

Experience, Coherence, and Culture: The Significance of Dilthey's 'Descriptive Psychology' for the Anthropology of Consciousness

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Abstract

This paper explores Dilthey's "descriptive psychology" and its significance for the anthropology of consciousness. To do justice to the complexities of Dilthey's project a significant portion of the paper is devoted to an exposition of the basic tenets of his "descriptive psychology." Most notably, his views on "experience," "consciousness," "introspection," and "objectified mind" are discussed before turning to examine his concept of the "acquired psychic nexus." After outlining these basic tenets the paper turns to explore how Dilthey's "descriptive psychology" can serve to shed light on current anthropological research on the experience of pain. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion of the contemporary relevance of Dilthey's project as it explores how his ideas may further inform current theoretical perspectives in anthropology about the relationship between consciousness, culture, and experience. *Key words:* Wilhelm Dilthey, descriptive psychology, experience, pain

'All science, all philosophy is experiential. All experience derives its coherence and its corresponding validity from the context of human consciousness. The quarrel between idealism and realism can be resolved by psychological analysis [which recognizes that]... I am a being that does not merely represent, but also wills and feels'

Wilhelm Dilthey 1883

Introduction¹

In the German language, the words for anthropology (*anthropologie*) and psychology (*psychologie*) can be used interchangeably (Makkreel 1992). That the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey was well aware of this semantic overlap is evident in his concerted effort to establish a "descriptive psychology" that is informed equally by history, culture, and the functioning of the human psyche. Dilthey's attempt to balance historical, cultural, and psychological perspectives in his study of the structures of human consciousness has contributed to the fact that, not only is he (with Schleiermacher) heralded by many scholars as a key figure in the foundation of modern hermeneutics (see Gadamer 1975; Heidegger 1962; Ricoeur 1991), but he is also widely acknowledged as a thinker whose work anticipates the later phenomenological approaches of Edmund Husserl and his many students (see Rickman 1976; Tillman 1976).

With its inception around the turn of the century, the discipline of anthropology has been comprised of a number of anthropologists who have, similar to Dilthey, also been interested in exploring the interface between culture, consciousness and human psychology (see Barnouw 1985; Brereton 2000; Bock 1980, 1988, 1994; Bourguignon 1979; Cohen and Rapport 1995; Csordas 1994a, 1994b, 1997; D'Andrade 1995; Desjarlais 1992; Hollan 2000; Hsu 1961; Ingham 1996; Laughlin 1992a, 1992b; Laughlin et al. 1990; Laughlin and McManus 1995; Levy 1973, 1984; Obeyesekere 1981; Shore 1990, 1996; Stigler, Shweder and Herdt 1990; Strauss and Quinn 1997; Shweder and Levine 1984; Shweder 1979, 1980, 1991; Strathern 1997; Winkelmann 1986; 1993; 1994). With what often appear to be overlapping projects, it is surprising, however, that more anthropologists have not turned back to examine how Dilthey's "descriptive psychology" might serve to inform their work.² This paper is meant to address this apparent oversight as it explores Dilthey's "descriptive psychology" and its significance for current theorizing about culture, consciousness, and psychological processes in the discipline of anthropology.

In order to do justice to the complexities of Dilthey's project a significant portion of the paper is devoted to an exposition of the basic tenets of his "descriptive psychology." Most notably, his views on "experience," "consciousness," "introspection," and "objectified mind" are reviewed before turning to explore his concept of the "acquired psychic nexus." Due to the fact that there is certainly no one canonical reading of Dilthey's corpus of work, I have decided to base my exposition of Dilthey's ideas on both primary sources (Dilthey 1977, 1985 [1887], 1989 [1883]) and the exegesis of a few key commentators (Ermarth 1978; Makkreel 1992). I believe that this will help not only to clarify my own reading of Dilthey's "descriptive psychology," but will further serve to situate my reading in the broader context of Dilthey scholarship.³ After outlining the basic tenets of his "descriptive psychology," I will then turn to explore how Dilthey's descriptive approach can serve to shed light on current anthropological research devoted to studying the cultural patterning of the experience of pain. Finally, I will conclude the paper with a discussion of the contemporary relevance of Dilthey's project as I explore how his ideas may further inform current theoretical perspectives on the study of consciousness, culture, and experience in the discipline of anthropology.

Descriptive Psychology as a Foundation for the Human Sciences

In his *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (1989 [1883]), Dilthey argued that a "descriptive psychology" is a necessary "reflective starting point" for the human sciences. Indeed, he believed that it is only within the context of an approach that is grounded in the careful and systematic description of the structures, contents, and properties of human consciousness that it will be possible to develop a valid theory of knowledge (Ermarth 1978: 141).⁴ Early in his career, Dilthey called for establishing just such an approach to consciousness with his "descriptive" or "real" psychology which sets out, as Michael Ermarth states, to "treat the actual 'inner' content and meaning of mental images and ideas, not merely the 'external' and formal order in which they are related" (1978: 148).

Before moving on to explore the basic tenets of his approach, it is important to first understand how Dilthey's idea of a "descriptive psychology" differed from the traditional empirical psychology of his day. Whereas empirical psychology focused on experimentation in an attempt to uncover formal causal explanations for the structuring of psychological experience, as Rudolf A. Makkreel makes clear, Dilthey's "descriptive psychology" was based on the assumption that

causal connections between psychical, social, and physical phenomena cannot be established before there is an adequate description of subjective experience "in terms of the overall pattern of an individual's behavior and of the relatively stable structures of...[the individual's] professed values and ends" (Makkreel 1992:311). In this respect, Dilthey believed that empirical psychology was under the "spell" of methods and models derived from the natural sciences and, as such, its abstract and hypostatized rendering of experience was often little more than a caricature of the replete quality of lived experience as it is given to the mind moment by moment. It is important to note that Dilthey's position is not one which concludes that explanations of psychological processes can never be achieved but, rather, without rigorous descriptive methods scientists will be premature in their race to formulate explanatory theoretical frameworks. Without this initial descriptive work which points to the inherent complexity of any particular mental act, Dilthey feels that it is impossible to begin to postulate normative or generalizable hypotheses. For Dilthey, then, true understanding can only emerge through careful attention to the description of the subtle complexities encapsulated in the immediate apprehending of lived experience.

Dilthey's 'Description' of Experience

A central component of Dilthey's "descriptive psychology" lies in a detailed descriptive analysis of the structures of "lived experience." In contrast to Kant's view that experience arises only with the conceptual patterning of sensation, Dilthey asserts that lived experience (*Erlebnis*) should be understood as a primordial "given" to human consciousness (Dilthey 1989). From Dilthey's perspective, experience is granted a certain primordial structure, coherence or self-givenness that exists prior to the active conceptual patterning of sensation seen as central to Kantian formulations of synthesis (Makkreel 1992). Put differently, for Dilthey the coherence of experience is given directly in experience itself and is not solely a product that is actively constructed by acts of consciousness. Much like James⁵ whose radical empirical doctrine calls for researchers to recognize that conjunctive relations are as much a part of experience as disjunctive relations (James 1996 [1912]; see also Laughlin and McManus 1995; Throop 2000), and like Husserl⁶ who proposes a "passive" synthesis already given to consciousness in pre-predicative experience (Hintikka 1995; Husserl 1948), Dilthey also recognizes that "connectedness is not merely the transcendental phenomenological background of experience, but is implicit in the foreground of ordinary experience itself" (Makkreel 1992:185).

One of Dilthey's basic assumptions underlying his understanding of *Erlebnis* is that even though it is "given" to consciousness as a coherence or structure, the structuring of experience is not necessarily fixed. Here Dilthey is struggling to express what he views to be an ever-present tension between the perpetual flux of life and the fact that our psyche strives for some semblance of order, stability, and coherence in that flux. As Ermarth makes clear, for Dilthey, lived experience is "becoming" rather than static 'being' but [as such] it develops in patterns and coherences" (1978:117; see also Makkreel 1992:389).

Again, unlike Kant who argues for a "capacity model" of the human psyche that is based on a limited number of *a priori* categories of understanding that exist prior to experience and which serve to provide an underlying framework from which experience is thought to emerge, Dilthey seeks to explain the formation of categories as originating within experience itself (Ermarth 1978:41). According to Dilthey, it is not universal *a priori* categories of the human mind but

common psychical structures derived from shared experience that provides the basis for the common form of human consciousness (Ermarth 1978:221). For instance, as Makkreel points out, Dilthey believes that the category of causation "cannot be explained by means of outer perceptions, which only disclose how different states of things follow each other" (1992:437). Instead, Dilthey asserts that we find the origin of the category of causation in the lived experience of our functioning "will," which "can direct our representation and set our limbs in motion" (Dilthey 1989:201). Moreover, Dilthey also believes that the category of substance can be traced back to our direct experience of "self-sameness." As he puts it:

...the lived experience of the self is the basis for the very concept of substance. The concept of substance arose when the lived experience of self was applied and adapted to external experiences on the basis of the principle of sufficient reason. We see, therefore, that the doctrine of mental substance merely transfers back to lived experience a concept of substance which was originally derived from it. (1989:60)

Much like James (1996 [1912]), therefore, Dilthey attempts to develop a position that serves as a third alternative to the polemical formulations of Kant's *apriorist* and Hume's *associationalist* philosophies. In this attempt to navigate between Kantian and Empiricist perspectives, Dilthey can also be compared to Emile Durkheim who, in his *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1995 [1912]), was interested in establishing an experientially based social epistemology that grounds the formation of mental categories, such as the category of causation, in the experience of "effervescence" accrued in the context of collective ritual' (see Rawls 1996, 1997; Throop and Laughlin 2002).

Axiom of Phenomenality

Again, like James whose radical empiricism was based on the assertion that all varieties of experience must be admitted as facts within reality since every fact in reality is part and parcel of "pure experience" and thus experienceable (1996:81), Dilthey suggests an "axiom of phenomenality" which affirms that "everything existing for me must be a fact of my consciousness" (Makkreel 1992:216, 429). In Dilthey's own words:

Facts of consciousness are the sole material from which objects are constituted.... The resistance that objects exert, the space they occupy, their painful impact as well as their agreeable contact - all are facts of consciousness. Thus I only *appear* to live among things that are independent of my consciousness; in reality, my self distinguishes itself from facts of my own consciousness, formations whose locus is in me. My consciousness is the locus which encompasses this seemingly immeasurable external world. (1989:245)

Because Dilthey believes that everything experienced must be considered a fact of consciousness, he also reasons that everything experienced must also be subject to the "conditions of consciousness" (Makkreel 1992:428). Furthermore, as Makkreel makes clear, the selfsame "piece" or "fact" of my consciousness can be interpreted "as physical facts if they are placed only in the context of outer experience and as spiritual facts if they are either directly or indirectly related to the context of inner experience" (Makkreel 1992:222).

Here, Dilthey clearly attempts to distance himself from advocating a strictly representational theory of consciousness. With Dilthey's "axiom of phenomenality" facts of consciousness are not thought to be merely "representations" of a world that exists independent of our experiences. Instead, much like Husserl who argues against the Kantian notion of a "transcendental object" and who believes that there is an immediate grasping of "objects" in consciousness—a confluence of consciousness and its intentional object (Husserl 1950:62; see also Hintikka 1995:82-83; Philipse 1995:267)—Dilthey also argues against a solipsistic rendering of the human psyche. This is not to say that there is no reality existing beyond our perception of it, but to say that there is no separation of subject and object in experience since there is an immediate grasping of reality by consciousness.

Dilthey further ties the "axiom phenomenality" to his belief that a descriptive psychology is necessary as a foundation for the human sciences. As he states:

Because whatever exists for me - things, persons, axioms, concepts, feelings, acts of will - is apprehended in the psychological nexus of the totality of my consciousness, where it primordially and originally exists, the concept arises of a general foundational science which will analyze the nexus of the facts of consciousness and ground the system of the individual sciences (1989:265).

It is important to make clear that Dilthey always accords primacy to experience while relegating the operations of thought to a second order of abstraction. Dilthey firmly believes that once "the grey cobweb of abstract essences is torn away" what remains are the *experiences* of human beings who are related to one-another in a multitude of ways (1989:216). In this regard, Dilthey contrasts *Erlebnis* translated as "lived experience," with *Erfahrung / Lebenserfahrung* translated as "ordinary experience." Whereas *Erlebnis* is viewed to be immediate experience in which there is the possession of "givens," "ordinary experience" (*Erfahrung*) is, in contrast, where we are "confronted" with "givens" (Makkreel 1992: 147). Ermarth describes this distinction as one where *Erlebnis* is an "immediate and unreflected experience, whereas *Lebenserfahrung* is reflected and articulated experience" (1978:226).

Due to our intimate experiential possession of "givens" in *Erlebnis*, the "phenomena of *Erlebnis* are given with certainty, whereas the objects of external experience [*Erfahrung*] are at least partly products of inference" (Makkreel 1992:147). In Ermarth's words, Dilthey argues that we are acquainted with experiential reality directly and that we "know this reality first and foremost not by elaborate chains of inference and hypothesis testing, but by personal experience" (1978:98). Although it is conceived as distinct from *Erfahrung* (external experience), it would be a mistake to interpret *Erlebnis* as limited to "inner" experience. As Makkreel points out, *Erlebnis* does not exclude external experience since it "is not restricted to a consciousness of our state of mind, but also involves our attitude to, and thus awareness of, external reality" (1992:148). Again, the distinction is not between the internal and the external, but, more precisely, between the prereflective and the reflective.

Varieties of Experience

In a more detailed descriptive analysis Dilthey asserts that within *Erlebnis* we can distinguish between a number of different modes of conscious experience⁸ (Dilthey 1989:300). Ermarth asserts that these various modes of conscious experience can be arranged along a

continuum that ranges from "initial givenness" to full "clarification" and objective knowledge" (1978: 130). Makkreel and Rodi (1989: 36) note that these various modes of conscious experience allow Dilthey to explain how it is that we can have experiences that are fully conscious yet are not attentively observed. Moreover, this careful description of different modes of conscious experience provides Dilthey with a means to account for "the so-called dark regions within consciousness without positing a separate realm of the unconscious" (Makkreel and Rodi 1989: 36). Varying in intensity in accordance with the functioning of our "attention" and "interest," Dilthey observes that facts of consciousness can be present, yet "unnoticed," at the fringes of our awareness, while still being considered properly conscious, albeit of a different degree (1989: 300, 305). As he argues:

All those facts that were supposed to be explained by the hypothesis of unconscious representations or, more generally, unconscious psychic acts can be explained by psychic acts available as facts in experience whose effects can be confirmed by a variety of instances. These psychic acts are conscious, but not attended to, noticed, or possessed in reflexive awareness. (1989: 311)

The first of these modes of consciousness is the "simple having of experience" (*Erleben*).⁹ This is a pre-predicative awareness, which, as Ermarth describes it, serves as the "most rudimentary level of experience prior to the analytical separation of subject and object" (1978: 130). Makkreel and Rodi (1989: 6) explain that this pre-reflective mode of consciousness is a simple awareness of a "given" prior to the abstract and theoretical standpoint of self-consciousness. In other words, this "initial givenness" is understood as the underlying ground of experience "behind" which nothing lies and out of which every fact of consciousness must ultimately emerge (Ermarth 1978: 130).

Moving from moments where there is the "simple having of experience" and where a fact of consciousness can be present in consciousness without it being "there for me," we are confronted with a second "prereflective mode" of awareness which Dilthey calls *Innewerden*. For Dilthey, *Innewerden* is a mode of awareness that is based in a primordial prereflective "self-feeling" or "feeling-for-oneself" that is also considered to be prior to the experience of a clearly articulated distinction between subject and object (Makkreel and Rody 1989: 26; Makkreel 1992: 430). It is, as Owensby asserts, a consciousness that does not act to objectify the "given" (1987: 565). Like Owensby, Makkreel cautions that *Innewerden* should not be confused with an "objectifying self-consciousness," for even though *Innewerden* "involves a mode of self-givenness in which there is self-feeling (*Selbstgefuh*l) [it is however still a mode of awareness that exists] without an explicit sense of self" (1992: 430). In its most basic sense, Dilthey describes *Innewerden* as "an immediate prereflective mode of self-givenness in which the dichotomies of form and content, subject and object characteristic of reflective consciousness do not yet exist" (1989: 247). In contrast to the "simple having of experience," however, *Innewerden* does entail primordial cognitive acts such as comparison, gradation, separation, association, relation, and reproduction (Ermarth 1978: 131).

From *Innewerden* Dilthey moves to *InnerWahrnehmung*, which Ermarth characterizes as a "stabilizing attention" that acts to isolate and stabilize specific elements of experience (1978: 131). According to Ermarth, Dilthey believes that this mode of consciousness gives rise to a unique type of knowledge—"objective grasping"—which brings into focus distinctive contents of consciousness without altering the "given" form of those contents (1978: 131). "Stabilizing attention" is, in other words, the ability to selectively focus attention on the contents

of consciousness as they arise in the flux of lived experience. In this sense, the grasping of a "given" can occur without transforming the patterned structure of that "given" with the act of grasping.

"Stabilizing attention" is followed by full fledged "inner observation" or "introspection" (*Innere Beobachtung*). In introspection Dilthey asserts that isolated features of experience are fixed with deliberate attention. This "fixing" results in the modification of the observed features of consciousness since these features must necessarily be abstracted from the prereflective flow of lived experience (Ermarth 1978: 131). While Dilthey believes that it is possible to use introspection without destroying the psychic state to which it is directed, in most instances introspection does alter the psychic state in question. With the exertion of our will in inner observation "any state of the free play of representations is canceled" (Dilthey 1989: 378).

Finally, Dilthey concludes his fine grained description of the various modes of experience by outlining the levels of "memory" (*Erinnerung*), "methodological self-reflection" (*Selbsbesinnung*), and "anthropological reflection" (*anthropologische Besinnung*). He characterizes these various levels as moving progressively from the ability to relate elements of experience into a meaningful coherence, to our ability to be conscious of the self-consciousness of others in the context of an ever-expanding historical and cultural perspective (Ermarth 1978: 131).

Tripartite Structure of Consciousness and World View

According to Dilthey there is a tripartite structure to consciousness. Not unlike James who believes that all thought is intermeshed with "purposefulness" and "non-imagistic feeling" (see Bailey 1999), Dilthey asserts that in every moment of lived experience we are confronted with the integration of representational, affective, and conative elements. In contrast to those philosophers who accord priority to the cognitive capacities of the mind, Dilthey argues that "feeling" and "will" play equally important roles in our psychic life (1985, 1989). Dilthey asserts that while each moment of our experience varies in the extent to which cognitive, affective or conative elements are present in our awareness, experience is always permeated with some combination of representations, feelings, and acts of will. As he explains, we must come to recognize that regardless of context "every impression [representation] contains, together with an image, a determination of the life of feeling and impulse [will]" (cited in Makkreel 1992: 353). Furthermore, he holds that it is important to accept the fact that, due to this integration, we must come to recognize the significant role which feeling and will play in influencing an individual's perceptual, conceptual, and representational functions¹⁰ (Ermarth 1978: 118).

Connected with Dilthey's tripartite division of the psyche is his "theory of world-views" (*Weltanschauung*). As Makkreel explains, for Dilthey a world-view is thought to be "an overall perspective on life which encompasses the way a person perceives the world, evaluates and responds to it" (1992: 346). Dilthey divides world-views into three categories that correspond to the degree to which representation, feeling or willing serve to inform those views. These include: (1) naturalism, which serves to express a fundamentally cognitive attitude to the world; (2) subjective idealism, which is based on the predominant functioning of the will; and (3) objective idealism, which in its appreciative contemplation is predicated on the life of feeling (Makkreel 1992: 346; Ermarth 1978: 119).

Of considerable interest for anthropologists is Dilthey's contention that there is a close connection between world view and character. With obvious affinity to later anthropological

theorizing about the relationship between culture and personality, Dilthey understands world view and character to be mutually informing.¹¹ As Ermarth asserts, Dilthey argues that a world-view is often little more than an "articulated and objectified form of the acquired coherence of personality" (1978:325). Ermarth also points out that Dilthey believes that the formation of a "world-view" is an elementary function of a mind that constantly strives to establish a stable, reliable framework in the midst of the "imponderability of life" (1978:328).

Introspection, Cultural Expression and Objectified Mind

In his descriptive psychology, Dilthey is well aware of the limits of introspection and accordingly tries to outline ways in which insights derived from introspection can be complemented by insights drawn from the examination of "objectified" projections of human consciousness (*objectiver Geist* and *Ausdrucken*). Dilthey calls the end product of mental activity "objectified mind" (*objectiver Geist*) or "cultural expression"¹² (*Ausdrucken*), which he understands literally as mental life that has become "transfixed into things" (1989). In his own words, "objectified mind" is "the distilled summation of component mental contents and the mental activities to which these contents are related" (cited in Ermarth 1978:123).

Even while acknowledging the limits of introspection Dilthey argues, however, that to attain a "full knowledge" of the psyche one must still cultivate an "attentive perception" or "observation" of our inner experience (Makkreel 1992:213). For Dilthey, then, introspection should be seen as an important but never self-sufficient means by which to gain insight into the intricacies of the human condition. As we saw above, Dilthey was well aware that introspection is often associated with a retrospective or retroactive stance that is likely to introduce new components into the original act of consciousness. As such, Dilthey held that introspection should always be considered a potentially effective but ultimately limited methodology.

The limits of introspection are understood by Dilthey primarily in reference to the more inaccessible realms of our psyche. As Bulhof (1980:152) points out, Dilthey believes that the central coherence of our psychic life, our "acquired psychic nexus" (*erworbener seelischer Zusammenhang*),¹³ is seldom given to our consciousness in its totality. It is due to this fact that Dilthey asserts that the contours of our "acquired psychic nexus" can only be determined once introspection is supplemented with the examination of the projective end products of mental activity. In other words, he argues that the examination of the creations or expressions of the mind are an indirect means by which to access those parts of psychic life that are not given directly to the purview of conscious introspection (Turner 1985:213). With this stress on the importance of investigating the expressions of *Erl bnis*, Dilthey attempts to expand his focus on immediate experience in order to include culturally mediated experience (Ermarth 1978:276-77). Even with this focus on expression, however, as Ermarth makes clear, Dilthey maintains that "although experience has a 'natural tendency' to pass into expression, this expression can never be fully identical with the immediate awareness of experience" (1978:281).

Makkreel points out that Dilthey views the "expression of experience" (*Ausdruck Erleben*) to complement "reflective experience" since, where "reflective experience gives inner experience an objective reference, expression makes inner experience public" (1992:258). In other words, as Tillman explains, "expression" provides Dilthey with a palpable "link between the inner psychic structure and the outer structure of the socio-historical world" (1976:124). Because expression

is seen as a pivotal link between internal and external structures, Dilthey believes that we can use expression as a means by which to access both mental and cultural facts.¹⁴ In this light, the process of understanding (*verstehen*) is construed to be the principle means by which we can move to “reconstruct” mental life as it is crystalized in the expression of experience in its various forms. As Ermarth puts it, “*verstehen* accomplishes the re-translation of the expression back into the mental life from which it [was first] issued” (1978: 249).

As one of the few anthropologists to have seriously reexamined Dilthey’s thought, Victor Turner argues that a specific community’s collection of “expressions” assembled under the auspices of “objectified mind” is nothing other than Dilthey’s version of “culture” (1982). Although equating culture and “objectified mind” is perhaps an oversimplification of Dilthey’s position, which asserts that “objectified mind” can be equally discerned at three levels—the individual, aggregates of individuals, and/or broader cultural systems¹⁵ (Makkreel 1992: 313)—Turner’s insights are nevertheless quite significant.¹⁶ Turner points out that interpreting Dilthey’s “objectified mind” as culture lends legitimacy to the anthropological enterprise while simultaneously pointing to how anthropology might benefit by incorporating introspective methods. In Turner’s own words, this view of culture is predicated upon the assumption that:

...we can know our own subjective depths as much by scrutinizing the meaningful objectifications ‘expressed’ by other minds, as by introspection. In complementary fashion, self-scrutiny may give us clues to the penetration of objectifications of life generated from the experience of others (1982: 14).

As such, Turner believes that Dilthey’s understanding of cultural expression as the “crystallized secretion of once living human experience” (1982: 17) accounts for how it is possible for an individual to gain access to what would otherwise be the methodologically private realm of another individual’s subjectivity. As Edward Bruner (1986: 21) points out, Turner’s and Dilthey’s ideas provide us with a model that accounts for how it is that individuals (and anthropologists) are able to transcend their subjectivity through the objectified expressions of other minds such that they come to at least partially partake in the “experiential worlds” of those others. Dilthey’s triadic formulation of “lived experience” (*erlebnis*), “expression” (*ausdruck*), and “understanding” (*verstehen*) constitutes, therefore, a dynamic outline for the possibility of mutual intelligibility through the process of translating “lived experience into form and form into lived experience” (Makkreel and Rodi 1985: 22).

Acquired Psychic Nexus and External Reality

For Dilthey the psyche is patterned according to a socio-historically acquired “inner continuum or nexus” (1985 [1889]). According to Dilthey, individuality is not innately given but acquired through a process of development that arises in the context of the “intersection of cultural systems and the external organization of society” (Makkreel 1992: 201). The “acquired psychic nexus” is thus understood by Dilthey to be the foundation of our individuality.¹⁷ He sees the formation of this psychic nexus as being closely connected to the functioning of the human will. In his estimation, the formation of the psychic nexus occurs early on in life with the experience of resistance which results from the pressure felt when our “vital impulses” are thwarted. Not

unlike Max Scheler's (1971:52-53) view that "reality as such is given only in an experience of resistance," Dilthey similarly argues that it is in the experience of felt resistance that we are confronted with the original source for our ability to distinguish between self and world. As Makkreel puts it, it is the "recognition of resistance as limitation of impulse that produces a consciousness of self as distinct from the other" (Makkreel 1992:217).¹⁸

In Dilthey's view, the trans-individual world thought to exist beyond the boundaries of our being can therefore be understood as arising experientially from the inefficacy of our will. As he puts it, an "Other resists my will, rendering it unable to change my impressions; this Other is given also to my feeling, which suffers from it.... It is thus given immediately - not as something inferred but as life" (1989:229). With our experience of efficacy and resistance we come to develop a distinction between self and other that gradually leads us to discriminate between our "inner" and "outer" modes of perception (Makkreel 1992:433). As Dilthey explains:

My self, however, as an object in space, as it is given through external perception, or my body, constitutes the point of transition from outer perception and experience to inner experience. The space which my body occupies, as given in outer perception, is progressively filled, so to speak, with inner states through accumulating experience, through practice, through the establishment of a context for the feeling of life, the exertion of the will, muscular sensations, and a variety of specifically localized feelings (1989:269)¹⁹.

This experientially derived distinction between self and world also importantly provides the foundation for the gradual emergence of an acquired psychic nexus which "serves both as a storehouse of experience and as a guide to action in our surrounding world" (Makkreel 1992:217).

Acquiring the Acquired Psychic Nexus

Dilthey believes that the "acquired psychic nexus" arises from the relationship between "centripetal" or sensory pathways and "centrifugal" or motor pathways, which articulate a dual function of "receiving impressions from the external world and reacting back on it" (Dilthey 1989:286). Through the repeated functioning of these afferent and efferent pathways, "traces" of sensation, feeling, and volition crystalize in the formation of distinctive habit patterns (1985 [1887]:97). As these sensory, affective and volitional habits accumulate "an independently functioning psychic life [is gradually able to] insert itself between these two parts of the psychic process.... [such that] A central nexus is formed which co-determines and sometimes channels perceptions and feelings into desire and action" (1989:287).

Shaped through the sedimentation and patterning of direct experience, the "acquired psychic nexus" is thus thought to inform the operation of perceptual and attentional modalities as it orchestrates the functions of feeling, will, and representation (Makkreel 1992:115, 117). In other words, the "acquired psychic nexus" is understood to be a mental structure that serves to direct an individual's interactions with external and internal reality by establishing the parameters within which an individual's mental, physical, and social life become organized (Bulhof 1980:150).

Flexibility, Indeterminacy and Individuality

According to Bulhof, Dilthey believes that the "acquired psychic nexus" emerges only after a period of initial indeterminacy which accounts for why psychic development is able to proceed according to a multiplicity of alternate roots (1980: 150). While Dilthey does not believe that individuals differ from each other according to qualitatively different "determinations," he does feel, as Makkreel makes clear, that "the intensity of each quality may vary from person to person" (1992: 139). As Makkreel explains, each "individual is thus a structural configuration of certain dominant qualities in tension with a base of subordinate qualities" (1992: 140). Put differently, Dilthey's position holds that there are common "psychological properties" or "qualities" that are shared by all humans, but, are differentially organized in each individual. Here, mutual intelligibility rests on the possibility that individuals are able to reference those qualities that are found within themselves and that are yet shared with, and expressed by others (Makkreel 1992: 249).

Dilthey explains that the "acquired psychic nexus" not only acts to pattern the individual's psychic processes but is simultaneously shaped by those selfsame patterns (Makkreel 1992: 99). Moreover, he holds that the acquired psychic nexus does not stand *over-against* experience but serves to articulate the coherences that are situated *within* experience (Dilthey 1985 [1887]: 97). As part and parcel of experience, the "acquired psychic nexus" cannot, therefore, be mistaken for a Kantian transcendental ego which lies apart from the phenomenal realm. Similarly, Dilthey's view of the "acquired psychic nexus" should not be confused with the associationalist writings of Locke and Hume. In contrast to these empiricist philosophers, Dilthey argues that psychic life is not a composite or construction of independent elements, but is instead given to us in experience as an "encompassing unity" (Makkreel 1992: 133).

According to Dilthey, the "acquired psychic nexus," while individually variable, is not, however, disconnected from wider cultural systems. He feels that it is important to recognize the fact that the "acquired psychic nexus" incorporates both *personal and cultural* ideals, values, images, and conceptualizations. In this light, the "acquired psychic nexus" should be understood as something which is built from the "systematic intersection of inner and outer, the psychological and the historical [cultural]" (Makkreel 1992: 108). By viewing the psychic nexus as integrating both personal and cultural ideals and values, Dilthey claims that it must, therefore, be seen as a central framework for grounding understanding in the human studies (Makkreel 1992: 101).

Well in line with his attempt to see the "acquired psychic nexus" as simultaneously personal and cultural, is Dilthey's long acknowledged concern "with the relationship between the mind's creativity and the constraints imposed upon the mind by the external [and internal] world" (Bulhof 1980: 137). Even with his stress on the importance of culture in the structuring of the individual's psychic nexus, Dilthey also holds that individuals are never completely determined by any one particular cultural system (Ermarth 1978: 125; Makkreel and Rodi 1989: 18-19; Makkreel 1992: 68). Moreover, even though Dilthey often makes allusions to a common "human nature" based upon a shared set of attributes, cultural and otherwise, he is also careful to point out that "in addition to this universal set of attributes, the individual acquires a distinctive core of personality which is unique and irreducible" (Ermarth 1978: 120). Dilthey's view of the "nature of man" is, as Makkreel points out, "something determinate but nondeterminable, enduring but not fixed" (1992: 391). In Dilthey's own words, we "find everywhere a limitation on what is possible. Yet we have the freedom to choose alternatives, and accordingly the wonderful feeling of being able to progress and realize new possibilities of our own existence" (cited in

Makkreel 1992: 391-92). According to Ermarth, Dilthey therefore characterizes the will as free in as much as individuals are able "to respond to a multiplicity of conditions as mediated through consciousness and cultural forms" (1978: 121).²⁰

Descriptive Psychology and the Anthropology of Pain

Having outlined some of the central tenets of Dilthey's "descriptive psychology," I will now turn to focus specifically on how Dilthey's in-depth analysis of multiple levels of experience—ranging from pre-predicative "simple having" to full blown culturally mediated intersubjectivity—might serve as a useful framework for recent attempts in anthropology to gain greater insight into the experience of pain.

Culture and Pain

Because biomedical models have long considered pain to be purely bodily, scholars have traditionally viewed pain to be a physical phenomenon that is relatively free from cultural conditioning (see J. Jackson 1994). Beginning with the work of Zborowski (1952, 1969) in the early fifties, however, there has been a growing number of anthropological studies that point to the fact that culture seems to play an important role in shaping the experience of pain along a number of dimensions—including its intensity, expression, response, and interpretation (Daniel 1994; Das 1997; Garro 1992; Good 1994; Good et al. 1992; J. Jackson 1992, 1994; Kleinman and Good 1985; Laughlin and Throop 1999: 342; Levy 1973: 308-310). In addition to these findings, which suggest a strong connection between culture and the subjective experience of pain, there also seems, however, to be an emerging consensus in anthropology regarding pain's tendency to actively "resist" the cultural patterning of linguistic and interpretive frames.

For instance, Valentine Daniel argues that pain's resistance to linguistic, representational and cultural elaboration reflects something more than a mere representation of conventional views of the relationship between the "pre-cultural body" and "cultural mind." Citing Elaine Scarry's influential book *The Body in Pain* (1985), Daniel explains that "pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language" (233). Using Peirce's tripartite framework of "firstness," "secondness," and "thirdness,"²¹ Daniel points out that while the experience of pain is indeed "world-destroying" in its pre-reflective immediacy, "this 'firstness' of pain is [often] overwhelmed by... 'secondness' - the experience of radical otherness in which ego and non-ego are precipitated out against each other in unique and absolute opposition" (1994: 246). In its "secondness" pain is truly a crystalized Peircian sign that lies "stuck" at the brink of language" (1994: 246).

Like Daniel, Good, Brodwin, Good and Kleinman (1992) also assert that pain "occurs on that fundamental level of bodily experience which language encounters, attempts to express, and then fails to encompass" (1992: 7). While acknowledging that regardless of cultural context, pain seems to be resistant to symbolization, these authors further point to the fact that the "experience of chronic pain includes much more than raw physical sensations: pain creates problems of control and meaning-making" (1992: 8). As these scholars see it, the totality of the experience of pain, which encompasses levels of narrativity and performance is, therefore, fundamentally intersubjective.

Writing in opposition to “representational views of language” and “correspondence theories of truth,” Byron Good (1994) also explores how pain is shaped through a number of culturally constituted “formative processes.” Drawing on the ideas of Ernst Cassirer and Alfred Schutz, Good examines how pain’s resistance to objectification does not, however, prevent the gradual reconstitution of the pain shattered life-world through “symbolization” and “narrativization” (1994: 133).

Dilthey’s Descriptive Psychology and the Anthropology of Pain

As these studies show, there seems to be an inherent ambiguity to the experience of pain which can often defy conceptualization while also occasionally succumbing to culturally shaped systems of categorization, classification, and narrativization. It is precisely this ambiguity, so fundamental to the experience of pain, that makes pain especially useful for demonstrating the benefits of Dilthey’s “descriptive psychology” for anthropological inquiry into the structures of consciousness.

In those “world-destroying” moments when pain engulfs the sufferer to the extent that subject-object distinctions collapse as the linguistic, reflexive, and conceptual mediation of pain dissipates in a wash of sensation, we are confronted with an experience that seems to reflect Dilthey’s pre-predicative level of *Erleben*. Moreover, attempts to “objectify” pain through narrative, discourse, categorization and imagination all point to the gradual movement through the initial coherence of pain as “given” to experience, to the formation and confrontation of an emerging self-awareness with a resistant “other,” and finally, to the full-blown attempt to mediate and objectify pain in culturally mediated moments of self-reflection and personal expression.

I believe that a quote from one of Byron Good’s informants, “Brian,” may be illustrative here. As Good notes, Brian at times struggles to describe his experiences of pain. For example:

It goes into the head... the maxillary muscles.... And it goes down here, and people would describe it as being choked or having this lump of.... this sensation of being restricted all the way through here. [He gestured to his throat and chest.] And it starts going down. And then your anxiety builds,... and you start feeling other things....” (1994: 123)

While this disjointed description outlines the pathways of pain through the body there is little attempt to describe the sensation of pain itself. Indeed, it is often only possible for Brian to admit that “there are times when I, when a lot of things are ineffable about what goes on internally” (1994: 129). However, there are a few examples provided by Good where Brian attempts to describe his experience of the sensation of pain, and in these moments pain is felt to be:

... like a pressure building up. It starts to move around and travel as it were a hot streak, lightning or something like that.... I’ll feel twinges in my shoulder, in the vertebrae that, that run down the neck and the spinal column. (1992: 38)

It’s [like] being bound up, ah, just having a pained body and not being able to adequately explain it or interpret it. Knowing I can’t, it’s so pervasive, I can’t really say, yes it’s like

a headache, but it's not like a headache either. You have to have it to really understand what it's like..... There's a sensation you have, you have it's a total thing. I've had these sensations, and the head is being clamped inside a vice, and something's jamming me on one side or the other and just a wheel is being cranked all the time.... (1992:40-41).

Good argues that while these experiences threaten to destroy Brian's life world, Brian uses two illness narratives, one based on "TMJ" (temporomandibular joint) and the other based on "depression" to "find or fashion meaning, [in order] to reconstitute the world" (1994:128).

I believe that Brian's experience of pain, which Good insightfully interprets according to a general distinction between "world-destroying" and "world-rebuilding" moments, is given an even more revealing analysis in the context of Dilthey's descriptive framework. As mentioned above, when pain is reportedly experienced as an ineffable sensation defying classification and categorization, this seems to be in accord with Dilthey's *Erleben* as a "simple having" that exists prior to subject/object distinctions. With emergence of pulsations, flashes and aches that eventually come to constitute a "headache that is not a headache" we see moments of "self-feeling" (*Innewerden*) erected upon the comparison, gradation, separation, and association of sensations that still elude "objectification." As the sufferer begins to focus on distinctive moments of pain in the head, the spine, and the shoulder we see the functioning of "stabilizing attention" (*Inner Wahrnehmung*) that serves to stabilize specific elements of experience without directly altering the "given" forms of those elements. Here pain has still managed to defy objectification and yet we are still far from the realm of narrativity and symbolization that serves to construct meaning and reconstitute the world. A more reflective attention to those painful moments brings conscious introspection (*Inner Beobachtung*) and the alteration of the "given." Pain is now completely distinct from the introspecting self and yet is still without a clearly articulated meaning or form. With conscious attempts to articulate these introspective moments of pain with culturally constituted narratives, images or symbols we see the gradual movement toward the incorporation of the levels of memory (*Erinnerung*), methodological self-reflection (*Selbstbesinnung*) and anthropological reflection (*anthropologische Besinnung*), as pain becomes fully objectified and integrated in the intersubjective realm of recognition, meaning, and morality.

With the experience of pain we are thus confronted with a horizon of experience where the struggle between the attribution of meaning and the coherence of the given is evidenced. While pain provides anthropology with a particularly clear view of the complex interplay of these various modes of experience, it is certainly not the only place where this relative transparency is revealed. Even where the horizon of indeterminacy is more significantly obscured by the cultural patterning of attention in reflective awareness, these same elements of experience are present. Indeed, I believe that it is the responsibility of the anthropologist to gain a better understanding of these processes through a more detailed exploration of these various modes of experience. It is my position that Dilthey's "descriptive psychology" can provide anthropologists with a framework that is detailed enough to help us in this endeavor.

The Limits and Benefits of Dilthey's Project

While I believe that Dilthey's descriptive psychology can provide anthropology with a number of important and useful theoretical insights into the relationship between culture, consciousness, and psychological processes, I feel that there are also some areas of his thought that

may pose problems for scholars who might otherwise be interested in Dilthey's work. In this final section of the paper I would like to address some of the potentially problematic dimensions of Dilthey's descriptive psychology while also turning to outline a few of the most important insights that anthropologists can draw from his writings.

Some Potential Limits

To begin, there is some question about Dilthey's attempt to propose the existence of a mode of purely "pre-predicative" experience that is non-reflexive and prior to distinctions between subject and object. What is important to note here is that, while there are a number of scholars in anthropology who subscribe to the existence of a "pre-objective" mode of experience (see Csordas 1994a, 1994b; Desjarlais 1992; Good 1994; M. Jackson 1996; Strathern 1994), these anthropologists are often careful to point out that this "pre-objective" mode is no less permeated by cultural contingency than objective or reflexive varieties of experience. In response to those critics who believe that Dilthey's understanding of "pre-predicative experience" fails to recognize this fact, I argue that while Dilthey's understanding of "pre-predicative experience" is certainly questionable, there is as of yet still no definitive evidence to suggest that a less culturally mediated variety of pre-predicative experience is necessarily untenable. Moreover, as Laughlin and McManus have noted in the context of their discussion of James's postulate of "pure experience," there seems to be a number of thinkers who do indeed argue for the possibility of using descriptive methods much like those found in Dilthey's "descriptive psychology" in order to phenomenologically access just such an "unsullied field of sensory immediacy upon which is built a more and more extensive picture of the world as the hierarchy of cognitive acts mold and produce order on that field" (1995:35).

Ultimately, however, I believe that we, as anthropologists, are compelled to try to move beyond purely theoretical debates over the pervasiveness of the cultural patterning of "pre-objective" experience by turning to confront this question directly through studies that explicitly attempt to assess the validity of this putative mode of "pre-predicative" experience. As briefly indicated above, I feel that this particular question can best be explored through more detailed investigations into such ambiguous experiences as pain.²² I believe that it is only in ambiguous experience that we will be given clearer access to the processes underlying the cultural patterning of the given in consciousness. It is in this realm of ambiguity, where our informants struggle to articulate their sensations, perceptions, and feelings, that I believe we will ultimately be able to discover an adequate "data set" to assess the existence of these various modes of experience.

Second, as alluded to above, it is potentially problematic to postulate a direct link between expression, language, and experience. Anthropologists have long noted that cultural, cognitive, and linguistic processes need not necessarily overlap (Duranti 1997; Obeyesekere 1990:221, 230). Moreover, because it is possible for language change (especially grammatical change) to lag behind cultural change, there is always a possibility that linguistic categories will not reflect currently salient experiential or cultural referents (Kroskrity 1993, 1998; Salzmann 1993). Also, due to the fact there seems to exist Whorfian "cryptotypes" in all languages (1956) — those covert or latent concepts that are not necessarily marked by overt lexical denotation — it would also be quite problematic to infer that the absence of a certain lexeme necessarily indexes the absence of a culturally salient concept/idea or experience (Needham 1972:128).

In this light, it seems fair to be critical of any simplistic rendering of Dilthey's insights into what he certainly understood to be the complex relationship between lived experience and

its crystallization in linguistic and cultural artifacts ("objectified mind"). While I believe that these kinds of criticism must certainly be heeded, I also believe that Dilthey's triadic framework of lived experience, expression and understanding, if employed with careful attention to these potential complexities, can nevertheless serve to support and guide our attempts to gain insight into the life-worlds of the individuals we work with and learn from in the field.

Third, I believe that some scholars will take issue with what appears to be Dilthey's somewhat abstract rendering of the "acquired psychic nexus"—that culturally and individually shaped psychic structure in which previous experience sediments and thereby serves to selectively filter and motivate later experiences. In response to this potential critique, I feel that it is important to realize that there will always be difficulties inherent in ensuring that our theoretical constructs remain "experience-near" (Geertz 1983; Hollan 2001; Wikan 1991).²³ Dilthey himself believed that his descriptive psychology provides a methodological foundation upon which to erect more "experience-near" theoretical constructs, and he most certainly felt that the acquired psychic nexus was based upon his own "experience-near" observations and descriptions of the functioning of the human psyche. Furthermore, I believe that there are a number of advantages to turning to Dilthey's construct of the acquired psychic nexus in lieu of more deterministic constructs such as Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*²⁴ (Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Throop and Murphy 2002). For even though Dilthey's "acquired psychic nexus" may seem for some to be equally as "experientially-distant" as Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, in the end it provides us with a much more satisfying model since it enables us to account for those culturally and personally informed residues of past experience that are sedimented in individual minds and bodies, while also leaving plenty of room for the creativity, intentionality, and agency of the individual human actor.

A final critique that can be launched against Dilthey's work lies in his tendency to present typologies and multi-level models of feeling, experience, and mind. Here the question that can be asked by critics is why seven modes of experience and not four? While it is certainly fair to argue that the designation of "seven modes of experience" is not comprehensive, it is important to realize that since Dilthey views these "modes" to index experientially verifiable psychological processes, these multi-level models are not arbitrary designations. That is, while "seven modes of experience" certainly do not exhaust all of the possible ways in which a theorist may choose to distinguish between various levels of psychological functioning that might pertain to "feeling," "sensation," "cognition," or "volition," this does not then perforce entail that these designations are empty constructs without referents. Of importance here is not the exact number of levels proposed, but how Dilthey's descriptive method can serve to illuminate the various layers of experience that may underlie particular processes and structures of consciousness in the interplay of sensation, feeling, emotion, volition, and cognition.

Some Potential Benefits

Moving beyond these potential criticisms, I feel that it is important to outline a few of the ways that Dilthey's work can provide the anthropology of consciousness with critical insight. First, I believe that Dilthey's ideas point to the fact that anthropologists should try to take seriously the discernment that may be garnered from the active introspection of conscious experience. While introspection has long been recognized as a flawed methodology (a position that Dilthey himself clearly articulates in his writings), Dilthey's work also makes clear how introspection can be understood as a potentially useful method for gaining insight into the functioning of one's own, and another's, psyche. Without some form of careful self-observation

which focuses upon the experiential properties of the functioning of one's own consciousness, it seems highly likely that investigators will be at a significant disadvantage in their attempts to understand the psychological frameworks and models found in unfamiliar cultural contexts. Put differently, without adequate attention focused on the nuances of one's own conscious experience it seems unlikely that an anthropologist will be able to gain adequate insight into the psychological realities that are described by individuals who are drawing from radically different cultural premises.²⁵

Even though introspectionist and empathetic models for anthropological research are widely heralded as problematic and are currently unpopular, there is still a great degree to which anthropologists tacitly rely upon the assumption that they can come to understand cultural phenomena through an empathetic process of comparing one's own conscious experience to the expressions of another-mind. The very method of participant observation is predicated upon such assumptions; namely, that through actively participating in the life-ways of another culture the anthropologist will work to approximate the perspective of those individuals who have been raised in that particular culture (see Desjarlais 1992; Fiske n.d.). Dilthey's work points to the importance of beginning this process with an attentive focus to the functioning of our own conscious experience. As his "axiom of phenomenality" clearly spells out, because all aspects of reality are ultimately part and parcel of consciousness, it is essential that anthropologists work to explore the constraints given by their own consciousness to the perception of that "reality." It seems evident that this kind of introspective insight will help to better foreground any alterations that may occur to the researcher's conscious experience in his/her attempts to approximate the sensations, perceptions and behaviors of "an-other." Dilthey's project thus points to the importance for anthropologists to explicitly work to re-integrate introspective, observational and empathetic perspectives in their attempts to develop more accurate interpretations of the psychological realities underpinning the understanding of what constitutes "consciousness" in other cultural contexts.

Lastly, I believe that Dilthey's framework can serve as the foundation for transcending polemical debates in anthropology between active and passive models of the human psyche. Dilthey's framework recognizes that coherence is not only a function of the cognitive and cultural patterning of the "given" but is also, at least partially, a function of the field of sensory activity. Just as Laughlin and McMannus found for William James's doctrine of radical empiricism, Dilthey's project similarly assumes that there is a "primordial field of sensorial activity that is itself ordered prior to any cognitive operations upon that field" (1995:44).

Dilthey argues that it is the articulation of the active "acquired psychic nexus" with the passive reception of the "given" in the sensory field that allows for various degrees of interpretive and perceptual patterning of that given field moment by moment. The degree to which this nexus is brought to bear on the primordial field of sensory activity is thus what determines the extent to which "cultural" and "personal" processes are able to shape and interpenetrate with the "given" in conscious awareness. From this perspective then, we are able to simultaneously postulate a "given" that is passively received in consciousness and an active grasping of that "given" within the personal and cultural patterning of our various attentional modalities (see also Csordas 1993). As we saw above in our brief exploration of how Dilthey's ideas might further inform the anthropology of pain, I believe that there is some evidence that supports Dilthey's notion of *Erleben* and the conceptual overlays which serve to pattern and give meaning to that initial "givenness." I feel that this struggle to articulate, and actively grasp the "givenness" of the experience of pain,

grants us potential access to the very processes of formation and categorization that underpin the personal and cultural patterning of this pre-predicative experience.

In light of a Diltheyan turn, I hold that future work in the anthropology of consciousness should focus greater attention to those experiences, like pain, which reside on the fringes of our abilities to articulate, verbalize, and interpret. By turning to examine the experiences that seem to be the most resistant to the patterning of cultural interpretive frames I believe that we will eventually be able to better judge the empirical validity of "pre-objective" modes of experience. Ultimately, I feel therefore that Dilthey's work points to the need to establish an "anthropology of ambiguity" that will allow researchers to investigate in finer detail those modes of experience that lie on the peripheries of the patterning imperative of our attentional modalities.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to suggest that Dilthey's "descriptive psychology" can provide the anthropology of consciousness with a viable framework that can serve to complement, complete, and expand many of its most current theoretical perspectives. Dilthey's work provides anthropology with the outline of a mature phenomenology that links the subjective experiential realm to the wider cultural world through the medium of expression and objectified mind. Moreover, while anthropology has recently been overwhelmed with an abundance of references to "experience" it is, in my opinion, lacking an adequate theoretical account of what it is we actually mean when we use this term. In accord with Desjarlais (1997), Mattingly (1998), and Scott (1991), I feel that a "common sense" rendering of the meaning of "experience" is no longer tenable in anthropological theorizing, and I believe that Dilthey's work can provide anthropology with much needed conceptual clarification in this regard (see Throop forthcoming). Finally, I believe that Dilthey's careful attention to the fine grained description of various qualitatively different types of "experience" — from experience as a pre-predicative "simple having" to a culturally mediated intersubjectivity — broadens and sharpens the scope of the anthropological lens as it provides the necessary conceptual clarity and specificity required for any truly accurate account of the structures of consciousness and the often illusive intricacies of "lived experience."

Notes

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²Considering the fact that hermeneutic and phenomenological approaches are gaining greater currency in anthropology (see Caoradas 1994a; Desjarlais 1992, 1997; Jackson 1996), it is surprising that more scholars have not turned back to Dilthey's pioneering and influential work. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the only anthropologist to have explored Dilthey's thought with any rigor is Victor Turner (see below; see also Turner 1982:12-19; 1985; 1986). Close to the end of his career, Turner began outlining the contours of an "anthropology of experience" that relied heavily on Dilthey's work, especially on his concepts of "lived experience" (*Erlebnis*) and "objectified mind" (*Objectified Geist*). Unfortunately, neither Turner's insights nor Dilthey's original formulations have found their way into contemporary theoretical discussions of "experience" and "consciousness" in the discipline of anthropology.

³The reader should note that there has traditionally been much debate in Dilthey scholarship over the extent to which his early "psychological" framework was carried over into his later hermeneutic writings. This paper focuses primarily on what is considered to be Dilthey's early "psychological phase" and as such runs counter to many contemporary readings of Dilthey's work. It is for these reasons that I have decided to support my reading of Dilthey with Makkreel and Ermarth's interpretations, which both argue for a basic continuity between Dilthey's

"psychological" and "hermeneutical" works. Indeed, as Paul Ricoeur notes, "Dilthey still belongs to the generation of neo-Kantians for whom the pivot of all human sciences is the individual, considered, it is true, in his social relations, but fundamentally singular. It follows that the foundation of the human sciences must be psychology, the science of the individual acting in society and in history" (1991: 60). In this respect, Ricoeur asserts that Dilthey's entire hermeneutical enterprise is grounded on the fundamental epistemological problem of understanding "by transference into another [mind]" (1991: 61). Thus, "the counterpart of a hermeneutical theory founded on psychology is that psychology remains its ultimate justification" (Ricoeur 1991: 61). That said, Ricoeur explains that Dilthey's hermeneutics, while always clearly informed by psychology, avoids falling prey to mere Romantic subjectivism since "the essential role of hermeneutics consists therein: 'To establish theoretically, against the constant intrusion of romantic whim and skeptical subjectivism..., the universal validity of interpretation, upon which all certainty in history rests'" (1991: 61).

⁴Dilthey is perhaps best remembered for his distinction between the natural and human sciences (Apel 1990; Makkreel 1985; Scharf 1976). As Kornberg (1973) makes clear, this distinction can be understood as a response to the ideal of a unified science proposed by the likes of Herbert Spencer and Auguste Comte at the mid-point of the 19th century. Dilthey argues that the problem with this ideal lies in the fact it is based upon the flawed assumption that it is possible to simply apply abstract categories originating from the physical sciences (i.e., atoms) to the study of human behavior and mental life (1973:300). In contrast to this view, Dilthey feels that there is some serious question as to whether a single scientific method should be used for investigating, what he believes to be, two potentially different objects of study. Central to Dilthey's distinction is his assertion that where the natural sciences are predicated upon explanation (*Erklärend*), the human sciences are focused, in contrast, on understanding (*Verstehen*). Where the natural sciences seek out causal explanations that are based on linking discrete representations drawn from "external experience" through hypothetical generalizations and abstractions, the human sciences look to understand the coherence and structure given directly within lived experience itself (Makkreel 1995). As Makkreel makes clear, in Dilthey's view "explanation involves subsuming the particular data or elements that can be abstracted from our experience to general laws, whereas understanding is more concerned with focusing on the concrete contents of individual processes of experience to consider how they function as part of a larger continuum" (1992:135). It is important to note that while Max Weber's call for "interpretive explanation" has often been credited with attempting to mediate what Dilthey's distinction between the natural and human sciences supposedly split apart (Apel 1990: 138), Dilthey himself never claims that these two "sciences" are incompatible. In contrast, Dilthey argues that "both sorts of knowledge always intermingle [in such a way that knowledge]...of the natural sciences overlaps with that of the human sciences" (Dilthey 1989 [1883]:70). Moreover, it is only with a recognition of the mutual compatibility of these two kinds of science that Dilthey believes that we can ultimately move toward resolving the opposition "between the transcendental standpoint for which nature is subject to the conditions of consciousness and the objectivist empirical standpoint which regards the development of the human spirit as subject to the conditions of nature" (1989 [1883]:71-72).

⁵As Ermarth notes, not only did James and Dilthey meet in Berlin in 1867, but, each was highly respectful of the other's work. Ermarth asserts that Dilthey felt that "he and James were working on parallel paths in the theory of mind and the empirical study of mind" (1978:33).

⁶There is also a close connection between Dilthey and Husserl. In fact, Dilthey's early writings on "descriptive psychology" were heralded by Husserl as an important precursor to his own phenomenology. Ultimately, however, there was a falling out between the two men as Husserl became increasingly critical of Dilthey's later hermeneutical writings (see Tillman 1976).

⁷I believe that Dilthey's experiential grounding of the categories can also be fruitfully compared with the recent work of Lakoff and Johnson who argue for the sensorimotor structuring of subjective experience and the experientially grounded mapping of metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1999; see also Throop and Laughlin 2002).

⁸Dilthey defines consciousness as a "being-there-for-me" which he believes serves to "help us avoid restricting its meaning to representational and intellectual processes" (1883:246).

⁹It is interesting to note that in his discussion "On the History of the Word Erlebnis," Gadamer argues that the verb *erleben* suggests "the immediacy, which precedes all interpretation, reworking, and communication, and merely offers a starting point for interpretation – material to be shaped" (1975:61). In contrast, the noun *erlebnis*, which became commonplace only during the 1870's, is understood to denote "an 'experience' not only insofar as it is experienced, but insofar as its being experienced makes a special impression that gives it lasting importance" (*ibid*).

¹⁰Even though Dilthey asserts that representation, will, and feeling are always intimately interconnected in each moment of experience, he also asserts with focused attention and interest in introspection we are able to parse out the various elements that come to constitute "complex representations" in experience (Makkreel 1992:168).

¹¹The strong resonances here between Dilthey's thinking and the "Culture and Personality" school in American Anthropology should not be viewed as merely coincidental. Indeed, not only was Boas directly influenced by

Dilthey's "historical method" (Stocking 1974:11), but, his student Ruth Benedict, famous for her assertion that culture could be understood as "personality writ large," often drew heavily from Dilthey's writings (see Benedict 1934:52).

¹²Bulhof (1976:25-26) translates *Ausdruck* as "cultural expression."

¹³Bulhof translates *erworbener seelischer zusammenhang* as "soul structure." Other renderings include "inner psychic structure" (Tillman 1976), "whole self" (Kornberg 1973), "acquired psychic nexus" (Makkreel 1992; Scanlon 1989), and "acquired coherence of the individual personality" (Ermarth 1978:231).

¹⁴It is important to note, that Dilthey does not restrict his notion of "cultural expression" to the realm of language but sees it as including "bodily gestures, physical actions, or any form in which life manifests itself in the sensuous world" (Makkreel 1992:293).

¹⁵Dilthey also makes an interesting distinction between culture and the external organization of society which are both grounded in the realm of lived experience. He understands these as two different perspectives in which "one considers how the psychic elements of different individuals in a purposive nexus relate to a cultural system; the other considers how wills are bound together, in accordance with the fundamental relationship of community and dependence" (1883:114).

¹⁶Turner's connection between "objectified mind" and culture finds some support in Ermarth's reading of Dilthey. Ermarth describes Dilthey's "objectified mind" as "the vast sphere of cultural content." Also of interest is his assertion that Dilthey's concept of culture should not be mistaken with idealist renderings of *Kultur* found at the turn of the century in the writings of the "Baden School" — Windelband (1848-1915) and Rickert (1863-1936) — for "he insisted that it [culture] contained not simply 'high culture' but practical life-values, sublimated drives, and technical arrangements" (1978:277).

¹⁷Makkreel has suggested that in a clinical context Dilthey would perhaps suggest that schizophrenia and multiple personality disorders arise when "the acquired psychic nexus is split into several partial systems." (1992:157) He also points out that Dilthey believed that madness is caused by an inactive acquired psychic nexus which is no longer able to assimilate the complexity and diversity of experience within the representational framework provided by the acquired psychic nexus (Makkreel 1992:157).

¹⁸While this may also sound reminiscent of G.H. Mead's (1934) assertion that the formation of the "self" is a process that is dependent on the confrontation with, and subsequent internalization of an "other," upon closer examination Dilthey's and Mead's perspectives are quite distinct. It is important to recall that Mead's understanding of self-formation is advanced as a purely cognitive function of "internalizing" otherness, whereas Dilthey's experience of "felt resistance" is understood to be a function of the thwarted "will" as immediately perceived in the sensorium.

¹⁹Dilthey also argues that the concept of matter is similarly deduced from our immediate experience of the "facticity of tactile sensations in which resistance is experienced" (1883:62).

²⁰Makkreel points out that Dilthey's view of creativity is closely connected to the operation of the imagination which is itself tied to the functioning of the acquired psychic nexus. In Makkreel's words "For Dilthey the imagination differs structurally from other mental processes [only] in that the control of the acquired psychic nexus is unimpeded by any physiological conditioning or theoretical and practical ideals of adaptation." (1992:164).

²¹Peirce's distinction between firstness, secondness and thirdness can be understood in the psychological realm as a distinction between simple feelings (firstness), sensations of resistance (secondness), and general conceptions and rules governed by habit (thirdness) (see Peirce 1958:150-152).

²²Of course, as Doug Hollan has pointed out (personal communication), culture may play a role in defining which "experiences" are deemed to be "ambiguous." For example, as Levy's (1973, 1984) work on hypercognition and hypocognition in Tahiti makes clear, emotions can be differentially elaborated culturally. Those emotions that are not salient (hypocognized) in a particular culture may be deemed "ambiguous" in the sense I am using it here. These hypocognized emotions may then also be useful to an investigation into the putative existence of a "pre-predicative" realm of experience. Conversely, it may also be the case that in a culture where pain is extensively conceptually elaborated (hypercognized), that the experience of pain may prove to be relatively less "ambiguous" than the studies cited in this paper intimate. In this case, pain may prove to be less amenable to the investigation of "pre-predicative experience" than I have otherwise suggested here. That being said, I tend to agree, however, with the scholars cited in this paper who have argued that "pain" seems to be particularly resistant to the processes of "objectification" and "symbolization" that underlie hypercognition, and as such, may be especially well suited to the type of analysis I am proposing.

²³The distinction between "experience-near" and "experience-distant" concepts was borrowed from the psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut by Clifford Geertz in his essay "From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding" (1983). As Geertz explains, an "experience-near" concept is, roughly, one that someone — a patient, a subject, in our case an informant — might himself naturally use and effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine....[where-as] An experience-distant concept is one that specialists of

one sort or another – an analyst, an experimenter, an ethnographer...employ to forward scientific, philosophical or practical aims" (1983:57).

²⁴While Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* has certainly provided the field of anthropology with an abundance of theoretical fodder — serving to address the problems of relying exclusively on an overly intellectualized vision of enculturative processes — it has, however, been criticized by a number of scholars (see Alexander 1994:130-136; Calhoun 1993:72; DiMaggio 1979:1467-68; Frow 1995:27-47; Gernham and Williams 1980:222; Jenkins 1982, 1992:82, 90; Strathern 1997:28, 36; Strauss and Quinn 1997:47) for dismissing the agency, creativity, and intentionality of the conscious human subject. For an extended discussion of Bourdieu's determinism in light of his critical dialogue with phenomenology see Throop and Murphy (2002).

²⁵Support for this perspective can be found in Laughlin et al. (1990:21-32) in reference to Husserl's phenomenology and Laughlin and McManus (1995:42-43) in reference to James's radical empiricism.

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