentalist anticipation of future events and pursuit of goals. For Allport (1955), for example, the person's philosophy of life, consisting of his "ultimate presuppositions" and values, occupies a central position in personality, and for Maslow (1968) the person's framework of values, philosophy of life, or religion is crucial for psychological health.

But despite its emphasis on the psychological importance of worldviews, the humanistic tradition has generated little systematic research on worldviews. Allport (1961; Allport, Vernon, & Lindsey, 1960) did develop a typological measure of values, on the basis of Spranger's (1914/1928) writings about philosophies of life, which however fell out of favor with the development of more psychometrically sophisticated and narrow measures of values (Rokeach, 1979; Schwartz, 1992), and he also developed an influential measure of religious orientation (Allport & Ross, 1967). Coan (1974), furthermore, conceptualized worldview as an important aspect of optimal personality, and constructed a questionnaire measuring a wide range of worldview beliefs. But he just factor analyzed the items without developing a theory of his worldview dimensions or a program for further research. Rogers (1961) and Maslow (1968, 1970), on the other hand, were mainly clinical psychologists, with limited interest in doing research, and they compared different persons mainly with regards to whether there was congruence between their self-images and experiences (openness), and between their deepest yearnings and ways of life (self-actualization), but not in terms of their worldviews per se, which were treated as idiographic wholes. Hence, the humanistic tradition has not managed to generate a systematic study of worldviews, despite its theoretical insistence upon the importance of worldviews.

It is, finally, worth exploring the tension between eclecticism and holism in humanistic thought. Practically all humanists (Allport, 1955; Maslow, 1968, 1970; Rogers, 1961; Stern, 1938) have been explicitly concerned with acknowledging the importance of both the organismic side of person and his subjective meanings, and with overcoming the duality between them. Stern's (1938) influential conception of personality as "psycho-physically neutral" (Allport, 1937, 1955; Lamiell, 2003), may very well be seen as an early form of non-reductive materialism insofar as it affirms the reality of mind yet rejects mind-body dualism. But it differs from more modern versions of non-reductive materialism (Davidson, 1963, 1970; Searle, 1992, 2010) in not giving due appreciation to the crucial

differences between intentional and non-intentional levels of description. This problem can be seen most clearly in Allport's (1955, 1964) work. Allport (1964) was, perhaps more than any other thinker, concerned with developing a comprehensive understanding of human nature, spanning everything from biochemical processes to philosophies of life. He adopted a "systematic eclecticism" that "seeks the solution to fundamental problems by selecting and uniting what it regards as true in the several specialized approaches to psychological science". He did not want to exclude any ostensibly valid evidence about human nature, yet he conceded that "In speaking of 'systematic eclecticism' I know that I am on the edge of self-contradiction [..] A system is more than an eclectic assemblage. It offers a plus quality, a superordinate principle, to bind together the accepted particularisms." He was well aware that any truly systematic eclecticism would have to somehow deal with the central antinomies of psychology, between the person as material, reactive system and the person as conscious, pro-active agent, and his proposed solution was to view the person as an open organismic system and to therefore, following Stern (1938) define personality as an internal psycho-physical system (Allport, 1955). This move was, however, a mistake that may, in fact, have fueled reductionism, because the idea that personality is an internal causal property is not compatible with a non-reductive conception of personality, as argued in Chapters 2 and 3. Only if personality is defined at the intentional level of description can we hope to achieve a holistic conception of the person, because intentionality cannot be accounted for in (material and efficient) causal terms (Davidson, 1963, 1970; Fay, 1983, 1996; Searle, 1983, 1992), but we can account for reactive tendencies at the intentional level of description insofar as we can describe them as part of what it makes sense for a rational agent to do. Allport was therefore never able to satisfactorily resolve the antinomies of psychology, even though he was an anti-reductionist at heart, because he did not have access to the powerful philosophical tools we have today (Davidson, 1963, 1970, 1977; Dennett, 1987, 1991; Fay, 1983, 1996; Hacker, 2007; Searle, 1983, 1992).

4.6. McAdams' integrative framework

Few researchers have had a greater influence than McAdams (1992, 1995, 1996; McAdams & Pals, 2006) in developing and legitimizing a non-reductive study of personality today. He has eloquently discussed the limitations of trait reductionism (McAdams, 1992) and contributed to an increased appreciation of the importance of meaning-making through his research on life-story narratives (McAdams, 1996, 2008), while clarifying the strengths of both kinds of research programs. Yet it is not clear that McAdams (McAdams & Olson, 2010; McAdams

& Pals, 2006) has been able to take the leap from a simple eclectic juxtaposition of different traditions in the field to a truly integrative and comprehensive conception of personality (cf. Allport, 1964).

Recall that McAdams (1992, 1995; McAdams & Olson, 2010; McAdams & Pals, 2006) divides personality into three layers. The first layer consists of decontextualized and dispositional traits, such as the Big Five, the second consists of motivational, cognitive, and developmental adaptations that are contextualized, and the third consists of life-story narratives that are strongly contextualized. The first level thus corresponds to the traditional trait perspective, the third to McAdams' own research program, and the second to basically everything in between, from defense mechanisms to project pursuits. McAdams (1995) originally conceded that "level II would appear to be an ill-defined, bulky, and disorderly domain at present", but has recently (McAdams & Manzcak, 2011; McAdams & Olson, 2010) developed a more integrative developmental understanding of it, restricting it to constructs dealing with the person as goal-pursuing agent (see also Little, 1996). But where does this leave the worldview? The original formulation of layer 2 was so vague that it would fit almost any personality construct, including traits, because there are, as argued earlier (Chapter 3), no inherently decontextualized personality characteristics. The more recent formulation, on the other hand, appears unable to accommodate those general worldview characteristics (e.g. Johnson et al., 1988; Leung et al., 2002; Paulhus & Carey, 2011; Tomkins, 1963; Wrightsman, 1992) that I have emphasized, many of which deal with how persons make sense of the world rather than with what goals they pursue. Many of these general worldview characteristics most likely also start to develop long before children pursue goals – for how will goals emerge if not from conceptions about the world, however rudimentary? It would seem plausible, for example, that a particular child's goal to become the best soccer player in the world could stem from his notion of the importance of success in order to attain value ("normativism", Tomkins, 1963) and his beliefs about his athletic self-efficacy (Bandura, 1999). But if worldviews start developing before goals, it seems that we, on McAdams (McAdams & Manzcak, 2011; McAdams & Olson, 2010) developmental conception of the layers, need to either incorporate general worldview characteristics into layer 1, or introduce a new layer between layer 1 and layer 2.

McAdams' third level, which deals with the adolescent or grown adult's active pursuit of meaning, purpose, coherence, and identity in life, also appears to be too narrow in the sense that it only includes life-story narratives. Tomkins (1963, 1965, 1979), for example, from whom McAdams (1992) has drawn ample theoretical inspiration, argued that persons can form *personal ideologies* that present a coherent vision of human nature, society, morality, science, and so on. Even though personal ideologies are, on Tomkins' account, structured by

underlying emotion-laden scripts and narrative integration, they are not *life-story* narratives, because they are about the world and not about specific personal events. In addition, a person's worldview may also, as emphasized both by philosophers, such as Jaspers (1919) and Dilthey (1890/1957), and by psychologists, such as Allport (1955), Royce (1964), and Coan (1974), be coherently integrated in a philosophical way into something that might be called a *philosophy of life,* which provides a subjectively satisfactory solution to the riddles of life and provides practical guidance as to how life should be lived. *Eclectic belief systems* that weave together cultural elements in a self-reflexive way, such as, for example, those constituting modern Western forms of spirituality (Forman, 2004), may provide yet another form of meaning system not encompassed by life-story narratives. All these forms of meaning systems about the world, narrative or not, may in fact be pivotal to trauma coping, when the person needs rebuild his/her worldview and construct a new image of what he world is like (Janoff-Bulman, 1992), by shifting the perspective from concrete experienced events to a more abstract and less self-centered perspective that is more healthy (Pennebaker & Chung, in press); we cope not just with life events, but with the existential predicament in general (Dilthey, 1890/1957; Jaspers, 1919). A "layer 3" psychology less exclusively focused on the person as self-preoccupied, as opposed to world-preoccupied, may in this sense ultimately not just be more complete, but may also convey a vision of human nature that is more healthy.

McAdams' model is, furthermore, unable to account for traits that are not goal-pursuits but that nevertheless emerge later in life than his layer 1, as the person develops in interaction with his environment (Bandura, 1986, 1999) and participates in a cultural and social world (Harré, Clarke, & DeCarlo, 1985; Piekkola, 2011). This is problematic, because it is, in fact, quite plausible that we would need to take both traits and worldviews into account at every single stage of the life course in order to fully account for the development of personality (Paper I).

But there is a yet more fundamental problem to consider, pertaining to the tension between reductive and non-reductive perspectives on personality that is apparent especially in McAdams and Pals (2006) attempt to outline five "fundamental principles for personality science" and closely related to the tension we saw in Allport's (1964) eclectic approach to personality. The second, third, and fourth principles state that personality is an individual's variation with regard to dispositional traits (layer 1), motivational, social-cognitive, and developmental adaptations (layer 2), and personal narratives (layer 3), and the fifth principle states that culture has the strongest effect on layer 3 and the weakest effect on layer 1. These principles correspond to those aspects of McAdams' model that I have discussed so far. But it is the first principle, stating that personality is "an individual's variation on the general evolutionary design for human nature"

(McAdams & Pals, 2006), that really brings out the tension in McAdams' approach between reductive and non-reductive conceptions of personality. McAdams and Pals (2006) write that, instead of relying on the grand theories, most of which are "faith-based systems whose first principles are untested and untestable", they "contend that an integrative science of persons should be built around a first principle that enjoys the imprimatur of the biological sciences. Personality psychology begins with human nature, and from the standpoint of the biological sciences, human nature is best couched in terms of human evolution" (cf. Koltko-Rivera, 2006a). We might, first off, object to McAdams and Pals' (2006) strongly adaptationist description of the human biological constitution – the renowned paleontologist Gould (1984), for example, thinks that "surely, most of what our brain does today, most of what makes us so distinctively human (and flexible), arises as a consequence of the nonadaptive sequelae, not of the primary adaptation itself – for the sequelae must be so vastly greater in number and possibility" (see also Panksepp & Panksepp, 2000). The deeper problem is, however, that it is, on a non-reductive conception of personality, not personality itself, but rather its internal causes that are biological. We might thus say that the internal causes of personality are a variation on the common biological constitution of human beings, some parts of which were designed by processes of evolutionary adaptation. We may of course still use evolutionary psychology to generate hypotheses about the inherited structure of some kinds of dispositions (Nettle, 2011; Penke, 2011) and meaning structures (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Schwartz, 1992; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). But this could only provide the first principle for personality psychology if personality were in itself a wholly internal property. Given that personality is, to a great extent, how the person relates to, and participates in, his world, rather than an internal property (Chapter 3), it appears to be as important to understand that world as it is to understand the internal causal proclivities of human beings when designing personality constructs and theories (Chapter 6). We thus need to bring all our knowledge about the internal human constitution of human beings *and* about the objective features of their shared world to bear when grappling with the structure of personality – something that McAdams (1996, 2008; McAdams & Pals, 2006) certainly also seems to be doing in his work, because he portrays life-story narration as particularly essential for meeting the challenge of identity-formation in a modern world. One particularly pivotal aspect of the objective features of our the world and life itself, which forms the very root of our struggles for meaning, is constituted by the common existential problems (Becker, 1973; Dilthey, 1890/1957; Jaspers, 1919; Wong, 2012), which I will discuss further in Chapter 6.

4.7. Koltko-Rivera's theory of worldviews

Koltko-Rivera (2004, 2006a, 2006b) has already proposed a theory of worldviews in his pioneering effort to design a psychology of worldviews. He has done a tremendous service to the field in articulating and motivating the need for a systematic psychology of worldviews and pointing out its relevance to other fields, and in summarizing previous worldview theories in psychology. I will discuss these matters more in Chapters 5 and 6. My concern here is with Koltko-Rivera's (2004) proposal of an "integrated theory of worldview functioning in personality", which is subject to the same critique as that directed at Bandura's (1986, 1999, 2001) approach (Chapter 4.2). Just like Bandura, Koltko-Rivera explicitly acknowledges that persons genuinely have agency, yet his theory operates on a mechanistic model of explanation, treating the worldview as an intervening variable in chains of efficient causality flowing from stimulus to experience and from self to behavior.

On Koltko-Rivera's (2004) model, experience is caused through a sequential process, whereby the initial sensation of a stimulus is mediated, and given meaning, by acculturated structures for interpretation, followed by the worldview, followed by further perceptual and conceptual processes; action is, analogously, caused through a sequential process rooted in an impulse from the motivational core that is mediated by the worldview, which provides information about what should be done to act on the impulse and how this can be done, followed by the agentic core, which is the locus of personal will. This model may very well, whatever the merits and problems of its particular depiction of the causal chains in question (Nilsson, 2007), contribute to explaining the mechanistic causes of behavior and experience, by drawing attention to the role of the worldview. But my concern is that it leaves no room for explaining behavior in rational terms (Chapter 4.2) and that it provides no insight into the structure and dynamics of worldviews per se; it is not a theory of worldviews, but rather a model of experience-formation and behavior.

Koltko-Rivera (2004) seems, furthermore, to share with trait theorists and socio-cognitive theorists a strong focus on behavior, stating that "The 'bottom line' worldview question for psychology is, How do worldviews relate to behavior? What behaviors in which domains are typical of what worldview options, and under what constraints imposed by situational factors and individual differences in personality?" His approach is, consequently, to construct an operationalization of "the worldview construct", by gathering all theory-derived dimensions and factor-analyzing them to see what comes out, and to then use the worldview construct to try to add cumulatively to the variance in behaviors that we can account for. But I contend that even though the behavioral questions are

important for a psychology of behavior, the bottom-line question for a psychology of worldviews is: *What meaning structures permeate worldviews and give lives directionality and purpose, and how do they change in response to the world?* The study of worldviews is, on the present non-reductive account, a *basic science*, from which better prediction of behavior may very well arise through application. The worldview itself is not a construct any more than personality is a construct; it is a complex phenomenon that we can imperfectly capture, or illuminate, *through* constructs, and the development of constructs and generalizations that allow us to do this has value in its own right, independent of the prediction of behavior, simply because it fosters understanding of persons and enables us to explain behavior as action performed by rational agents.

5. Conceptual foundations for a psychology of worldviews

> The human quest for meaning is probably the best kept secret to the greatest human adventure – namely, that is has always been here, springing from the deepest yearnings of the human heart, confronting the mysteries, uncertainties, and fears of human existence, and pursuing dreams and ideals that know no boundaries. The never-ending quest for meaning and significance has taken human race to the sublime heights of truth, goodness, and beauty, as well as to the hideous lows of atrocities, aggression, and oppression against fellow human beings [..] The future of humanity hinges on understanding and harnessing the unlimited potentials of meaning seeking and meaning making.
>
> Paul T. P. Wong (2012)

'Worldview' is a broad and complex term that is used in many different contexts for different purposes and with different meanings and emphases. Its breadth makes it powerful but at the same time makes its meaning difficult to explicitly pin down without resorting to definitions that are vague and uninformative, describing it as something like an interpretive lens or fundamental perspective on reality. It will therefore be crucial to clarify what we mean by 'worldview', to demarcate worldview constructs from other kinds of psychological constructs, and to elucidate the role of a psychology of worldviews in psychology today. In order to do this, I will begin by briefly locating the psychology of worldviews in a historical context, and then proceed to the issues of definition and demarcation, and finally discuss the utility of a psychology of worldviews.

5.1. Historical prelude

As suggested by the works of both Naugle (2002), who has surveyed the philological, philosophical, theological, and scientific history of the worldview concept, and Koltko-Rivera (2004), who has surveyed its history specifically in psychology, it is important to distinguish the term 'worldview' from the

worldview concept, because the term has different meanings and the concept is expressed through different terms. The original meaning, coined by Kant (1790/1987), was that a worldview, or weltanshauung, is the person's inner phenomenal perception of the outer noumenal world. Although the term 'worldview' played only a minor role in Kant's philosophy, it came to quickly proliferate throughout the philosophy of the German idealists and romanticists in the 19th century, and to occupy a central position within the German intelligentsia, from where it rapidly spread also to other languages and became a part of everyday language. But it gradually acquired a second meaning in German philosophy, transforming it into an intellectual rather than intuitive conception of the universe that would be supplied by philosophy or science (see Naugle, 2002). This meaning is captured by Freud's (1933/1964) later definition: "a Weltanschauung is an intellectual construction which solves all the problems of our existence uniformly on the basis of one overriding hypothesis, which, accordingly, leaves no question unanswered and in which everything that interests us finds its fixed place". Although this usage of 'worldview' still lives on today (e.g. Aerts et al., 1994), many others have, however, maintained a usage more close to that of Kant (1790/1987), describing a worldview as a set of basic presuppositions or concepts that are innate, learned, adopted, and to a great extent unconscious rather than deliberatively constructed or chosen (e.g. Dilthey, 1890/1957; Jaspers, 1919; Jung, 1942/1966; Kearney, 1984; Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Naugle, 2002). 'Worldview' has, moreover, often come to refer to socially shared systems of thought, including religions, philosophies, political ideologies, scientific paradigms, and cultures in general (Naugle, 2002; Smart, 1999), rather than to the worldviews of persons, in 20th century science. If we combine these two distinctions between personal versus cultural and presuppositional versus intellectual worldview concepts, this yields four different types of worldview concepts, as depicted and exemplified in Figure 1 below.

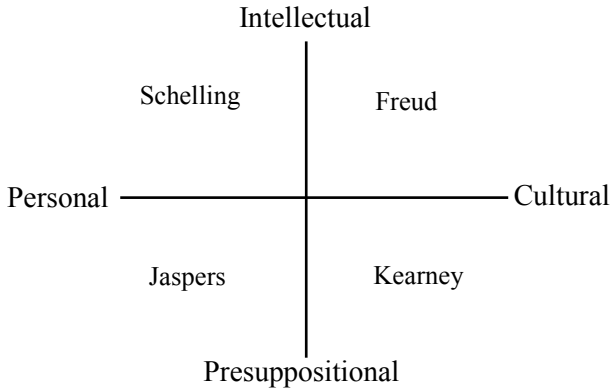


Figure 1. Different uses of term 'worldview'. Examples from Naugle (2002).

The meaning of 'worldview' that is most relevant to psychology is the personal and presuppositional one represented by the lower left quadrant, because few persons have well-organized intellectual or narrative philosophies of life (Converse, 1964; Tomkins, 1965), but all persons do have foundational assumptions and values that greatly affect their experiences and behavior (Allport, 1955; Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Tomkins, 1963, 1965). In addition, life-story narratives, personal ideologies, intellectual philosophies of life, internalized belief systems, and other layer three-type constructs (McAdams, 1992; McAdams & Olson, 2010), can, on the present usage, also mold and consolidate the worldview, and become part of it; what matters is not whether they are intellectually constructed or intuitive, but whether they form important loci of meaning that permeate experience and action.

Even though a handful of psychologists (e.g. Coan, 1974; Jung, 1942/1966; Koltko-Rivera, 2000, 2004), including especially cultural psychologists (e.g. Baldwin & Hopkins, 1990; Carter & Helms, 1990; Obasi, Flores, & James-Myers, 2009) have used 'worldview' about the psychology of individuals, the majority of psychologists have talked about worldviews in other terms, such as 'paradigm beliefs' (Kramer, Kahlbaugh, & Goldston, 1992), 'attitudes about reality' (Unger, Draper, & Pendergrass, 1986), 'philosophy of life' (Allport, 1955), 'world assumptions' (Janoff-Bulman, 1992), 'world hypotheses' (Pepper, 1942), 'philosophical tendencies' (Ross & Barger, 1990), 'ideo-affective structures' (Tomkins, 1965) and 'value orientations' (Carter & Helms, 1990; Maznevski et al., 2002). If we therefore instead switch to talking about worldview as a concept, without worrying about what term is used to describe it, we can find numerous examples of psychological theory and research with a strong intrinsic focus on worldviews (e.g. Baldwin & Hopkins, 1990; Carter & Helms, 1990; Coan, 1974; Johnson, German, Efran, & Overton, 1982; Koltko-Rivera, 2000; Kramer, Kahlbaugh, & Goldston, 1992; Ross & Barger, 1990; Tomkins, 1963; Unger, Draper, & Pendergrass, 1986). Most of these examples are, however, scattered islands of research, with little connection to each other and little generation of further research on worldviews. Even Koltko-Rivera's (2004) systematic approach has, despite being frequently cited, not generated any unified body of research on worldviews. There are, on the other hand, substantial bodies of, mostly recent, research on specific aspects of worldviews, such as social beliefs (Duckitt, 2001; Leung et al., 2002), values (Schwartz, 1992), life-story narratives (McAdams, 1996, 2008), intuitive moral attitudes (Haidt & Graham, 2007), and just-world beliefs (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). But these research programs lack the intrinsic focus on comprehensive and integrative description of worldviews and they are also still, although things may be changing, to a great extent isolated from each other. There is hence nothing that could be called a unified psychology of worldviews in the research literature today.

But how could it be that psychology has overlooked something so vastly important to human psychology? Part of the explanation for this is that psychology was, during its formative years, heavily influenced by the hegemony of logical empiricism, especially in North America, and consequently by the focus on legitimizing its scientific status through reductionism (Kukla, 2002). This empiricism spawned a fragmented science divided into a plethora of narrow specialized topics, a separation of empirical research from questions of theoretical explanation, and a strong focus on behavior, which is the most readily observable aspect of personality, over subjective meaning. Tides have begun to turn, however, in the last few decades, leading to an increased interest in the broader theoretical issues and in research on subjective meanings. Although radical critiques of mainstream psychology (e.g. Harré, DeCarlo, & Clarke, 1985; Lamiell, 2000) have fostered polarization and defense, more moderate compatibilist approaches have enjoyed great success (e.g. Little, 2005; McAdams, 1992, 2008; Wong, 2012). The main problem today, barring historical obstacles, may be that there simply is too little unified literature on worldviews and too little appreciation for the crucial role of worldviews in personality. Because research on worldviews is so highly scattered across different fields, with different researchers not even using the same terms to describe worldviews, and there is little literature making a compelling case that the study of worldviews is an intrinsically important part of personality psychology, researchers may not even be familiar with each other's research on worldviews or with the prospect of having a systematic study of worldviews in the first place. But with tides changing, and concerted efforts, psychology may, hopefully, gain enough self-confidence to stand as a non-reductive discipline in its own right.

5.2. What is a worldview? Definition and demarcation

In the broadest sense, a worldview is, on the present account, a person's total phenomenal outlook on the world (Kant, 1790/1987). This outlook could, however, be described in different ways, through the lenses of human nature, culture, personality, and so on. When speaking of worldviews in the context of personality, we implicitly refer to what is characteristic of the worldview when compared to the worldviews of other individuals. If we apply the definition of personality from Chapter 2.4 to the worldview, we derive the following:

> *The worldview consists of those mental states that, in comparison with those of other individuals, make the individual intelligible and predictable as a rational system, to other rational agents*

As in the case of personality, this retains our view of the worldview as a complex and dynamic whole that can never be captured completely with psychological constructs. But it provides little guidance for researchers, who need to know how to demarcate worldview constructs from other types of constructs. We need to find a way to pick out constructs that are particularly representative of the worldview, capturing as much of it as possible – constructs we might say represent the *core* of the worldview. This situation is analogous to the demarcation of traits, because we can never hope to discover, and measure, all the objective regularities of a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are actually there in the complex temporal patterning of personality. In the case of traits, we try to capture the core of these objective regularities by describing and measuring those that are particularly *stable* and thus probably most useful in explaining and predicting behavior. There is no absolute and definite criterion for what is stable enough to count as a trait, because no trait is perfectly stable, insofar as we allow the matter of stability to be empirically testable (Chapter 4.1). But stability nevertheless functions as an ideal that we aspire to achieve to the greatest degree possible and that we use to demarcate trait constructs from other constructs. In the case of worldviews, this corresponding ideal is *centrality*, with which I mean importance as a source of meaning for other aspects of the worldview.

But what exactly is 'meaning'? Intentional states and events can, following Searle (1983), be analyzed in terms of their content, which *represents* that aspect of the world they are directed at, and their psychological mode, which is the attitude held toward that content, such as 'belief', 'fear', 'hope', 'desire', and so on. Contents can be either conceptual or propositional, and they can represent either what the world is like or what we desire it to be like and intend to make it (Searle, 1983, 2001). Conceptual contents, such as 'spider', can have referents or lack referents, but they can, unlike propositional contents, such as 'spiders have eight legs', not be true or false (Kukla, 2002). For example, the content of Jake's concept of a spider includes morphological features, kinship with other animals, and other features of his representation of spiders, and this is clearly part of the meaning 'spider' has for him, and the content of his propositional attitude to whether spiders have eight legs or not is his representation of the fact or fiction it refers to, which is again part of what 'spiders have eight legs' means to him. But meaning is, in the present context, not just this; it is also the attitude he takes toward the content. Whether something 'means' something to us, and what it means, is in everyday life not just a matter of what content it has for us, but also of what subjective significance it has, because we *engage* with our world – we *care* about it – which is manifested in the emotional and conative-volitional attitudes

we adopt to our mental contents[2]. Whether Jake, for example, views spiders as essentially repugnant or pleasant creatures is part of what spiders mean to him, and whether he *believes* that spiders have eight legs, and puts a lot at stake in doing so, or not, is part of what that proposition means to him. Even though propositional contents, unlike conceptual contents, are associated with epistemic attitudes regarding their truth and certainty (Searle, 1983), propositional contents are, like conceptual contents, also associated with emotional and conative-volitional attitudes – countless wars have, for example, been fought over the truth of some religious and political propositions and scientists have devoted entire lives to the pursuit of others. Both mental content and the attitude to it are therefore part of the subjective meaning of what is being represented, whether the content is conceptual or propositional, and, because intentional states and events depend upon each other (Davidson, 1977; Searle, 1983), both content and attitude are, in turn, determined by how they fit into larger systems of meaning. To give something meaning is therefore *to form a representation of it and an attitude to it, by embedding it within a larger system of meaning*.

But what then is a 'source' of meaning? The sources of meaning are heavily connected with other parts of the worldview so as to infuse them with meaning. They are the concepts and presuppositions *through* which we think, feel, and act – the substrata, or skeleton, upon which all intentional thought, feeling, and action hinges (Naugle, 2002). They are not just the epistemic a priori structure underlying our perception of reality (Kant, 1790/1987), but also the *existential a priori* structure (Binswanger, 1963; Dilthey, 1890/1957) underlying our being. They are highly important to us, because we are completely dependent upon them – we need our worldviews to get on with life – and therefore also, to a great extent, infused with emotionality and defended passionately when challenged (Becker, 1973; Greenberg, Pyszczynski , & Solomon, 1986; Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Naugle, 2002; Tomkins, 1963, 1965), forming what Naugle (2002) called an "orientation of the heart". This stems partly from the fact that they are, typically, far from the "sensory periphery" (Quine, 1953) of the worldview and thus not subject to empirically certification and change that does not involve changing the entire system (Gabora, 1999; Koltko-Rivera, 2004), which often has the consequence, as Tomkins (1965) put it, that "what is lacking in evidence is filled by passion and faith and by hatred and scorn for disbelievers". Koltko-Rivera (2004) has described these sources of meaning the following way:

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[2] Although English uses the term 'meaning' for both subjective meanings and socially shared meanings (i.e. shared intentional contents), some languages, such as German and Russian, use separate terms for these two meaning concepts (Leontiev, 2005).

> A worldview is a way of describing the universe and life within it, both in terms of what is and what ought to be. A given worldview is a set of beliefs that includes limiting statements and assumptions regarding what exists and what does not (either in actuality, or in principle), what objects or experiences are good or bad, and what objectives, behaviors, and relationships are desirable or undesirable. A worldview defines what can be known or done in the world, and how it can be known or done. In addition to defining what goals can be sought in life, a worldview defines what goals should be pursued. Worldviews include assumptions that may be unproven, and even unprovable, but these assumptions are superordinate, in that they provide the epistemic and ontological foundations for other beliefs within a belief system.

To reinforce the point made earlier (Chapters 2 and 4), I consider this to be a description of the worldview core, and a potential demarcation of worldview constructs, rather a definition of 'worldview' per se, because we can surely make persons intelligible and predictable not just by virtue of the core, but also in terms of other less central meanings in everyday life, just like we can make them intelligible and predictable in terms of local behavioral regularities that are not stable enough to be called traits; to have a systematic personality science we simply have to focus on those aspects of personality that are most important, that subsequently can serve as a background for the interpretation of less important aspects of personality (Chapter 3). But defining worldview in terms of the constructs used to measure it would be to confuse the phenomenon itself with the constructs we approach it through, that is, to turn method into metaphysics (Rychlak, 1988).

As a description of the core of worldviews, the passage quoted from Koltko-Rivera (2004) is both illuminating and problematic, clearly elucidating the role of beliefs in the worldview yet neglecting the equally paramount role of concepts and the non-epistemic attitudes held toward both propositional and conceptual contents. His distinction between descriptive, evaluative, and pre-/proscriptive beliefs, drawn from Rokeach (1973), can neither account for the emotional and conative-volitional attitudes through which we subjectively want, fear, and loathe, etc., aspects of our world, regardless of whether we think they are objectively good and desirable or not, nor for the conceptual contents that help to structure our thought. It is true that we often study the worldview through beliefs, because concepts can only be inferred from how they are used, but the conceptual structures are nevertheless crucial for understanding the structure and dynamics of the worldview (Binswanger, 1963; Kant, 1790/1987).

A final pivotal issue is whether the worldview core should consist only of the very most general and abstract presuppositions, concepts, and attitudes to them, or whether we should also include those (more idiographic ones) pertaining to specific persons, events, objects, groups, places, and so on, that hold special meaning through their emotional and conative-volitional significance. Although the fact that something is highly subjectively meaningful does not in and of itself guarantee that it becomes a source of meaning, as emotions fluctuate, it certainly *can* become so entrenched within the worldview that it becomes an integral part of the person's paradigmatic way of viewing the world, as vividly demonstrated by research on life-story narratives (McAdams, 2008). Take, for example, the case of Jake, who has experienced a powerful life-episode of overcoming an eating-disorder, which for him has become a story of resilience and growth – of "redemption" (McAdams, 2006) – changing his very sense of personal identity, philosophy of life, and sense of the agentic capabilities of human beings. His view of this emotional experience is clearly an important source of meaning within his worldview. Assume further that Jake has undertaken as his life's mission to help others with the same problems as he once had, in which case Jake's life project is a powerful source of meaning about how he intends to make the world. This fairly dramatic case is an illustration of something more general, namely that worldviews are not just abstract structures that exist prior to experience, like Kant's (1790/1987) usage of 'worldview' suggested, or ones that change through intellectual considerations as many others thought (see Naugle, 2002), but also ones that are molded by, and in part constituted by, real emotionally and existentially valid "lived experience" (Dilthey, 1890/1957) emerging through interaction with, and caring about, the world. There is hence a place within the psychology of worldviews both for the study of the general sources of meaning, which are presumably relevant to practically all human beings, and the more specific and idiographic ones that fill the worldview with experiential content and that are, to a great extent, accounted for by McAdams' (1992, 1995; McAdams & Olson, 2010; McAdams & Pals, 2006) second and third layers of personality.

5.3. How can a psychology of worldviews be used?

I will now speak more directly about the potential utility of a psychology of worldviews, dividing it into the facilitation of interpretation, prediction of behavior, theoretical and conceptual integration, and non-instrumentalist significance for society.

Although I have argued (Chapter 2) that traits are also associated with implicit theories of interpretation, providing assumptions about what, for example, extraverts are like and how they should behave, their imposition of meaning on

persons nevertheless renders little empirical information about what different persons believe, want, and value. Other traditions in personality psychology (e.g. Bandura, 1999; Little, 2005; McAdams, 2008) are also, as argued in Chapter 4, limited in focusing on particular aspects of the worldview rather than larger systems of meaning, and are therefore also of limited use in facilitating holistic understandings of persons. Here a more systematic psychology of worldviews that studies the subjective meanings in their own right quite naturally has an important role to play, in generating interpretive frameworks that facilitate the holistic understanding of individuals, thus promoting the intelligibility part of personality explanations, and providing a bridge from systematic personality science to existential psychotherapy (Cooper, 2003) and other clinical schools (Jung, 1942/1966) that emphasize the importance of worldviews.

But the psychology of worldviews may also have vast unexplored utility for the predictive part of personality explanations (Koltko-Rivera, 2004, 2006a), although this is an application rather than the primary goal of the field itself (Chapter 4.7). This is an empirical issue, but let me nonetheless give a few examples to establish its prima facie plausibility. First, there is ample research suggesting that worldview constructs are key predictors of behavioral phenomena that are highly laden with ideological and cultural meaning, within the domains of, for example, religiosity (de St. Aubin, 1996, 1999; Paper II), politics (Duckitt, 2001; Haidt & Graham, 2007; Paper III), and prejudice (Ekehammar, Akrami, Gylje, & Zakrisson, 2004; Levy, Stroessner, & Dweck, 1998). In many studies (e.g. Ekehammar et al., 2004; Lewis & Bates, 2010; Sibley, Harding, Perry, Asbrock, & Duckitt, 2010), traits have proved to be related to the outcomes of interest only indirectly through worldviews. Second, worldviews have strong relevance for predicting epistemic behaviors and outcomes, pertaining, for example, to the psychology and sociology of science (e.g. Babbage & Ronan, 2000; Coan, 1979; Johnson et al., 1988) and to learning and optimal teaching (e.g. Perry, 1971; Royce, 1964; Schommer, 1990). Third, worldviews have great relevance for predicting phenomena relating to psychological adaptation, including adjustment to psychological adversity (Janoff-Bulman, 1992; McAdams, 2008; Wong, 2012), personality change (Caprara, Vecchione, Barbaranelli, & Allesandri, 2012; Dweck, 2008), and the pursuit of goals (Little, 2005; Schwartz, 1992).

Another way that the psychology of worldviews can be useful is through its potential to contribute to unification of a fragmented discipline. It can do this by gathering and organizing research from different traditions in a coherent framework, thus affording awareness of research on worldviews and, by establishing common conceptual ground, enabling the comparison, and potential unification, of theories from different traditions. But its integrative power also goes beyond mere "bottom-up" organization of previous research, because a psychology of worldviews can also help to promote a new and more coherent

paradigm of non-reductive thought in psychology that challenges conventionally reified divisions between constructs, topics, and fields and suggests new directions for research and principles for unification "top-down" (Chapters 6 and 9; Paper I). This is particularly important to personality psychology, given that we understand persons as holistic wholes, to a great extent through their worldviews (Chapter 3; Paper I), because the richer and more integrative our portrayals of personalities become, the more will we be able to facilitate the idiographic integration of different strands of personality into intelligible wholes. One might want to object here that because psychology is an intrinsically complex and variegated field (Goertzen, 2008; Yanchar & Slife, 2008), personality cannot be forced into one integrative straitjacket, and that we, because we have no reason to believe that a simpler rather than more complex theory will be true, should just do the best theoretical work we can without pre-committing ourselves to unification (Kukla, 2002). But this would miss the point, because with unification I do not mean the search for an ultimate conceptualization of the contents of personality or a complete theory of personality, but rather an attempt to provide common ground, by explicating basic concepts and principles for a psychology of meaning, which facilitates thought and communication and makes the field itself more intelligible and useful for interpretation and prediction. At least when it comes to systems of rationality (i.e. personality), explanation is not just a matter of revealing causal mechanisms and producing true statements (Salmon, 1990), but also of producing statements that fit with human epistemic capacities such that they can be readily understood (Hansson, 2006). In this sense, unification facilitates explanation by fostering intelligibility whether it also fosters truth or not. A psychology of worldviews would indeed be of little practical utility if it would be too fragmented to be comprehensible.

It is, furthermore, worth noting that, although Koltko-Rivera (2004, 2006a) has also emphasized the unification aspect of a psychology of worldviews, his approach is more one of systematic eclecticism along the lines of Allport's (1964) proposal than the type of integrative and non-reductive conception of personality psychology I have defended here. Koltko-Rivera (2006a) thinks that the psychology of worldviews should be a multi-disciplinary endeavor, because it forms a topic of interest for many different specializations in psychology, such as sport psychology, environmental psychology, developmental psychology, and psychotherapy research, and he envisions a massively multivariate approach that combines different sorts of variables, from different approaches, so as to account for as much variance as possible in the phenomena we are trying to explain – the problem with psychology is, according to Koltko-Rivera (2006a), that we have too few input variables in our models. But Koltko-Rivera's approach is in itself problematic, because a multidimensional model does not necessarily explain the variance that it accounts for (Rychlak, 1981, 1988). This is particularly true when it comes to explaining in terms of rationality, which requires that we elucidate the

entire pattern of the explananda rather than just appealing to the additive effects of disparate causes (Chapter 2). Moreover, if we are to have a true psychology of worldviews, and not just a psychology of behavior that includes worldview as a predictor, I contend that we need to recognize the study of worldviews as a basic branch of personality psychology that can have *applications* in other fields of psychology.

Koltko-Rivera's (2004) presuppositions are also evident in his emphasis on dimensional conceptualizations of worldviews, which try to cover the most important aspects of worldviews with separate constructs (e.g. Carter & Helms, 1990; Coan, 1974; Koltko-Rivera, 2000), over typological ones, which try to measure particular worldviews as fully as possible (e.g. Baldwin & Hopkins, 1990; Johnson et al., 1988; Kramer, Kahlbaugh, & Goldston, 1992; Unger, Draper, & Pendergrass, 1986). On a non-reductive conception of personality, there is no substantive difference between "dimensional" and "typological" conceptualizations of worldviews, apart from the potential difference in breadth of the constructs, because we can never understand a worldview fully in terms of a particular type; even, for example, 'positivism' and 'the African worldview' are just aspects of the worldviews of real individuals, however broad. The typological approaches (e.g. Pepper, 1942) do, in fact, have an advantage in the sense of typically originating in an integrative consideration of the broader systems of meaning permeating different aspects of the worldview insofar as they do not fall into pieces on empirical scrutiny, and their psychometric disadvantages disappear when measured dimensionally (de St. Aubin, 1996; Johnson et al., 1988; Paper II).

Finally, it is important to also appreciate the broader non-instrumental significance of a psychology of worldviews for helping us to understand our own cultural and historical world (Habermas, 1971) and fostering democracy, tolerance, and conflict-resolution (Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Royce, 1964) in a world of diversity. As phrased by Koltko-Rivera (2006a): "In today's world, it is no longer adaptive to pretend that other ways of looking at the world either do not exist or are simply wrong-headed. Now, more than at any previous time in history, it is not only adaptive, but crucially important, that we find productive ways to approach other people who have vastly differing ways of looking at the world, with an objective other than their extermination." A psychology of worldviews could hopefully, without embracing relativism, help to facilitative such awareness that there is not just a plurality of worldviews, but a plurality of *rational* worldviews (Rawls, 1971), thus propelling tolerance and compromise (Habermas, 1971; Haidt & Graham, 2007) rather than polarization. According to Royce (1964), the awareness of the finitude of your own worldview, can also, ideally, contribute not just to acceptance of the plurality of worldviews but also to an impulse to broaden your own perspective on reality so as to take others' viewpoints into account (cf. Gadamer, 1975), thus stimulating both tolerance and

epistemic virtues. In this sense, a psychology of worldviews has major significance for modern multicultural societies, insofar as it can promote an awareness of the psychological dynamics and varieties of human worldviews.

6. Motivational structure and dynamics: Worldview as solution to the existential problems

> As human nature is always the same, so are the fundamental features of life's experience common to all men. Such features are the transitoriness and final futility of all things human, and yet our ability to enjoy the present hour [..] the views of the power of destiny, of the corruptibility of all that we own, cherish or even hate or fear, and of ever present death which, all powerful for everyone of us, determines the significance and meaning of life.
>
> Wilhelm Dilthey (1890/1957)

How do we proceed from these conceptual foundations to laying out a theory of the structure and dynamics of a worldview? One question we have to answer – that all personality theories need to answer – is: What are those deepest needs that elicit motivational impulses and fuel the person's intentional engagement with the world? The answer is probably manifold, involving the need to affiliate, and the need to survive and reproduce. But insofar as we focus on persons in their uniquely human capacities, as linguistic, reflective, existentially aware creatures, they also have a *need for meaning* (Dilthey, 1890/1957; Frankl, 1969; Jaspers, 1919; Maslow, 1968; Wong, 2012) that is not reducible to their more animalistic needs. As discussed earlier (Chapter 4.6), understanding how this need operates involves not just understanding the innate meaning-making proclivities of human beings, but also understanding the objective features of their worlds and lives that their meanings are directed at, as captured so well in the quote from Dilthey (1890/1957) that introduced this chapter. In this section, I address this task by discussing both the innate proclivities and the objective features of human worlds and lives, and how this theory can be used to generate empirically testable propositions. I conclude with some reflections on how persons can obtain awareness and agentic autonomy despite being bounded by the limitations of their worldviews and the mechanisms that underlie them.

6.1. The innate meaning-making proclivities of human beings

Human beings most likely did not evolve to have the sorts of elaborate existential worldviews they have today (Gould, 1984; Gould & Lewontin, 1979; cf. McAdams & Pals, 2006). But they probably did evolve more basic mechanisms propelling them toward exploration of their environments and enabling them to detect and interpret patterns, while also making them intensely wary of dangers (Gabora, 1999; Hood, 2008; Rokeach, 1960; Shermer, 2011). Subsequently they acquired, for adaptive or non-adaptive reasons, more advanced forms of representation than their primate ancestors, enabling them to form abstract non-episodic concepts that generalize vastly beyond sense-impressions and to invent and manipulate symbols (Gabora, 1999; Gabora & Aerts, 2009). This in turn produced a selective advantage for cognitive conservatism, because the maps of reality that such representations created would have to be stable in order to be useful (Gabora, 1999). But it also enabled, plausibly as a by-product of evolution (Gould, 1984; Gould & Lewontin, 1979), human beings to become aware of their own existence, to build civilizations, and to exercise the capacity we know as free will – they became persons (Hacker, 2007). The elaborate existential worldviews began to emerge as the innate human proclivities for curiosity, pattern-detection, cognitive conservatism, and fear and anxiety were "co-opted" (Gould & Lewontin, 1979) by the newfound existential awareness, so as to produce a need for meaning directed not just at the material world but also at existence itself. Hence, persons seek to understand their enigmatic existence, through poetry, philosophy, literature, arts, religion, and so on, both out of their innate curiosity and need for practical guidance in life, and to provide a "protective shell" (Jaspers, 1919; trans., Naugle, 2002), or "sacred canopy" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) that shields them from the horrors, including suffering, nihilism, uncertainty, and the transitoriness of life, of a brute unsymbolized world (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Becker, 1973; Dilthey, 1890/1957; Jost et al., 2003; Jaspers, 1919; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986; May, 1981; Rokeach, 1960). The internal dynamics of worldviews can thus to a great extent be understood in terms of a dialectic opposition between a pursuit of knowledge and a conservative resistance to, and denial of, new information that threatens to undermine the worldview and paralyze the person with fear and anxiety – we need to know reality while staying away from danger, like our ancestors had to explore their environments while remaining vigilant to predators (Gabora, 1999; Hood, 2008; Rokeach, 1960; Shermer, 2011). Furthermore, just like our ancestors were totally dependent upon a mental map to find their way around their physical environments we also, due to our intentionality and existential awareness, need a map for the existential aspects of

our lives, without which we, according to existential psychologists (Frankl, 1969; Maslow, 1968; Wong, 2012), may even become ill, as phrased by Maslow (1968):

> The state of being without a system of values is psychopathogenic, we are learning. The human being needs a framework of values, a philosophy of life, a religion or religion-surrogate to live by and understand by, in about the same sense he needs sunlight, calcium or love. [..] The value- illnesses which result from valuelessness are called variously anhedonia, anomie, apathy, amorality, hopelessness, cynicism, etc., and can become somatic illness as well.

6.2. Objective features of our worlds and lives: The existential condition

Given that the structure and dynamics of the worldview are determined not just by the internal meaning-making proclivities of human beings, but also by those features of the world that it is directed at, we now need to turn to the structure of that world. Here it is useful to explicitly draw on the penetrating insights of Dilthey (1890/1957) and Jaspers (1919), who were essentially the first two worldview psychologists (Naugle, 2002), discussing the genesis, development, and varieties of worldviews in a way most useful, but nevertheless long lost, to contemporary academic psychology. Although Dilthey (1890/1957) emphasized that worldviews emerge out of life experiences, he did not view such experiences as entirely idiosyncratic phenomena, but rather as recurrent manifestations of the same underlying structure of life, evoking the very same existential dilemmas over and over. For Jaspers (1919, 1932/1994) as well, life reveals itself through experiences, which are in turn elicited by what he called *boundary situations*, or *existenz*, propelling different aspects of life into focal awareness. These situations could include, for example, subversive or traumatic events that force the person to come to terms with the cruelty and injustice of the world (Janoff-Bulman, 1992), such as the loss of a loved one or a natural disaster, or a life crisis stemming from a gradual realization that a current vocation, marriage, or other choice is not consistent with authentic subjective values. Even though these are dramatic examples, Jaspers (1932/1994) believed that we are always in boundary situations – making choices, and experiencing existential guilt and anxiety, and relating to our existence – and that to be a person is, in fact, to be in a certain kind of general boundary situation.

These ideas are highly relevant to a contemporary psychology of meaning, because they highlight aspects of life that are objective and universal, thus

providing a basis for elucidating the most general principles of meaning-making – principles which, in turn, can be used to anchors understandings of cultures and individuals (Chapter 3.1). The writings of Dilthey (1890/1957), Jaspers (1919, 1932/1994), and other existentialists (e.g. Frankl, 1969; May, 1981) are also useful for the light they shed on the negative aspects of existence – death, suffering, anxiety, guilt, despair, and so on – because it is arguably through struggles with adversity that we pursue meaning most actively, as we are forced to question, rethink, and change our worldviews, so as to confer meaning upon negative life-events that make them bearable and propel more authentic living. But it is nevertheless important not to forget that there are also other objective features of our common world, of life in a social and natural world, that, whether threatening or uplifting, also instigate intense meaning-making, thus forming equally appropriate targets for consideration in an account of general principles of meaning-making.

I will try to describe different features of the objective existential condition below – the self, the social world, the material world, our epistemic limitations, evil and suffering, the transience of life, freedom of choice, and purpose and value – and, in so doing, highlight different aspects of worldviews emphasized in the worldview literature that are particularly relevant to each dilemma. Although worldview constructs may not map onto the existential predicament this neatly, I divide them here according to this scheme for purposes of exposition. This framework can, I will argue in Chapter 9, guide future empirical investigation into how worldviews form and change in the pursuit of solutions to existential problems. With 'solutions' I only mean that they provide a *subjectively satisfying* sense of meaning for the person; not that they are necessarily epistemically or morally desirable. It is quite possible that diametrically opposing worldviews may provide equally subjectively satisfying solutions to the same existential problem (e.g. for one person, a deterministic denial of free will may foster comfort, but for another person comfort may be found in the belief that s/he can change the world) such that the relation between the salience of existential problems and worldviews is variant across individuals.

The self

One fundamental existential fact that confronts every person is the singularity of the self as a locus of subjective experience, and the subsequent need to decide for him-/herself how to think of, identify, and in this sense construct the self. Countless psychologists have, accordingly, emphasized the importance of the subjective meanings imputed to the self. Existentialist and humanistic psychologists (Binswanger, 1963; Maslow, 1968, 1970; Rogers, 1961), for example, believe that whether the person has an authentic self-conception that

harmonizes with his or her true experiences and deepest aspirations is of utmost importance. Wong (2012), similarly, has described "Who am I?" and "Where do I belong?" as two of the most central questions to the pursuit of meaning in life. McAdams (1996, 2008) has, in addition, described the problem of finding a compelling sense personal identity, in terms of life-story narratives, as especially central to navigating the limitless possibilities of the modern world. Social cognitive theorists, moreover, have emphasized the importance of various aspects of our self-concepts, such as beliefs about our agentic capabilities (Bandura, 1999, 2001), and expectations regarding interpersonal acceptance or rejection (Dweck, 2008; Mischel & Shoda, 2008).

Note finally that the self-concept is relevant not just to individualistic worldviews, but also to those that portray different selves as connected on a deeper spiritual level (Forman, 2004) or as greatly socially constituted (Bishop, 2007), because such worldviews are still just another way of providing subjective solutions to the problem of self.

The social world

Another feature of life common to all persons is that they all live in a socially structured world, or at least have to relate to such a world in some way, if so by refusing to take part in it. Although the social world differs from place to place, and person to person, it also has universal features. The anthropologists Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1973), for example, have portrayed the preference for hierarchical, collateral, or individualistic relational orientation as a key dimension of worldviews, in their *Value Orientations* model, which has accumulated plenty of research in psychology (Carter & Helms, 1987; Ibrahim & Kahn, 1987; Maznevski et al., 1997; see also Gilgen & Cho, 1979; Montgomery, Fine, & Myers, 1990). Similarly, political psychologists, including Duckitt (2001) and Jost et al. (2003) have described preference for equality versus hierarchy as a core aspect of political ideology, and others, including Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) and Altemeyer (1981), have emphasized the importance of submissiveness to authority and adherence to conventional norms (see also Koltko-Rivera, 2004). Other researchers have also emphasized the importance of whether the social world is seen as a dangerous and competitive (Duckitt, 2001) or just and benevolent place (Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Leung et al., 2002), and whether persons are seen as trustworthy or deceitful, egoistic or altruistic (Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Wrightsman, 1992), generally good or bad (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1973; Tomkins, 1963), and complex or simple (Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Leung et al., 2002), and whether accepting or punitive attitudes are held toward others (Tomkins, 1963).

The material world

Another undeniable objective feature of our existence is that we live in the same material world, on the same planet earth, with essentially the same physical and biological constitution, confronted with the same question as to how we as self-conscious, language-possessing, civilized creatures fit in with, and should relate to, the rest of the universe. Both Dilthey (1890/1957) and Tomkins (1963) suggested that whether mind or matter is treated as the center-point of reality – whether mind is determined by matter, or matter is determined by mind – was perhaps the single most crucial difference between worldviews. Similar to this, research on religiosity, points to the difference between traditional forms of religiosity that portray human beings as divine and thereby standing above nature and spiritual orientations that portray divinity as a force permeating all living beings (Forman, 2004; Piedmont, 1999). Others have suggested that what attitudes we take to the natural world – for example, harmony and acceptance or subjugation and control (Baldwin & Hopkins, 1990; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1973) – and what attitudes we take to our own biological being, including our sexuality (Koltko-Rivera, 2004), are also key dimensions of worldviews.

Our epistemic limitations

Another part of our existential predicament is that we are epistemically finite rather than omniscient beings, which means that we inevitably have to deal with uncertainty and we have to choose what sources of knowledge to trust. Jaspers (1919), for example, included this as a key element in his account of worldviews, describing several worldviews in epistemic terms, such as skepticism, nihilism, rationalism, and authoritarianism. Several psychologists have also emphasized epistemic elements of worldviews, including rationalism, empiricism, intuitionism (Royce, 1964; Tomkins, 1963), and authoritarianism (Rokeach, 1960; Royce, 1964). Other researchers have emphasized the role of uncertainty rather than the sources of knowledge, describing worldviews as absolute, dialectical, and relativistic (Kramer, Kahlbaugh, & Goldston, 1992) and traditional, modern, and postmodern (Golec de Zavala & Van Bergh, 2007). In addition, research in political psychology suggests that whether the person is tolerant of uncertainty or has a high need for cognitive closure has a powerful influence upon ideological thought (Jost et al., 2003).

Evil and suffering

Another undeniable feature of our objective world is that it is full of evil and suffering caused by wars, natural disasters, personal tragedies, and so on, which strike unexpectedly without ostensible meaning or deservedness. This is

exemplified by the quandaries of theodicy, rooted in the tension between the existence of evil and suffering and the existence of an all-powerful and benevolent God (Fontana, 2004). It is also a problem emphasized by existentialists, who point to the importance of whether evil and suffering, and negative feelings in general, are denied or authentically accepted as a natural part of life (Frankl, 1969; Jaspers, 1932/1994; May, 1981), and to whether an optimistic or resigned attitude is taken to the overcoming of adversity (Frankl, 1969) and to life in general (Dilthey, 1890/1957; Jaspers, 1919). Several researchers have, similarly, portrayed optimistic and adventurous contra pessimistic and resigned postures to life (Coan, 1974; Westerlund, 2001), and variations in whether the world is seen as fundamentally good or bad (Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Tomkins, 1963), as key dimensions of worldviews.

The transience of life

Considering life itself, one important feature of its objective structure, that we are all inevitably confronted with, is that everything about it, including all that we value and even our very existence, is temporary, changeable, and corruptible, and rendered a sense stability and permanence only through our symbolic worlds. Many humanistic and existentialistic psychologists (Allport, 1955; Binswanger, 1963; Maslow, 1968, 1970; Rogers, 1961) have, accordingly, emphasized the importance of whether the person is open or closed to his world and sees himself as a process of becoming or as a fixed entity, and Rokeach (1960) has suggested that openness to change versus dogmatism is also the most important characteristic of belief systems. Several researchers have also emphasized the psychological importance, for important phenomena such as academic success, prejudice, and personality change, of whether persons (Dweck, 2008; Koltko-Rivera, 2000, 2004; Levy, Stroessner, & Dweck, 1998) and the world in general (Chiu et al., 1997) are seen as static and immutable entities or as dynamic and changeable processes, and whether persons are seen in terms of underlying essences (Haslam, Bastian, Bain, & Kashima, 2006; Keller, 2005) or not. Similarly, political psychologists (Jost et. al, 2003) have portrayed the person's resistance contra openness to change per se as a core aspect of political ideology. Pepper (1942), furthermore, presented a model, which later generated several strands of research (Babbage & Ronan, 2000; Johnson et al., 1988; Harris, Fontana, & Dowds, 1977), describing worldviews in terms of different ways of explaining phenomena, including formistic classification, mechanistic causation, organismic unfolding, and contextual dynamics, with the first two focusing on stasis and the latter two focusing on change. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1973) model, finally, suggests that whether a person's orientation to time is to focus on the traditions of the past, life at the present moment, or on plans for the future, and whether he prefers spontaneous

activities, activities that aim at the development of an integrated self, or activities focused on external achievement, are key dimensions of the worldview.

Several existentialists (Jaspers, 1919, 1932/1994; Kierkegaard) have also given the fear of death a special role as the ultimate manifestation of the transience of life, and Becker (1971, 1973) famously argued that all human culture is rooted in the denial of death, which spawned a mass of research on how awareness of death powers worldviews by strengthening conviction and provoking polarization (Burke, Martens, & Faucher, 2010; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986). Several researchers (Holm & Bjorkqvist, 2006; Obasi, Flores, & James-Myers, 2009) also include beliefs about spiritual immortality and reincarnation as dimensions of worldviews

Freedom of choice

Another fundamental feature of life is that it enables, or even forces, us to make choices, so as to navigate between the myriads of potentialities its affords, which evokes uncertainty and anxiety. Countless philosophers and psychologists have pointed out the powerful psychological consequences of what attitude is taken to such choices – whether free will is seen as genuine and as a powerful determinant of action, or whether it is seen as an illusory epiphenomenon that has no genuine influence in a world of physical, biological, psychological, or environmental determinism. The existentialists especially (Jaspers, 1932/1994; May, 1981) have given the acceptance versus denial of free will, and its connection to authentic living, a paramount role in their portrayals of human psychology. Consistent with this, several researchers have emphasized the psychological importance of whether behavioral outcomes are attributed to internal or external causes (Sue, 1978), whether personality is seen as proactively changeable (Dweck, 2008), and whether potential actions are expected to be causally efficacious (Bandura, 1999, 2001), and beliefs about volition and determinism (Koltko-Rivera, 2004), including whether society rewards effort (Leung et al., 2002; Unger, Draper, & Pendergrass, 1986), have been included in worldview models. Coan (1974) in particular made beliefs about free will central to his research on worldviews, including voluntarism, determinism, biological determinism, environmental determinism, finalism, and mechanism. Other multidimensional models of beliefs about free will have also been developed more recently, covering scientific determinism, fatalistic determinism, unpredictability (Paulhus & Carey, 2011), free will, personal agency, moral responsibility, higher power control, and personal limitations (Rakos et al., 2008).

Value and purpose

All persons also have to, explicitly or implicitly, choose a set of values about what is good or bad, and desirable or undesirable, and a concomitant set of purposes, to ground their engagement with the world. Tomkins (1963), for example, portrayed the opposition between seeing persons as intrinsically valuable and seeing their value as contingent upon the achievement of external ideals and norms, which maps onto modern conceptualizations of general goal structure (Grouzet et al., 2005), as intertwined with the opposition between primacy of mind versus matter, and thereby as part of the most fundamental division between worldviews. Allport (1955) similarly saw values as central to philosophies of life, adopting Spranger's (1914/1928) conceptualization of theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, and religious value types (Allport, Vernon, & Lindzey, 1960), and Rokeach (1968, 1973) placed values at the core of human belief systems. Countless clinical psychologists have also emphasized the psychological importance of experiencing a sense of purpose in life and sought to measure it (e.g. Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006; Wong, 2012), and Koltko-Rivera (2004) lists nine different purposes – nihilism, survival, pleasure, belonging, recognition, power, achievement, self-actualization, and self-transcendence – in his review of the worldview literature in psychology. More specific approaches have also been developed, focusing on values (Schwartz, 1992), intuitive moral beliefs (Forsyth, 1980; Haidt & Graham, 2007), and major life goals (Grouzet et al., 2005; Little, 2005).

6.3. Reflective consciousness, freedom, and growth

One potential worry is that the account I proposed here leaves no room for freedom, but just replaces the mechanics of drives, instincts, cognitions, and affects with the mechanics of existential needs and external life-episodes that elevate the salience of different existential problems thus pushing the person toward changing his or her worldview. This objection is partly illusory, because the mere presence of a probabilistic regularity does not tell us whether its cause is mechanistic or volitional (Rychlak, 1988). But we nevertheless need to address the question of just how conscious and free persons are with regard to their worldviews and of how their consciousness and freedom can be increased.

If we start with consciousness, it is part of our existential predicament as epistemically finite beings that we are often unaware of how our assumptions, opinions, ruminations, emotional reactions, and so on, are conditioned by our worldviews – or, more generally, of *why* we really have them – because worldviews are so *pre*-suppositional for our thinking (Naugle, 2002; Sire, 2004)

and so imbued with emotion (Tomkins, 1963, 1965) that we cannot really see them from the outside and think critically about them; they have a way of presenting themselves as the obvious truth. Moreover, research has shown that the mind is quick at intellectually rationalizing beliefs and opinions post hoc (Haidt, 2001; Shermer, 2011), while failing to understand how they really often emanate from coherence, or "resonance" (Tomkins, 1963, 1965), with worldviews or intuitive reactions. In other words, it is difficult for a person to truly recognize his own worldview as the limited, historically, culturally, and subjectively finite perspective on reality that it is and to see how strongly it determines his thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. We are, in this sense, "encapsulated" (Royce, 1964) by our worldviews. But we are, on the other hand, more aware of *what* our beliefs, feelings, opinions, and so on, are than about why they have them. You can be wrong about whether you are an extraverted person or not, because your view of how you usually think, feel, and act may be fraught with poor memory, biases, and lack of perspective, and a scientist who could observe you across a sufficient range of contexts may be in a better position to judge your traits. But it is more difficult for you to be wrong about your belief in God, because of the subjective ontology of the mental (Fay, 1996; Maslin, 2001; Searle, 1992) – your experience of the belief makes it real, just like a pain is real if you experience it – and there is no way that a scientist could know what you believe other than paying attention to the meaning conveyed by your words and actions, like s/he could observe that you generally tend to be moody, introverted, trusting, and diligent extraspectively, because worldviews do not have fixed behavioral expression.

This does, however, not mean that persons are in general reflectively, or meta-cognitively, aware of their own worldviews and of how to best describe them linguistically (Fay, 1996; Maslin, 2001). Describing your worldview can be a challenging task that involves both mastery of complex concepts and an ability to weigh together different parts of your worldview in a balanced way, because your toolbox of linguistic concepts may not always capture your subjective experiences, especially if you are not used to reflecting upon your worldview. For example, deciding what your view of human nature is can be a complex judgment involving both weighing of life experiences and weighing of coherence with other important worldview elements, resulting in a synthesis of increased introspective awareness and symbolic construction. Some experiences may even be so deeply subjective that they are ineffable (Naugle, 2002). But persons are, on the other hand, a great deal better at deciding whether they agree with a particular perspective than they are at verbalizing their own views (Tomkins, 1963, 1965). They also have what existentialists have described as a latent stream of *ontological anxiety* that is ever-present for existentially aware beings, and typically blocked out of focal awareness in everyday life, yet capable of being propelled into focal awareness at any time by life events, and to thereby increase worldview awareness (Jaspers, 1932/1994; May, 1981). The general salience of different existential problems

may, furthermore, differ between cultures – for example, religious tend to make the problem of how to construe suffering and evil salient (the theodicy problem), and postmodern society tends to make the problems of freedom and personal identity salient.

As for agency, it is, in the sense interesting for personality theory, enabled by our capacity for complex, symbolic thinking (Harvey, Hunt, & Schroder, 1961; Kelly, 1955; Rychlak, 1988), which allows us to rise above our primeval urges and immediate sensory experiences, and by our social world (Martin, Sugarman, & Thompson, 2003), which affords us the capacities and alternatives needed to exercise free will. A linguistic creature has the ability to view the exact same objects, events, persons, and life experiences in different ways, through different symbolic conceptualizations and narrative accounts, and to conceive of and imaginatively experiment with different possible courses of action. A person's worldview is thus heavily underdetermined by his life experiences, especially when it comes to the very most general and super-ordinate assumptions, and a person always has at least some leeway in how to view even the strongest and most gruesome of life experiences, as the famous Auschwitz survivor and psychotherapist Frankl (1946/2006), who propounded a heroic and optimistic attitude to suffering, was a living testament to.

There are, however, two major limitations to this freedom. First, a person's encapsulation (Royce, 1964) by his worldview places constraints upon what possible courses of action, descriptions of experiences, and larger patterns of life-story narrative (McAdams, 1996) s/he can conceive of and choose. The problem is not only that a person cannot see beyond his or her worldview horizon (Gadamer, 1975), but also that s/he cannot choose to view something in a way that does not fit reasonably well with his or her worldview. It may be possible to "revolutionize" (Gabora, 1999) the worldview at some deep level in extreme circumstances, such as trauma recovery (Janoff-Bulman, 1992) and religious conversion (Fontana, 2004; Shermer, 2011), but in general worldviews are extremely resistant to disconfirmation and revision (Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Kunda, 1999) and therefore basically only let the person operate within the freedom of construal that is possible *within* the given worldview. Second, the potential for freedom in a linguistic organism can still be thwarted by phenomena such as akrasia, biological and environmental constraint, coercion, self-deception, and above all, the feelings of anxiety that an awareness of freedom can entail. The more a being is cognitively sophisticated and reflective, the more it has not only the potential freedom to choose between alternative courses of action and construals, but also the potential to be overwhelmed and paralyzed by the anxiety that is inherent in the burden of choice and responsibility (Fromm, 1941; May, 1981). Being truly free requires not only having the potential for freedom, but also accepting and embracing your freedom, along with the ontological anxiety it

entails (May, 1981). As emphasized by existentialist thinkers, persons often deny, repress, or "escape from" (Fromm, 1941) their freedom, especially in post-modern societies with their overwhelming range of possible choices, thus acting as mechanical automatons in the hands of external pressures rather than as responsible moral agents (Fromm, 1941; May, 1981), and prioritizing safety and comfort over freedom and growth (Maslow, 1968). A person does, however, at least have the capacity, through persistence and courage, to exercise freedom over his or her worldview and thus over his personality, in a way difficult to accommodate within current trait theory (e.g. McCrae & Costa, 2008).

But in what ways can a person become more aware and freer? The questions of awareness and freedom are intertwined, because an increased awareness of personal worldview, world and self, and existential problems and possibilities enhances the *capacity* for free choice, though not necessarily how much of that capacity is actually utilized. One way that a person can become more aware is through confrontation with, and reflection upon, worldview questions. Reflection activates the human faculty of symbolic reasoning, which is formidable at articulating and tying different experiences together into more abstract and coherent unities, reducing both fragmentation and inconsistency in the worldview, and thus potentially increasing both the explanatory breadth and the accuracy of the worldview (Gabora, 1999). Awareness of inconsistencies between fundamental elements of the worldview may be an especially powerful catalyst for substantive and lasting changes of the worldview (Gabora, 1999; Rokeach, 1960), propelled by the human need for cognitive consistency, as Rokeach (1960) experimentally demonstrated by making people aware of consistencies between their self-concepts and values.

Solitary life experiences and reflection do, however, not by itself have nearly as much potential to increase worldview awareness as does the encounter with other worldviews. Worldview encounters have the potential to make the person more aware of the fact that his or her own worldview, like everybody else's, provides only a limited vision of reality and that such limited visions strongly condition every person's experiences and actions, which, in turn, has the potential to promote understanding, tolerance, and respect. By demonstrating how differences of opinion boil down to fundamental differences in worldview assumptions and values, it can also help a person to understand the core tenets of his or her own worldview as contrasted to those of others. Granted, the confrontation with other worldviews can generate passionate worldview defense, derogation of dissidents, and polarization of worldviews (Becker, 1973; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986; Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Tomkins, 1963, 1965), rather than awareness, understanding, and tolerance. But the vast human potential for abstract, symbolic thinking at least enables the *capacity* to understand the notions of worldview finitude and plurality and to, given requisite courage and

wisdom, synthetically broaden our visions of reality so as to accommodate the perspectives of others, through what Gadamer (1975) called a "fusion of horizons", as well as to correct subjective biases that distort our view of regularities in the world (Kelly, 1955) and cause disharmony between our self-perceptions and actual organismic life experiences (Rogers, 1961). As Royce (1964) observed:

> The overwhelming impact of new ways to see, thought based on different assumptions, methodologies foreign to one's nature but relevant to another domain of knowledge, is so great that one almost bursts from the deeper and broader sense of reality. The step toward unencapsulation is, of course, a very real shock; it is quite comparable to the loss one suffers when a loved one dies, or if one is shedding a religious framework. But this is true education! This is learning where it hurts! When education reaches you where you live, it is real, it is powerful, it is existentially valid.

7. Background of the empirical research: Tomkins' Polarity Theory

The empirical research presented in Papers II and III is based upon Silvan Tomkins' (1963, 1965, 1987) *Polarity Theory* of ideologies and worldviews. Tomkins, who had a doctorate in philosophy and was also an astute anthropological observer and a reputed expert on affect and facial expression, took a non-reductive approach to psychology, much like Allport (1937), arguing that "Man is to be found as much in his language, his art, in his science, in his economic, political, and social institutions, as he is to be found in his cerebrum, in his nervous system, and in his genes." Although he never reached the level of fame Allport did, Tomkins' ideas did have a decisive influence upon the emergence of contemporary psychology of affect (Demos, 1995; Holinger, 2008; Kosofsky, Sedgwick, Frank, & Alexander, 1995) and narrative psychology (Barresi & Juckes, 1997; Carlson, 1988; Carlson & Carlson, 1984; McAdams, 2008) and, to some extent, political psychology (Stone & Shaffner, 1988, 1997) as well. Tomkins (1965) also envisioned a more general "psychology of knowledge" that:

> would concern itself first of all with the structure of man's knowledge. This would include both knowledge that is demonstrably valid and knowledge which is demonstrably invalid, and knowledge which is grey and especially knowledge which is based on faith. It would also concern itself with the ebb and flow of affect investment in ideas and ideology, in methods and styles of investigation, and in what is considered acceptable criteria of evidence. It would concern itself with the matches and mismatches between the ideologies which individuals and societies believed, and their needs. It would concern itself with the dynamics of initial resonance to ideology, of seduction by ideas, of disenchantment with ideas, of addiction to ideas and the abstinence symptoms of ideological deprivation, of commitment to ideas and the integration of both individuals and societies through commitment. It would concern itself with the role of violence and suffering in either encouraging or discouraging commitment to and deepening of ideology

The crown of his own contribution to this field was his Polarity Theory (Tomkins, 1963, 1965), which described the structure of worldviews and ideologies in terms of a fundamental polarity between *Humanism*, which construes the human being as "the measure, an end in himself, an active, creative, thinking, desiring, loving force in nature", and *Normativism*, which asserts that the human being "must realize himself, attain his full stature only through struggle toward, participation in, conformity to a norm, a measure, an ideal essence basically prior to and independent of man". He originally based this theory upon his observation that the polarity between humanism and normativism recurs in science, philosophy, art, jurisprudence, child-rearing practices, mathematics, and other "cultural products" of humanity, across different cultural and historical contexts, claiming that ideology "is found in its purest form in those controversies which are centuries old, and which have never ceased to find true believers" (Tomkins, 1965).

But Tomkins (1963, 1965, 1987) also suggested that, even though most individuals do not have coherent and articulate *personal ideologies*, the polarity within cultural ideologies nevertheless reflects the structure of individuals' *ideo-affective postures* – sets of more loosely organized, emotion-laden ideas – which we may, in the current context, simply translate as 'worldviews'. He consequently constructed the *Polarity Scale* (Tomkins, 1964; reprinted in Stone & Schaffner, 1988) to measure humanistic and normativistic beliefs and attitudes about persons, society, affect, science, children, and other highly general aspects of the world, and presented a theory about the psychological origins and dynamics of worldviews. Tomkins' (1963, 1965, 1987) worldview model is, perhaps paralleled by Pepper's *World Hypotheses* model (1942; Johnson et al., 1988), arguably the most comprehensive worldview model to date that both offers an integrative theory, rather than just a collection of separate worldview dimensions (cf. Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1973), and has been subject to empirical scrutiny (e.g. de St. Aubin, 1996; Stone & Schaffner, 1997). I will begin here by presenting Tomkins' description of the opposition between humanism and normativism in more detail, then I briefly summarize Tomkins' ideas about the narrative, emotional, social, cultural, and historical origins and dynamics of humanism and normativism, and, finally, I review previous research on humanism and normativism.

7.1. The opposition between humanism and normativism

In his theoretical exposition of Polarity Theory, Tomkins (1963) elucidated ten different opposing assumptions underlying the polarity he believed he had discovered in ideological thought, summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. *Assumptions underlying humanism and normativism*

Humanism	Normativism
The human being is an end in himself	The human being is not an end in himself; the valuable exists independent of humanity
The human being is the most real entity in nature	The human being is not as real as the world outside of him, which exists independent of humanity
Values are what human beings wish	Values exist independent of human beings
Human beings should satisfy and maximize their drives and affects	Human beings should be governed by norms which modulate their drives and affects
Human beings should maximize drive dissatisfaction and negative affects	Human beings should maximize norm conformity and norm realization
Affect inhibition should be minimized	Affects should be controlled by norms
Power should be maximized in order to maximize positive affect and to minimize negative affect	Power should be maximized in order to maximize norm compliance and achievement
Conflict between affects within the individual and between individuals should be minimized	Wishes should be ordered according to a norm and according to the necessity of the particular wish or behavior in furthering maintenance or achievement of the norm
If one satisfaction must be surrendered in the interest of another, the selection should be governed by the strategy of maximizing positive and minimizing negative affects	If one norm pursuit must be surrendered, that should be surrendered which is lower in the normative hierarchy or which will most threaten some higher member of the hierarchy
Weaknesses and imperfections in human beings should be tolerated, forgiven, and ameliorated	Weaknesses and imperfections in human beings should be relentlessly punished, demanding reform and perfection

Tomkins (1963) portrayed the first assumption as the most important one and also described seven direct derivatives of it: (1) human beings are inherently good

and must be corrupted to become bad versus human beings are inherently bad and must labor to become good, (2) human beings should be the object of love versus human beings should be loved only if they are worthy, (3) human beings should be the object of respect versus human beings should be respected only if they are respectable, (4) human achievements should be respected and glorified versus human achievements should be treated with restraint and temperate enthusiasm, (5) human affects should be approved versus human affects should be controlled because they jeopardize rational control of behavior and norm fulfillment, (6) reason should be used as a source of knowledge providing valuable distance from sensorial information versus reason should be held in check by the authority of the world external to the individual, and (7) reason should *not* be used to restrain affects versus reason should be used to restrain affects. These derivatives appear to have been of particular importance when Tomkins constructed his Polarity Scale, which Tomkins (1987) grouped into philosophy of science and education (sixth derivative), view of human nature (first derivative), sympathy versus antipathy toward other human beings (second and third derivatives), sympathy versus antipathy toward children and childish play (second and fifth derivatives), positive versus negative attitude to affect as such (fifth and seventh derivatives), pluralism and plenitude versus hierarchical selectivity (eight assumption), and view of how society should be governed (seventh assumption).

Note that almost every single existential problem discussed in Chapter 6 is touched upon in the above explicated assumptions, including value and purpose (internal vs. external), freedom (intuition vs. reason), the material world (prior vs. secondary to the experiential world), the social world (progressiveness vs. conformity), the transience of life (external, eternal vs. experiential, changeable reality), and the epistemic limitations (rationalism vs. empiricism). This is testament to the enormous breadth of humanism and normativism in addressing the existential problems and permeating the worldview. Tomkins' model can however be understood as an idealized rationalization describing what a worldview with a humanistic or normativistic core assumption *should* be like (see Chapter 2); it is an empirical question whether worldviews really do conform to this pattern. Tomkins (1963, 1965) did, in fact, not claim that real worldviews always fit neatly into this idealized theoretical structure, acknowledging the existence of, for example, "middle of the road" ideological expressions, such as the philosophy of Kant and the music of Beethoven, that creatively synthesize elements of both humanism and normativism.

7.2. Social, cultural, narrative, emotional, and historical foundations and dynamics

Tomkins (1965, 1979, 1995) emphasized the role of socialization and interpersonal experience in the developmental origins and dynamics of humanism and normativism. On his account, parental figures, and other role models, who encourage and take part in play and bestow upon children the feeling that they are ends in themselves, that they control their environment, and that human interaction is deeply satisfying promote the development of humanistic postures, whereas parental figures who try to mold children according to norms of morality, manners, competence, and independence and set aside the children's feelings and wishes in favor of the demanded behaviors promote the development of normativistic postures; humanistically socialized children acquire an open and accepting posture toward their own experiences and feelings and they come to feel positively about, and value happiness and satisfaction in, both themselves and others, normativistically socialized children come to renounce and devalue the personal wishes and thereby the self, and children who are exposed to mixed socialization influences develop mixed postures. There is some evidence today, on the basis of other models, that socialization affects worldviews (Duckitt, 2001), but it is likely that new experiences, as well as re-framings of old ones, also can, to some extent, continue to affect the person's ideological posture throughout the life course (Dweck, 2008; Guimond, Dambrun, Michinov, & Duarte, 2003).

Tomkins (1963, 1965, 1987), furthermore, emphasized the role of culture in the development of worldviews, suggesting that ideological elements that *resonate* sufficiently with the worldview are integrated within it and serve to consolidate it. He pointed out that humanistic and normativistic postures may therefore have very different manifestations depending on the cultural setting, such that, for example, "a left-wing American is more like a right-wing American than either is to any member of Confucian China" and "If he [the left-wing philosopher] lives in an age of superstition, he is apt to glorify rational analysis. If he lives in an age of superstition he is apt to stress, as do the existentialists today, the value of intimate surrender to the object". Tomkins (1965, 1979, 1987) did, nevertheless, not view persons as wholly subject to the blind dynamics of social and cultural processes, but argued that the fit between the worldview and cultural elements need not be perfect at the outset for them to be integrated, thus leaving room for persons to choose freely from the cultural smorgasbord of ideological thought, and that persons have the freedom to narratively construct a coherent and articulate personal ideology and write a play of their lives, on the basis of their worldviews.

Another important aspect of Tomkins' (1963, 1965, 1987) account of worldviews was his emphasis of the importance of their emotional foundations and

dynamics. He proposed that normativism is associated with anger, contempt, disgust, surprise, and excitement and that humanism is associated with joy, distress, fear, and shame, which may be understood both in terms of *appraisals* of situations that are caused by worldviews and generate affect (Smith & Lazarus, 1990; Tomkins, 1987) and in terms of *narrative constructions* of personal experiences in the emotion terms prominent within the given worldview (de St. Aubin, 1996; Goldie, 2000). But Tomkins' distinction between humanistic and normativistic affects needs to be understood in light of his historical account of humanism and normativism (Mosher & Tomkins, 1988; Tomkins, 1987), which traced their origins to the emergence of social stratification and exploitation due to perceived scarcity of natural resources and struggles for survival. On this account, the benign presence of physical and cultural resources fostered pacific relaxation, excitement, and communion, which bred humanistic ideologies, whereas perceived scarcity of resources fostered ruthless competition, social stratification and exploitation, and violence and warfare between social strata, which bred normativistic ideologies; the normativistic affects were, consequently, associated with conflict, dominance, and warrior-mentality, whereas the humanistic affects were associated with peace, submission, and empathy for human weakness and suffering. Tomkins (1987) also speculated that the emergence of societies with division of labor in resource provision caused the stratification between the warrior or oppressor normativists and the pacifist or submissive humanists to shift to class, sex, and age, and to the relation between humanity and deity, associating humanism with the lower classes, femininity, the elderly and weak people, secularity or animality, and the political left-wing and associating normativism with the upper classes, masculinity, the young and strong people, divinity or purity, and the political left-wing.

But regardless of how fascinating this historical account is, and how strong link between emotionality and worldview is (e.g. Jost et al., 2003), there are reasons to question Tomkins' (1963, 1965, 1987) specific postulated links between worldview and affect. Although there is evidence of a connection between normativism and hostile affect, and between humanism and joy (Nilsson, 2013; Tomkins, 1987; Walter & Stone, 1997), the connection between humanism and fear, shame, and guilt is more contentious, and Tomkins' account completely leaves out those positive emotions, including gratitude and admiration, that are based upon appraising a moral agent as praiseworthy rather than blameworthy (Keltner, Horberg, & Oveis, 2006). It is plausible also that humanism is associated with anger of a different kind than normativism, rooted in the appraisal of violations of a person's rights or freedoms rather than of violations of norms (de St. Aubin, 1996; Keltner, Horberg, & Oveis, 2006).

7.3. A review of previous research

Tomkins' original Polarity Scale (PS; 1964; reprinted in Stone & Schaffner, 1988) presents participants with one humanistic and one corresponding normativistic statement at a time, asking them to choose one of these statements, both, or neither. The scoring procedure recommended by Tomkins (1964) and used in most subsequent studies computes separate humanism and normativism scores. Stone and Schaffner (1988) revised this scale, rephrasing some of the items and reducing the total number of item-pairs from 59 to 40 through item-analysis, creating one 40-item pair version and one 43-item pair version that kept three theoretically significant item-pairs with low item-total correlations. De St. Aubin (1996) further transformed the 40-item pair version into Likert format by splitting the 40 item pairs into 80 separate items and rearranging their order, and called it the Modified Polarity Scale (MPS). The items used in these scales have previously been translated into Spanish (Stone & Garzon, 1992), Turkish (Gürsimsek & Göregenli, 2004), Finnish (Lindeman & Sirelius, 2001). Several abridged scales have also been used (Carlson & Brincka, 1987; Lindeman & Aarnio, 2006; Tan, Kendis, Fine, & Porac, 1977), and taste-smell imagery has been used as a covert measure of humanistic tolerance and normativistic rejection of human beings and life generally (Carlson & Levy, 1970; Tomkins, 1963, 1964) although the taste-smell items in the PS have low correlations with the total scales (Stone & Schaffner, 1988). Empirical studies using these measures of humanism and normativism span several decades and several different fields of research, as summarized below.

The structure of humanism and normativism

Previous research has, surprisingly, rendered consistently non-significant, or weak, correlations between humanism and normativism, regardless of whether the Likert format (de St. Aubin, 1996) or the original paired format (Stone & Schaffner, 1997) has been used, which, prior to the current research (Paper II), appeared to undermine Polarity Theory.

Two personalistic studies using *Q-methodology* (Stephenson, 1953) to group persons with similar worldviews have also been used to shed light on the question of what the worldviews of humanists and normativists actually look like. In the first one, Thomas (1976) let participant Q-sort the Polarity Scale items and derived one humanism person-factor and one normativism person-factor from his analyses. These two factors were however, contrary to expectations, orthogonal rather than opposite; the actual humanists and normativists were, Thomas (1976, 1978) argued, not polarized on the same issues, because the actual normativists had

different concerns, and were less intolerant, rigid, and inflexible, than Tomkins' theorized normativist. In the second study, I (Nilsson, 2007) correlated humanism and normativism with worldview person-factors derived through Q-methodology, finding four different worldviews which all turned out to combine different elements of humanism and normativism, with around 60% of the participants falling into the groups characterized by a worldview with high normativism and low humanism or high humanism and low normativism. The actual humanistic worldviews in this study were less hedonistic and relativistic than Tomkins' theorized humanist and the actual normativistic worldviews were more rationalistic than Tomkins' theorized normativist and were characterized by pessimistic realism (e.g. human beings are egoists) rather than an altogether negative view of the world (e.g. not human beings are evil/bad).

The emotional and social basis of ideology

The early research on Polarity Theory focused almost exclusively on the affective and social basis of ideology and was inspired by psychoanalytic thought. In Tomkins' own (1963, 1987) experiments, humanism correlated positively with general sociophilia on a projective test, normativism correlated positively with sociophobia especially regarding physical contact between men, with the expectation of aggression from others, and with social restlessness on the same projective test, and humanists tended to see happy faces whereas normativists tended to see contemptuous faces when presented with a different affect to each eye in a binocular rivalry test. In another study, Vasquez (1976) found relations between humanism and smiling as well as responding with shame, and between normativism and responding with disgust, in a situation where the participant was talking to an experimenter. In Walter and Stone's (1997; see also Stone & Schaffer, 1997) more recent study, humanism correlated positively with positive mood and normativism correlated positively with negative mood and negatively with positive mood. I have also previously (Nilsson, 2007, 2013) found correlations between humanism and current positive affect, between humanism and dispositional jovial affect, and between normativism and dispositional hostile affect.

Other studies have found affectivity variables to be related especially to humanism. Positive relations have been found between humanism and emotional empathy (Walter & Stone, 1997), affective attention, behavioural activation, and intuitive thinking (Lindeman & Aarnio, 2006), absorption (Krus & Tellegen, 1975) and between humanistic imagery and affective responsiveness in a learning situation (Carlson & Levy, 1970). De St. Aubin (1996), in addition, found that humanism was associated with emotions expressed in life-story narratives involving the humanistic affects joy, distress, and fear and with anger of the

author, whereas normativism was only associated with anger of the other (see also de St. Aubin, Wandrei, Skerven, & Coppolillo, 2006). Ashton and Dwyer's (1975) have, finally, argued that humanism is associated with right-hemisphere mentation, based on the assessment of frequencies of lateral eye movements in response to reflective questions.

Narrative psychology

Several researchers have addressed humanism and normativism as central themes in identity-formation and life-story narration (Albaugh & McAdams, 2007; Carlson & Brincka, 1987; de St. Aubin, 1996; 1999; de St. Aubin et al., 2006). De St. Aubin (1996) found humanism to be negatively correlated with the life-narrative theme of God as a rule-based force outside of humanity and that normativism correlated negatively with the theme of God as a human expression within humanity. De St. Aubin et al. (2006) compared the four most extreme humanists (highest humanism and lowest normativism) with the four most extreme normativists (highest normativism and lowest humanism), in de St. Aubin's (1996) data, yielding several findings. First, the humanists' stories were filled with emotion, whereas the normativists' stories contained some contempt and anger but very little emotion overall. Second, the humanists saw their selves as dynamic, open, and continuously shaped and explored through introspection and self-development, whereas the normativists saw their selves as a stable unit to rely upon and protect and portrayed its consistency and autonomy from outside forces as a moral virtue. Third, the humanists' stories were filled with portrayals of intimate relationships and of the struggles with working through the difficulties of these relationships, whereas the normativists' stories were filled with examples of independence and distance from others, portraying people as obstacles or threats and focusing more on work ethic, productivity, and social progress. Fourth, to the extent that they were religious, the humanists saw religion as a personal path of exploration of their connection to a greater force, characterized by personal experiences, self-reflexivity, and eclecticism, whereas the normativists saw religion more as more externally defined, in terms of institutionalized religious doctrines, tradition, and ceremony. Fifth, the normativists' stories contained several themes that were much less pronounced or completely absent in the humanists' stories: focus on the control of emotions and behavior of self and others, judging people according to criteria of conduct and then ranking them in a hierarchy of human worthiness, and vivid escape fantasies of breaking rules of conduct, violating taboos, and acting with passion and rebelliousness. De St. Aubin et al. (2006), finally, suggested that both humanism and normativism may have maladaptive consequences when taken to their extremes, concluding that the extreme humanists had an overanalyzed and highly dynamic selfhood that stifled their ability to be productive and complete projects, while the extreme

normativists had an insecure and fragile sense of self and were dependent upon social acceptance and recognition as well as unable to fully engage with others.

Albaugh and McAdams (2007) correlated humanism and normativism to "Lakoff-themes" involving nurturance and strictness in life-story narratives. Normativism correlated positively with self-discipline and negatively with empathy and openness, and humanism correlated positively with caregiving. Normativism did, however, not correlate with rules and reinforcements, or with competition and success, in this study. Carlson and Brincka (1987), finally, found that Republican leaders at that time in the United States were narratively associated with the normative affects of excitement, anger, and contempt, whereas the Democrat leaders were narratively associated with the humanistic affects of joy, distress, and shame.

Political psychology

Tomkins (1963, 1965, 1987) posited a strong connection between humanism and left-wing politics and between normativism and right-wing politics, as discussed in Paper III, and even used the labels 'left-wing' and 'right-wing' interchangeably with the labels 'humanism' and 'normativism'. This theorized connection has been amply supported by research. Thomas (1978) used Q-methodology (Stephenson, 1953) and found a correspondence between humanistic and normativistic Q-factors and left- and right-wing Q-factors composed of attitudes about political, economic, and social issues. Normativism has also been found to correlate positively with right-wing authoritarianism (RWA; Albaugh & McAdams, 2007; Schultz, Stone, & Christie, 1997; Walter & Stone, 1997), social dominance orientation (SDO; Albaugh & McAdams, 2007; Caldwell, 2007; Walter & Stone, 1997), system justification (Gürsimsek & Göregenli, 2006), self-rated conservatism (Albaugh & McAdams, 2007), and a measure of conservative attitudes (de St. Aubin, 1996), and to correlate negatively with voting for the democrats in U.S. elections (de St. Aubin, 1996). Humanism on the other hand has been found to correlate positively with self-rated liberalism (Albaugh & McAdams, 2007), a measure of liberal attitudes, and voting for the democrats (de St Aubin, 1996), and to correlate negatively with RWA (Albaugh & McAdams, 2007; Schultz, Stone, & Christie, 1997; Walter & Stone, 1997), SDO (Caldwell, 2007; Walter & Stone, 1997), voting for the republicans and the occurrence of conservative themes in life story narratives (de St. Aubin, 1996). Farre and Duckitt (1994) did, however, not find any significant relations between humanism and normativism and political party preference or liberalism/conservatism self-rating in a South-African context, and Stone, Ommundsen, and Williams (1985) have suggested, based upon research with American and Norwegian samples, that Polarity Theory fits the social attitude structure better in the U.S. than in Norway.

The psychology of prejudice

In addition to RWA and SDO, which are included in contemporary accounts of prejudice (Duckitt, Wagner, DuPlessis, & Birum, 2002; Ekehammar et al., 2004), several other measures of prejudice have also been found to correlate with humanism and normativism. Krus and Tellegen (1975) found positive correlations between normativism and self-interested, prejudiced, and aggressive "forms of consciousness" and positive correlations between humanism and more altruistic and intuitive forms of consciousness. Other studies have indicated positive relations between normativism and dogmatism (Alker & Poppen, 1973; Alker, Tourangeau, & Staines, 1976; Tan, Kendis, Fine, & Porac, 1977), Machiavellianism, the pre-moral stage Kohlberg's model of moral development (Alker & Poppen, 1973), Tellegen's authoritarianism scale (Krus & Tellegen, 1975), and negative attitudes to some groups of disabled persons (Caldwell, 2007), and negative relations between humanism and experimentally induced rigidity (Schultz et al.,1997), dogmatism (Alker, Tourangeau, & Staines, 1976; Alker & Poppen, 1973), Machiavellianism (Alker & Poppen, 1973) and discomfort associated with interaction with disabled persons (Caldwell, 2007).

The psychology of religion

Several researchers have embraced Polarity Theory as a framework for understanding religious belief (de St. Aubin, 1996, 1999; Graskamp, 2006; Lindeman & Aarnio, 2006). In line with the findings already mentioned (de St. Aubin, 1996; de St. Aubin et al., 2006), the association between normativism and traditional religiosity is supported by several studies (Graskamp, 2006; Hakstian, Suefeld, Ballard, & Rank, 1986). Interestingly, my own earlier results (Nilsson, 2007) indicate positive correlations between atheism and normativism in a Swedish context. Lindeman and Aarnio (2006), moreover, found that humanism was the second strongest predictor, out of a large battery of variables, of the common factor behind religious, paranormal, and superstitious beliefs.

Values

Several studies demonstrate correlations between humanism and normativism and values that provide mixed support for Polarity Theory. De St. Aubin (1996) measured values with Rokeach's (1973) Value Survey, finding that humanism correlated with high rankings of mature love, broad minded, and imaginative, and with low rankings of clean and polite, and that normativism correlated with high rankings of polite and low rankings of imaginative. The correlations between

humanism and social recognition, loving, and world of beauty and between normativism and world of beauty and clean were in the expected directions but not significant. The correlations between normativism and high self-control and social recognition, and low love, forgiveness, and equality were not significant. The power in these analyses is, however, questionable ($N = 64$).

Lindeman and Sirelius (2001; personal communication, October 16, 2008) correlated humanism and normativism with Schwartz Value Survey and with food-choice ideologies in two different samples of Finnish women. Humanism correlated mainly with an ecological food-choice ideology that emphasized ecological welfare, political motives, and natural content and with a pleasure ideology that emphasized sensory appeal, and normativism correlated with a health ideology that emphasized health concern and weight control. Humanism correlated also positively with hedonism, self-direction, and stimulation and normativism correlated positively with power and tradition in both studies. Humanism also correlated positively with universalism, benevolence, tradition, and achievement and negatively with security, and normativism correlated positively with conformity, security, stimulation, and achievement in one of the two studies.

Personality traits

In Walter and Stone's (1997) study, humanism correlated positively with openness, agreeableness, and emotional empathy, normativism correlated negatively with openness, agreeableness, and extraversion, but neither humanism nor normativism correlated significantly with altruism. Other studies provide additional findings regarding the affective traits associated with humanism, including affective attention, behavioral activation, intuitive thinking (Lindeman & Aarnio, 2006), and absorption (Krus & Tellegen, 1975). I have also found positive correlations between humanism and empathy, life satisfaction, general happiness, and experiential favorability, and negative correlations between normativism and experiential favorability (Nilsson, 2013).

Beliefs about agency, control, and discipline

Hakstian et al. (1986) found positive correlations between normativism and individual-focused responsibility ascription involving reward and punishment, meritocracy beliefs, and libertarianism and between humanism and egalitarian diffusion of responsibility and authority to social groups, societies, and states; diffusion of responsibility also correlated negatively normativism. Williams (1984) classified participants into normativists and humanists and reported that the normativists attributed more responsibility to both welfare clients and theft

victims, had a less favorable view of both welfare clients and theft victims, and expressed less sympathy with and greater disgust toward both welfare clients and theft victims. The humanists were also more lenient and sympathetic toward an emotionally upset victim and had a more favorable view of the victim of serious theft than the victim of minor theft, in contrast to the normativists, who were less affected by the emotional state of the victim and who had a less positive view of the victim of serious theft than the victim of minor theft. In line with this, Coppolillo (2006) has found correlations between normativism and blame of, and negative attitudes toward, victims of sexual assault. Gürsimsek and Göregenli (2004) have also found, in a sample of Turkish school teachers, a correlation between a composite humanism-normativism scale and their control orientation, involving rules, rewards, and punishment, in the classroom, and de St. Aubin (1996) has found positive correlations between humanism and perceived trustworthiness, altruism, and complexity of human nature and a negative correlation only between normativism and perceived altruism. Two studies, finally, suggest that humanism is associated with internal locus of control (Alker, Tourangeau, & Staines, 1976; Tan et al., 1977) and one suggest that both humanism and normativism are unrelated to locus of control (Alker & Poppen, 1973).

8. Overview of the papers

This thesis includes three individual papers – one entirely theoretical and two empirical. The first paper addresses conceptual, theoretical, and methodological issues, seeking to elucidate the role of the psychology of worldviews within contemporary personality psychology. The second paper improves and evaluates measures of humanistic and normativistic worldviews, on the basis of Tomkins' Polarity Theory. The third paper applies Tomkins' Polarity Theory to contemporary political psychology, seeking to demonstrate how humanism and normativism contribute to our understanding of the psychological underpinnings of political ideology.

Paper I. Personality psychology as the integrative study of traits and worldviews

This paper originated in my ambition to demonstrate that the study of worldviews is an important yet neglected topic in personality psychology. This led me to scrutinize how personality theorists today conceive of their field as a whole, and to conclude that their conceptualizations were either incoherent or overly descriptive, such that they reify the *current* study of personality rather than start from an analysis of how personality *should* be studied. I therefore sought to delineate the foundations for a coherent normative framework for the study of personality, on the basis of a core distinction between the study of traits, defined as objective behavioral regularities, and the study of worldviews, defined as subjective sources of meaning, which I suggest should be equally basic to the study of personality. The first part of the paper is dedicated to the explication of this distinction, a discussion of what has been previously left out from both the study of traits and the study of worldviews, and an argument to the effect that we have no theoretical or empirical grounds for supposing that traits are more inherently universal than worldviews, ontogenetically and causally prior to worldviews in the sense commonly assumed, or in other ways more basic than worldviews. The second part of the paper addresses the problem of how personality psychology can contribute to the integration of knowledge of personality attributes into holistic portraits of personalities, emphasizing the need to study coherence not just within traits, but also within worldviews, and between worldviews and traits, and taking a conciliatory approach to the opposition between critics and proponents of contemporary personality psychology, by trying to carve out a role for mechanistic accounts in holistic personality portraits and to defend the utility of individual

difference methodology while emphasizing the need to *complement* it with personalistic methodology.

Paper II. Measuring Humanistic and Normativistic worldviews: Distinct, hierarchically structured, and negatively correlated

This paper was rooted in the need to evaluate previous measures of humanistic and normativistic worldviews and to make sense of the puzzling finding that these measures, contrary to Polarity Theory (Tomkins, 1963, 1965, 1987) which they are based upon, fail to render substantial negative correlations between humanism and normativism. To shed light on this problem, and address the content validity of the scales, I introduce a hierarchical model of humanism and normativism, dividing them into five facets each – view of human nature, interpersonal attitude, attitude to affect, epistemological orientation, and political values – and suggesting that the relation between humanism and normativism varies across the facets. These facets were derived from Tomkins' (1987) own categorization of his items, but with two of his seven categories removed: attitude to children and childishness was included in interpersonal attitude because it is subsumed under interpersonal attitude and attitude to affect within Tomkins' (1963, 1965) theory, and preference for plenitude and pluralism versus hierarchical selectivity was removed because it covered only two items, with dubious psychometric properties, in previous measures.

In the first study, I evaluate the Swedish Likert version of the Polarity Scale, finding evidence, on the basis of confirmatory factor analysis, that humanism and normativism cannot be appropriately reduced to one bi-polar construct nor to two homogenously related constructs, because they are distinct and negatively related across view of human nature, interpersonal attitude, and attitude to affect but not across epistemological orientation and political values. In the second and third studies, I develop six-item facet-scales in Swedish and English (U.S.), by adding new items to the item pool and picking out the best items on the basis of item analyses and theoretical considerations, and I give all facets the same weight in the total humanism and normativism scales, arguing that, even though the facets are very unequally represented in previous scales (e.g. eighteen epistemology items but only two directly assessing view of human nature), there is no clear theoretical justification in the literature for weighing them unequally. Confirmatory factor analyses replicate the finding from the first study that humanism and normativism cannot be reduced to one bi-polar construct and that they are negatively related across view of human nature, attitude to affect, and interpersonal attitude, but

unrelated across epistemological orientations and political values. I also report indications of discriminant and predictive validity in the second and third studies, and in a fourth study investigating the correlation between humanism and normativism and the Big Five Aspects in a multinational online sample. Humanism correlated positively with benevolent-world beliefs, several measures of spirituality, intrinsic life goals, left-wing political identity, compassion, politeness, industriousness, enthusiasm, and openness, and negatively with opposition to religion; normativism correlated positively with various measures of essentialist beliefs, right-wing political identity, religious fundamentalism, opposition to religion, extrinsic life goals, and orderliness, and negatively with benevolent-world beliefs, one measure of spirituality, compassion, politeness, enthusiasm, openness, and intellect. The majority of these correlations are consistent with the theoretical expectations. I conclude by suggesting that humanism and normativism have partly different psychological origins and consequences yet often come into conflict with each other with regards to specific, culture-laden ideological issues.

Paper III. Revisiting Tomkins' Polarity Theory: How Humanism and Normativism shape political ideology

In this paper, we address the question of how humanism and normativism can contribute to contemporary explanations of the psychological underpinnings of political ideology, arguing that Tomkins' Polarity Theory (1963, 1965, 1987) can contribute to the development of a more unified account of the central role of worldviews, and cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral tendencies in ideology. In the first study, we investigate the relation between humanism and normativism and Duckitt's (2001) model of ideology in the U.S., providing evidence, through path analysis, that normativism predicts political identity through dangerous-world, competitive-world beliefs, right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation and that humanism, conversely, predicts political identity through negative relations to all these variables. We also investigate the relation between humanism and normativism and Jost et al.'s (2003) model of ideology, providing evidence that normativism predicts political identity through system justification, resistance to change, and low preference for equality, that humanism only independently predicts political identity through preference for equality and economic system justification, and that normativism but not humanism is correlated with existential and epistemic motivations to manage threat and reduce uncertainty and complexity. After this, we investigate the relation between humanism and normativism and Haidt and Graham's (2007) model of ideology, in two Swedish studies and one U.S. study, reporting consistent positive correlations between humanism and moral intuitions regarding fairness and the

avoidance of harm (i.e. the liberal moral intuitions) and negative correlations between normativism and moral intuitions regarding loyalty, authority, and purity (i.e. the conservative intuitions), and also mainly significant negative correlations between normativism and moral intuitions regarding fairness and the avoidance of harm. In one of these three studies, conducted in Sweden, we also test a number of path models relating humanism and normativism to Jost et al.'s (2003) and Haidt and Graham's (2007) models of political ideology and to the HEXACO model (Ashton & Lee, 2007) of personality traits which predict political orientation. We successfully replicate the finding from the first study that normativism predicts political identity through system justification, resistance to change, and low preference for equality, while humanism predicts political identity only through preference for equality. We also find evidence that liberal moral intuitions, emotionality, and honesty-humility mediate the relationship between humanism and political attitudes and that conservative moral intuitions and low openness mediate the relationship between normativism and political attitudes. Finally, we report hierarchical regression models in both the first and the last study, providing evidence that humanism and normativism add to the prediction of resistance to change and preference for equality over and above the predictors from the other models of ideology. We conclude by discussing what new light these findings shed on the structure and dynamics of ideology, emphasizing the broad and unifying perspective of Polarity Theory.

9. General discussion

The overarching purpose of this dissertation was to contribute to the development of a non-reductive science of personality that systematically studies the person's worldview in its own right, as the source of meaning in personality. This is, needless to say, a monumental undertaking, aimed at the development of an entire field, rather than merely the testing of a specific theory or evaluation of a measure. It also presents tricky challenges, given the deep and emotion-laden rift between philosophical and theoretical perspectives on personality and current empirical personality psychology. This thesis therefore, inevitably, has great limitations, and leaves innumerable questions to be adequately addressed. I discuss these limitations here and suggest directions for further theoretical work and empirical research. I begin by discussing prospects for reconciliation of philosophical perspectives on personality with contemporary empirical personality psychology and then address the question of whether the methodology used is compatible with the theoretical framework. I thereafter discuss how to go from the current empirical research, from humanism and normativism and beyond, toward a more systematic attempt to conceptualize and measure worldviews, and suggest ways of studying how worldviews develop in response to existential problems. I conclude by summing up the contributions and implications of this thesis.

9.1. How can the gap between theoretical/philosophical and empirical personality psychology be bridged?

It has become increasingly clear to me, while working on this thesis, that the rift between philosophical and theoretical psychology and empirical psychology, which originally came to my attention much earlier (Nilsson, 2006), still runs deep. On the empirical side of the rift, although there is wide acknowledgement of the role of domain-specific theorizing in research, there is much less interest and competence with regards to critically discussing general theoretical and conceptual issues, as well as paradigmatic assumptions and historical factors, pertinent to personality psychology. Lamiell (2007), for example, describes his failure, despite several decades of effort, to get mainstream personality researchers to engage with critical discussions about the shortcomings of the individual differences approach, Danziger (2013) writes that "the striking feature of much of twentieth-century personality psychology is the strength of its faith in the objective reality of

whatever it is attempting to uncover", and Kukla (2002) claims that psychology in general is, despite its great potential to benefit from theoretical research, perhaps the most extremely empiricist of all academic disciplines. It is, indeed, not difficult to find examples of how the lack of attention devoted to theoretical issues causes problems that proliferate throughout the field – the fact that Five Factor Theory (McCrae & Costa, 2008) is still, despite the many refutations of it (e.g. Harré, 1998; Lamiell, 2000; Boag, 2011) accorded its own chapter in the prestigious Handbook of Personality – is one of them. One might want to object, by appealing to Kuhn (1962), that the lack of attention to philosophical matters is just "normal science", which depends on our ability to form a consensus, explicit or implicit, on theoretical assumptions and methodology so that we can go out and do research instead of perpetuating endless philosophical debates. But this objection would overlook the fact that the problems exemplified by Five Factor Theory are not just empirical anomalies (Kuhn, 1962), but internal inconsistencies, ultimately rooted in the futile attempt to provide a reductionistic account of an inherently non-reductive concept, which I hope to have shown in Chapter 4. It is thus clear that personality psychology *should* pay more attention to theoretical and conceptual issues, but this raises questions as to what is the best way to make this happen.

If we look at the theoretical and philosophical side of the rift, there clearly seems to be more that could be done to stimulate empirical psychologists to engage with critical conceptual and theoretical issues. One problem is that most of the articles published in theoretical and philosophical psychology journals simply do not address issues that empirical psychologists care much about. One response to this problem would be to argue that theoretical and philosophical psychology should be integrated within the specialized disciplines of psychology and included as a core element in graduate training for all researchers, rather than as branching off into its own specialized discipline that is of interest chiefly to those who specialize in it (DeJong, Bem, & Shouten, 2004). I do not wish to deny, however, that theoretical and philosophical psychology could legitimately form an autonomous discipline on its own, with theoretical experts and consultants (Kukla, 2002; Slife & Williams, 1997), because this does not stand in necessary opposition to an increased appreciation of theoretical methods within empirical research fields. But I do wish to emphasize the need for theoretical experts to try to demonstrate how their philosophical analyses apply to the problems researchers are concerned with and what concrete methodological implications they have (e.g. Boag, 2011; Lamiell, 2000; Piekkola, 2011), rather than just developing their own philosophical visions for psychology. As Tissaw and Osbeck (2007) remarked, in their editorial for a special issue on this topic in a leading theoretical psychology journal, it is important not just to be "critical of", but to "engage with", the mainstream – as I have tried to do in this thesis – without, for that matter, letting this turn into "alliance or compliance". This is precisely where psychologists versed in theoretical reasoning can make a huge difference to psychology.

Another problem is that several theoretical and philosophical psychologists (e.g. Harré, Clarke, & DeCarlo, 1985; Lamiell, 1987, 2000), who have engaged with contemporary empirical research, have taken radical positions, rejecting the mainstream in favor of a completely reconceived personality psychology, thus perpetuating the idea of a gap of incommensurability between empirical and theoretical psychology. I have, instead, taken an integrative and conciliatory approach, with regards to traits and worldviews, and individual differences and personalistic methodology, both because I believe radical critiques of the mainstream are exaggerated and because I believe that they elicit psychological processes of polarization and defense, which discourage mainstream researchers to engage with critical conceptual and theoretical issues. It is, it might be objected, quite possible that a conciliatory approach does not help for getting the mainstream to engage with conceptual and theoretical issues, as in the case of Allport's (1937, 1962) advocacy of personalistic inquiry (Lamiell, 1987, 2003). It may, furthermore, be that I am trying to do something impossible. Indeed, it is arguable that this dissertation places the psychology of worldviews on more secure footing than it does the integrative framework for personality psychology. I have, for example, tried to "save" the trait concept, by defining traits in terms of behavioral regularities that are invoked, non-circularly, in personality explanation by the addition of assumptions about what reasons and capacities the trait is typically associated with. But can traits and worldviews really be combined in this way, as different aspects of the same phenomenon, or do we need to change our methodology or re-define traits as antecedents or consequences rather than constituents of personality? (e.g. Boag, 2011; Kreitler & Kreitler, 1990; Lamiell, 1987). I believe that this is exactly what good personality explanations are like – integrating information about tendencies with information about subjective meanings – but it remains to be seen whether this idea passes the test of critical discussion. There is a rich literature on explanation (e.g. Malle, 1999; Salmon, 1990) that may shed additional light on these issues, including a consideration of the varieties of mechanistic explanation, which I have ignored in this thesis. The only way to learn whether the kind of integrative approach I have taken here will prove viable or not, philosophically and rhetorically, is to develop it in further detail and evaluate it. This pursuit has unquestionable value, because a viable integrative approach has potential to powerfully stimulate theoretically grounded research, and because psychology is losing an important resource if researchers with philosophical inclinations are forced to retreat from empirical psychology just because philosophically informed perspectives tend to radically reject the mainstream. In addition, although Allport (1937, 1955) may have failed to make personalistic methods widely accepted, others like McAdams (1992, 2008) and Little (2001, 2005) have had better success in bringing non-reductive methodologies into the mainstream.

9.2. Were the methods appropriate for the theoretical agenda?

One particularly important objection to my conciliatory approach is that the methodology adopted in the empirical studies presented in Paper II and III, which is based upon questionnaires and *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM), does not fit with a non-reductive personality theory. Although I have already addressed part of this objection in Chapters 2 and 3 as well as Paper I, I will summarize my response here and use it to reflect upon the limitations of the present research.

A first objection, which I do not think is very severe, is that SEM statistics is based upon the assumption that endogenous factors, including both latent and manifest variables, are *causes* of exogenous factors, which would seem difficult to reconcile with the holistic notion of personality variables as partly *constituted* by their relations to each other. Borsboom, Mellenberg, and Herden (2004), for example, argue that it is inherent in the notion of measurement that if we really have measured *something* (i.e. a latent factor), say the factor of extraversion, then there must be something that has caused our results, namely the property of extraversion. Cramer et al. (2008) have even found it necessary, in order to avoid treating traits as causes of behavior, to reject SEM altogether and invent a new form of analysis that portrays personality as a "network" of affective, cognitive, and behavioral components that "depend on one another directly for causal, homeostatic or logical reasons". However appealing this network approach may be, there is nothing in SEM itself that forces us to take a causal interpretation of it, and doing so may often even be misleading. Borsboom, Mellenberg, and Herden's (2004) argument only demonstrates that the notion of measurement entails the assumption that there is *something* causing the patterns we discover in our data. But having measured something tells us nothing about the ontology of what we are measuring – whether it is an abstract pattern, a causal structure within the person, a mathematical group-level idealization, or a complex conglomeration of many things – or about the nature of the relations between the variables. That something causes responses on a self-report questionnaire has nothing to do with whether it also independently causes behavior or not (Boag, 2011; Harré, 1998; Chapter 4). Ontological assumptions can only be warranted on the basis of theory and experimental evidence of causality.

Another objection is that worldviews need to be studied at the level at which they are actually lived, through ethnographic and biographical methods, rather than at an intellectual or philosophical level. Because a worldview is a presuppositional structure that you think through, or with, rather than typically about, having a worldview does not imply being able to understand or describe it, and what comes out in self-report questionnaires may, therefore, be an intellectual

or self-deceptive construction rather than the actual worldview. This objection is particularly relevant given the possibility that the educated and cognitively sophisticated persons that are inclined to participate in worldview research are unrepresentatively adept at articulating their own worldviews and of achieving coherence between their traits and worldviews (cf. Federico, Hunt, & Ergun, 2009) – a possibility worth exploring in its own right. It is also an objection worth taking seriously. It is true that if we want to probe as deeply as possible into a particular person's worldview, we need to learn about that person's world and actions and not just listen to his or her self-reports, and it is also possible to, in some ways, go beyond self-descriptions, getting to know the person better than s/he knows him-/herself, with the aid of an outside, third-person perspective (Fay, 1996). The use of self-report questionnaires alone does, however, not require the assumption that persons have a coherent and articulate sense of their worldviews. As Tomkins (1965) noted, persons tend to experience a feeling of resonance when they encounter a belief, option, attitude, or ideology that fits with their worldview, giving them, essentially, a sense of whether they like a particular worldview statement or not, whether they can also make meta-judgments about their worldview or not. Self-report measures thus, ideally, provide a structure that helps persons express their own worldviews better than if they are asked open-ended questions, on the basis of a conceptualization that is grounded in psychological theory while still, hopefully, picking up on subjective meanings, as long as the questionnaire items are not too philosophically advanced.

A final objection is that my methodology inappropriately decontextualizes persons, ignoring their socio-cultural embedment and individualities, and thus reducing them to sets of lifeless abstractions. The core of my response to this objection, elaborated in Chapters 2 and 3 and Paper I, is that the idea of a dichotomy between studying real, socio-culturally situated, individual persons and studying abstract, artificial categories (Allport, 1937; Lamiell, 1987; Magnusson, 1999; Stern, 1938) is illusory, because it is impossible to understand a person without simplification, idealization, and thus decontextualization – understanding *requires*, rather than is precluded by, decontextualization. Constructs and generalizations that are universalistic and based upon individual differences methodology are, I have argued, applicable to individuals, albeit with a limited degree of certainty, accuracy, and richness, they can serve as backgrounds and anchors for the idiographic interpretation of individuals, and the communication of the resulting understandings, and they can help to build up a conceptual nexus for integrating the scientific community.

I do nevertheless consider the lack of personalistic methodology to be one of the greatest limitations of the empirical studies included in this dissertation. It is entirely legitimate to ask what we really know about the applicability of the worldview constructs studied in the current research to individuals. Although

Tomkins' (1963, 1965, 1987) theory of humanism and normativism was based upon anthropological studies of how meanings are expressed in cultural phenomena, such as science, art, jurisprudence, philosophy, child-rearing, and so on, and not upon factor analysis, we cannot be sure that general cultural-level findings neatly reflect the structure of the worldviews of individuals. The life-story narrative (de St. Aubin, 1996; de St. Aubin et al., 2006) and Q-methodological (Nilsson, 2007; Thomas, 1976) studies, mentioned in Chapter 7, do provide an indication that humanism and normativism, and the notion of an opposition between them, do have relevance for describing individual worldviews, but that real worldviews also may deviate slightly from Tomkins' (1963, 1965) theoretical description of humanism and normativism. There are, moreover, clearly interesting worldview varieties hidden within humanism and normativism, such as, for example, the forms they take in persons with different orientations to religion (de St. Aubin, 1999; de St. Aubin et al., 2006; Nilsson, 2007; Paper II) or differential emphasis of openness to change versus self-transcendence values (Nilsson, 2007; Schwartz, 1992). Person-oriented methods that study patterns across worldview variables, and between traits and worldviews (Allport, 1924, 1937; Magnusson, 1999; Stephenson, 1953), appear to offer a particularly promising avenue for research, in line with the current theoretical agenda. It would also seem important to investigate how the varieties of humanism and normativism and their opposition play out in different social and cultural contexts, with different political and religious status quo, which I have touched briefly upon in Paper III. It is, finally, worth using open-ended questions, alongside structured ones, because the answers to these provide an indication of both individuality, and degree of articulation and autonomous, meaning-based regulation within a worldview (Leontiev, 2005, personal communication, March 23, 2013), and to develop a structured interview similar to McAdams' (2008) life-story interview but more specifically tailored to worldviews, in order to probe into subjective meanings in further depth and open up the door for serendipitous findings.

9.3. Humanism, normativism, and beyond: Toward a systematic study of worldviews

Another crucial question regarding this dissertation is how to go from the empirical studies presented in Papers II and III toward a systematic study of worldviews. I have not meant to suggest that humanism and normativism (Tomkins, 1963), which I focused upon in these papers, provide a thorough description of the worldview as a whole, yet I have not hitherto provided any more comprehensive taxonomy of worldviews or any concrete proposals about to how to proceed. Here I will try to, at least partly, remediate this important weakness by

discussing possible ways to proceed, and how humanism and normativism can contribute to this endeavor.

One way forward would be to take an empiricist approach, gathering all dimensions and measures of worldviews we know of in a common framework and trying to empirically synthesize them through factor analysis, as proposed by Koltko-Rivera (2004). This strategy has been employed, for example, by Coan (1974), who factor analyzed 130 belief statements addressing many philosophical worldview issues that were sampled on theoretical grounds, and by Leung et al. (2002), who factor analyzed 182 belief statements sampled from questionnaires used in psychology and from interviews and then replicated the factor structure in different cultures. Saucier (2000), furthermore, used a lexical approach, deriving a list of 335 "isms" (terms ending with –ism), constructing items to measure each ism, and factor analyzing the data. A limitation of these approaches is, however, as mentioned in Paper I, that the method of factor analysis cannot by itself guarantee that what comes out of it has psychological significance, because it gives no consideration to the nature of the actual relations (e.g. causal, constitutive, or other) among the elements fed into the analysis (Allport, 1937; Block, 1995; Lamiell, 2000). That the sampling of items has been comprehensive does, furthermore, not guarantee that the resulting measure will be comprehensive, because the sampling methods all have individual limitations. For example, as argued in Paper I, previous research on worldviews in psychology is systematically biased toward beliefs and attitudes about the self and the social world, and there is no non-theoretical way of deciding how to weigh different worldview aspects in the item-sample. A lexical approach focusing on specific terms, such as isms, or expressions of a particular syntactic form, may seem to escape the problem of weighing items, but only at the expense of leaving out worldview aspects that are not manifested in the given terms or syntactic forms. This is not to say that these types of empirically-driven analyses have no worth; they have value especially insofar as different approaches converge on the generation of similar constructs and insofar as they are enhanced through personalistic analyses for tuning the resulting constructs to individuality (Nesselroade et al., 2007). It is, furthermore, as I emphasize in all three papers, worthwhile to study worldviews as intertwined with traits, investigating, for example, to what extent we can find worldview beliefs and attitudes that map onto the dominant trait models, such as the Big Five and the HEXACO (e.g. Leung et al., 2011). Results from Paper III suggest that there are at least moderate correlations between some such traits and worldviews, which could be boosted by hand-picking and tuning worldview items so that they optimally map onto traits.

But substantive progress can, I contend, not happen without also using careful theoretical analyses of the logical relations between different meaning structures within worldviews providing guidelines about how to sample and formulate items and helping us to make psychological sense of the resulting factors. An avid

empiricist might want to object that it is the *psychological* rather than *logical* relations between worldview structures that are of interest to psychology. But, as I discussed in Chapter 2, to interpret a creature as a person at all is to understand him or her as an idealized normative system that *should* have basically coherent relations between its worldview structures (Davidson, 1973, 1982; Dennett, 1987); if the normative system does not pass empirical muster, then this does not mean that the worldview is not logically structured, but rather that the useless normative system must be replaced by another coherent normative system that is more nuanced, and perhaps more individualized, and thereby empirically adequate – that is, the explanatory structure must be both empirically adequate and coherent. This suggests that one way forward is to analyze the logical relations between different worldview constructs to see if they can be integrated or whether they represent different core elements of the worldview, as was done in the introduction of Paper III, when comparing Polarity Theory to other models of ideology. Although there are several different worldview models in the literature to compare and contrast (Naugle, 2002; Koltko-Rivera, 2004), I will here just note a number of important relations between humanism and normativism and other important worldview dimensions, in order to shed additional light on the contribution of Papers II and III to the psychology of worldviews.

Several worldview accounts have striking similarities to humanism and normativism. The connections between Becker's (1971, 1973) account of the dynamics of human worldviews and Tomkins' (1963) account of normativism is particularly fascinating. Becker (1973) held that the root existential paradox powering human worldviews is that the human being is "half animal and half symbolic":

> he has an awareness of his own splendid uniqueness in that he sticks out of nature with a towering majesty, and yet he goes back into the ground a few feet in order blindly or dumbly to rot and forever disappear [..] he must desperately justify himself as an object of primary value in the universe, he must stand out, be a hero, make the biggest possible contribution to world life, show that he counts more than anything or anyone else [..] The hope and belief is that the things that man creates in society are of lasting worth and meaning, that they outlive or outshine death and decay, that man and his products count.

This worldview account does, like normativism, describe persons as striving toward something outside of themselves in order to attain significance, and can thereby be re-framed as a penetrating analysis of the existential dynamics underlying normativism, thus extending Tomkins' account of normativism and suggesting new hypotheses. This extended account fits nicely with the findings from Paper III that normativism is related to needs to manage threat, avoid

uncertainty, and justify the system (Jost et al., 2003), dangerous-world and competitive-world beliefs (Duckitt, 2001), and loyalty with in-groups, which provide a common symbolic world, obedience to authorities, which represent the normative system, and purity, which distances humanity from animality (Haidt & Graham, 2007). The normativistic desire for an eternal symbolic world, of orderly and enduring properties that transcend the self, to assuage the threat of finitude, transience, and nihilism, also logically maps onto other worldview dimensions, such as seeing reality in essentialist terms (Haslam et al., 2004; Keller, 2005) – which ought to engender cynicism (Wrightsman, 1992) through reification of human badness – as static (Chiu et al., 1997; Levy, Stroessner, & Dweck, 1998), and in terms of mechanistic and formistic modes of explantion (Harris, Fontana, & Dowds, 1977; Johnson et al., 1988; Pepper, 1942), orientation to the past and to activities focused on achievement (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1973), absolutist and authoritarian epistemologies (Golec de Zavala & Van Bergh, 2007; Kramer, Kahlbaugh, & Goldston, 1992; Rokeach, 1960; Royce, 1960), and self-enhancement and conservation values (Schwartz, 1992). A normativistic symbolic world could however, as noted earlier, be either naturalistic or religious, because either system is normative – even though Dilthey (1890/1957) identified the same opposition as Tomkins, between reality as external to human beings versus created by them, his description of the former pole as naturalistic was meant to apply solely to philosophical worldviews.

But even though we have an expanded account of normativism here, tracing it to existential problems through Becker's (1971, 1973) theory, there is also at least one other side of human nature – the humanistic side – which Becker and many other existentialist thinkers have ignored. The research presented in Papers II and III clearly suggests that humanism does not fall squarely into Becker's account, but that it, like Tomkins (1963) suggested, rather represents another side of human nature that competes with normativism. Can we find an equally unifying account of the existential underpinnings of humanism, as we did with normativism, in the worldview literature? I have found no such integrative account paralleling that of Becker, perhaps due to the traditional focus on the negative side of humanity in psychological literature. But if we look at other worldview models and research, it does seem like humanism is rooted simply in a positive attitude to humanity, and a desire for all that is human to be realized fully, which is related to the problems of the social world, value and purpose in life, and the sources of knowledge. It conceptually maps onto benevolent-world beliefs (Janoff-Bulman, 1992), interpersonal trust (Wrightsman, 1992), optimistic attitudes to life (Coan, 1974; Dilthey, 1890/1957; Jaspers, 1919; Westerlund, 2001), experientialist epistemologies (Nilsson, 2013; Royce, 1960), and an affirmation of the reality of mind (Barušs & Moore, 1992; Nilsson, 2013) and free will (Paulhus & Carey, 2011). Further research is clearly needed, potentially fueled by the burgeoning field of positive psychology, to construct a unified account of the motivational

underpinnings of humanism and investigate whether humanism is perhaps just less related to coping with existential problems than normativism and more to other forms of motivation.

Finally, it is worth re-emphasizing that this highly general theorizing works as a scaffolding, and anchor, for the development of more culture-specific and individual accounts of forms of humanism and normativism. Tomkins would certainly have endorsed an approach that seeks to understand ideologies as culturally embedded yet intelligible as specialized manifestations of the same underlying dynamics.

9.4. Studying worldview formation and dynamics as coping with existential problems

The theoretical framework presented in Chapter 6 can be used to investigate how worldviews form and change as a result of the salience of different existential problems. There are at least three different social psychological theories (Jost et al., 2003; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986; Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006) that have previously addressed this question, generating ample evidence in their support, but all of them have limitations.

Terror Management Theory (TMT; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986; Burke, Martens, & Faucher, 2010), which is based upon Becker's (1971, 1973) anthropological synthesis of existentialism and psychoanalysis, has been highly successful in experimentally demonstrating that morality salience boosts worldview conviction, derogation of dissidents, and other related responses, through unconscious processes. But even though a recent meta-analysis (Burke, Martens, & Faucher, 2010) suggests that few other comparable experimental manipulations (meaning threats are one important exception) have as strong effects upon worldview conviction and defense as mortality salience, this does not imply that death is *the* ultimate existential problem underlying all worldviews, which Becker (1971, 1973) claimed. Becker's (1971, 1973) writings appear to, at least partly, manifest the problem, often attributed to psychoanalytic thought, of letting a necessary conceptual truth masquerade as an empirical truth about the world (Kukla, 2002), by defining all meaning-making and actions not ostensively expressing fear of death as pursuits of *symbolic* rather than *literal* immortality. Although I have included the need to assuage existential fears and anxieties as defining of persons, to say that the fear of death specifically is the meaning governing all others would be to impose unnecessary a priori constraints upon the individuality of persons. We should, I contend, allow for the possibility that persons differ in fear of death, and in how they are affected by it, which has, in

fact, already been empirically demonstrated with mindfulness as one mediator of the effects of mortality salience upon worldview defense (Niemiec et al., 2010), and we should take other existential problems into account as well.

System Justification Theory (SJT; Bonanno & Jost, 2006; Jost et al., 2003; Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009) is broader than TMT in the sense that it covers not just the need to assuage fear of death but also needs to manage uncertainty and affiliate as well as identify with others, which pertain to the problems of epistemic finitude, the transience of life, and how to relate to the social world. But unlike TMT, SJT hypothesizes that all these needs make persons more conservative, regardless of what their worldview is. There is, however, empirical research supporting both theories (Bonanno & Jost, 2006; Burke, Martens, & Faucher, 2010; Jost et al., 2003), and a conciliatory perspective, drawing attention to the distinction between fear of death and death anxiety, has been proposed (Castano et al., 2010). The perspective developed in this dissertation does, however, offer another potential reconciliation in the suggestion that how likely it is that the person will become more conservative versus just more convinced about his or her worldview, whatever it may be, is moderated by the extent to which the system in question and the worldview characteristic being measured form important sources of subjective meaning. If the person is strongly attached to the status quo, then death awareness will propel system justification and thereby conservatism; if the person is strongly attached to an ideological identification such as liberalism, then death awareness will boost liberalism rather than conservatism. This hypothesis could be tested by measuring the extent to which the person feels attached to, or identifies, with the systems and ideological groupings in question.

The *Meaning Maintenance Model* (MMM; Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006; Proulx & Inzlicht, 2012) offers another perspective that is yet broader, and consistent with the framework developed in the current dissertation, postulating a basic need to maintain meaning and construing the effects demonstrated on the basis of TMT as special cases of the need for meaning maintenance. MMM has also garnered independent support in the form of demonstrations that violations, or disruptions, of meaning, propelled by, for example, exposure to absurdist literature or art, elicits meaning maintenance, often through reaffirmation, or "fluid compensation", of alternative meaning structures (Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006; Proulx & Heine, 2009; Proulx & Inzlicht, 2012). But despite its great promise as a research program on how existential problems mold worldviews, what MMM offers is chiefly a social psychology of worldview dynamics without a corresponding personality psychology. We need to empirically consider the possibility that different worldviews are differentially sensitive to different existential problems and that different existential problems potentially drive worldviews in different directions. Although the actual relations between existential problems and worldviews may be complex, there is nothing in principle

to stop us from investigating how people's confrontations with different aspects of their existence mold their pursuits of meaning. As we have seen, normativism, for example, has strong ties with the problems of human finitude, transience, the material world, and nihilism, which provides at least one source of hypotheses. But we cannot be sure that the artificial experimental effects adequately capture all real-life, existentially valid, worldview dynamics. It is therefore crucial to pursue the question of how existential problems mold worldviews not just experimentally, but also developmentally, as the person confronts existentially salient situations (e.g. Janoff-Bulman, 1992), and by combining measurement of worldviews with life-story interviews (McAdams, 2008) that help to unveil the significance of defining life events.

9.5. Overall conclusions

Have I succeeded with the task undertaken in this dissertation? Given that the purpose was to influence how we think of, and practice, personality psychology today, only the future can show whether the efforts initiated in this thesis will, in effect, make a substantive contribution, or whether their result will, as so often happens, be swiftly relegated onto the even-increasing pile of interesting but soon forgotten perspectives by the powerful forces of normal science. But I hope that both empirical psychologists and theoretical/philosophical psychologists alike will, regardless of their appraisal of my own theoretical and conceptual proposals, at least appreciate the basic argument that we need a more systematic theory and study of worldviews and give their own contributions to this endeavor, along parallel tracks. I also hope that my empirical studies will help to reclaim Tomkins' (1963, 1965, 1987) Polarity Theory from the pile of forgotten perspectives, and establish its position as one particularly promising avenue for further worldview research. But I am afraid that the empirical research I have presented in this dissertation nevertheless only provides a fragment of what is needed to turn the psychology of worldviews into a vibrant research field. What is needed is large-scale empirical collaboration along with careful theoretical analysis. To this end, I can only hope to be able to encourage other personality psychologists to join me in furthering the pursuit of what pioneers, such as Allport (1937, 1955), Kelly (1955), and Tomkins (1965), started but far from completed – the establishment of a genuinely non-reductive science of personality informed by theoretical analysis but geared toward systematic empirical research.

10. References

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11. Summary in Swedish

Personer drivs inte enbart av djuriska instinkter, utan de är även språkliga och existentiellt medvetna varelser, vars upplevelser och handlingar är fyllda av subjektiv mening. Att förstå en människa som en person är att förstå honom eller henne som ett rationellt system som har viljor, rädslor, förhoppningar, trosföreställningar, och andra sätt att ge sin värld mening, och inte bara som ett mekaniskt system av som styrs av samma orsaker som andra djur. Men nutida personlighetspsykologi har, i stor utsträckning, fokuserat på personlighetens beteendeaspekt på bekostnad av dess meningsaspekt, utan att inse att subjektiv mening är en grundläggande aspekt av personligheten i sig självt snarare än blott en orsak till beteende. Mitt övergripande syfte med denna avhandling är, därför, att bidra till att etablera en genuint icke-reduktiv personlighetsvetenskap som, på ett systematiskt sätt, studerar de meningssystem som utgör personers världsbilder, som grundläggande källor till mening i personligheten. Jag ämnar både etablera ett begreppsligt och teoretiskt fundament för studiet av världsbild och presentera empirisk forskning om världsbilder.

De begreppsliga och teoretiska frågorna behandlar jag i de inledande kapitlen och i den första artikeln. Jag börjar med att utarbeta en icke-reduktivt realistisk personlighetsfilosofi som styr mellan reduktionism och socialkonstruktionism, och genom att föreslå att vi behöver en rikare och mer koherent förståelse av personligheten och en rikare metodologi, snarare än ett radikalt nytt metodologiskt paradigm. Jag fortsätter med att diskutera begränsningar, och begreppsliga problem, hos befintliga traditioner i personlighetspsykologin, och därefter lägga fram ett begreppsligt fundament för världsbildens psykologi som kan hantera dessa problem och begränsningar. Jag avgränsar världsbildsbegrepp som de som refererar till personliga antaganden, begrepp, och skript som, genom att fungera som underliggande struktur, eller bakgrund, för intentionalistiska tankar, känslor, och handlingar, utgör de mest centrala källorna till subjektiv mening. Jag fortsätter genom att diskutera världsbildens struktur och dynamik i termer av relationen mellan interna mekanismer för meningsskapande och de universella aspekterna av människans existentiella situation som alla världsbilder måste hantera. Jag avslutar de inledande kapitlen genom att beskriva bakgrunden för den empiriska forskningen och diskutera begränsningar med denna avhandling samt möjligheter för vidare teori och forskning. Jag fortsätter, i den första artikeln, genom att mer ingående argumentera för att studiet av objektiva beteendemönster (eng. ”traits”) och studiet av subjektiv mening (d.v.s. världsbild) utgör ömsesidigt irreducibla delar av personlighetspsykologin, och för att värdsbilden inte är mindre universell i sin struktur, eller på andra sätt mindre grundläggande för personligheten, än

beteendemönster. Jag avslutar med att diskutera vikten av att förklara enhetlighet inte enbart inom beteendemönster utan även inom världsbilder och mellan världsbilder och beteendemönster, samt vikten av att komplettera studiet av individuella differenser med personalistisk metodologi.

De empiriska studierna presenterar jag i de andra och tredje artiklarna som ingår i denna avhandling. Denna forskning handlar om Humanism och Normativism, som är två av de bredaste och viktigaste världsbildsbegreppen i tidigare forskningslitteratur. De representerar huruvida människan tillskrivs ett inneboende värde och en särskild ontologisk status (humanism) gentemot huruvida människan ses som kapabel att uppnå värde och förverkliga sig själv bara genom att uppnå normer och ideal som existerar utanför henne själv (normativism). Även om dessa ursprungligen beskrevs som motpoler så har tidigare forskning funnit förvånansvärt låga korrelationer mellan dem. I den första empiriska artikeln introducerar jag en hierarkisk modell av deras struktur, utvecklar skalor för att mäta deras facetter, och demonstrerar, genom konfirmatorisk faktoranalys, att de är, i motsats till vad man tidigare trott, negativt relaterade vad gäller syn på människans natur, attityd till känslor, och attityd till andra människor, men icke-relaterat vad gäller kunskapssyn och politiska värderingar. Jag presenterar också resultat som underbygger deras diskriminanta och prediktiva validitet i relation till andra världsbildsvariabler, livsmål, utbildningsfält, politisk och religiös orientering, samt ”Big Five”-beteendemönster. I den andra empiriska artikeln undersöker jag, med hjälp av stigmodeller, hur humanism och normativism kan bidra till den politiska psykologins förklaringar av hur meningssystem, och andra psykologiska faktorer, ligger bakom politisk ideologi. Resultaten indikerar att humanism är relaterat till politisk ideologi genom preferens för jämlikhet, vilket medieras av moraliska intuitioner om rättvisa och undvikande av skada, emotionalitet, och ärlighet/ödmjukhet, samt att normativism är relaterat till politisk ideologi genom både motstånd mot förändring och låg preferens för jämlikhet, vilket medieras av rättfärdigande av systemet, moraliska intuitioner om lojalitet, auktoritet, och renhet, och låg öppenhet. Båda dessa empiriska artiklar ger tydliga belägg för att det finns breda meningssystem som skär igenom hela världsbilden och att dessa är viktiga för att förklara andra psykologiska fenomen. De hjälper därigenom till att underbygga och, förhoppningsvis sprida, världsbildens psykologi.