



The Sociocultural Turn in Psychology: The Contextual Emergence of Mind and Self

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The sociocultural turn in psychology treats psychological subjects, such as the mind and the self, as processes that are constituted, or "made up," within specific social and cultural practices. In other words, though one's distinct psychology is anchored by an embodied, biological existence, sociocultural interactions are integral to the evolution of the person.

Only in the past two decades has the sociocultural turn truly established itself within disciplinary and professional psychology. Providing advanced students and practitioners with a definitive understanding of these theories, Suzanne R. Kirschner and Jack Martin, former presidents of the American Psychological Association's Division of the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, assemble a collection of essays that describes the discursive, hermeneutic, dialogical, and activity approaches of sociocultural psychology. Each contribution recognizes psychology as a human science and supports the individual's potential for agency and freedom. At the same time, they differ in their understanding of a person's psychological functioning and the best way to study it. Ultimately the sociocultural turn offers an alternative to overly biological or interiorized theories of the self, emphasizing instead the formation and transformation of our minds in relation to others and the world.

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Editorial Review

Review

The Sociocultural Turn in Psychology addresses a variety of ways in which, in contemporary psychology, there has been a trend toward viewing both mind and self as fundamentally constituted by cultural context and human interaction. A variety of books on topics like hermeneutics and psychological theory or cultural psychology have been published, but no book has attempted to bring together these diverse yet related approaches to the sociocultural origins and basis of mind and self.

(Jaan Valsiner, editor, *Culture & Psychology*)

This book is urgently needed in psychology. The title phrase 'sociocultural turn' has an important meaning because it connotes that a full 'turn' is required. For too long, psychologists have resisted such a turn by attempting to add cultural sensitivity to culturally insensitive ideas, such as Western research, theory, and practice. Fortunately, this book has assembled a Who's Who of scholars who not only make the full sociocultural turn but describe practically how other psychologists can and should as well.

(Brent D. Slife, Brigham Young University, author of *Critical Thinking About Psychology: Hidden Assumptions and Plausible Alternatives*)

About the Author

Suzanne R. Kirschner is associate professor of psychology at the College of the Holy Cross and author of *The Religious and Romantic Origins of Psychoanalysis: Individuation and Integration in Post-Freudian Theory*, as well as numerous articles on the interconnections between psychological theories and their sociocultural contexts. She is a fellow of the American Psychological Association.

Jack Martin is Burnaby Mountain Endowed Professor of Psychology at Simon Fraser University and coauthor of *Persons: Understanding Psychological Selfhood and Agency, Psychology and the Question of Agency*, and *The Psychology of Human Possibility and Constraint*. His research interests are the philosophy and history of psychology, social developmental psychology, and educational psychology, with particular emphasis on the psychology of selfhood and personhood.

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