

Wilfrid Laurier University

Scholars Commons @ Laurier

Theses and Dissertations (Comprehensive)

1999

Critical psychology in action: Recommendations for the practice of critical psychology

Stephanie Austin
Wilfrid Laurier University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.wlu.ca/etd>



Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Austin, Stephanie, "Critical psychology in action: Recommendations for the practice of critical psychology" (1999). *Theses and Dissertations (Comprehensive)*. 675.
<https://scholars.wlu.ca/etd/675>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Scholars Commons @ Laurier. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations (Comprehensive) by an authorized administrator of Scholars Commons @ Laurier. For more information, please contact scholarscommons@wlu.ca.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI[®]

**Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600**

**Critical Psychology in Action: Recommendations for the
Practice of Critical Psychology**

by

Stephanie Austin

Bachelor of Arts with Honours, University of Ottawa, 1996

THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Psychology

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Master of Arts Degree

Wilfrid Laurier University

1999

© Stephanie Austin 1999



**National Library
of Canada**

**Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services**

**395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

**Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada**

**Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques**

**395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-40330-0

Canada

"There is no defined path of action, other than the path we collectively and individually create. And to inform the decisions of where we should place our footsteps, we have only our deepest moral intuitions and the sage advice of others to act as markers in guiding our path" Audrey Celeste Rosa

Acknowledgements

One of my favourite memories in this year's thesis project is an experience that I had last spring. It was a beautiful day at the beginning of May. I was having a meeting with Isaac to discuss the ideas that were starting to take shape in my thesis proposal. We had decided to get out of the office and go down to the Atrium in the Science Building where we could enjoy some of the sunlight pouring in from the skylights. Isaac and I were having one of the many intellectually stimulating discussions that were still to come in this year's collaborative work. In a moment that comes along infrequently in a lifetime, I felt the thrill of psychic and soulful connection. Yes! We were on the same wavelength. Each of us was putting words to what the other had been thinking for a long time. I was quite overwhelmed by emotion. This energy is what has carried me through the challenging parts and the exhilarating parts of the thesis journey.

Writing a theoretically oriented thesis can be a solitary process. My peers from first year can attest to that fact. Thank you all for helping me stay focused and grounded, and for giving me a reason to get out of my office once in a while. I would like to acknowledge the helpful support I received from Isaac Prilleltensky, my advisor and friend, and from my loving classmates Jody, Rolando, Isaac and Shannon. Your words and presence, even at a distance, were appreciated. The reading group with Susan James came at the most perfect time. I enjoyed being invited to think in different ways in this group. I would like thank my mom for being my most inspiring and admired mentor. Her intertwined roles of feminist woman working in the academy, and lovingly present mother responding to my ups and downs, guided me through every aspect of this thesis experience. I can attribute the pride I feel having accomplished this goal to the ongoing encouragement I have received from my family, friends, and colleagues. Merci.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements		iii
Abstract		1
I. Introduction		3
Understanding Critical Psychology		4
The vision of critical psychology		4
The values of critical psychology		4
The practice of critical psychology		5
Defining Oppression and Emancipation		6
My Point of Departure		7
II. Methodology		9
Overview of the Research		9
Participants		14
Data collection		15
Section on foundations		15
Section on applications		16
Limitations		16
Ethical Considerations		17
Confidentiality		17
Credit		17
Representation (or) subverting identity politics		19
Inclusivity		19
Data Analysis		21
III. Philosophical Roots and Historical Developments in Critical Psychology		23
Critical Theory		23
Contextualizing critical theory		23
Defining critical theory		24
Critical theory in critical psychology		25
German Critical Psychology		27
Latin American Liberation Theology/Psychology		30
Postmodernism and Post-Structuralism		32
Contextualizing postmodernism and post-structuralism		32
Postmodernism/post-structuralism and critical psychology		34
Multiple Voices Critique		38
Feminism in critical psychology		39
Anti-racism in critical psychology		41
IV. Contemporary State of Critical Psychology		43
The vision of critical psychology		43
The values of critical psychology		44

	The practice of critical psychology	44
	My stance	46
V.	Debates in Critical Psychology	49
	Epistemology: theory and practice	50
	Methodology: denunciation and annunciation	54
	Context: inside and outside	55
VI.	Critical Psychology for Critical Action	57
	Critical analysis of power relations	58
	Critical redefinition of the role of psychology and psychologists	59
	Micro level context: Re-introducing respect in relationships	59
	Meso level context: Re-inventing our discipline	60
	Macro level context: Re-imagining social justice	63
VII.	Recommendations for Action	63
	Subjectivity and agency	64
	Teaching	67
	Research	73
	Community work	77
	An example of critical psychology in action	81
VIII.	Conclusion	83
	References	87
	Appendices	96

Abstract

Critical psychology is a movement that is gaining momentum in psychology. Although people define it in various ways, for the purpose of my current research I define critical psychology as *a movement that challenges psychology to work towards emancipation and social justice and that opposes the uses of psychology to perpetuate oppression and injustice*. This thesis project engaged critical psychologists from several different countries in a formative evaluation of the field of critical psychology.

The research I have undertaken has conceptual/theoretical and practical components, consistent with a commitment to what Paulo Freire called critical praxis. Critical psychology as a scholarly or intellectual movement has been found to be well underway. However, its translation into action needs to be further developed. The methodology used in this study therefore combines reflection and action by inviting participants to share their thoughts as well as their experiences in critical psychology. Participants were given the choice of responding to a series of questions in essay form or through an Email discussion group.

The enthusiastic participation in the Email discussion group and the thoughtful essays received demonstrate the willingness among critical psychologists to share a rich combination of theoretical and practical insights. The results of this thesis, which summarize the thoughts and experiences of the participants worldwide, are condensed into a series of recommendations for action that can be useful in its application to the areas of teaching, research and community work. Suggested examples for teaching psychology critically involve going beyond the narrow limits of the dominant positivist paradigm to include more diverse ways of knowing. Critical teaching consists of submitting all statements, including the professor's, to critical scrutiny while attempting to build a critical psychology that works for the emancipation of oppressed groups. Critical research in psychology can be attained by using new approaches to research in psychology such as

participatory action research, qualitative research or discourse analysis. Doing community-based critical research in psychology requires that researchers engage in a respectful dialogue with research participants to negotiate the parameters of the research project. Community work which is consistent with the values and vision of critical psychology include actively seeking to bridge the gap between the University and the community by involving community members in academic work for social change and being involved as an academic researcher in community work for social change. The example of the Community Psychology program at Wilfrid Laurier University is used to further illustrate how the principles of critical psychology may be applied to the practical domains of teaching, research and community work.

Introduction

I have undertaken a formative evaluation of critical psychology with the intention of producing a set of recommendations for the practical advancement of critical psychology in the areas of teaching, research, and community work. The purpose of this thesis is to clarify the theoretical foundations of critical psychology and to strengthen the efforts of identifying and engaging in the applications of critical psychology. To introduce some of the concepts I will be working with throughout the thesis, the opening section provides definitions of critical psychology, oppression and emancipation and positions me as the subject through which this thesis flows.

The methodology is described in the following section, paying particular attention to how I involved critical psychologists in each phase of the research, calling upon both their conceptual and experiential knowledge. The dialogical process used in the study is explained an attempt to ensure the necessary grounding for translating critical psychology from theory to practice.

A review of the relevant literature informs the conceptual processes undertaken throughout the research. The philosophical roots and historical developments of critical psychology in critical theory, German critical psychology, Latin American liberation psychology, post-structuralism/postmodernism and the multiple voices critique are discussed.

The contemporary state of critical psychology, as defined by participants in the formative evaluation and by a review of the recent literature in critical psychology, is presented in the next section. The central debates in critical psychology at the present time are discussed. From these tensions, directions for action are identified. Critical psychology is presented, based on the literature reviewed and the data collected, as a field that can offer important contributions to the promotion of emancipation through psychology. The focus of the last section is on a discussion of how these efforts can be translated into action steps.

The reader is left with concrete tools in the form of critical questions that can be applied to his/her daily practices in teaching, research and community work. The graduate program in Community Psychology is briefly reviewed as a practical example of how to implement critical psychology.

Understanding Critical Psychology

Critical psychology is a strategy aimed at politicizing all subdisciplines in psychology. It is a metadiscipline in that it enables the discipline of psychology to critically evaluate its moral and political implications, as these relate specifically to the lives of human beings. In a similar way as methodology enables psychology to understand and measure human phenomena, a critical dimension makes it possible for psychology to assess the moral and political repercussions of its theories and practices (Prilleltensky, 1994, 1999). Critical psychology focuses on improving the discipline of psychology in order to promote emancipation in society.

The Vision of Critical Psychology

As Prilleltensky and Fox (1997) suggest, the underlying values and institutions of modern societies reinforce misguided efforts to obtain human fulfillment while maintaining inequality and oppression. The role of critical psychology is to raise questions about what we as a discipline are doing to promote social justice and human liberation rather than human suffering and social control (Ibanez, 1997; Kitzinger, 1997). Critical psychology strives to go beyond studying oppression in the laboratory with an attempt to effect change in the lives of people in real societies. Thus critical psychology is guided by a vision of working collaboratively toward the creation of a better world, in keeping with its mandate to enhance human welfare (Prilleltensky, 1997; Tolman, 1994).

The Values of Critical Psychology

Critical psychology is based on a commitment to the values of social justice and empowerment (Prilleltensky & Fox, 1997). These values are the starting point from which

critiques of mainstream psychology and of the social status quo are elaborated. Critical psychology goes beyond simply stating its values by further exploring the various ways in which values complement and/or contradict one another in varying contexts (Rosa, Russell & Prilleltensky, 1996). As an example, the conflict that exists between the values of personal empowerment and social justice is the topic of much discussion (Prilleltensky, 1996; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). The emphasis placed on values also contributes to critical psychology's attempt to envision a better world, one in which human beings could live respectfully and equitably on the earth (Bennett & Campbell, 1996).

The Practice of Critical Psychology

Within the critical project, there is a profound commitment to altering the status quo of psychology in fundamental ways (Montero, 1997). By evaluating the extent to which the theories and practices of psychology maintain an unjust or unsatisfying state, critical psychology seeks to promote the welfare of oppressed and vulnerable groups and individuals (Prilleltensky, 1999; Prilleltensky & Fox, 1997). From this overarching goal stem a number of approaches which constitute the actual practice of critical psychology.

Certain models have been developed in the areas of teaching, research, and community work which exemplify critical psychology's ideal practice. In the area of teaching, the various critical approaches to education, such as feminist (Hernandez, 1997; Hofmann Nemiroff, 1989; Rail, 1996), anti-racist (Dei, 1997; Ng, 1995) engaged (hooks, 1994), and liberatory (Freire, 1994) pedagogies provide examples of ways in which critical psychology's vision and values can be applied. To do research from a critical perspective in psychology implies reinventing traditional research paradigms. Inspiration for alternative research frameworks comes from the development of feminist (Reinharz, 1992; Kirby & McKenna, 1989; Ristock & Pennell, 1996) and participatory action approaches (Nelson & Telford, 1996; Serrano-Garcia, 1990). Being involved in community based

social action initiatives also contributes to the advancement of critical psychology (Alinsky, 1972; Kuyek, 1990).

The commonality that the various ideal practices in critical psychology share is a profound conviction that through teaching, research, and community work we can fulfill our commitment to the vision and values of critical psychology. The way in which we, as critical psychologists, do our work either contributes to or inhibits the process of social change; it can either perpetuate or alter the status quo. Therefore, the ideal practice in teaching, research, and community work implies a direct challenge to the traditional ways of engaging in these pursuits, and an active creation of alternatives.

Defining Oppression and Emancipation

Oppression and emancipation are at the core of critical psychology. By oppression I mean both a state of subjugation and a process of exclusion and exploitation. Oppression involves psychological as well as political dimensions. In light of these central characteristics, Prilleltensky and Gonick define oppression as "a state of asymmetric power relations characterized by domination, subordination, and resistance, where the dominating persons or groups exercise their power by restricting access to material resources and by implanting in the subordinated persons or groups fear or self-deprecating views about themselves" (1996, p. 129). Oppression involves structural inequality which is reproduced by the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal citizenry. As Young explains, the causes of oppression "are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules" (1990, p. 41). An abstract discussion of the systemic nature of oppression is not meant to discount the personal experiences of people who are oppressed or to absolve those who benefit from another group's oppression. Rather, it is meant as an effort to further understand the complex dynamics of oppression. It is important to have a clear

understanding of the multiple ways in which human beings perpetuate and are victimized by oppression. I see this clarification as a necessary step in promoting emancipation.

Although it is sometimes difficult to define emancipation as there are so few examples of truly equitable and respectful relationships between persons, communities, nations and systems of the world, it is important to explicate what human liberation might include. When I invoke emancipation, I refer to the person's life opportunities as they relate to power (Teo, 1998a). Liberation involves a dialectical relationship between "subjective experience" and "power". As psychologists whose central focus it is to further understand and ameliorate subjective experience, it is essential that we concern ourselves with power. Similar to the definition of oppression, emancipation can be conceptualized both as a state and a process which includes psychological and political dimensions. Emancipation is the experience of symmetric power relations characterized by equitable and respectful alliances between persons, communities, and nations whereby people are free from internal and external sources of oppression and free to express and explore their physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual human qualities. This notion of emancipation builds on Fromm's (1965) dual conception of freedom; *freedom from* social and psychological sources of oppression, and *freedom to* pursue one's objectives in life. Freedom from social oppression entails the experience of liberation from class exploitation, gender domination, and ethnic discrimination, for instance. Freedom from internal and psychological sources includes overcoming fears, obsessions, or other psychological phenomena that interfere with a person's subjective experience of well-being.

My Point of Departure

I would like to share some thoughts about how I position myself in relation to this thesis project. There are many experiences that have lead me to this point. Most salient is the recognition that what I care most about is the respectful and loving connection that can exist between people and with living things. The core of who I am and how that manifests

itself in what I do, is expressed in my vision statement: *Who I am is in love with the life and the lives around me; fulfilling projects to enhance community; growing and learning from others, touched by and touching others.* I am passionate about the life experiences that remind me of what it really means to be human. At the deepest level of my being, I feel an overflowing excitement when I let myself feel a part of the wondrous happenings of the natural environment. The interactions between all life forms, continuous and ever-changing, feed this exhilaration. The most profound spiritual sense of wholeness comes for me when I am actively engaged with others in work that contributes to creating that moment of magical harmony. In the moment where cycles, thoughts, intentions, desires come together between life forms, meaning is made.

My interest in critical psychology has to do with attempting to bring meaning to a field that studies human phenomena. When I entered psychology, I intuitively thought that it would have something to offer in terms of an increased understanding of what subjectivity is about. As time went on, I found that whether my courses were in developmental, social, abnormal, or physiological psychology, I was not given the chance to significantly further my knowledge of human subjectivity. Human experience can be the most stimulating arena of exploration. The way that mainstream psychology has chosen to approach its study has stripped away much of what is essential to meaningful knowledge. Critical psychology has explicitly sought to account for what has been left behind by mainstream psychology in its quest for scientific purity. Through my present thesis work in critical psychology, I am committed to integrating the psychological, social, political, moral and historical contexts into the study of human experience. I hope to challenge the traditional frameworks that exclude many people from the process of learning about and defining human experience. Additionally, I want to transgress the boundaries of psychological knowledge to include what has been neglected and explore what is still misunderstood.

The perspective that I take in my work and in my life determines much of what I do, think, and feel. I would like to share this with you as a way of contextualizing this thesis experience. The intentions I have had in working on this project can be explained by using the image of a spiral. At the center of the spiral is me: a complex combination of subjectivity and agency. My life story involves personal experiences of oppression and emancipation which have contributed to my academic interests in psychology as it relates to equity. From my perspective justice is of primary importance in any understanding of human experience. While justice is usually defined as the equitable distribution of resources, opportunities and responsibilities in a given society, my interpretation of justice more broadly refers to a dynamic and harmonious relationship with ourselves, each other, and the earth (Rosa, 1997). As the spiral moves outward, other critical psychologists become involved, many of whom have expressed the ways in which their subjectivities and agencies have lead them to the study of psychology and equity. At the extremities of the spiral there are broader social ideals (e.g., emancipation and liberation). These are connected to the way we think and feel within ourselves (i.e., subjectivity) and the way we act upon the world (i.e., agency). This thesis project, conceptualized as a spiral, has been in constant movement, continually spiraling between my own thoughts, impressions, perceptions and experiences and those of other critical psychologists who have been involved in this study. Each of the elements of this dynamic process has kept the thesis project alive through constant interaction.

Methodology

Overview of the Research

In the following section, I will provide a map that will help trace the steps I have taken in conceptualizing this thesis project. I will outline the purpose for each of the sections of the thesis, identifying the rationale for these choices and the sources from which information was gathered. This overview of the research can be found in the table below.

Critical psychology is a movement that is gaining momentum in psychology. My reading and experiences of the past several years lead me to believe that the time was right to conduct a formative evaluation of critical psychology. Because critical psychology is emerging at such a rapid pace, this study could provide critical psychologists with an opportunity to critically reflect on the development of their subdiscipline. Examples that point to the notable developments in critical psychology recently are the two international conferences on the subject in Sydney, Australia in April and May 1999.

Table 1

Outline of the Research

Section	Purpose	Rationale	Sources
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To do a formative evaluation To integrate theoretical and practical components in the research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical psychology is emerging at a rapid pace Importance of critical reflection on the development of critical psychology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published literature Data generated from academics and practitioners in critical psychology
Roots of Critical Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To trace the philosophical and historical influences that have contributed to the development of critical psychology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground the project in historical context Understand critical psychology's philosophical traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published literature Responses from research participants identifying what has influenced them as critical psychologists
Contemporary State of Critical Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To analyze the present state of affairs in critical psychology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify the key issues being debated in critical psychology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published literature Data generated through formative evaluation
Critical Psychology for Critical Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify the focus of future efforts in critical psychology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose an area for intervention Have critical psychologists define the actions needed for change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data generated in the research (voices of critical psychologists)
Tools for Action in Critical Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop strategies to implement the changes identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need examples of tools that people have used or may use in teaching, research and community work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published literature Data collected in the study My thoughts

The new Centre for Critical Psychology at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean, which now offers a MA and a PhD degree program in critical psychology, hosted the Millennium World Conference in Critical Psychology as well as helped to organize the International Society for Theoretical Psychology's Conference which had a specific focus on critical theoretical work in psychology. There are several initiatives being developed at the Bolton Institute in Bolton, UK which seek to link critical psychology with practice in various contexts internationally. One of these is a conference to be held in Manchester, UK in July 1999 on Critical Psychology and Action Research. Also two new journals, the International Journal of Critical Psychology and the Annual Review of Critical Psychology will be launched this year. The thesis project I have undertaken was intended to be a contribution to the field by reflecting on the progress of critical psychology so far. The research involved conceptual/theoretical and practical components, consistent with a commitment to engaging in what Paulo Freire called critical praxis (Freire, 1994). Consequently, the research questions were related to the foundations and to the applications of critical psychology. Critical psychology as a scholarly or intellectual movement is well underway. However, its translation into action needs to be further developed. The chosen methodology was therefore a combination of reflection and action. It was theoretical in that it was informed by a thorough overview of the published literature in critical psychology, and practical in that I invited participants to share their thoughts as well as their experiences in critical psychology.

There is a section devoted to reviewing the philosophical roots of critical psychology. Informed by the published literature, this section provides the information needed to understand critical psychology in a historical context. Furthermore, it provides insight into the philosophical influences that have contributed to contemporary critical psychology looking specifically at critical theory, German critical psychology, Latin-American liberation psychology, postmodernism/post-structuralism and the multiple voices

critique. This section strengthens the rationale for my thesis project by providing an increased understanding of the emergence of critical psychology in the history of critical thought. Also interesting to trace through this section are the key philosophical traditions that influenced individual critical psychologists in their personal and professional endeavors.

A look at the contemporary state of affairs in critical psychology situates the movement in the present. It examines critically the shortcomings of critical psychology. It is a chance to clarify the issues that are considered of prime importance. There is an identification of the key debates and tensions that critical psychology as a movement, and critical psychologists as people, face. This section is inspired by the published literature as well as by the responses generated from participants in the study.

The section entitled critical psychology for critical action clearly articulates the present-day focus of the movement. From the historical and contemporary accounts of what has been and continues to be important in critical psychology, the focus shifts to identifying where future efforts should be placed. Having critical psychologists themselves defining the agenda for what needs to be done in critical psychology was crucial in this section. Through the data collected, critical psychologists chose the priority for an effective intervention.

The purpose of the last section was to develop tools and strategies that could be used in various practical arenas to implement the changes that were identified. These examples of concrete applications were found to be missing in critical psychology. Through a synthesis of the data as well as my readings of the published literature in critical psychology and beyond, I came up with some suggestions that could be used to teach, do research, and community work in critical psychology. My hope is that the overview of the research outlined above provides the necessary introduction to a more detailed exploration of each of these sections in later parts of the thesis.

Participants

Psychologists working in academic and/or community settings in Canada and internationally were invited to participate in this study. Research participants were recruited through the Radical Psychology Network, the Psychology and Oppression Email discussion group, as well as through informal networks of people working in critical psychology. The published literature was a source of inspiration for the initial sampling. Also professional organizations such as the American Psychological Association and the Canadian Psychological Association provided membership lists from which to choose a sample of potential participants in the essay writing component of the study.

Research participants were chosen using a purposeful sampling technique based on the following criteria: identification as a critical psychologist, gender balance, wide cross-section of geographical and cultural backgrounds, broad spectrum of subdisciplines in psychology, and diverse working experiences. More specifically about each of these points, each participant was a self-identified critical psychologist. In their writing, publications, community work and/or spoken word, the participants had a clearly articulated commitment to the vision and values of critical psychology, as defined in the introduction section of this document. Participants were actively working toward the promotion of critical psychology in their chosen psychological subdiscipline (e.g., cross-cultural, gay/lesbian, abnormal, community, political, developmental). Furthermore, each participant was working in at least two of the three chosen areas of practice (i.e., teaching, research, community work). The sample was chosen with an attempt to achieve a gender balance and to represent a broad spectrum of expressions of critical psychology through geographic and cultural diversity.

There were a total of 25 participants in this study. While 23 responded using the Email forum, 2 responded in essay form. Information packages inviting potential participants to write an essay were sent out to 50 people working in mostly academic but

also some community settings. The Email discussion lists consisted of an estimated 150 potential participants, with about 20 members on the Psychology and Oppression list and 130 members on the Radical Psychology Network list. The 25 participants in the thesis were from 10 different countries. The sample consisted of 17 male and 8 female participants. The majority of the group was comprised of professionals who worked in a university setting, many of whom were also heavily involved in community work.

Data Collection

Participants were invited to respond to the guiding questions related to the foundations and applications of critical psychology. They were given the choice of responding to these questions in essay form or through an email discussion group. Those who chose to contribute their thoughts and experiences in writing were asked to type their answers on separate sheets. They were encouraged to write as little or as much as they liked, preferably not exceeding 12 pages double-spaced. However, they were also given the option of tape recording their answers and sending me the tape.

Those who decided to participate in the Email discussion group responded to the questions posted on Email. Two or three questions were posted every 10 days for a period of 40 days. The discussion period lasted ten days for each of the groupings of questions. Participants had the option of sending their answers exclusively to me, or to the entire list to generate discussion. If participants preferred to see all the questions and type their responses at once and send them to me via email, they were invited to write me a private Email so that I could send them the full set of questions. I saved the contributions as data to be used in the study. The questions guiding this research were the following:

Section on foundations:

1. What is your understanding of critical psychology? How would you define it?
2. What basic elements (e.g., theoretical concepts, values, and/or vision) should guide critical psychology?

3. **What do you think is missing from the basic elements (e.g., theoretical concepts, values, and/or vision) of critical psychology?**
4. **Tell me the story of how you came to develop your theoretical concepts, values and/or vision of critical psychology?**
5. **What are your recommendations to further develop the basic elements of critical psychology?**

Section on applications:

1. **What is your understanding of how critical psychology should be practiced in teaching, research, and/or community work?**
2. **What principles should guide the practice of critical psychology in teaching, research, and/or community work?**
3. **What do you think is missing from the practice of teaching, research, and/or community work in critical psychology?**
4. **Tell me the story of how you developed and how you apply critical psychology principles in teaching, research, and/or community work.**
5. **What are your recommendations to further develop the practice of critical psychology in teaching, research, and/or community work?**

Limitations

Because critical psychology is in its formative stages, even at the level of theory, it is important to acknowledge that this thesis project involved significant challenges. The research was attempting to develop recommendations for action for the practice of critical psychology in the areas of teaching, research and community work when critical psychology is still emerging on a conceptual level. However, the intention of this thesis project was to give momentum to the movement that critical psychology is attempting to generate in mainstream psychology. Some people may have once said that feminism did not exist soundly enough in theory, and therefore could not be further explored as to its practical relevance in the areas of teaching, research, or community work. I would argue that the progress of social movements in general, and of critical psychology in particular, relies upon the simultaneous development of theory and practice.

Attending to the importance of diversity and participation, which are intimately linked to the values and vision of critical psychology, was a central component of the development and implementation of this research project. However, based on these criteria there are several limitations in the methodology that should be noted. In the following section, some potential limitations in the chosen methodology will be explicated as ethical considerations that influenced all aspects of the thesis project from original conception to future implementation.

Ethical Considerations

I have chosen not to include the specific questions related to the professional ethics employed in this study. These questions did not present any major ethical dilemmas. The broader ethical considerations reflected upon will be discussed in this section of the thesis as they were the cause of a more in-depth exploration of the role of research in promoting or inhibiting social change.

Confidentiality

Research with human populations is fraught with ethical dilemmas. The standard ethical stance in most research involving human participants is to maintain full confidentiality and respect the privacy of the participant. Using Email as a tool for data collection made it impossible to ensure that each participant's responses to the questions I posed would be kept confidential if the participant chose to send his/her response to the entire list. The option of sending the responses to me privately was made available to each participant as a way of ensuring confidentiality. Some participants chose this option, while others chose to engage in some discussion with other Email list members about their responses to the questions.

Credit

Many of the members of the group of self-identified critical psychologists who chose to participate in the study worked in academic settings. In the university context,

emphasis is placed on printed recognition and validation of one's work through publication. The more an academic's ideas circulate in the public domain, the more successful he/she becomes. The issue of ownership of knowledge and providing due credit for individual thoughts and ideas therefore became an ethical dilemma.

Early in the research, I wondered what the best way of meeting people's needs was. I had to make a decision based on the values that my project was working to promote. On one level, there were personal values to consider. These included personal effort, merit, accomplishment and success. On another level, there were collective values to consider which included using power at the service of the powerless, and using knowledge for the collective good. Relational values called upon in this situation helped to bridge both individual and collective values by stressing the importance of collaboration and compromise. The conflict, described in more concrete terms in the following paragraph, arose because personal and collective values were out of balance.

In traditional academic settings, emphasis is placed on personal values to the detriment of collective values. Critical psychologists who recognize the importance of promoting collective values still are confronted with the reality of having to meet personal demands in an environment that neglects and devalues collective demands. I came up against a contradiction in deciding who, if anyone, would be given personal credit for their thoughts in the study and who would remain anonymous. On one hand I wanted to support and acknowledge personal contributions and efforts but on the other hand I wanted to challenge the notion that ideas can belong to one particular person. I felt that as critical psychologists, we are supposed to all be working to use power and knowledge for the promotion of greater social ideals rather than for our own self-interest. It was a conflict that I resolved, with much discussion and deliberation, by ensuring that my review of the published literature was complete and gave appropriate credit to the people who spend a lot

of time and energy publishing, and by acknowledging equally and anonymously the contributions of all the research participants in my reporting of the data.

Representation (or) Subverting Identity Politics

While one of the most pressing critiques of critical psychology elaborated to date has been its highly academic/theoretical nature, the chosen methodology called upon an academic/professional population as its key informants. The methodological weakness involved in giving a voice to people who hold power in society rather than to those who do not, potentially perpetuated the inequities that exist between privileged and oppressed peoples in our society. The intention in this study was to knowingly disrupt these exploitative dynamics. The proposed research did not call upon a group of academics/professionals to define the experiences of oppressed/marginalized people. It called upon them to define their own role, as people who hold power, in addressing issues of inequity and disempowerment. By engaging and mobilizing a group of privileged academics in a critical analysis of the implications of our own work, we may begin to unravel some of the inequitable relations of power still present in our social institutions. The methodological choice was therefore a strategic attempt to critically evaluate our work as members of a dominant group, and to collaboratively develop strategies for action from this location.

Inclusivity

The nature of academic work can simultaneously provide elements of flexibility and restriction in the research process. Using Email as a methodological tool made participation quite accessible and easy for a particular academic population. Many academics use Email regularly and this form of discussion can facilitate the thinking and/or writing process. The culture of the Email discussion lists, in particular the culture of the Radical Psychology Network list, is important to examine critically. Although the list counts an estimated 130 members, regular postings come from a notable few (maybe 10).

Much of the discussion is dominated by male participants. Certainly the majority of the responses generated from the questions I posted came from a group of male academics. The ethical questions that this reality brings up center around ensuring that an inclusive space for participation is created throughout the research process. The culture of this particular Email list tends to be quite critical and sometimes even confrontational. Who feels safe participating in this type of dialogue?

Not only is access to Email an important consideration, but also of concern is whether the climate is conducive to broad based and inclusive participation from participants across categories of gender, race and class. While the intentions of the Radical Psychology Network Email discussion list are certainly reflective of principles of equity, the barriers to participation are obviously still present. One male Email participant suggested that, "if more men were able to let women speak and work and contribute to society, we'd all be living in a much better world". I agree entirely with this assertion; however, in light of the observation that there was such a small number of women participating in the Email discussion, I think the contradiction is glaring. We must remember to examine critically all aspects of everything we do. There is still work to be done in the area of ensuring that inclusivity is achieved. Many more strategies have to be put in place that were not effectively utilized in my study.

I had mailed out essay guides and encouraged participation from a broad spectrum of critical psychologists, both male and female, working in the range of psychological subdisciplines inside and outside the academy. Still the majority of the 25 participants chose to use the Email forum to express their thoughts. This methodological tool was effective in that participants from 10 different countries actively contributed to the evaluation. However, I think it is fair to say that the sample consisted of a relatively homogeneous group of people, if not in terms of ethnic background, certainly in terms of gender and more than likely in terms of class and race. Most of the participants were from

countries in Europe, North-America and Oceania which speaks to the still limited scope of critical psychology in general, and of my study in particular.

Another consideration that has ethical implications is that critical work is often not recognized as valid or valuable in the world in which we presently live. As Albee skillfully points out, "one of the major reasons that mental-health professionals have not examined critically the exploitative power structure of laissez-faire capitalist societies is because we have to work for a living. Our salaries are paid in institutions that will not tolerate serious criticism of the social order" (1992, p. 318). The most critical of voices are still not being heard because there is no legitimized forum for their expression. Critical work is being practiced on the margins, as an almost hidden and secretive venture. Only certain people who have the privilege of status and seniority can be more openly and actively engaged in work that critiques the status quo. This has surely been a barrier in my research, as it has been the case in other critical psychology research.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected from critical psychologists participating in this formative evaluation was organized, analyzed and summarized. The first step once the data had been collected was to code the responses. Once the codes had emerged from the data with some consistency, they were broken down into themes. There were four main themes in the data: (1) Influences in critical psychology, (2) Critique of mainstream psychology, (3) Key debates and questions in critical psychology, and (4) Critical psychology's contributions to psychology and to society. Generally I noticed that the thoughts generated using the Email forum and those sent to me in essay form were consistent with what is available in the published literature. For that reason, I chose to report the findings of the study in conjunction with the review of the literature. It should be noted that the most likely reason behind the overlap between the data and published material is that at the present time, there are relatively few people who explicitly identify themselves as critical

psychologists. Therefore, the sample of participants came from a fairly small pool of academics and practitioners, many of whom publish substantially in critical psychology. I would like to draw attention to the fact that, consistent with the ethos of this thesis, the combination of literature and findings provides an opportunity for an integration of theory and practice as the knowledge gathered from books is balanced by the knowledge and experience offered by participants.

The Influences theme is discussed in the section of the thesis that gives an overview of the philosophical foundations and historical development of critical psychology. The theoretical insights that were significant in influencing critical psychologists in their work are identified and described. Also in this section, the stories of personal experiences that influenced participants are recounted. The Critique theme is not described in one discrete section of the thesis but is an ongoing theme in my work. Much of what has already been done in critical psychology has focused on the critique of mainstream psychology. Although this work has been essential to the development of critical psychology, I have chosen not to dedicate a section of the thesis to these important ideas but rather to weave the critique of psychology throughout the entire document.

The Debates theme is presented in its relationship to the published literature. This section demonstrates most effectively the complementary character of the data and published literature in critical psychology. Contributions of critical psychology to mainstream psychology and society are the starting point from which the recommendations for action are drawn. It is interesting to note that although this thesis project had a clearly stated action orientation, the data did not provide many examples of strategies for action in critical psychology. In the final product, I have placed an emphasis on developing recommendations for action that are focused, clear and achievable to ensure that this collective project has a significant impact on both the foundations and applications of critical psychology.

Merging the literature review and the results sections, has helped to clarify the intention of this formative evaluation of critical psychology. It is clear both in the published literature and in the findings that critical psychologists place value and importance on theoretical work but would like to see how these conceptual ideals can be applied in the various contexts in which we work. I have felt confident at each stage of this project that although the examples of action do not presently abound, there is a common commitment among critical psychologists to work toward increasing them. From this standpoint, it has become possible to make recommendations for changes that support critical psychology's movement toward a praxis orientation.

Philosophical Roots and Historical Developments in Critical Psychology

Critical Theory

Contextualizing Critical Theory

In an attempt to understand the philosophical and historical context in which critical psychology developed, it is important to succinctly explain the evolution of critical theory. The Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, founded in 1923, was the place where the concept of a critical theory emerged. The work that came from the Frankfurt school in Germany is often cited in the published literature and in the data as having played a prominent role in critical psychology. The first generation of Frankfurt school theorists (Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Loewenthal, Pollock, Fromm) sought to establish a social science that went beyond the positivist tradition and thus criticized the very status, structure and goal of traditional social science (Geuss, 1981; Teo, 1997). Max Horkheimer and other members of the first generation of critical theorists attempted to revise both Marx's critique of capitalism and his theory of revolution in order to confront those new social and political conditions which had evolved since Marx's death. A number of participants in the study mentioned the influence of Marx in their understanding of critical psychology.

Critical theory emerged as a multidisciplinary approach to understanding society, drawing from political economy, sociology, cultural theory, philosophy, anthropology, psychology and history (Bronner & Kellner, 1989). Concerned with "critically reexamining the basic assumptions on which Western civilization had been founded so that a more adequate theory and a more emancipatory practice could emerge" (Sampson, 1983, p. 16), these theorists were critical of the denial of subjectivity found in positivism. As the following quote describes,

The eradication of subjectivity, they believed, was a betrayal of the promise of modernity, which was itself predicated on the belief that the augmentation of science and technology would improve human control over nature and produce more freedom, individuality, and happiness. Instead, the critical theorists argued, the institutions and practices of "advanced industrialized society" were apparently producing ever greater conformity and social domination (Bronner & Kellner, 1989, p. 9).

The second generation of critical theorists included Habermas as a thinker whose work profoundly influenced the social sciences, especially psychology (Sloan, 1996). Several participants in this study also identified Habermas's work as having been influential in their development as critical psychologists. According to Habermas, there are three interests served by knowledge seeking (i.e., technical control, interpretive understanding, and emancipatory interest) (Sloan, 1997; Sullivan, 1984). The emancipatory interest, which is of particular interest in the work of critical psychology, seeks not only to explain or understand, but to enhance human agency in order to modify conditions of systematic suffering.

Defining Critical Theory

Critical theory is an exploration of human and social phenomena that seeks to understand the ways in which our categories of thought reduce our freedom by providing only a partial recognition of what could be (Calhoun, 1995). It goes against relativism and nihilism by suggesting an emancipatory alternative to the existing order (Bronner &

Kellner, 1989). According to Geuss, "a critical theory, then, is a reflective theory which gives agents a kind of knowledge inherently productive of enlightenment and emancipation" (Geuss, 1981, p. 2).

Geuss (1981) goes on to explain that critical theories differ significantly from theories in the natural sciences. On an epistemological level, theories in the natural sciences are objectifying while critical theories are reflective. Scientific theories have an instrumental use because they aim to manipulate the external world. Critical theories aim to make agents aware of hidden coercion, thereby freeing them from that coercion and promoting emancipation and enlightenment. In a scientific theory, there is a clear distinction between the theory and that to which the theory refers. In contrast a critical theory, which is reflective and self-referential, is a part of what is being theorized.

Critical Theory in Critical Psychology

Critical theory has significantly influenced the development of all critical subdisciplines in the social sciences. Of particular interest in this study is its role in critical psychology. As a movement, critical psychology endeavors to change our psychological knowledge about the individual in society, and in so doing may pave the way to overturn those circumstances in which the human being is degraded, subjugated, forsaken, and contemptible (Teo, in press-a). Critical theory has been helpful in critical psychology as it has marked an invitation to go beyond the traditional psychological focus on the individual in isolation. It has introduced concepts such as ideology to the study of psychology. The following response to the question about what the most important elements guiding critical psychology should be, clearly identifies the influence of critical theory in contemporary critical psychology.

The basic concept should probably be ideology, which for me suggests a combined analysis of institutions, representations, character types, and practices that sustain relations of domination...Marxism and psychoanalysis provide the rest of the general conceptual tools that are necessary.

The addition that critical theory has brought to the field has impacted the development of our understanding of human experience. Integrating the broader socio-political and historical context into our analyses has altered the psychological knowledge base substantially. It has been noted in the data that,

The one-sidedness of mainstream psychology is not just politically unhelpful but also conceptually mistaken. For example, the presumed individual/society divide does not "just" function to individualize social problems as individual malfunctions, it also gives rise to conceptual errors when we come to theorize persons, errors which inevitably find themselves replicated in research and practice, hence gaining the status of apparent "truths."

As all critical work is dynamic, in the 1940s there was a change from the original project of developing a revised Marxian theory of society to engaging in philosophical and cultural criticism. There was a transition from the early years of developing an interdisciplinary critical theory of social transformation to later concentrating on a critique of mass culture (Bronner & Kellner, 1989). A parallel can be drawn between this historical shift in critical theory and the diversity of perspectives and approaches characteristic of contemporary critical psychology. In keeping with the early influences of critical theory, some critical psychologists engage in research that is interdisciplinary in nature (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996) and are concerned with the construction of critical theories of social transformation (Teo, 1998a). Others, inspired by the later works of critical theory, concentrate on the critique of mass culture (Parker & Spears, 1996).

Critical theorists never developed an adequate theory of social change nor did they achieve the unity of theory and practice that they worked toward. A critique that has been attributed to critical theory is that it has come solely from a Western intellectual tradition which does not reflect the diversity of human experience (Calhoun, 1995). The repercussions of this critique will be explored in later sections of the thesis which highlight the role of postmodernism and post-structuralism as well as the multiple voices critique in

critical psychology. A contemporary reconfiguration of critical theory is necessary to meet the concerns of the day. A new generation thus has new challenges to confront in reinvigorating and repoliticizing that notion of emancipation which inspired critical theory in the first place (Bronner & Kellner, 1989).

The four streams that will be presented in the following sections have all played an important role as philosophical and historical building blocks of critical psychology today. German Critical Psychology, South-American liberation psychology, postmodernism/post-structuralism, and the multiple voices critique have each participated in laying the ground work for a contemporary emergent critical psychology. They are not presented in chronological order, rather they are explicated contextually, locating each one in a specific historical and political period. While their histories and contemporary influences differ, the common bond is their contribution to the work that is presently referred to as critical psychology. The following section is therefore an attempt to organize some of the major currents that have been discussed in the literature and identified by the participants in this research.

German Critical Psychology

German Critical Psychology is sometimes unrecognized in the philosophical and historical development of contemporary critical psychology because it emerged within a specific context in Germany. Much of the work that was done at that time was not translated into English until the recent works of Tolman and Maiers (1991), Tolman (1994), and Teo (1998b). This section provides a brief overview of a long and rich tradition of critical work in psychology that should be explored further by those who are interested in knowing more.

There is a distinction in the German tradition between uppercase Critical Psychology (CP) and lowercase critical psychology (cp). German critical psychology as a whole (upper and lowercase) emerged in the context of radical political and social

movements in the 1960s and 1970s. Lowercase critical psychology was initiated primarily by the student movement of the time. It was a direct challenge to mainstream psychology; its ultimate goal was to abolish it. Centered on the work of the movement's founder and promoter Klaus Holzkamp, critical psychology (CP) sought to improve psychology by developing an alternative ontological and epistemological foundation (Tolman & Maiers, 1991). Critical psychology (CP) at that time identified the inherent weakness of psychology as what Holzkamp defined as psychology's reliance on the wrong philosophy of science. In contrast to the empirico-deductive model of accessing psychological knowledge, Holzkamp suggested that a critical psychology (CP) should use a social constructivist approach. This approach still worked with the experimental method but rather than believing that psychological knowledge could be *attained* or *accessed* through the observation of behaviour in an experimental setting, Holzkamp suggested that psychological knowledge was *constructed* through the observation of behaviour in an experimental setting. From this perspective, the study of a social psychological phenomenon such as conformity for example, would be understood differently from an empirico-deductive perspective than a social constructivist perspective. An empirico-deductive approach may suggest hypotheses about the conforming or non-conforming behaviour of participants in an experiment and, based on the observed results, make conclusions about conformity as a psychological phenomenon. The social constructivist approach may use the same experiment to study conformity but may focus more attention on the impact of the experience of participating in the study on the conforming or non-conforming behaviour observed. Following this example, the assumption in the empirico-deductive model is that the truth about conformity can be found if researchers observe it under the right conditions while the assumption in the constructivist model is that the truth about conformity is made by the many factors that are involved in experimentation in particular and human experience in general.

In the social and political context of Post-War West Germany, challenging the status quo in society by critiquing traditional structures and procedures was quite common. One participant in my research included the following statement as an experiential account of having lived in Germany, "in this country of great economic, historical, and political importance, I experienced in a profound way the significance of the analyses of racist and sexist politics." The student movement of the time was reminding people that academic and scientific knowledge had failed during the Nazi regime; that there was no such thing as value neutrality or abstention from value judgement (Teo, 1995). As an example of the social and political climate during the period in which German critical psychology was on the rise, students from the Free University of Berlin founded a Critical University. This permanent institutional setting was to be a place where scientific knowledge could be used to develop the necessary skills to critique society and to prepare students for political practice. Holzkamp's work in critical psychology (CP) at this time established the link between psychological issues and societal goals by questioning the relevance of psychology in the practical domain, identifying problems with traditional psychological methodology, and disclosing psychology's ideological assumptions (Teo, 1998b).

A scandal in which Holzkamp was involved influenced the course of critical psychology's history. From that point on, Holzkamp's work concentrated more on developing a stronger theoretical basis of psychological objects. His critique centered around the idea that "the accumulation of statistically significant yet theoretically insignificant findings was perceived as leading to the stagnation of knowledge and to the lack of scientific progress in psychology" (Teo, 1998b, p. 243). He was concerned that the method dominated the problem in psychological research and that this approach would not contribute to an increased understanding of human beings. The decline of German critical psychology started to occur in the late 1970s when it became apparent that the ideal of socialism would not appear. There had been an assumption in critical psychology, as in

early critical theory, that once capitalism disappeared so too would mainstream psychology; that once psychologists recognized that there were alternatives to what was being done in psychology, critiqued as being of little significance to the majority of the world, then change would occur. The myth of the grand (psychological) theory that would solve the whole world's problems was found to be just that, a myth.

Latin-American Liberation Theology/Psychology

South-American liberation psychology was developed based on the philosophical and historical underpinnings of liberation theology. This too is a rich tradition that deserves a more detailed discussion in later work but will remain generalized for the purposes of this thesis. What made liberation theology different from most academic theology was its connection to grassroots movements. The socio-political context which marked the starting point for a liberation theology was the fact of widespread poverty. As Rigoberta Menchu, Nobel Peace Prize laureate for her struggles in Guatemala asserts: "as Christians, we have understood that being a Christian means refusing to accept all the injustices which are committed against our people, refusing to accept the discrimination committed against a humble people who barely know what eating meat is but who are treated worse than horses" (Menchu, 1984, p. 134). Liberation theology was an active critique of how social structures like the Christian church treated the poor. It was explicitly concerned with having an impact on the experiences of oppression of the people of Latin-America. Liberation was the motivation for and the outcome of pastoral work. The goal of this theology came from a need to "reinterpret Christian faith in terms of the bleak lot of the poor; to criticize society and its ideologies through theology; and to observe and comment on the practices of the church itself and of Christians" (Berryman, 1987, p. 87).

Similarly liberation psychology emerged as an attempt to reinterpret mainstream psychology in light of the experiences of people who are disadvantaged; to criticize society and its ideologies from a psychological perspective; and to observe and comment on the

practices of psychology and psychologists. An example that was shared by one research participant shows that "growing up in conditions of oppression makes you a radical or critical thinker real fast. It was not through some high intellectual exercise that I turned to critical perspectives. It was through life experiences and a little empathy and compassion". This participant goes on to say that in Argentina there was "a great deal of repression and government brutality. Becoming a radical was very easy, if you only looked around you". The work of Martin-Baro (1994) is important in the Latin-American context and beyond because it clearly defines an alternative to traditional formulations of psychology. He proposes a psychology that openly concerns itself with ending oppression and promoting emancipation. In contrast to mainstream psychology, a liberation psychology is one that is historically grounded, that does not abstract its subjects from their social and political contexts, that is not individualistic, and that locates the sources of values, motivations and behaviours in the dialectical relationships between person, community, and society. From the perspective of liberation psychology, "there is no person without family, no learning without culture, no madness without social order; and therefore neither can there be an I without a we, a knowing without a symbolic system, a disorder that does not have reference to moral and social norms" (Martin-Baro, 1994, p. 41).

Martin-Baro was a psychologist who felt very strongly about the liberatory potential of his discipline (Prilleltensky, 1996). He was passionate about working not simply to understand the world but to change it; about putting knowledge into the service of human liberation (Martin-Baro, 1994; Rosa, Russell, Prilleltensky, 1996). He suggested that psychology had for too long participated in obscuring the relationship between personal estrangement and social oppression, presenting the pathology of persons as if it were something removed from history and society. From his perspective, this meant that "psychology erases the very real things of life that make up what we are as human beings" (Martin-Baro, 1994, p. 5). He worked to develop a new epistemology that was grounded

historically and specifically in the experiences of Latin-American people. He suggested that "the truth of Latin-American people is not in the present oppression but rather in the tomorrow of their liberty. The truth of the popular majority is not be found but made" (Martin-Baro, 1994, p. 27). This was the impetus for him to develop a new form of praxis in psychology which would enable psychologists to know *what is* and *what is not* in order to orient themselves toward *what ought to be* .

Martin-Baro's critique of psychology was indicative of his commitment to the field. He was passionately engaged in his work. "Psychology was his anchor, holding him fast in a storm of repression. He took psychology very seriously: dignifying it, scolding it, praising and challenging it, having no illusions about its devotion to trivial pursuits, but no doubt about its potential to grow up and make a serious contribution to human knowledge" (Aron & Corne, 1994, p. 3). In the politically volatile environment of the time in El Salvador, the academic slogan "publish *or* perish" was transformed to "publish *and* perish." Martin-Baro was killed in 1989 for this work in the area of liberation psychology.

Postmodernism and Post-Structuralism

Contextualizing Postmodernism and Post-Structuralism

Critical discourses in the 1980s indicated a shift away from Marxism toward postmodernism. Disappointed by the failure of Marxist social utopias, many French and German postmodern philosophers moved to new ideas (Teo, 1996). The advent of postmodernism particularly in Europe marked a recognition that the project of modernity had not been realized to an extent that would make a liberated or emancipated subjectivity possible. "Modernity entered history as a progressive force promising to liberate humankind from ignorance and irrationality" (Rosenau, 1992, p.5). Postmodernists recognized and worked from the idea that this assumption needed to be rejected. The postmodern critique involves a direct challenge to modern priorities such as the career, office, bureaucracy, individual responsibility and liberal democracy. It challenges not only

individualistic values but also collectivist values such as tolerance of human diversity, humanism, and egalitarianism. The argument put forth by the postmodernist position asserts that while at one time modernity represented a source of liberation, it is no more than a force of repression and subjugation.

By providing evidence that the particular interests of certain groups were erroneously being presented as universal, and that modern science was being misused and abused to legitimate the preferences of powerful groups at the expense of the interests of less powerful groups, postmodernists developed their critique of all-encompassing social theories of all sorts (Teo, 1996; Rosenau, 1992). Consequently, postmodernism's critical analysis of the way power is used in the very process of developing theories, rendered questionable the critical project to develop a grand theory of human liberation (Teo, 1998a).

Post-structuralism more specifically referred to the critique of structuralism as a way of classifying and categorizing thought according to predefined, unchallenged and inequitable relationships of power. The quote that follows describes the limits of structuralism and the alternatives that post-structuralism provides.

Structuralist approaches to human activity and experience tend to seek systematic and rather formal frameworks of description. They aspire to comprehensiveness, bringing the most diverse of phenomena into order. Indeed it was the breakdown of this structuralist enterprise that gave rise to post-structuralism, with its acceptance of fragmentation and incoherence. Structuralism sought ways of disciplining difference, whereas post-structuralism seeks to recognize difference for its own sake (Morss, 1996, p. 8).

A distinction needs to be made between the work of critical theory, which relies heavily on a modernist interpretation of social phenomena, and the critical work of postmodernism and post-structuralism. The starting point from which postmodern and post-structuralist critiques have emerged can be expressed in the assertion that follows. "However critical we may think ourselves, we cannot simply stand back from the social

world and analyze it in a detached manner. It is us" (Morss, 1996, p. 123). From this standpoint, it becomes crucial to acknowledge the role of power in our theoretical and practical endeavors. With the advent of postmodernism and post-structuralism, we have gained a different way of conceptualizing power. This has contributed to a change in the critical commentary used in the social sciences, as described in this quote.

Rather than power being equated with oppression and seen as a negative thing, which can be got rid of come the revolution, power is seen as productive, inherently neither positive nor negative: productive of knowledges, meanings and values, and of certain practices as opposed to others (Hollway, 1984, p. 237).

Power, in this sense, can be used both to create and to destroy. The power of language to define reality can be used to create new ways of envisioning and understanding liberation.

Postmodernism/Post-Structuralism and Critical Psychology

According to Teo (1996), psychology has relied on meta-theoretical constructions from outside the discipline more than those from inside the discipline. Those theorists who understand psychology as a natural science have been spellbound by philosophy of science and chaos theory. Those who understand psychology to be part of the humanities have been inspired by critical theory and postmodernism. This last group, which is of particular interest in my thesis, has changed its language game by leaving behind "alienation, oppression, class struggle, capital and dialectics, and by adopting deconstruction, texts, narratives, discourse, plurality, construction, difference and aesthetics" (Teo, 1996, p. 281).

Critical theory, German critical psychology and liberation psychology as examples from the more critical philosophical traditions explored so far in this thesis, were all attempts at improving the social sciences in general, and psychology in particular. However, the postmodern and post-structuralist insights lead to the conclusion that these schools of thought still worked from within the social scientific paradigm. Postmodernism and post-structuralism provided an opportunity for critical psychology to go beyond the ontological (what is), epistemological (what we know) and methodological (how we know)

realms that were most familiar and foundational in the context of contemporary critical psychology. Two responses from the data reflect this point. The first excerpt describes the implications of postmodernism and post-structuralism in broad terms while the second gives a particular example of how this kind of thinking influences the particular experiences of one participant who works with street kids.

I understand critical psychology to come from a poststructuralist theoretical position. Critical psychology questions the knowledge claims of the "discipline", reads the discourses of the discipline as producing and reproducing social power relations which privilege some social interests and exclude others. Critical psychology is openly political, deconstructs the production of knowledge/power, and seeks to give voice to the silenced.

By pushing the boundaries of research to include - as legitimate - evocative, generative, and thoughtful critical, interpretive, hermeneutic, feminist, broad and creative approaches to our topics...My commitment was, and is to the street kids who are positioned so far out on the edge of the margins I'm pretty sure they can't remember what the centre looks like - to speak about their experiences in a way which points to something bigger than itself - in a way that implicates all aspects of our living together in understanding street kids and our compliance in poverty management.

Changing the subject: Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity is a book often cited in the literature as having marked a turning point for a critical understanding of psychology. Inspired by post-structuralism, Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine (1984) use these concepts to discuss psychology's insistence on the split between individual and society, and how this has contributed to perpetuating oppression rather than promoting emancipation in psychology. The distinctive feature of this work is that it does not conceptualize mainstream psychology as a direct force of oppression which constrains and enchains individuals. Rather, as this quote clearly states, psychology,

Has helped to constitute the very form of modern individuality. Psychology is productive: it does not simply bias or distort or incarcerate helpless individuals in oppressive institutions. It regulates, classifies and administers; it produces those regulative devices which form us as objects of child development, schooling, welfare agencies, medicine, multicultural

education, personnel practices and so forth. Furthermore, psychology's implication in our modern form of individuality means that it constitutes subjectivities as well as objects (Henriques et al., 1984, p. 1)

The consequences of this are significant and multiple as can be seen in the example of employability used to illustrate this point in the text. Through the concept of unemployability, the unemployed person can become identified and may even identify her/himself as a cause of unemployment. This kind of psychologically reinforced explanation for unemployment perpetuates the status quo: the individual labeled unemployable can be trained in interpersonal skills either by a psychologist or by psychological instruments but this does not increase the number of available jobs in any way.

Foucault has been identified in the literature and in the data collected in this study as a central figure in post-structuralist thought. A concise summary of what Foucault meant in his work would be somewhat contradictory given the large scope of his contributions to post-structuralism. However, it is possible to present a brief synopsis of the implications of his work for critical psychology. Through his writing in the area of madness, sexuality and health, the idea put forth is that psychology as a science and profession is a generating body of knowledge composed of statements, practices, expectations and definitions that allow people to control themselves and each other (Morss, 1996).

According to Teo (1998a) there is a formal problem in the idea of developing a contemporary theory of liberation which is based on the post-modern critique of grand, systematic and foundational theories. Increasingly in psychology and in the social sciences it is becoming clear that theories of liberation are cultural, historical, and social events. It is no longer possible to suggest that in all contexts one theory can and should be used to promote the liberation of all people in the world. The solution he proposes to that problem is the development of a conceptual network rather than one static theory which would reflect the fluidity of liberation in varying contexts over time. In the same article, Teo

notes the content problem, which has to do with the critique of the idea that progress occurs as rationality increases. The assumption that knowledge and emancipation are in a direct linear relationship to one another (i.e., as knowledge increases emancipation increases) has been found to be overly simplistic. The postmodern and post-structuralist insight enables a recognition of this simplicity and provides alternatives through multiplicity and diversity. As there is no one rational answer that can liberate the subject, there is no one solution to any problem other than ensuring that proposed solutions to diverse problems are context specific, fluid and dynamic.

It is important to note that there is some ambivalence toward the postmodern and post-structuralist discourses in critical psychology. As Teo (1996) points out, on the one hand postmodernism encourages the deconstruction of unexamined presuppositions in psychology. Also, it helps to describe some aspects of Euro-American subjectivity more adequately than does traditional psychology. It has helped us to recognize that psychological knowledge is powerful. As one critical psychologist suggests "psychology fascinates me as an apparatus of control. It is so successful in policing behaviour and action, and in getting people to regulate themselves" (Parker as cited in Law & Lax, 1998, p. 54).

On the other hand, some would argue that the assumptions as well as the consequences of postmodernism in psychology do not seem to be theoretically consistent or practically helpful. A complete rejection of universal principles, which are necessary as criteria of unjust or unfair realities (Teo, 1996) may lead to the relativism and nihilism that critical theory was so wary of. The critique of psychology's limited models of truth-seeking has been useful but only to an extent. Postmodern and post-structuralist thought in psychology has been confronted with the problem of raising questions and providing answers without taking a position on the true (epistemology) or the good (practical reason). It has been inconsistent in that it has put itself beyond its own critique (Teo, 1996). Some

critical psychologists have adopted a more structuralist approach. The assumption in their work is that through correct analysis - ideology critique - it will be possible to come up with true statements about *what is* and *what ought to be* in the social world.

Multiple Voices Critique

The emergence of community psychology in North-America has contributed to setting the stage for contemporary critical psychology in its attempt to move beyond the ahistorical, asocial, and value neutral assumptions of mainstream psychology (Sarason, 1981; Sampson, 1983; Albee, 1992). In the cultural context of the Western world, which can be characterized as a place of extreme individualism as it was clearly stated in the data, community psychology's critique of society and psychology centered around the notion of community as something that had been lost or forgotten. Community psychology was therefore developed in response to the growing sense of disempowerment and alienation that an individualistic mainstream psychology was not effectively challenging. In the data, community psychology was referred to as "a psychology for social transformation".

Community psychology has aligned itself with other social movements such as the feminist movement and the civil rights movement. Albee (1992) suggests that social problems begin as human problems. Because as psychologists our focus is on human problems, it goes without saying that we need to pay attention to social problems. He goes on to say that sexism, racism and class exploitation are causal factors in human problems but have been largely unexamined in mainstream psychology. Sarason, one of the founders of community psychology points out that "psychology at its core has been quintessentially a study of the individual organism unrelated to the history, structure, and un verbalized world views of the social order" (1981, p. ix). The deep structures of the society, which are discriminatory and unjust, inhabit the deep structures of our discipline: psychology (Sampson, 1983). Or, as the following quote succinctly puts it, whether "an intelligence test or an automatic ice cube maker, it is a cultural artifact that says something important

both about how people in the society see themselves and each other and about what is desirable" (Sarason, 1981, p. 143).

The increased awareness that mainstream psychology has played an active role in the exclusion of certain powerless groups in society has marked the starting point for the multiple voices critique. As discussed in the data and exemplified in the following excerpt, some critical psychologists articulate clearly their disagreement with psychology's role in supporting psychiatry rather than finding alternatives to some of its discriminatory practices.

I am interested in talking about the values that perpetuate the status quo (i.e. drug companies and multi-billion dollar corporations which are invested in people feeling unwell)...I think psychology and psychologists (and others too) need to recognize their own complicity in maintaining oppressive structures and systems.

Sampson also makes this argument by suggesting that "psychology is not simply a messenger, nor is it a passive vehicle; instead, it is a means of shaping and constituting properties. Psychology's messages participate in sustaining the very culture from which those messages emerge. Psychology's reflections help reproduce the reality it studies and reflects" (Sampson, 1983, p. 47).

Indeed since the 1980s the work being done in the area of anti-racism (Moghaddam & Studer, 1997; Teo, in press-b) and feminism (Burman, 1990; Mulvey, 1988; Wilkinson, 1997) has had a strong impact on the advancement of critical psychology.

Feminism in Critical Psychology

Feminist theory recognizes and emphasizes the fact that "women's experiences are important, and the validity of women's perceptions must be known and valued" (Brown, 1994, p. 52). There are many different kinds of feminism which focus on a variety of issues. Some underlying themes are common to the varying manifestations of feminism, such as: the importance of egalitarianism, respect of difference, and social activism aimed at eliminating power imbalances and exploitation (Lerman & Porter, 1990). In essence,

feminism looks at "oppression in all its endless variety and monotonous similarity" (Gayle Rubin in Fraser & Nicholson, 1990, p. 28).

Feminist psychology has critiqued mainstream psychology's exclusion of women as psychological subjects and creators of psychological knowledge. Furthermore, it has been critical of biologism in mainstream psychology because it has had the effect of representing women's inferior position in society as biologically determined and therefore unchangeable (Hollway, 1984). In contrast, feminist psychology would argue that sex/gender should no longer be theorized as difference but reconceptualized as a principle of social organization that structures power relations between the sexes (Wilkinson, 1997). When sex/gender is thus defined, the possibility for change remains. Feminist psychology has used the underlying principles of feminism to create a space for a feminist approach within the practice of mainstream psychology. In feminist psychology, the feminist goal of working toward equity and social justice is interwoven with mainstream psychology's goal of further understanding human activity and experience with the intention of improving mental health.

Although the feminist contribution to critical psychology has been remarkable, it has not often been acknowledged as such. One response from the data counters this point by clearly identifying the influence of lesbian feminism on the participant's development as a critical psychologist. The following quote describes the tension that nonetheless exists between feminist psychology and critical psychology, "critical (social) psychology appropriates and assimilates theoretical advances of feminist psychology without due recognition of the political visions which inform and energize it" (Wilkinson, 1997, p.186). As the author suggests, feminist work in the area of the gendered identity is not merely an intellectual exercise, it is motivated by the political imperative to improve women's lives. This is not meant to imply that only people who have experienced discrimination directly should work for the elimination of oppression. Rather, it is meant as a reminder that white

men still represent the wide majority of people working in critical psychology. It is still they who define psychological knowledge.

Anti-Racism in Critical Psychology

Anti-racism in critical psychology is still emerging as a critical interrogation of the racist foundations of psychological knowledge and practice. As one author points out, "the modern concept of race was constructed pseudo-scientifically within the context of European colonization and conquest in order to justify, within a systematic ideology, inhuman practices" (Teo, in press-b, p. 18). Scientific support for racism began with Galton, the founder of the eugenics movement (Sarason, 1981, p. 77). It is not difficult to find evidence to exemplify the history of racism in psychology. One participant in the research shares experiences which reflect some of the complex and multiple ways in which psychology has contributed to maintaining racism,

I'm from Iran and I have quite personal experience, direct experience with conditions in the Third World. Also I have experience of being a member of the elite educated class in the Third World. It struck me going back to Iran latter and also working for the United Nations in Third World projects, it struck me that there is enormous inequality in the distribution of resources such as knowledge and that elites have at their disposal a very powerful instrument when they come into a country such as Iran or Turkey or India or China claiming to be objective scientists and using psychological knowledge, disseminating psychological knowledge from the West. I came to adopt a critical view of psychology through my realisation that first of all, psychology itself is a critical resource. Second that it is unequally distributed and third, that psychology is actively and directly helping to maintain inequalities in power and resource in the Third World. When I came back to the West, I realized that the same inequality in resources is present in Western societies but it is of course camouflaged in a much more effective way. There is a larger middle class here so the inequality of resources and particularly the role of psychology in maintaining and extending inequalities is camouflaged much better in the West. But it is there nevertheless. So I came to adopt a critical psychological approach through very personal experiences.

Another response in the data suggests that through anti-racism education the participant developed critical thinking skills which were an essential element in becoming a critical psychologist. The ability to critically reflect on whether our discipline works to

promote either the oppression or the emancipation of certain groups based on the category of race, has been neither taught nor practiced in psychology. As one research participant notes, "I am quite adamant that my critical analysis skills (very akin to the 'structural analysis' taught as a result of Paulo Freire's work in South America) have NOT arisen through any writing or theorizing in the discipline of psychology". Anti-racism educator George Dei defines anti-racism as a "critical discourse of race and racism in society and of the continuing racializing of social groups for differential and unequal treatment. Anti-racism explicitly names the issues of race and social difference as issues of power and equity rather than as matters of cultural and ethnic variety" (1996, p. 25). Critical psychology needs to be further inspired by anti-racism in order that our work may reflect the lived experiences and historically situated realities of diverse groups in society.

There has been some frustration expressed concerning how slowly things change in psychology and in society. When Sampson poses the question of why critique after critique is put forth, never to be proceeded by meaningful change, he attributes the cause to our ahistoricism/anti-historicism in psychology. When he says that, "much of what one hopes to present by way of a critique has previously been noted somewhere, even in the relatively near past; yet the field plods on relentlessly in spite of often biting and, in my view, insightful critical analyses" (Sampson, 1983, p. 45), I would have to agree. I think a lack of substantial change in psychology may be partly due to ahistoricism or anti-historicism. However, I think it is important to note that, using the example of community psychology which emerged as a critique of mainstream clinical psychology, there are many factors that work against a fundamental change in psychology.

Community psychology has never really flourished because the economic Establishment is not inclined to provide training funds and economic support for programs that seek to correct injustice and to identify the exploitative causes of distress and disturbance (Albee, 1992, p. 318).

There are certainly other traditions that have impacted the philosophical and historical development of critical psychology. As my view is limited to what I have read in the published literature, the responses generated from this study, and what I have been previously exposed to, I presented this section as a partial representation of what the strong influences have been in critical psychology. This section should therefore be understood as a specifically located attempt to explore oppression and emancipation through the lens of critical psychology.

Contemporary State of Critical Psychology

The conceptual parameters used to comprehend critical psychology as a movement have already been described in the opening section of this thesis. The purpose and rationale for engaging critical psychologists in a formative evaluation of critical psychology was also made explicit. Additionally, a retrospective account of the philosophical influences in critical psychology was briefly described. The proceeding section uses the published literature and the data collected in this study to present the actual state of affairs in critical psychology. The crux of the formative evaluation is found in this section which explores not only the vision, values and practice of critical psychology, but also the key debates that are being confronted in the movement today.

The Vision of Critical Psychology

As we try to raise questions about the role of psychology in human emancipation rather than social control, we do so with the understanding that we cannot always succeed, or even always know for sure what outcome would constitute success (Prilleltensky & Fox, 1997). Conceptualizing and implementing the project to create more equitable communities are tasks that are more easily undertaken from the safety of our offices. The efforts of critical psychologists are fraught with contradictions. The section below identifies the tensions that are presently the focus of much attention in critical psychology. As one example which characterizes the state of the movement, in theory, critical

psychology's vision is strong, but in practice a lot of work still needs to be done in the area of translating this theory into practice.

The Values of Critical Psychology

In theory, it is easy to define such values as social justice and empowerment. The difficulty lies in implementing these values with integrity (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997). Maintaining a commitment to social justice in a society that places the value of individual empowerment at the top of the hierarchy, is quite challenging. As has been the case in other psychological subdisciplines, such as community psychology (Rosa, Russell & Prilleltensky, 1996), critical psychology struggles with this paradox which results from the overemphasis on certain values to the detriment of others.

Critical psychology's commitment to social justice cannot be discounted. However, critiques informed by feminist (Wilkinson, 1991), gay and lesbian (Kitzinger, 1997), in addition to anti-racist perspectives suggest that the voices of people from marginalized groups are still not being heard (Moghaddam & Studer, 1997; Rappaport & Stewart, 1997). Therefore, the values of social justice and empowerment may be evident on paper, but the lives of people (oppressed or not) are still unchanged.

The Practice of Critical Psychology

A distinction between what critical psychology says it does, and what it actually does, needs to be made in order to fully comprehend the actual state of the practice of critical psychology. The following statement endeavors to present an overview of what critical psychology says it does. In an attempt to challenge individualistic and universalist assumptions about human nature (Spears, 1997), critical psychology creates a forum through which a variety of approaches that differ in philosophical justifications, terminology, and political strategy, can contribute to the study of human behaviour (Prilleltensky & Fox, 1997). Thus, critical psychology has become an umbrella term which is constituted of diverse, though related, areas such as: discourse analysis and discursive

psychology, the study of rhetoric and ideology, deconstruction, social constructionism, post-structuralism and postmodernism, and the analysis of textuality (Parker, 1989; Wilkinson, 1997; Burman, Aitken, Alldred, Allwood, Billington, Goldberg, Gordo-Lopez, Heenan, Marks & Warner, 1996). Furthermore, critiques of various sub-disciplines of psychology; such as developmental (Burman, 1997; Morss, 1996; Teo, 1997), abnormal/clinical (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1997), intelligence (Cernovsky, 1997), social (Parker, 1989; Pancer, 1997), community (Sarason, 1981, 1982), feminist (Wilkinson, 1991), cross-cultural (Moghaddam & Studer, 1997), lesbian and gay (Kitzinger, 1997), forensic (Fox, 1997) and political psychology; (Montero, 1997) have been developed through the project of critical psychology.

In terms of what critical psychology actually does, it becomes clear in the outline above that the components involved in the practice of critical psychology are multiple and complex (Spears, 1997). Critical psychologists work in various subdisciplines that have very different histories. Their teaching, research and community work involves divergent attempts to meet the needs of different populations, using diverse approaches and methodologies. Although critical psychologists envision their work as challenging the status quo in psychology and also share a commitment to social justice and empowerment, these aims can be pursued in multiple ways. What can be problematic in attempting to define the areas of application of critical psychology with coherence, is this very diversity. The tension that lies between multiplicity and clarity can sometimes lead critical psychology to fragmentation and participation in aimless pursuits such as endless theorizing. As one research participant put it "rather than obsessing about academic concepts of selfhood, we need to shift attention to what people who are trained in psychology, in conjunction with others who care, can do to address the horrors of the new global situation."

Sites in which there is discrepancy between the ideal and the actual practice of critical psychology are many, as in all dynamic and responsive practices. A few examples of these are identified below. Whereas the ideal for critical psychology would be to develop a theory informed by praxis from which would follow concrete actions aimed at altering the status quo of psychology (Prilleltensky, 1994; Sullivan, 1984), in actuality, critical psychology has not yet made the leap from theory to practice.

Moreover, contradictions exist both within and between the various currents in critical psychology. As an example, which was alluded to in the previous discussion of postmodernism and post-structuralism, there is a fundamental inconsistency in the *certainty* with which the postmodern approach asserts the *uncertainty* of social realities (Spears, 1997; Potter, 1997). If there is no such thing as one unitary truth in psychology, then the adherence to the unitary truth of postmodernism or post-structuralism is just as problematic. Similar contradictions also exist between these currents, such as the debate between realism and relativism in critical psychology (Stainton Rogers & Stainton Rogers, 1997). Consequently, the actual practice of critical psychology suffers.

My Stance

The existence of discrepancies between the ideal and the actual states of critical psychology leads to potential areas for critical questioning. I feel it is necessary to position myself in relation to these key debates that have emerged in the published literature and in the data with which I have been working. My beliefs and values influence the way I conceptualize problems. I bring these to any discussion of important tensions in contemporary critical psychology. Therefore, I feel it is crucial that I share some of the elements that mould every aspect of what I think, feel and do. One of the most important beliefs I hold was echoed by Audrey Rosa (1997): *our joy can never be complete while so many suffer*. This realization represents the seed from which a life of heartfelt and dedicated contribution can grow. As she so eloquently states, "one result of taking up the

challenge of changing indignant social conditions is creating a life with meaning and integrity, fraught with difficulties and sacrifices, but always dynamic and transformative" (Rosa, 1997, p. 185).

When I discuss the tensions that exist as central debates in critical psychology, I am not suggesting that we must choose one radical stance and maintain it forever. However, I am not advocating that we constantly sit on the fence. On my walk to school every morning, I am reminded of the importance of clearly articulating and asserting my opinions. There is a beautiful interruption in the spiritless grey of my cemented path to work. It is a graffitied slogan that reads: "if you stand for nothing, you will fall for anything." Therein lies the potential of critical psychology. Hence, I challenge myself and the reader to take a position, though certainly imperfect and probably temporary. I also actively encourage myself and the reader to be self-aware, open to critique from others, and willing to change the stand that we have taken. We must embrace paradox and contradiction because personal and social transformation involves a never ending complex spiral of reflection, action, error and understanding (Rosa, 1997).

Teo (in press Tod) proposes a methodology to be used in critical psychology that involves deconstruction, reconstruction and construction. He asserts that this methodology can also be a framework used to trace the biographical trajectory of critical psychologists. I will use these three concepts to demonstrate the ways in which my experiences have followed along this path.

Generally speaking I used to hold views that individualized social problems and human suffering. I used to think that each person was responsible for his/her fate. Every part of my education, including my post-secondary education in psychology fueled this assumption. When I learned, through courses in women's studies, to be more critical of what was being presented to me as truth, and to take into consideration the social, historic,

and political contexts in which people live, I was introduced to the world of deconstruction. This was very useful at the time and will always be a tool that I will employ.

Deconstruction helped me to critically examine the assumptions that I held and that others hold about all aspects of life. I understand reconstruction to be a process of coming to terms with more traditional approaches that are presented as truth once you have discovered that they are just as incomplete, arbitrary, and temporary as any other. For instance, reconstruction helped me understand the context in which traditional psychology was developed. Because of this process of reconstruction through which I could trace the development of mainstream psychology through history, I did not feel the need to entirely reject psychology when I understood what a sexist, racist and elitist science it was. I still had hope that we could learn from our mistakes and through critical psychology, actions could be taken to change mainstream psychology. As time went on I felt I was getting stuck in deconstruction and reconstruction. I wanted to put some energy into creating rather than destroying. This is how I came to construction. I see my role in critical psychology at this time as focusing on the constructive aspects. I integrate deconstruction and reconstruction in what I do now, but my energy is directed toward construction.

Having presented myself as the filter through which the story of the key debates and critical questions of critical psychology will be told, I pursue the review of the literature in critical psychology merged with the data collected in this study. In this section and throughout the thesis in general, I am exploring the tensions that exist between extremes. I am attempting to arrive at a dynamic and fluid state of balance which recognizes the contributions and limitations of either pole. I am trying to use these strategically at the service of the vision and values of critical psychology.

The broad based discussion of the importance of academic work as well as activist work encompasses many of the tensions that have become apparent in critical psychology. A distinction is made between reflection and action as conceptual elements used in critical

psychology. There is a clear recognition of the value of reflection as the precursor to theory, and of action as the impetus for practice. An engagement in denunciation and annunciation implies placing emphasis on the deconstruction of mainstream psychology's concepts, theories and practices and also on the elaboration and implementation of alternatives.

Debates in Critical Psychology

There are recurrent ideas that can be identified both in the literature and the data collected through this study. These are presented in the upcoming section as contemporary debates that have been the cause of much discussion and require further clarification in critical psychology. The use of dualism as a framework for situating the debates is at once a critical reflection on the limited thought models still being used in critical psychology and a recognition that taking a critical position on dichotomous thinking can help us move beyond this framework. Moving toward a dialectical perspective that does not polarize thought into restrictive binary categories will be the approach taken in the following section.

I will be presenting different shades of what may seem to be a similar debate. The issue centers on the identity of critical psychology and our roles as critical psychologists. While an acknowledgement of the similarities in the debates discussed is important, it is also crucial to highlight the subtle differences that exist between each of these tensions (i.e., theory and practice, denunciation and annunciation, as well as inside and outside the academy). I will describe the dialectical relationship, that is to say the relationship of simultaneous commonality and distinction, between the debates. The levels of analysis for each of the dialectics mentioned above are the following: epistemology, methodology and context. The ideal state of balance between the extremes has been termed the optimal moment in each of the dialectics. As outlined in Table 2 below, the optimal moments are, respectively, praxis, construction and community involvement.

Table 2

Debates

Domain	Dialectic	Optimal Moment
Epistemology	Theory / Practice	Praxis
Methodology	Denunciation / Annunciation	Construction
Context	Inside / Outside	Community Involvement

When I discuss epistemology, I am answering the following questions "what is known?" and "what is done?" in critical psychology. Theory and practice are used to describe and define the role of critical psychological knowledge (epistemological). When I call upon methodology, I am answering the question "how do we know?" and "how do we do?" in critical psychology. Denunciation and annunciation are the tools used to do critical psychological work (methodological). When I ask the following questions, "where do we know?" and "where do we do?", I am referring to context. Inside and outside established institutional structures such as the University refer to the locations in which critical psychological efforts are placed (contextual).

Epistemology: Theory and Practice

Theoretical reflection in critical psychology involves placing emphasis on the importance of introducing thoughtful consideration and creative imagination to our conceptions of what the world might be, and how psychology might help to achieve this end. A desire to broaden the traditional boundaries of psychological work to explore diverse ways of knowing in psychology is one example that was consistently called upon in the data. Conceptualizing a world in which justice and liberation are real requires not only strategies for action but also reflection.

Teo (in press-a) strongly emphasizes the importance of theory in critical psychology by highlighting the need to critique mainstream psychology's theoretical weakness and ideological commitments to upholding an unjust status quo. From this recognition, he

suggests that a strong theoretical component in critical psychology is not only helpful but necessary. Critical psychology seeks to advance an explicit political agenda of ending oppression and promoting emancipation. Furthermore, it seeks to counter the unjust status quo in society and psychology. From these assertions, Teo makes the following suggestion "critical psychologists should be careful not to submit themselves to the logic of an ideology that measures results in terms of their exchange value, or assume that, because psychology has become a huge commodity, reflections must be marketable" (in press-b, p. 26). In other words, we have to remind ourselves and each other that the personal and political emphasis in critical psychology is on human liberation and the elimination of suffering, especially for the most marginalized groups in society. This emphasis goes fundamentally against the current use of psychology in certain contexts to legitimate inequity and remain complicit in the face of oppression.

The tension between theory and practice is a highly contested debate in critical psychology (Rappaport & Stewart, 1997). According to Reicher, "critical ideas in the absence of a critical practice do more to sustain than to undermine the social order" (1996, p. 237). It would seem that at present, theories about human suffering and exploitation are legitimate pursuits in critical psychology to the extent that they remain abstracted from the concrete realities of people's lives. In this sense, it is important to be reminded that no action constitutes an act in support of the status quo (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Many participants in the study agree that "critical psychology should emerge from political activity" because social problems are "resolved best in struggle not speculation." Critical psychology needs to be actively engaged in efforts to transform the status quo because change is born through practice (Spears, 1997).

Theory in the data was presented as "an intellectual artifact devoid of transformative effects." This could be explained by another response from the data suggesting that "theory is a word that evokes modernist notions of legitimacy and sounds exclusive and closed."

When too much emphasis is placed on theory, the result is "few descriptions of modes of practice designed to contest oppression and foster conscientization." The data point to the heart of the matter in a discussion of the "thirst for discussion on modes of action" in critical psychology. The goal of any critical practice, whether theoretical or applied, is "to overturn all circumstances in which the human is a degraded, a subjugated, a forsaken, a contemptible being" (Teo, in press-a, p. 1).

In the data there was an acknowledgement of the importance of balancing theory and practice because generally speaking, "those who think more act too little and those who act more think too little." In the literature, the inconsistency between calling for practical interventions aimed at structural change and refusing to become politically involved is challenged repeatedly (Berryman, 1987). Many critical psychologists support the need for an integration of reflection and action in the process of change. As Rosa puts it, "action must follow awareness in order to achieve change" (1997, p. 217). Prilleltensky suggests that "the urge to act should be tempered with the need to know" (1999, p. 8). The optimal moment in the dialectic of theory and practice is critical praxis.

There are different ways of integrating theory and practice as well as different reasons for combining them. Some chose to integrate theoretical considerations into their practice with the intention of improving it. One research participant makes the following statement related to praxis: "In my everyday work, I don't make a distinction between foundations and applications or theory and practice, I believe in the old dictum popularized by people like Lewin that the most practical thing is a good theory."

Engaging in critical praxis can be the step that is taken to ensure that critical psychological knowledge is used in direct accordance with the needs of oppressed people as defined by oppressed people. It can also be an opportunity to strengthen one's theoretical insights by grounding these in experience. Critical practice is therefore the ultimate criterion for critical psychology (Teo, in press-a). The oppressed decide if critical

psychology is important. An integration of reflection and action ensures accountability as it relates to the nature of critical psychological work. The upcoming example presents a critical comment on our inaction by saying that as critical psychologists, we "spend too much time looking at ourselves instead of looking at the people who critical psychologists should be accountable to." The issue of accountability was discussed at some length in the data collected. Action was seen as a concrete strategy that could be used to ensure accountability. For instance, if we are engaging in practice and neglecting theory, or getting stuck in theory and forgetting practice, the groups we are accountable to will serve as reminders. In very practical terms, if I am working in collaboration with a community group doing anti-poverty work, I will be reminded daily of the need to take concrete steps to improve people's access to health care, employment, and/or housing. I will also be reminded of the importance of developing theories or conceptual frameworks of intervention to prevent poverty in this community. Both theoretical and practical work are intended to improve the life circumstances of the people with whom I am working.

From an ideal point of view, critical psychology presents a unity of theory and practice through critical praxis, but it is crucial to recognize that what theory and practice means depends on the historic and cultural context (Teo, in press-a). This is clearly demonstrated in the following quote in which the author critically evaluates the assumptions made about the way theory is conceptualized in the North-American context and contrasts it to the way it is defined in the Latin-American context.

A discussion of theory and practice reveals clear cultural differences between the intellectual milieu of North-America (and often West Europe as well) and Latin-America. In our everyday usage "theory" is often contrasted pejoratively with "reality". We tend to take as normative the "scientific method" in which theory is the result of empirical, self-correcting trial and error process. Among Latin-American intellectuals, on the other hand, "empirical" is most often a pejorative term, denoting superficial appearance rather than a deep reality of things. Theory is regarded as a tool for cutting through appearance to get at the heart of things. (Berryman, 1987, p. 85)

The split between theory and practice in the Western world may not be as applicable in Latin-America for example. "In Latin-American terms, we must affirm that any effort at developing a psychology that will contribute to the liberation of our people has to mean the creation of a liberation psychology; but to create a liberation psychology is not simply a theoretical task; first and fundamentally it is a practical task" (Martin-Baro, 1994, p. 25).

To facilitate the integration of theory and practice in critical psychology, agency is required (Rappaport & Stewart, 1997). Critical psychology must develop its own agency by reflexively identifying its needs and acting to fulfill them. In addition, critical psychology must work to strengthen and support the agency of various communities, groups and individuals.

Methodology: Denunciation and Annunciation

The methodological tool most often used in critical psychology is denunciation. It enables a fundamental questioning of psychology's underlying assumptions and is useful as one strategy among others that can help to critique the status quo (Parker & Shotter, 1990). Critically evaluating truth claims in psychology can help dismantle what has been taken for granted as the only way of conceptualizing psychological phenomena. This creates an opportunity for expanding the field of inquiry to be more reflective of the realities of groups which have typically been excluded or neglected in the formation of knowledge in psychology. Furthermore, it opens up the possibility of being more responsive to the needs of marginalized groups who, rather than having been helped by psychology, have sometimes been victimized by the discipline.

Whereas denunciation or deconstruction have received much attention in critical psychology, annunciation has been widely neglected (Teo, in press-a). Deconstruction and critique are useful tools, only to the extent that they are not taken to the extreme. A feeling of impotence, often the result of an over reliance on critique and deconstruction, contributes to disillusionment and cynicism concerning the status quo in psychology and in society

(Gill, 1995; Spears, 1997). Annunciation is the creative process by which we articulate an alternative to the status quo. Critical opposition must be plural, using different tactics to reach its aims (Parker, 1989). If critical psychology is to be true to its vision of a more equitable society, it should be engaged in actions that go beyond the intellectual exercise of conceptual deconstruction. From the following question posed in the data, we learn that it is necessary to ask ourselves "what can be DONE beyond description and denunciation about (as an example) human rights violations?" As some critics suggest in the literature, it is doubtful that racism will be eliminated by solely challenging discourse (Wilkinson, 1997).

A theoretical denunciation of the oppressive ramifications of mainstream psychology may be viewed as safer than the annunciation of concrete strategies for action to make psychology more responsive to people's need/desire for emancipation. An excerpt from the data supports this main point by saying that "it is easier to destroy than to create." Furthermore the argument is made that "too many revolutions, both social and political, think too much on how to tear apart the system, but not enough on how to fairly create a new one." A turn away from solely relying on deconstruction or denunciation toward actively engaging in annunciation would represent a timely integration of reflection and action as well as theory and practice in critical psychology (Prilleltensky, 1994). The optimal moment in the dialectic of denunciation and annunciation is construction. It is the active process of both critically interrogating what is in place and creatively building something better.

Context: Inside and Outside

Critical psychology has been undertaken, up to this point, by a fairly homogeneous group of professionals working inside the academy. It has been noted in the data and in the literature that the "inaccessibility of psychology's ways of knowing" has been problematic not only in mainstream psychology but also in critical psychology. Language, knowledge

and approaches used in critical psychology should not be inaccessible to those people who find themselves outside academic circles. This barrier only contributes to the maintenance of the inequitable distributions of power in society, something that critical psychology seeks to disrupt. As one participant noted, "the primary ethic of our work needs to be to change the outcomes of our societal institutions - otherwise we are indeed just another new academic sub-discipline with no impact on knowledge or the world."

The often unacknowledged privilege that we have as academics, to sit at our computers playing with words and ideas, must be understood within the present socio-political context, where the freedom of one is attained at the expense of the unfreedom of many others. Our unwillingness to challenge structures such as the university which serve to keep certain people poor and marginalized contributes to inequity (Rosa, 1997). The bubble of privilege from which academics reflect, theorize and denunciate is held up by the less privileged people struggling with the daily routines of running the mainstream (Gill, 1995; Kitzinger, 1997).

Many of us choose to use our professional position to disrupt some of the inequities that psychology has been involved in perpetuating. Traditional academic work in psychology has not been aligned with action oriented social justice work outside the academy. Thus, it is difficult to justify professional involvement inside and outside the academy without feeling torn between our roles as academics and activists. The optimal moment in the inside and outside dialectic is community involvement. The challenge is in attaining this optimal moment. As academics, we may begin to feel guilty when the research that is deemed legitimate in our department is not the action research we know would have a greater impact on the life conditions of the groups we are working with. Thus, we may succumb to the pressures and demands of our institutional allegiances and engage in research that upholds the status quo. On the other hand, we may also feel guilty working to destroy or dismantle the very institution that helps us sustain ourselves

financially and otherwise. As one response suggests, the location in which critical psychological work is undertaken needs to be chosen carefully.

Not only am I examining a topic that people hate to contend with (i.e. child poverty, street kids etc...) but I've done it in a way that frightens? mainstream psychology because my approach sits in a different landscape than quantitative or traditional scientific method data collection and analysis, means that my assumptions about the world are different and are potentially frightening to some, and I have to sit a defense in an environment that is typically about perpetuating the status quo...Now again, the people in my department are probably not that much different than in other departments and I guess what I am getting at is that action is hard to achieve because there are so many traps that catch you along the way...Nobody likes to be shown that their positions and actions might mean that they are not being sweet in the world...people are resistant to that...radical or critical people are marginalized because they raise the dirt, kick up the sand...action is o.k. as long as you don't take down the house you live in right?

The participant goes on to ask "how to engage in action that is meaningful without getting thrown out of school?" Another critical question that is posed is "how do you use your powered position in ways that are inclusive of the people who often sit on the margins?" My question would be the following: How do we, as critical psychologists, strike an appropriate balance between our work inside and outside the academy? These are the challenges that make the work of critical psychology at once difficult and rewarding.

There are many concrete examples of the rewards that await when academic work and activism are combined. The work of Bennett and Campbell (1996) in the area of community shared agriculture is an inspiring account of the way knowledge and skills acquired through the academic study of community psychology has been useful to improve community living in rural areas. Also, Nelson, Lord and Ochocka (1999) have worked with psychiatric consumer/survivors on self-help and mutual aid initiatives that have had transformative outcomes for all the participants involved. In the British context, a similar example can be pulled from an interview with Ian Parker and Erica Burman. Parker discusses his work in collaboration with a community group called the Hearing Voices Network. This group is a present-day expression of the anti-psychiatry movement in that it

consists mainly of people who have been diagnosed with schizophrenia and use psychiatric services but resist the traditional definitions of their experience. When Parker describes the experience of having a Hearing Voices Network conference in an academic setting, it provides a clear example of the liberatory potential of critical work in psychology. He suggests that having the conference in a University, "leveled out the accounts that are normally privileged as being 'scientific', and put the voices of those who are normally the objects of science into the debate" (Parker as cited in Law & Lax, 1998, p. 57).

Our commitment to reevaluating and reinventing relations of power through critical psychology is connected to our own suffering related to the present status quo in psychology and society. In the words of Goldenberg,

As social scientists we are publicly committed to the search for truth. As human beings we are responsible for the specific truths we choose to guide us in daily life. By their very nature, the problems of oppression and social intervention cut across the usual and often comfortable distinctions we seek to make between our public-professional roles and our private-personal missions. We are now in a situation in which the truth-seeker becomes the subject of his (sic) own quest: we cannot claim immunity from ourselves (1978, p. 26).

While we cannot assume that the experience of suffering is the same for every person in every context, the effects of direct or indirect suffering can be generalized as having negative impacts on all people. For instance, even if I am not homeless at this time, I am negatively affected by the fact that many people in my community do not have a home. From the negative thoughts and feelings that I have related to homelessness, I can act to make changes in the hope of improving life circumstances for people and myself. The world is not perfect yet, and nor are we as professionals or human beings. The tensions and contradictions that are an intimate part of the work we do, and the lives we lead, are not to be masked by the allure of theoretical prowess or epistemological correctness (Gill, 1995). The importance of acknowledging and embracing paradox is central to the sustainability of critical work. Being a critical psychologist must entail professional and personal commitments in both academic and political spheres (Reicher, 1997). Through our

collective and individual efforts to envision and engage in more equitable interactions between persons, groups, institutions, and systems we may begin to live in accordance with our values (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997).

Critical Psychology for Critical Action

As evidenced throughout the literature and the data, critical psychology has clearly stated its commitment to an action orientation. The section that follows describes the contributions that critical psychology can make to promote emancipation and liberation through psychology. Responses from critical psychologists who participated in the study are organized to reflect, using their own words, how critical psychology can be useful to change inequitable relationships of power and to transform the traditional understanding of the role of psychology and psychologists. Weaving together many of the quotes generated in this formative evaluation has helped me to ground the recommendations for action in the words of critical psychologists. The common thread throughout the data collected is clearly a conviction that critical psychology can have a transformative effect on the way psychology is practiced through teaching, research and community work. Critical psychologists who responded to the questions posed in the research identified not only what kind of change it would bring about, but also what the implications of this change would be. The outcome from this formative evaluation is a clearly defined focus, generated from critical psychologists themselves, of future efforts in critical psychology.

Critical Analysis of Power Relations

A critical analysis of the way power is (mis)used in society and in psychology was an area of concern that was discussed at length in the data. Using the words of participants, I will share the main thoughts expressed about how critical psychology can contribute to action by providing a critical analysis of the power systems that are presently in place. According to respondents critical psychology is a "psychological theory that overtly

challenges social institutions and ideological structures related to the reproduction of social relations of domination and oppression."

It has been suggested in the data that "psychology, our discipline, is itself a formal resource that is unequally distributed (that is, access to psychology and the production of psychological knowledge is unequally distributed among populations in the world)."

Critical psychological work focuses on "dismantling the mainstream's hegemony" both in psychology and in society because it "recognizes that modern society is marked by widespread injustice" and "that the societal status quo contributes to oppression."

Furthermore, it "critically looks at the values undergirding the market economy and political structures." Through this form of critical interrogation of the exploitative power structures in society, critical psychology "critiques resistance to social change."

The fact that critical psychology "recognizes the effects of the politics of exclusion" reflects critical psychology's commitment to addressing social injustice. One participant notes one example of the way this manifests itself by suggesting that critical psychology spends time "critically analyzing all mainstream theorizing through lesbian feminism and anti-racism education." Central to the work is a critical exploration of "issues of poverty, social policies that victimize the poor and blame mothers."

As one participant suggested in a critical analysis of how critical psychology could use power for emancipatory rather than oppressive ends, "psychologists are inherently involved in the political process and this should be part of our teaching, this should certainly be explicit in our research and our interventions in the practical domain whether it be education, health, environment, community or politics proper, all these interventions, we should be making them with our ideology explicit."

Critical psychology strives to "promote real democracy" by participating actively in a "redistribution of resources (knowledge as resource, power as resource)." By "sharing power" in teaching, research and community work, critical psychologists promote "justice"

and "social justice." Critical psychologists use "deconstruction, reconstruction, construction of traditional psychology to produce alternatives in research and practices." Engaged in a critical "analysis of social power relations", a "critical analysis of the use of language" and an integration of "knowledge of social processes and relationships", as three examples, the work of critical psychologists "alters paradigms that perpetuate oppressive realities."

Critical Redefinition of the Role of Psychology and Psychologists

Critical psychology as a movement facilitates and enables concrete change on the micro (individual), meso (organizational), and macro (societal) levels of intervention. At the micro level, critical psychology is involved in reestablishing respect in the relationships that exist between psychologists and citizens. On a broader based level (meso), critical psychology challenges the mainstream discipline to look at itself critically. Additionally, at the macro level critical psychology invites all social agents to be actively involved in creating a more equitable world.

Micro Level Context: Re-introducing Respect in Relationships

From the perspective of respondents, "the needs, desires and values of oppressed people fighting for change are the starting point, the principal guide" in critical psychology. There is a clear commitment to "taking the subjectivity of students, participants, community members seriously" and to "listening to what they tell me about the circumstances of their lives."

Critical psychology "considers the importance of contexts in shaping behaviour, interests, of people not agencies." The context through which "caring" and "helping" have become professionalized has in many circumstances had abusive effects on the people who are most vulnerable. Critical psychology has challenged this process of dehumanizing the most human of interactions: the helping relationship. Being heard and validated as a person as well as engaging in "collective action decided by people for themselves and on their own

terms" has transformative effects and "enables a taking control of their own lives and situations." This is the process through which people become empowered. Because it engages in "collaboration and cooperation" and creates a "community of support", critical psychology participates in action for change by building respectful relationships. Sometimes "the process itself is the result (importance of process)."

Meso Level Context: Re-inventing our Discipline

Critical psychology "goes beyond the conventional limits of psychology." It "pushes the boundaries of research" in that it participates in the "interruption of discourse" by giving "voice to the silenced." Critical psychology is "psychology from the standpoint of the subject", "psychology *for* not *about* individuals" (italics added). The critical psychologist is engaged in "conscientious action research" and "develops action-oriented practices."

Critical psychology is a human science that does not hide behind a mask of objective perfection, rather "critical psychology is a psychology that shows its imperfections, dirty parts, differences in applications, and questions the omnipotence of psychology." As critical psychologists, "we assess human behaviour in context with an understanding that our assessment is inherently biased in some ways and is a social construction itself."

One participant suggests that "wholistic approaches are needed, that is a move away from the reductionism that pervades mainstream psychology." Critical psychology has taken on this challenge by recognizing the inevitability and worth of "complexity...no certainty...diversity" in human activity and experience. Critical psychology "recognizes that psychology's values, assumptions and practices have been culturally and historically determined."

Macro Level Context: Re-imagining Social Justice

Inspired by "a vision of a better world... openness... change... hope... action... re-envisioning" critical psychology "seeks to alter and ultimately provide alternatives to both mainstream psychology's norms and the societal institutions that those norms strengthen." As one participant clearly articulates "critical psychology with a practical intention should change our psychological knowledge about the subject in society, and in doing so should pave the way to overturn those circumstances in which the human is a degraded, subjugated, forsaken, and contemptible being." Through its theoretical and practical interventions, critical psychology "provides a forum through which the notion that society can be transformed to promote meaningful lives and social justice can be lived out." There is a clear emphasis on the fact that with a critical component, "psychology can contribute to the creation of more just and meaningful ways of living."

Recommendations for Action

As it has been articulated throughout this document, my thesis project emerged from a clear recognition of a need for action in critical psychology. The desire to integrate theory and practice, denunciation and annunciation as well as work inside and outside the academy was restated in the data collected. The emphasis in critical psychology up to this point has been too heavily placed on theory, denunciation and work inside the University. The priority then, as defined by critical psychologists, is to focus on practice, annunciation and work outside the University in order to establish a fluid yet balanced optimal state. It also became evident both in the literature and the data that concrete examples of critical practice in psychology are missing. As one participant suggests when asked to tell the story of how he/she became involved in the practice of critical psychology, "I wish there were a story to tell. I am just beginning to move from theoretical understanding toward action." By moving beyond a verbal or written commitment to an action orientation in critical psychology, the following section endeavors to provide tools that may be helpful in

teaching, research and community work. A synthesis of the literature, the data, and my own thoughts and experiences is the springboard from which I propose these recommended courses of action. The specific tools, which may be differently adapted depending on the time, place, context, and circumstances in which they are used, are formulated with the intention of advancing the practice of teaching, research and community work in critical psychology.

Subjectivity and Agency

To fully understand how critical psychology leads to critical action, we must be aware of the ways in which subjectivity and agency contribute to our work in the practical domain. By subjectivity, I am referring to the personal experiences and feelings an individual has. The term agency refers to the impact a person has on other people and on the world.

On a subjective level, a psychologist can be a victim of oppression when she/he feels devalued, treated unfairly or rejected in her/his personal or professional life. Working in a setting that is not receptive to critical approaches can lead to a subjective experience of alienation rather than emancipation. In an environment in which the values and vision of critical psychology are being implemented with consistency, a psychologist can feel respected, valued and treated fairly. Citizens working with psychologists in teaching, research or community intervention capacities can also be victims of oppression when they feel that they are being put down, silenced or disrespected. A citizen can have personal experiences that can be either emancipatory or oppressive, depending on the ways in which the vision and values of critical psychology are being applied.

Both psychologists and citizens have agency in that they can have an impact on other people and on the world in which they live. This impact can be oppressive or emancipatory. When psychologists use their power or their knowledge to exclude others, their agency contributes to oppression. As an example, a psychologist who is doing

research on the psychological adaptation of a specific group of refugee women but who never consults with this group to ask them what kind of research would be of most help to them at this particular time, is not working toward this population's emancipation. When psychologists use their resources to promote equity and liberation of groups and individuals who are subordinated, their actions cultivate emancipation. Similarly, citizens who are working with critical psychologists have agency. They can be actively promoting oppression or emancipation in their day to day lives. It is important to recognize that although power is distributed unfairly in the society in which we presently live, where overall psychologists have more power than users of psychological services, neither group is exclusively victim nor oppressor. Agency and subjectivity are dynamic and context dependent.

In developing proposals for action, we need to ask ourselves some simple but essential questions,

What are our action plans? What are we doing with likeminded or even better with unlikeminded individuals to help define the field of change? Is that not the historic task of intellectuals? Or are we merely satisfied to comfortably observe, measure, evaluate, and prognosticate the real social change work of others? (Rosa, 1997, p. 230)

Critical psychology is applicable to a number of areas, of which I have chosen three: teaching, research, and community work. Tables 3, 4 and 5 provide critical questions that critical psychologists can use in their teaching, research and community work to promote emancipation. Relying on the results of the evaluation, the tables are an extension of what was identified as the missing link between theory/practice, denunciation/annunciation, and inside/outside. They provide examples of practical steps that can be taken to promote emancipation when we teach, do research and community work. The tables pose questions related to each of the three domains that were described in the previous section on the key debates in contemporary critical psychology (i.e., epistemology, methodology and context). Each table is an attempt to translate questions of epistemology into practical terms, by

reflecting more specifically on the theories we use or develop, the practices we engage in or encourage, and the praxis we model or support. The teaching, research and community work tables provide insight into methodology by giving examples of possible applications of denunciation, annunciation and construction in practice. The issue of context is given practical relevance in questions related to work inside and outside the University as well as questions of how to foster community involvement.

To support the process of developing recommendations for action, a brief review of the relevant literature in each of these domains will follow. The literature review goes beyond the discipline of critical psychology to call upon the knowledge and experience of various disciplines such as education, interdisciplinary women's studies, cultural studies, feminist psychology, religion and culture, and sociology. The aim of this literature review is to examine the intersections between critical psychology and other critical disciplines. The purpose is to provide a broader context for the development of suggested paths for action in critical psychology. Reflections and examples from these other disciplines will be presented in combination with concrete steps that can be taken to teach, do research and community work in critical psychology. Using the words of Albee, what unites the various critically oriented practices we engage in is the following: through critical practice we seek out ways to "make vocal what is now silent. To make conscious what is now unconscious. To resist being co-opted by an exploitative social system that pays us well with status, income, and upward mobility in exchange for our remaining silent about injustice" (1992, p. 321). The commitment to promoting emancipation and ending oppression is shared across disciplinary lines. This will be further evidenced in an upcoming section describing the way the Community Psychology program at Wilfrid Laurier University practices its teaching, research and community work.

Teaching

As critical psychology critiques mainstream psychology for unquestioningly upholding the status quo, so do the critical traditions in education (Hernandez, 1997). The critical questions in Table 3 are an example of how critical psychology challenges mainstream psychology to go beyond its narrow boundaries in order to promote emancipation through teaching. The work of such liberatory pedagogues as Paulo Freire is notable in a review of relevant literature for the teaching of critical psychology (Freire, 1994). The intimate connection that exists between the critiques of education and of psychology can be best summarized in Freire's suggestion that education has traditionally been used as a practice of domination but can (and should) be used as the practice of freedom (Freire, 1981). Clearly critical psychology endeavors to create a psychology that can be used as the practice of freedom by inviting critical psychologists and others to reevaluate our epistemology, methodology and the context of our work.

Relying on the teachings of her mentor Paulo Freire, hooks (1994) asserts that education is never politically neutral. Similarly, it should be acknowledged that psychology is never politically neutral. The significance of this needs to be explored in the classroom context to discuss the ways in which psychology works in the interests of certain societal groups while neglecting others. The critical question related to annunciation (see Table 3) gives a concrete example of how critical psychologists can counter the imposed silence or invisibility of marginalized groups in psychology by integrating what has traditionally been excluded. The process of becoming aware of education as political requires working against and through the overwhelming will to deny the extent to which the politics of sexism, racism, classism, and heterosexism inform how and what we learn and teach (hooks, 1994). In mainstream psychology there is little to no discussion of how the politics of sexism, racism, classism and heterosexism shape how and what we learn and teach. Teaching psychology critically can represent a concrete step toward changing the

course curriculum, as well as the classroom discussions and exercises to integrate a critical exploration of sexism, racism, classism and heterosexism in psychology and society.

A critical approach to education includes the notion that "education should be democratized. Education should not mean incorporating people into existing cultural structures but giving them the means so that they can be the agents of their own progress" (Berryman, 1987, p. 37). Following in this tradition, teaching psychology from a critical perspective should involve discussing power, politics, oppression and emancipation. One example of this can be seen in the critical question related to working inside the University (see Table 3). As a teacher, a critical psychologist can use her/his power to promote his/her own self-interest or the interests of powerless groups in society. As critical psychologists, we need to be reminding ourselves and each other what our purpose is and who we are accountable to. Providing students with the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills enables them to become the agents of their own progress and creators of a more just and meaningful world as opposed to passive conformers to the existing status quo.

Critical pedagogy as an approach to teaching and learning which has an explicit emphasis on equity and justice, has had a transformative impact on the field of education (Freire, 1985; Giroux, 1988; Rezai-Rashti, 1995). When discussing the particular application of anti-racist education, Dei affirms that "anti-racism is an intellectual discourse as well as an educational advocacy for social change" (1997, p. 12). Similarly, critical psychology is an intellectual discourse which can be applied through teaching to advocate for social change.

Teaching critically is not a process whereby a teacher imparts pure knowledge to an ignorant student, rather it is one through which both teacher and learner seek to understand the world together (Berryman, 1987). When students are expected to be the passive recipients of unquestionable knowledge, they stop thinking and the liberatory potential of the pedagogical process is stunted. When they are invited to integrate their own

experiences and their own knowledge to actively contribute to the learning experience, the collaborative and creative process of better understanding the world grows exponentially. Only when psychologists develop a more critical approach to teaching will we be able to make a meaningful contribution to the problems of human liberation (Martin-Baro, 1994).

NOTE TO USERS

Page(s) not included in the original manuscript are unavailable from the author or university. The manuscript was microfilmed as received.

70-72

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI

Research

According to Rosa, Russell and Prilleltensky (1996), every aspect of research involves choice points in which one can decide to promote the vision and values of critical psychology or not. The critical questions provided in Table 4 are intended to guide the researcher through the complex maze of choice points in order that our research as critical psychologists may promote emancipation. The approaches to research that have been developed and used by feminists (Kirby & McKenna, 1989; Reinhartz, 1992) are important sources to consider in conjunction with the present discussion on how to engage in research which is consistent with the vision and values of critical psychology. Feminist research in psychology can be broadly defined as more cooperative, participatory, interdisciplinary, and non-hierarchical, as well as starting from personal experience (Wilkinson, 1989). Ristock and Pennell (1996) advance the notion that empowerment as an approach to community research implies consciously thinking about relations of power, cultural contexts and social action. A discussion of the political nature of psychological problems is not an end in itself. It is significant because it allows the perception that things could be otherwise, which creates the possibility for change. Critically evaluating the role of power in research has an emancipatory effect because, as the following quote suggests,

Critical thinking implies freedom by recognizing that social existence, including our knowledge of it, is not simply composed of givens imposed on us by powerful and mysterious forces. This recognition leads to the possibility of transcending existing social conditions. The act of critique implies that by thinking about and acting upon the world, we are able to change both our subjective interpretations and objective conditions (Thomas, 1993, p. 18 cited in Eakin, Robertson, Poland, Coburn & Edwards, 1996, p. 163).

The critical question related to denunciation (see Table 4) flows from the recognition that it is essential that we question the omnipotence of the dominant research paradigm in psychology.

Feminist research in psychology has been extremely influential in underlining the importance of using research and knowledge to help oppressed people. From this assertion,

we can see the consistency between feminist research in psychology and more general critical research in psychology. "Critical psychology as a subject-oriented research program promotes a type of research in which subjects are both participants and co-researchers simultaneously. Psychological research is intended as research for people not about people" (Teo, 1998b, p. 247). To provide a practical example of how this might manifest itself, consider the following. In a study that seeks to better understand the problem of smoking among young women, a critical approach to research would differ from the traditional psychological research paradigm. Rather than having young women who smoke as the objects of research, a critical researcher may choose to engage young women as active participants in each step of the research process. While research *on* young women's smoking patterns may increase the empirical knowledge base, it may not promote change in the lives of girls and young women. Working *with* young women in a respectful and empowering way to identify some of the root causes that they see as the reasons they have for choosing to smoke, the potential for meaningful change in the lives of girls and young women is increased substantially. More examples of this approach to research can be seen in Table 4 in the critical questions related to the methodology and the context of our work.

Participatory action research (PAR) methodologies have been adapted by community psychologists to advance the value of social justice (Nelson & Telford, 1996; Serrano-Garcia, 1990). PAR can often resemble community work due to the fact that it is community-based and community-driven, as well as being focused on directly changing the conditions of people's lives in a given community. As the example of working with young women suggested above, such alternative approaches influence the culture of research at every step. Inspired by participatory action research methodologies, critical research in psychology provides concrete strategies for changing the way research is typically done (see Table 4). Starting from the choice of a research topic to the involvement of multiple

stakeholders in each phase of the research experience, the research process is transformed. A shift in the emphasis on research over action needs to occur according to this perspective. Action must lead and research follow in order for social change to take place. Also, action that comes directly from the community is more grounded and sustainable than action imposed from a disconnected source. The researcher takes on the role of facilitator rather than expert in the process of change because, as was pointed out in the data, "the expert model breeds incompetence in everyone."

These recommended transformations in the traditional ways of conceptualizing and engaging in research are not to be taken to the extreme. Jimenez-Dominguez (1996) cautions participatory action researchers to the perils of producing liberation rhetoric that does not fundamentally alter the status quo of research. To be truly effective as we determine courses of action in critical psychology research, we must remember the importance of attaining a balance in the theory/practice, denunciation/annunciation and inside/outside dialectics involved in the research process. Furthermore, we must be willing to use various research paradigms to meet the specific needs of the populations we are working with, as the critical question related to annunciation suggests. There are many different ways of doing research. We must use multiple approaches in critical psychological research. For instance, the Latin-American psychologist Martin-Baro (1994) found in survey research a powerful tool for promoting change by putting statistical knowledge at the service of human liberation. This approach has also been used by feminist-empiricists. The ability to be flexible, adaptable and responsive goes a long way toward enabling the effective use of critical research in psychology.

Table 4

Critical Questions for the Promotion of Emancipation in Research

Domains	Critical Questions To Promote Emancipation
Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory: Do I rely solely on traditional psychological research paradigms in conceptualizing research projects, applying for research grants, and publishing research findings? • Practice: Have I tried new research paradigms in my psychological research, such as qualitative research, or participatory action research? • Praxis: Have I integrated grounded experience with theoretical knowledge in community-based action research?
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denunciation: Do I question the assumptions of empirical and quantitative research in my writing, teaching and research? • Annunciation: Do I adapt my research style and expectations to suit the specific needs of the diverse populations with whom I work? • Construction: Recognizing the limitations and potentialities of both traditional and non-traditional research in psychology, do I integrate paradigms to promote the interests of powerless groups?
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside: When I am publishing research findings do I make a concerted effort to truthfully discuss the findings of the research even if this may reflect negatively on me or the institution with which I am affiliated? • Outside: When I am conducting research in the community, do I engage in a respectful dialogue with research participants to negotiate the parameters of the research project? • Community Involvement: Do I work to ensure that there is a climate of collaboration and collective ownership of the research findings so that the recommendations from the research will be implemented?

Community Work

There are many examples of community involvement that can be useful in supporting the discussion of how to be involved in community work as a critical psychologist (Alinsky, 1972; Kuyek, 1990; Mies & Shiva, 1993). Social and political movements such as the environmental movement, the civil rights movement and the women's movement provide insight on the importance of such interventions and their relevance to critical psychology. Community work is a practical application of critical psychology. Examples of how community work can be used as a forum for the promotion of emancipation are outlined in Table 5. More broadly defined than clinical practice, the aim of community work is to engage in community-based action.

According to Kuyek (1990), to start doing community work it is not necessarily crucial to begin by getting large groups of people to discuss social, economic and political questions but rather, it is essential to build a culture of hope (instead of despair) which begins in our own lives, in the lives of our neighbors, and our friends. Rigoberta Menchu describes it best by sharing her thoughts about her experiences as an activist in Guatemala, "we went on organizing continually, we did it joyfully because ours was a just cause and we were motivated by something, something real" (Menchu, 1984, p. 198). Each of the critical questions in Table 5 point to this culture of hope. The conviction that it is possible to change the conditions of our own lives or of the lives of a particular group of people is the essential ingredient in any community work. As psychologists, we have traditionally limited our work to that which we might be able to explain instead of that which we might transform (Rosa, Russell & Prilleltensky, 1996). The critical question related to annunciation (see Table 5) is aimed at helping critical psychologists work in collaboration with others to transform psychology and the world around them. While the implicit motivation of psychological work has been to improve mental health, the methodologies have been limited to focussing on accumulating empirical knowledge and achieving

statistical significance. Observing, measuring and explaining the world as it is, as opposed to theorizing, actualizing and critically evaluating what it can be, is what feeds our apathy.

The critical turning point in which people begin to renew their hope and build a vision for a better society seems to be what Freire called "conscientization", which involves "the deepening awareness of both social relations and the possibility of their transformation" (Burton & Kagan, 1996, p.202). This process is quite similar to the concept of "the personal is political", the foundation of the feminist movement (Mulvey, 1988; Nelson & Telford, 1996). The relationship that exists between one's personal experiences and the broader social-political-economic-historic context is what critical consciousness and critical psychology are based on. Having or creating the opportunity to discuss this relationship can have important repercussions in terms of change "because we can only understand when we start talking to each other. And this is the only way we can correct our ideas" (Menchu, 1984, p. 166). Through dialogue, community work comes alive. The critical question related to community participation (see Table 5) reflects this point. Political literacy, or our ability to see the links between psychological oppression and structures of domination, leads to political action which helps us move imperfect societies to more desirable states (Prilleltensky, 1996).

The practical steps involved in community work shift over time and in diverse situations. Table 5 may be used as a guide to some of the important things to remember when doing community work. I will identify some steps that are commonly used to serve as one example of community work in critical psychology. The first step is the identification of a problem or concern in the community. A group of people who share this concern will come together to start discussing the problem. They may decide to learn more about this problem by reading about it or talking about it with other people who may know more than they do. The group will decide what they want to do about this problem. They will consider what action they can engage in and how they want to go about implementing

it. They may choose to raise people's awareness through an educational initiative that they will organize such as a community forum with guest speakers. This would be consistent with the cultural, ideological and educational approach to social intervention as described in Bennett (1987). They may choose to hold a demonstration to bring broad-based attention to some of the issues that they are concerned with. They may choose among many other very creative approaches to effecting social change as a community of concerned and responsible citizens in a democratic society. When one action has been accomplished, the group will evaluate all aspects of their work and make the necessary changes to be more effective in the next action.

The role of a critical psychologist as a community worker might be to participate in a group advocating for children's rights or to become the founder of a community-based educational initiative on environmental issues. No matter what area we have chosen for our community interventions, as critical psychologists we need to remember to engage in community-based actions that are consistent with the vision and values that we continually define to be critical psychology.

Table 5

Critical Questions for the Promotion of Emancipation in Community Work

Domains	Critical Questions To Promote Emancipation
Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory: When I write about the work I do, can I clearly articulate who I am accountable to? • Practice: Do I work in community-based settings so that I am not always surrounded by a privileged elite population of university students and faculty? • Praxis: Do I use the knowledge I have about oppression and social movements in the actions I take to work toward emancipation?
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denunciation: Do I question sexist, racist and classist strategies that have been traditionally used in psychological community interventions? • Annunciation: Do I work to create a climate in which creative and imaginative actions can be thought of and put into practice? • Construction: Do I promote the constant process of articulation of ideas and critical evaluation of actions throughout all aspects of my involvement in community work?
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside: Do I transgress the oppressive boundaries between the University and the community and actively seek to bridge the gap by involving community members in academic work for social change and involving myself in community work for social change? • Outside: When I am facilitating a community-based project do I bring together people with different capacities so that we may all learn from one another throughout the collective action process? • Community Involvement: Do I take time in my busy academic schedule to enter into dialogue with the people who are most oppressed by injustice to decide what kind of community work would be most valuable, meaningful and appropriate?

An Example of Critical Psychology in Action

In order to better understand what these recommended courses of action could look like when implemented, I will briefly describe how I think the Community Psychology (CP) program at Wilfrid Laurier University engages in practices that have an explicit critical orientation. Through its teaching, research and community work, the CP program provides an excellent example of critical praxis, construction and community involvement. For the purposes of this research, I will limit this discussion to a simple overview of the key features that are characteristic of the critical approach taken in the CP program. However, I think it would be worthwhile to explore in greater depth the CP program at WLU as one example of critical psychology in action.

Some features of the CP program at WLU illustrate how the principles of critical psychology can be applied in teaching, research and community work. In the context of teaching, the graduate program in CP has been inspired by critical pedagogy, feminist and empowerment pedagogies and adult education. In CP, we learn about how the politics of racism, sexism, classism and ableism shape what we learn and how we are taught. There is an explicit emphasis on these topics and their impacts on the mental and physical health of individuals, communities, and societies. As a program, we are continually reviewing the curriculum, as well as other aspects of the learning environment, to ensure that an anti-oppression perspective is used. As active learners who are treated as such, students have the opportunity to participate in the development of the course curriculum and the structure of each course.

Accountability to the groups with whom professors and students work is a central component of the classroom content and process. There is often an opportunity to have guest speakers attend our classes to share their experiences with the group. In class-related work, students may choose to work with community groups, involving them in all aspects of a project. This extends the walls of the university classroom to a broader audience and

transcends the narrow boundaries of what is considered legitimate knowledge in psychology. Furthermore, this pedagogical approach diversifies and enriches the learning experience for all participants involved.

Critical thinking is highly encouraged in all aspects of our work in CP. Both professors and students are actively involved in the pedagogical process with the intention of gaining a further understanding of the world. Time is spent to establish an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in each class. We are encouraged to integrate our own experiences and knowledge to contribute to the learning. This provides students and professors with the opportunity to create more equitable and meaningful learning environments.

Community-based research is taught and modeled by professors in the CP program. The research methodology course covers a broad range of research paradigms from quantitative research methods and qualitative research methods. Many students who come to the CP program have only been exposed to quantitative research methods in their undergraduate degrees in psychology. In the CP graduate program, students have an equal opportunity to further their knowledge of quantitative methods and be introduced to the many qualitative research techniques. Students and professors engage in both qualitative and quantitative research.

Many research projects in the CP program have been undertaken in collaboration with community groups or community members as both participants and co-researchers. This type of research usually relies on a participatory-action approach (PAR) in which researcher and community member play an active role in each step of the research process, from design to implementation to action-oriented outcome. Another unique approach to research that has recently been used in the CP program is a critical autobiographical approach. With this approach, it becomes possible to merge the researcher's public/academic self with his/her private/personal self. As one CP student describes,

I have long understood how particular personal life experiences influenced my decision to study psychology but, prior to coming to Wilfrid Laurier, these experiences were rarely shared in the classroom context or in private discussions with my instructors or classmates. I always feared that to share these experiences would undermine my right to legitimacy and to authority in an academic setting. This likely largely due to being an undergraduate student in a psychology department wedded to the distanced and disinterested positivist approach to research. Objectivity was deemed possible and necessary in this setting, and I feared that by sharing my first-hand experiences I would be seen as incapable of doing "good" research by virtue of locating myself within an interested position (Brown, 1998).

Professors and students in the CP program have a long history of involvement in community work in the Kitchener-Waterloo region. There is a full year course dedicated to a practicum designed to provide students with the chance to apply their learning in community settings. Some students choose to engage in community-based research while others get involved in grassroots activism. One student and professor this year participated in organizing a teach-in. The focus of this event was to give youth a chance to explore economic globalization and corporate rule. The objective was to bring youth from Southern Ontario together to discuss the impacts of globalization on societies, communities, and individual people. The teach-in provided a forum for young people to strategize and develop action plans to counter the effects of economic globalization and corporate rule. The teach-in had an inspiring effect on all students, youth and adults involved. Together they created a culture of hope. They discovered that through dialogue and action-oriented strategizing they could make a difference in each of their respective communities.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to engage critical psychologists in a formative evaluation of the field of critical psychology. The methodology used was dialogical in character, inviting contributions of thought and experience from critical psychologists working in a range of psychological subdisciplines worldwide. A retrospective account of

the major philosophical influences provided an opportunity to reflect on the roots of critical psychology and how these contribute to the present day expression of critical psychology. The contemporary state of critical psychology was discussed using the published literature and the responses generated from research participants. Key debates were identified as dialectics that shape the entire critical movement in psychology. The focus on action that consistently emerged from all the sources that were consulted was explored as an attempt to fully understand critical psychology's commitment to an action orientation. The next step, the recommendations for action, which combined the literature, the research findings and my own reflections, is the contribution that we have all collectively made to critical psychology as a movement.

My vision for this research project was to take a concrete step in the direction of developing a psychology that works toward emancipation. One research participant made the following comment about critical psychology's involvement in the process of social change, "since we are mostly academic types at this point, we need to get out and learn from trying to be part of the change process in much more direct ways and then share these experiences." Since I have come to the Community Psychology program at Wilfrid Laurier, I feel I have been honored to be in an academic program that actively seeks to engage in actions that facilitate social change. My passion for critical social theory and community-driven social action has been acknowledged, validated and encouraged for the first time in the academy and in psychology. This thesis experience has helped crystallize some of my earliest intuitions about psychology. I can now assert with confidence that critical psychology contributes meaningfully to human liberation.

My thesis was intended to be a mobilizer. It was not an intervention directed at groups who have been silenced and marginalized by the inequities perpetuated by mainstream psychology and society. It was aimed at a group of people who, because inequities still exist, have the power, resources, and responsibility to be actively engaged in

social change initiatives. We are all involved in the collaborative creation of justice in interpersonal relationships, community settings, and society as a whole. We all benefit from the promotion of emancipation and the elimination of oppression. My thesis was designed as an invitation to critically reflect on our roles as academics and as psychologists in the process of change. We are committed to human liberation in the work we do in critical psychology. Together, we defined some steps to explore the potential of what that commitment can mean for the practice of critical psychology in teaching, research and community work.

NOTE TO USERS

Page(s) not included in the original manuscript are unavailable from the author or university. The manuscript was microfilmed as received.

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI

References

- Alinsky, S. D. (1972). Rules for radicals: A pragmatic primer for realistic radicals. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Aron, A. & Corne, S. (Eds.) (1994). Writings for a liberation psychology. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bennett, E. (Ed.) (1987). Social intervention: Theory and practice. New York, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Bennett, E. & Campbell, S. (1996, August). Fair share farming: Putting community psychology ideals to practice. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada.
- Berryman, P. (1987). Liberation theology: The essential facts about the revolutionary movement in Latin America and beyond. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Bronner, S. E. & Kellner, D. M. (Eds.) (1989). Critical theory and society: A reader. New York, NY: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc.
- Brown, L. S. (1997). Ethics in psychology: Cui bono? In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), Critical psychology: An introduction (pp. 51-67). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Brown, J. L. (August, 1998). Unpublished Master's Thesis Proposal. Psychology Department, Wilfrid Laurier University.
- Brown, L. S. (1994). Subversive dialogues: Theory in feminist therapy. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Burman, E. (1997). Developmental psychology and its discontents. In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), Critical psychology: An introduction (pp. 134-149). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Burman, E., Aitken, G., Alldred, P., Allwood, R., Billington, T., Goldenberg, B., Gordo Lopez, A. G., Heenan, C., Marks, D. & Warner, S. (1996). Psychology discourse practice: From regulation to resistance. Bristol, PA: Taylor & Francis, Inc.

Burton, M. & Kagan, C. (1996). Rethinking empowerment: Shared action against powerlessness. In I. Parker and R. Spears (Eds.) Psychology and society: Radical theory and practice (pp. 197-208). Chicago: Pluto Press.

Calhoun, C. (1995). Critical social theory: Culture, history, and the challenge of difference. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Cernovsky, Z. Z. (1997). A critical look at intelligence research. In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), Critical psychology: An introduction (pp. 121-133). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dei, G. (1997, March) Race and difference: The politics of denial and affirmation. Paper presented at Wilfrid Laurier University. Waterloo, Canada.

Eakin, J., Robertson, A., Poland, B., Coburn, D. & Edwards, R. (1996). Towards a critical social science perspective on health promotion research. Health Promotion International, 11, 157-165.

Fox, D. (1997). Psychology and law: Justice diverted. In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), Critical psychology: An introduction (pp. 217-232). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fraser, N. & Nicholson, L. J. (1990). Social criticism without philosophy: An encounter between feminism and postmodernism. In L. J. Nicholson (Ed.), Feminism/Postmodernism (pp. 19-38). New York, NY: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, Inc.

Freire, P. (1981). Education for critical consciousness. New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company.

Freire, P. (1985). The politics of education: Culture, power, and liberation. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.

- Freire, P. (1994). Pedagogy of the oppressed (rev. ed.). New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company.
- Fromm, E. (1965). Escape from freedom. New York, NY: Avon Books.
- Geuss, R. (1981). The idea of a critical theory: Habermas & the Frankfurt School. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Gill, R. (1995). Relativism, reflexivity and politics: Interrogating discourse analysis from a feminist perspective. In S. Wilkinson and C. Kitzinger (Eds.), Feminism and discourse: Psychological perspectives (pp. 165-186). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Giroux, H. A. (1988). Teachers as intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning. Granby, MA: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.
- Goldenberg, I. I. (1978). Oppression and social intervention. Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall.
- Hare-Mustin, R. T. & Marecek, J. (1997). Abnormal and clinical psychology: The politics of madness. In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), Critical psychology: An introduction (pp. 104-120). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Henriques, J., Hollway, W., Urwin, C., Venn, C., & Walkerdine, V. (1984). Changing the subject: Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity. New York, NY: Methuen & Co.
- Hernandez, A. (1997). Pedagogy, democracy and feminism: Rethinking the public sphere. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Hofmann Nemiroff, G. (1989). Beyond "talking heads": Towards an empowering pedagogy of women's studies. Atlantis, 15, 1-16.
- hooks, b. (1994). Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom. New York, NY: Routledge.

Ibanez, T. (1997). Why a critical social psychology? In T. Ibanez and L. Iniguez (Eds.), Critical social psychology (pp. 27-41). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Jimenez-Dominguez, B. (1996). Participant action research: Myths and fallacies. In I. Parker and R. Spears (Eds.) Psychology and society: Radical theory and practice (pp. 220-229). Chicago: Pluto Press.

Kirby, S. & McKenna, K. (1989). Experience research social change: Methods from the margins. Toronto, ON: Garamond Press.

Kitzinger, C. (1997). Lesbian and gay psychology: A critical analysis. In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), Critical psychology: An introduction (pp. 202-216). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kuyek, J. N. (1990). Fighting for hope: Organizing to realize our dreams. Montreal, PQ: Black Rose Books.

Law, I. & Lax, B. (1998). What is critical psychology: An interview with Erica Burman & Ian Parker. Gecko, 2, 51-61.

Lerman, H. & Porter, N. (Eds.). (1990). Feminist ethics in psychotherapy. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.

Martin-Baro, I. (1994). Writings for a liberation psychology. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Menchu, R. (1984). I, Rigoberta Menchu, an Indian woman from Guatemala. New York, NY: Verso.

Mies, M. & Shiva, V. (1993). Ecofeminism. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publications.

Moghaddam, R. M. & Studer, C. (1997). Cross-cultural psychology: The frustrated gadfly's promises, potentialities, and failures. In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), Critical psychology: An introduction (pp. 185-201). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Montero, M. (1997). Political psychology: A critical perspective. In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), Critical psychology: An introduction (pp. 233-244). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Morss, J. R. (1996). Growing critical: Alternatives to developmental psychology. New York, NY: Routledge.

Mulvey, A. (1988). Community psychology and feminism: Tensions and commonalities. Journal of Community Psychology, 16, 70-83.

Nelson, G., Lord, J. & Ochocka, J. (1999). Shifting the paradigm in community mental health. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Nelson, G. & Telford, W. (1996, August). Social justice in community psychology research. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada.

Ng, R. (1995). Teaching against the grain: Contradictions and possibilities. In R. Ng, P. Staton and J. Scane (Eds.) Anti-racism, feminism, and critical approaches to education (pp. 129-152). Toronto, ON: OISE Press.

Pancer, S. M. (1997). Social psychology: The crisis continues. In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), Critical psychology: An introduction (pp. 150-165). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Parker, I. & Shotter, J. (1990). Introduction. In I. Parker and J. Shotter (Eds.), Deconstructing social psychology (pp. 1-14). New York, NY: Routledge.

Parker, I. & Spears, R. (1996). (Eds.). Psychology and society. Chicago: Pluto Press.

Parker, I. (1989). The crisis in modern social psychology: And how to end it. New York, NY: Routledge.

Parker, I. (1997). The unconscious state of social psychology. In T. Ibanez and L. Iniguez (Eds.) (pp. 157-168). Critical social psychology. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Potter, J. (1997). Discourse and critical social psychology. In T. Ibanez and L. Iniguez (Eds.) (pp. 55-66). Critical social psychology. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Prilleltensky, I. & Fox, D. (1997). Introducing critical psychology: Values, assumptions, and the status quo. In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), Critical psychology: An introduction (pp. 3-20). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Prilleltensky, I. & Gonick, L. (1996). Politics change, oppression remains: On the psychology and politics of oppression. Political Psychology, 17, 127-148.

Prilleltensky, I. & Nelson, G. (1997). Community psychology: Reclaiming social justice. In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), Critical psychology: An introduction (pp. 166-184). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Prilleltensky, I. (1994). The morals and politics of psychology: Psychological discourse and the status quo. Albany, N-Y: State University of New-York Press.

Prilleltensky, I. (1996). Human, moral and political values for an emancipatory psychology. The Humanist Psychologist, 24, 307-324.

Prilleltensky, I. (1997). Values, assumptions, and practice: Assessing the moral implications of psychological discourse and action. American Psychologist, 52, 517-535.

Prilleltensky, I. (1999). Values in community psychology: A framework for review and renewal. American Journal of Community Psychology. Paper submitted for publication.

Rail, G. (1996, February). Feminist pedagogy, empowerment education, and women's studies courses. Paper presented at the workshop on feminist pedagogy, University of Ottawa, Canada.

- Rappaport, J. & Stewart, E. (1997). A critical look at critical psychology: Elaborating the questions. In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), Critical psychology: An introduction (pp. 301-317). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Reinharz, S. (1992). Feminist methods in social research. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Rezai-Rashti, G. (1995). Multicultural education, anti-racist education, and critical pedagogy: Reflections on everyday practice. In R. Ng, P. Staton and J. Scane (Eds.) Anti-racism, feminism, and critical approaches to education (pp. 3-20). Toronto, ON: OISE Press.
- Ristock, J. L. & Pennell, J. (1996). Community research as empowerment: Feminist links, postmodern interruptions. Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Rosa, A. C. (1997). The courage to change: Salvadoran stories of personal and social transformation. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.
- Rosa, A., Russell, J. & Prilleltensky, I. (1996, August). Social justice in community psychology. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada.
- Rosenau, P. M. (1992). Post-modernism and the social sciences: Insights, inroads, and intrusions. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sampson, E. E. (1983). Justice and the critique of pure psychology. New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Sarason, S. B. (1981). Psychology misdirected. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Sarason, S. B. (1982). Psychology and social action. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers.
- Serrano-Garcia, I. (1990). Implementing research: Putting our values to work. In P. Tolan, C. Keys, F. Chertok, & L. Jason (Eds.), Researching community psychology: Issues

of theory and methods (pp. 171-182). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Sloan, T. (1996). **Damaged life: The crisis of the modern psyche**. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sloan, T. (1997). Theories of personality: Ideology and beyond. In D. Fox and I. Prilleltensky (Eds.), **Critical psychology: An introduction** (pp. 87-103). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Spears, R. (1997). Introduction. In T. Ibanez and L. Iniguez (Eds.), **Critical social psychology** (pp. 1-26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Stainton Rogers, W. & Stainton Rogers, R. (1997). Does critical social psychology mean the end of the world? In T. Ibanez and L. Iniguez (Eds.) (pp. 67-82). **Critical social psychology**. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sullivan, E. V. (1984). **A critical psychology: Interpretation of the personal world**. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Teo, T. (1995). Society, subject, and development: Analysis of categories in German critical thought. In I. Lubek, R. van Hezewijk, G. Pheterson, and C. Tolman (Eds.), **Trends and issues in theoretical psychology** (pp. 353-358). New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Teo, T. (1996). Practical reason in psychology: Postmodern discourse and a neo-modern alternative. In C. W. Tolman, F. Cherry, R. van Hezewijk, and I. Lubek (Eds.), **Problems of theoretical psychology** (pp. 280-290). Toronto, ON: Captus.

Teo, T. (1997). Developmental psychology and the relevance of a critical metatheoretical reflection. **Human Development**, 40, 195-210.

Teo, T. (1998a). Prolegomenon to a contemporary psychology of liberation. **Theory and Psychology**, 8, 527-547.

Teo, T. (1998b). Klaus Holzkamp and the rise and decline of German critical psychology. History of Psychology, 1, 235-253.

Teo, T. (in press-a). To overturn all circumstances in which the human is a degraded, a subjugated, a forsaken, a contemptible being. In T. Sloan (Ed.), Voices for critical psychology.

Teo, T. (in press-b). Methodologies of critical psychology: Illustrations from the field of racism. Annual Review of Critical Psychology.

Tolman, C. W. (1994). Psychology, society and subjectivity: An introduction to German critical psychology. London: Routledge.

Tolman, C. W. & Maiers, W. (Eds.) (1991). Critical psychology: Contributions to an historical science of the subject. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Tolman, C. W. (1994). Psychology, society and subjectivity: An introduction to German critical psychology. London: Routledge.

Wilkinson, S. (1989). The impact of feminist research: Issues of legitimacy. Philosophical Psychology, 2, 261-269.

Wilkinson, S. (1991). Feminism and psychology: From critique to reconstruction. Feminism & Psychology, 1, 5-18.

Wilkinson, S. (1997). Prioritizing the political: Feminist psychology. In T. Ibanez and L. Iniguez (Eds.) Critical social psychology (pp. 178-194). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Young, I. M. (1990). Justice and the politics of difference. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Letter of Introduction for Potential Email Participants

Dear Colleague,

My name is Stephanie Austin. I am a graduate student in psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University working with Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky. I am writing to invite you to participate in an exciting study about critical psychology. Critical psychology is a movement that is gaining momentum in psychology. Although people define it in various ways, for the purpose of this research we define critical psychology as *a movement that challenges psychology to work towards emancipation and social justice and that opposes the uses of psychology to perpetuate oppression and injustice*. We believe the time is right to conduct a formative evaluation of the field and to propose recommendations for action. This study, which will constitute my Master's thesis, will contribute to critical psychology by reflecting on its progress so far.

Because of your involvement in critical psychology in one way or another, we would like to ask you to participate in this study. We would like to ask you to share your thoughts with us about the foundations and the applications of critical psychology. Following an analysis of the information, I will provide you with a summary of the findings and recommendations. At that point you may wish to provide me with further input which I will consider for inclusion in the thesis.

As a participant in the Email discussion group portion of the study, you will be asked to answer two or three questions every week, for a period of four weeks. The Email discussions will take place during the month of November 1998. People may send their answer exclusively to me, or to the entire list to generate discussion. I will save the contributions and try to incorporate them into my study. I believe that we can learn a lot from each other about the state of affairs in critical psychology.

If you would prefer to see all the questions at once and type your answers at once and send them to me, please write me a private Email and I will gladly send them to you.

I would like to use the material for my thesis. If you object to having your contributions used for the thesis, please advise me and I will not use your input. Otherwise, I may choose to use material for the thesis. Please note that any material I use from the Email discussion group will not identify the writer. Your contributions will remain anonymous.

The questions for this week (Nov. 2 - 8) are as follows:

1. What is your understanding of critical psychology? How would you define it?
2. Tell me the story of how you came to develop your theoretical concepts, values and/or vision of critical psychology?

Questions for week two (Nov. 9 - 15):

1. What basic elements (e.g., theoretical concepts, values, and/or vision) should guide critical psychology?
2. What do you think is missing from the basic elements (e.g., theoretical concepts, values, and/or vision) of critical psychology?
3. What are your recommendations to further develop the basic elements of critical psychology?

Questions for week three (Nov. 16 - 22):

1. What is your understanding of how critical psychology should be practiced in teaching, research, and/or community work?
2. Tell me the story of how you developed and how you apply critical psychology principles in teaching, research, and/or community work.

Questions for week four (Nov. 23 - 29):

1. What principles should guide the practice of critical psychology in teaching, research, and/or community work?
2. What do you think is missing from the practice of teaching, research, and/or community work in critical psychology?
3. What are your recommendations to further develop the practice of critical psychology in teaching, research, and/or community work?

Stephanie Austin

Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky

Letter of Introduction for Potential Essay Participants

Dear Colleague,

My name is Stephanie Austin. I am a graduate student in psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University working with Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky. I am writing to invite you to participate in an exciting study about critical psychology. Critical psychology is a movement that is gaining momentum in psychology. Although people define it in various ways, for the purpose of this research we define critical psychology as *a movement that challenges psychology to work towards emancipation and social justice and that opposes the uses of psychology to perpetuate oppression and injustice*. We believe the time is right to conduct a formative evaluation of the field and to propose recommendations for action. This study, which will constitute my Master's thesis, will contribute to critical psychology by reflecting on its progress so far.

Because of your involvement in critical psychology in one way or another, we would like to ask you to participate in this study. We would like to ask you to share your thoughts with us about the foundations and the applications of critical psychology. Following an analysis of the information, I will provide you with a summary of the findings and recommendations. At that point you may wish to provide me with further input which I will consider for inclusion in the thesis.

We would prefer that you type your answers on separate sheets (you can write as little or as much as you like, preferably not exceeding 12 pages double spaced). However, if you would like, you should feel free to tape record your answers and send me the tape. Some people may prefer this option.

I would highly appreciate your participation in the study. It would be great to have your input about how to advance the practice of critical psychology. Needless to say, your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose not to respond to one or more of the questions, or you may choose to withdraw from the study. I look forward to hearing from you. If you are interested in participating, please read and sign the enclosed consent form and return it to me with your answers in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Thank you in advance for your consideration

Stephanie Austin

Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky

Letter of Informed Consent for Essay Participants

Researcher: Stephanie Austin
Masters of Community Psychology Student
Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont.

Supervisor: Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky
Associate Professor of Psychology
Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont.

This letter confirms that I have been informed of the purpose and the methods of the Guidelines for Action in Critical Psychology study. Further, I have been informed of what will be requested of me if I agree to participate in this study. If I choose to participate, I understand that:

-my participation in this study is entirely voluntary;

-I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, and to not answer any questions that I do not wish to answer;

-there is no risk involved in my participation and I am free to contact the researcher if I have any questions or concerns;

-my identity will not be revealed in the study;

-I agree to allow any data collected in this study to be used in future publications and/or presentations;

-quotes from my written responses may be used in the research and subsequent publications;

-I will be provided with a summary of the findings for my feedback after the initial analysis and synthesis and again once the entire research project has been completed;

Name of participant (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Please return your signed copy to Stephanie Austin before December 1, 1998.

Essay Guide

Critical psychology is a movement that is gaining momentum in psychology. We are aware that there are various strands of critical psychology and that different emphases exist. However, for the purpose of this study, we define critical psychology as *a movement that challenges psychology to work towards emancipation and social justice and that opposes the uses of psychology to perpetuate oppression and injustice.*

Because of your involvement in critical psychology in one way or another, we would like to ask you to participate in this study. The main purpose of the study is to develop recommendations for action in critical psychology. The enclosed letter explains the objectives of the research and the pertinent ethical considerations.

Now we would really appreciate it if you could take a little time to answer the following questions and send your responses back before December 1, 1998:

SECTION ON FOUNDATIONS

- 1. What is your understanding of critical psychology? How would you define it?**
- 2. Tell me the story of how you came to develop your theoretical concepts, values and/or vision of critical psychology?**
- 3. What basic elements (e.g., theoretical concepts, values, and/or vision) should guide critical psychology?**
- 4. What do you think is missing from the basic elements (e.g., theoretical concepts, values, and/or vision) of critical psychology?**
- 5. What are your recommendations to further develop the basic elements of critical psychology?**

SECTION ON APPLICATIONS

- 1. What is your understanding of how critical psychology should be practiced in teaching, research, and/or community work?**
- 2. Tell me the story of how you developed and how you apply critical psychology principles in teaching, research, and/or community work.**
- 3. What principles should guide the practice of critical psychology in teaching, research, and/or community work?**

- 4. What do you think is missing from the practice of teaching, research, and/or community work in critical psychology?**
- 5. What are your recommendations to further develop the practice of critical psychology in teaching, research, and/or community work?**