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Multicultural Counseling
as the "Fourth Force":
A Call to Arms

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Recent contributors to the multicultural counseling debate seem to suggest that multi-cultural counseling has almost attained the status of a new paradigm, a new theory. This article examines the field of multicultural counseling as a new paradigm in counseling theory and suggests that although there has been a heightened awareness in multicultural counseling theory, the need to recognize the cultural and political context of human development in clinical practice has been very slow. It is argued that the progress made seems to be only in theory and research and that as scientist-practitioners, we need to work hard at supporting competent practice. A call is made to the profession for action.

Traditional counseling and psychotherapy theories have tended to pay very little attention to cultural differences. Social psychological theories, on the other hand, have long recognized individuals as cultural beings and have suggested that awareness of this important fact is very crucial in the under-standing of individuals, especially those in therapeutic relationships. Aware-ness of cultural differences was heightened at the Vail Conference, where it was suggested that to conduct therapy with the culturally different client without proper training and without the awareness of the role of cultural differences is unethical (Korman, 1973). In 1991, the American Psychologi-cal Association (APA) issued guidelines for providing psychological services to ethnic, linguistic, and culturally diverse populations. The Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) also approved a docu-ment outlining the "need and rationale for a multicultural perspective in counseling" (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Thus there seems to be a new emphasis on cultural diversity, and this is leading the field of psychology in several divergent directions, especially in feminist approaches, family psychology, and cultural identity development theories.

There is no doubt that with such an awareness and a rationale for a multicultural perspective in counseling, very significant gains have been made in multicultural counseling theory. It is encouraging that numerous

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journals in the field have, more than ever before, devoted whole issues and several articles to multiculturalism. It is also encouraging that counseling psychology has at least paid more lip service to multiculturalism than have other specialties. It is perhaps these gains that lead Pedersen (1991) to suggest that "[m]ulticulturalism has gained the status of a general theory, complementing other scientific theories to explain human behavior." Pedersen further argues that the profession is "moving toward a generic theory of multiculturalism as a 'fourth force' position, complementary to the other three forces of psychodynamic, behavioral, and humanistic explanations of human behavior" (p. 7). Ivey, Ivey, and Simek-Morgan (1993) have also referred to multicultural counseling as "the fourth force of counseling theory," stating that it "starts with the awareness of differences among clients and the importance of the effects of family and cultural factors on the way clients view the world" (p. 94). Niles (1993) has also suggested that multicultural counseling has "acquired legitimacy" (p. 14). Ibrahim (1991) suggested that the "meaningfulness of multicultural counseling and development literature and research as the fourth force in counseling" is possible when differences in worldview are considered (p. 14). It appears, from the examination of the literature, that this view of multicultural counseling as a fourth force is beginning to be shared and endorsed by other researchers.

Despite the current attention being given multiculturalism, professional organizations, training institutions, and service providers are still practicing counseling and psychotherapy that focuses on the individual client from an intrapsychic perspective. Thus Sue and Zane's (1987) observation of almost a decade ago that past efforts at outlining the need and rationale for a multicultural perspective have met with only minimal success seem to be still valid. Arredondo (1994) has also observed that we are still "reexamining reasons and possible models for multicultural counselor training (MCT) program development" (p. 309). Writing in a similar vein, Atkinson (1994) has also submitted that some of the motivators for developing a philosophical basis for multiculturalism (political correctness, guilt, and paternalistic attitudes) "are self-serving and less appropriate motivators" (p. 301).

This article represents an effort to discuss an alternate viewpoint about the status of multicultural counseling. I will attempt to (a) look at Kuhn's (1962) definition of a paradigm and examine how well multiculturalism fits that definition, (b) look at some of the major approaches to multiculturalism and research strategies, (c) argue that "a serious moral vacuum" (see Pedersen & Marsella, 1982) still exists in the delivery of cross-cultural counseling and therapy, and, most importantly, (d) offer some suggestions on what we could do to make multiculturalism a fourth force.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Although some progress has been made toward enhanced multicultural awareness and intentionality, many unanswered questions still remain. For example, will this progress achieve the kind of impact realized by the first three forces? Is multiculturalism just a fad that will pass away in due time? Are psychologists and other mental health professionals developing multicultural awareness and competence simply because this is the politically correct thing to do, or are they doing so because it is morally and ethically the correct thing to do? At this stage in our development, multiculturalism may not really be a fourth force. To some of the pioneers in the field (for example, Atkinson, Helms, Ivey, Pedersen, and Sue, to name only a few) who have worked and continue to work so tirelessly, multiculturalism as a fourth force can be envisioned. But for the majority of academicians and practitioners, it seems to me that multiculturalism is nothing more than a mirror image of traditional theories, a new way of doing the "same old stuff." This is because multicultural counseling issues continue to be add-ons only and treated as peripheral. Academic departments seem satisfied when they are able to offer one course in multicultural counseling while they go on with traditional training models in a business-as-usual manner. As Ponterotto and Casas (1987) observe, programs that include cross-cultural issues tend to be developed at institutions primarily because of a commitment by a minority faculty member interested in the field. The unfortunate implications of multiculturalism still being the same old stuff are these: Minorities continue to be underserved in therapy, and they continue to terminate the process prematurely (Sue & Zane, 1987). It would indeed seem, as Cheatham (1994) has suggested, that "proclaiming multiculturalism as a fourth force in counseling and psychotherapy does not make it so" (p. 290).

PARADIGM SHIFT

Kuhn (1962) describes a paradigm as a "universally recognized scientific achievement that for a time provides model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners" (p. x). When paradigms change, there are "usually significant shifts in the criteria determining the legitimacy both of problems and of proposed solutions" (p. 108). New paradigms, therefore, have their own theories, methods, standards, and worldviews. In the words of Gutting (1980), a "super-theory" is created with the emergence of a new paradigm, and it should function as "a focal point for the consensus of the

scientific community" (p. 2). Thus any new paradigm must be able to establish rules by which the scientific community conducts research; it must have its own language, key concepts, and methods of research.

As a fourth force, multicultural counseling must learn to look at problems of all clients on a much deeper level than is currently achieved. This deeper level of study will require that we address the dominant themes of multicultural counseling: differences in worldview and spirituality from the epistemological, ontological, cosmological, and axiological perspectives. For example, how do ethnic minorities conceptualize the structure of the universe? What are the origins of nature and human beings? What is reality? How does it come to be? How does it change? What is knowledge? What are values, and how do they develop? In therapy, what constitutes change and how does the change process come to be? Answers to these questions will demonstrate, in some measure, that psychology trainees are acquiring knowledge as well as understanding the worldviews of their minority/culturally different clients. It will also provide the meaningfulness of multicultural counseling as a fourth force that Ibrahim (1991) sees as possible only when worldviews are made components of training.

Inasmuch as the fourth force continues to define itself by means of traditional theories, it would appear that a paradigm shift has not occurred, and the old ways continue to be relevant in both our conceptualization of problems and their treatment. If we use the top-down, expert-provider-driven movements, such as humanistic, behavioral, and psychodynamic approaches, then multiculturalism as a fourth force would seem to fit the Kuhnian definition of a paradigm. If, on the other hand, the fourth force notion is a bottom-up, consumer-driven movement (and I think it is), then it would not fit the Kuhn (1962) criteria. In its present state, multiculturalism appears to be a "fourth dimension" (like height, width, depth, and time) complementing the other three theories rather than a fourth theory. It is then necessary for us, as a profession, to continue to work toward achieving a fourth force status that will transcend the very narrow conceptualizations of which these predecessor forces have been criticized.

Etic and Emic Approaches

A new paradigm should function as a focal point for the consensus of the scientific community, but what do we see in multicultural counseling and development? Should multiculturalism be defined very broadly (etic approach) or from a culture-specific perspective (emic approach)? There seems to be disagreement in this debate, with some scholars favoring an etic

approach and others favoring an emic approach. Those who favor the etic approach use a broader definition that looks at differences such as those from sociodemographic variables, and gender and affectional orientation as very important in working with people. They agree with Pedersen (1985) when he asserts that

> to some extent all mental health counseling is multicultural. If we consider age, life-style, socioeconomic status, and gender differences, it quickly becomes apparent that there is a multicultural dimension in every counseling relationship. (p. 94)

This broad definition of multiculturalism considers a population as consisting of various ethnic groups, each with basic identifiable characteristics such as cultural heritage, family/networks, overall social status, and social political aspects (Fukuyama, 1990; Vontress, 1979). The contention is that existing counseling theories could be used in working with all clients, provided that individual and cultural differences are recognized.

Locke (1990), on the other hand, argues that if the multicultural approach becomes too general, specific cultural groups will suffer. Each minority group interrelates differently with the White dominant culture. Race issues should not be diluted with the other issues, especially because all minority groups still see race as the crucial factor in their relationships with the dominant culture. Thus a broad approach to multiculturalism will probably not differ substantially from what psychology has done historically: the study of individual differences. Also, at the present time, the approved APA core curriculum for doctoral training in psychology includes the study of individual differences. My own position is that we define multiculturalism from an emic approach, as Locke has done. This is because if we do not, we will dilute the important issue of race with other competing issues. As Fukuyama (1990) has indicated also, existing multicultural counseling literature has been built on the study of ethnic and international cultures. It will make sense to continue to develop this more strongly and later complement this with the etic approach. This, though, should not be interpreted in any evaluative way, because it is only when we combine both approaches that we appreciate both our similarities and differences.

Although the two major models of multicultural counseling are very helpful in providing a frame of reference for psychologists, there is really no acceptable formal paradigm of multicultural counseling that will define such key psychological concepts as normal and abnormal behavior. This is very necessary for the theory to move into a fourth force position (Snowden & Cheung, 1990). In most instances, the client continues to be the central focus for intervention, and individual growth and self-actualization continue to be

emphasized. Although family therapists think and operate in relational terms, they remain very limited in what they do, because their conceptualization of family growth continues to define family as either nuclear or extended—concepts that are primarily Caucasian in nature.

Research Designs

Numerous researchers agree that the single most important reason both for the underutilization of mental health services by ethnic minority clients and for the high dropout rates are the inability of psychotherapists and counselors to provide culturally sensitive/responsive therapy for the ethnic minority client (Cheung, 1991; Sue, 1982; Sue & Zane, 1987). Despite more than adequate evidence of underutilization of counseling services by ethnic minorities (Snowden, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1990), psychologists instead occupy themselves with the debate about qualitative as well as quantitative methods in multicultural counseling, seem to prefer dialogue to action, and continue to advocate quantitative methods as if they are the only methods of empiricism.

We need to be reminded constantly that when we enter the realm of multiculturalism, we are not completely or wholly dealing with quantitative empiricism. The experiences of our ethnic minority clients, for example, transcend the quantitative empirical world of science. We need psychologists who will risk swimming against this current, both in research and in practice, pointing out that quantitative studies that have been applied to ethnic minority populations in the past have often been poorly designed. In research, we need psychologists who will look at alternatives to a natural science approach and who, in addition, will use qualitative designs to describe reality from the ethnic minority worldview rather than succumb to the pressure to use only quantitative designs, which sometimes rely on questionable data. Using these alternatives will come with potential risks (e.g., fewer publications because the scientific community may prefer natural science methodology). This risk taking, however, will help us shift from objective science to "epistemic" science, from the absolute truth to approximate descriptions, from structure to process, and from the part to the whole. Qualitative methods must be considered as credible as quantitative methods, because they are relevant and accurate and because they can be used as initial research design before quantitative studies are undertaken.

In practice, we need to come to terms with the fact that external environmental and social factors can probably better explain individual and family problems of clients (especially ethnic minority clients) than the

intrapersonal/intrapsychic factors that we tend to emphasize (Ivey et al., 1993). We need to move scholarship and practice from college/university walls and clinics into the community and help minority clients deal with real issues: racism, discrimination, oppression, injustices, and inequalities in society. We must make a conscious and determined effort to purge the remaining effects of race theory, racism, and ethnocentrism not only from our scholarship and intellectual experiences but also from our practice. This means that we need to recognize that the human psyche resides in a sociocultural context and thus we must be ready to accept advocacy roles just like social workers without any fear of crossing professional boundaries. In fact, social workers have long moved from advocacy to action and are now enhancing an existing model of working with minorities.

We, as psychologists, are still struggling with the question of the advocacy role. We need to work at redesigning our institutions so that justice, equality, balance, sharing, and reciprocity will be the new portrait we paint of a truly multicultural society. As mental health professionals, we need to care more about equal opportunity to the extent that we are willing to eliminate all biases in entry/admission to our graduate programs and to work toward the retention of all enrolled students. If we continue to limit opportunities to ethnic minorities, but blame them for their inadequacy and their limited presence in our profession, we are showing a lack of understanding about the history of oppression and discrimination in American society—and people who do not understand history are condemned to repeat it.

Professional Associations as
Handmaidens of the Status Quo

The fourth force idea is meaningful only when professional associations throw their weight behind it. It is only in this way that both in theory and in practice we will demonstrate as a profession that we are ready to move forward with multicultural theory as a fourth force. Theory without practice is lame, and so is practice without theory. More than ever before, the need for collaboration between our researchers and practitioners is paramount, and the role of professional associations in this endeavor cannot be overemphasized. Cheatham and Ivey et al. (cited in Ivey et al., 1993) have indicated that the counselor's responsibility is to "liberate clients from self-blame, encourage them to see their issues in a social context, and facilitate personal action to improve their conditions" (p. 94). Drawing parallels from Freire's (1971) work, they see multiculturalism as a pedagogy for liberation. Freire develops a unique perspective on education, which responds to the very

concrete and tangible needs of the dispossessed in Latin America. Freire points out that "no pedagogy (and by analogy, training programs in psychology) which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors" (p. 39). He further suggests that the pedagogy of the oppressed has two distinct stages: first, the unveiling of the world of oppression by the oppressed and their commitment to its transformation and, second, when the pedagogy becomes a "pedagogy of all men in the process of permanent liberation. In both stages, it is always through action in depth that the culture of domination is culturally confronted" (p. 40). The struggle of the dispossessed in Latin America is very similar to the struggle of ethnic minorities in the United States; thus Freire's philosophy as well as his methodology can be used by our multicultural experts to liberate minority clients from the oppression that Sue (1992) mentions.

Multicultural theorists have provided us with Freire's (1971) first stage by unveiling oppression and injustice in the American society. They have shown more than adequate commitment for its transformation. It is now time for the profession to initiate an action plan—a pedagogy for liberation, because it is only by doing so that our trainees can critically confront reality when they work with clients outside the walls of the university. Ivey (1987) suggests that it is time for the APA Council, with its more than "250-plus white members and no non-whites," not only to converse with the oppressed, the minority psychologists, but to share power with them. At the present time, only 6 out of the 105 members of the APA Council of Representatives are ethnic minorities, and Division 45 (Ethnic Minority Affairs) has only one council seat. This slow pace at which policies are set in motion to ensure a truly multicultural organizational structure in the APA, it will seem, serves to justify the relegation of multiculturalism to an adjunct/peripheral position. In the history of the APA, there have only been elected two ethnic minority psychologists (Kenneth Bancroft Clark in 1970-1971 and Logan Wright in 1986) to the highest office of the president, in spite of the fact that Blacks (and other ethnic minorities) have had Ph.D. degrees in psychology as early as 1920, a length of time that is very close to the APA's own life span. We need to recognize that some outreach work may at times be necessary if ethnic minority psychologists would be encouraged to aspire to APA Council of Representative membership and, ultimately, to the presidency. If the composition of the APA Council of Representatives membership were to reflect a commitment to multiculturalism, it is possible that the level of commitment and sensitivity to multiculturalism would be much stronger than it is now.

SUGGESTION FOR A FOURTH FORCE

How can multiculturalism move from what I consider to be a fourth dimension to the fourth force for which our esteemed dialectical thinkers have worked so hard? As Nwachuku and Ivey (1991) suggest when they talk about culture-specific training, a good multicultural counseling theory "would be enriched if theorizing began from the point of view of the host culture"—that is, minority cultures. This means that Western ideas and philosophies will no longer be imposed on the culturally different client. It will also mean that we need to rethink the way we engage in science and research and develop a basic model in which cultural knowledge is integrated into a coherent model of counseling.

The first step will be for us, as a profession, to know ourselves. As noted by several authors (Speight, Myers, Cox, & Highlen, 1991; Sue & Sue, 1990), training in cultural diversity and counseling is still treated as peripheral, and it is not well integrated into the theory and philosophy of counseling. Such training programs are inadequate and sometimes deficient. Sue and Sue have called on the profession to consider the political implications of being dominated by the culture of the majority and asked us to become more aware of the way that psychology as a profession perpetuates racism in counseling. They have suggested that the APA mandate multiculturalism as part of graduate training. The APA (1979) criteria for accreditation of graduate programs in psychology mandate departments of psychology to assure that graduate students are prepared to function in a multicultural, pluralistic society. The criteria also mandate that the composition of students and faculty reflect this commitment. Although these edicts are laudable, they imply that training programs will do this as the politically correct thing to do. If doing so is a moral obligation (and I think it is), then we probably should not legislate morality. Rather, we should learn to do this vicariously by imitating what the APA itself does.

The APA's track record and the revised ethical guidelines often encourage psychologists to use multiculturalism as a tool for working with the culturally different client only "where differences . . . significantly affect psychologists work" (APA, 1992, p. 1601), that is, whenever it is "politically correct" to do so. Multicultural counseling is, therefore, utilized piecemeal when it is convenient, and it is pushed back on the shelf after such use. There seems to be no incentive for many psychologists who have the luxury of a good middle-class client caseload to work with the culturally different, because the APA (1991) encourages such referrals to "appropriate experts as necessary" (p. 2). Perhaps, in the year 2000, when psychology embraces the reality that there has actually been a shift in demographics, we will also begin to embrace

the reality that race, culture, and ethnicity are important in therapeutic relationships, not only with ethnic minorities but with every person.

Traditional counseling theories continue to supply language and concepts for the fourth force (such words as *nuclear* and *extended family*, for example). Multicultural experts recognize that most, if not all, ethnic minority cultures value collateral relationships (Aponte, Rivers, & Wohl, 1995; Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993; Ivey et al., 1993; Sue & Sue, 1990). In these relationships, "nonblood" relatives are highly valued as significant family members. The use of the term "extended family" suggests extension from the nuclear family. This is a misnomer, at least in the African American context, wherein family has never been "nuclear." It has always been multigenerational and transgenerational, and it has always included several different networks—friends, teachers, priests, and so forth (Hines & Boyd-Franklin, 1982). This network of family is the African American reality, and until psychology recognizes this and shifts from this concept of extended family to network interventions as a metaphor of knowledge, it will fail in its efforts to serve ethnic minorities. In my work with White graduate students trained in traditional theories and ethical principles, the primary concerns typically raised include liability and other legal issues when network intervention is mentioned. They question to whom the therapist has an ethical and legal responsibility as his or her "client" or "identified patient." Although this seems to be a very legitimate concern, it is interesting to note, from my anecdotal observations, that this has not usually been of such concern to my ethnic minority students, even though they have also been trained in the traditional theories.

Regardless of the gains made by multicultural counseling and development, a critical look at both theory and practice may indicate that our endeavors as a profession are still only intellectual, abstract, and sterile and that we still disregard the culturally defined context of client and therapist behaviors. Not all divisions within the APA and ACA have been equally responsive to multiculturalism, despite our recognition that individuals are cultural beings. Professional associations need to take a proactive stance in creating the paradigmatic shift discussed in this paper. The challenge is for us to guide the development of community action and social change, and this will require transformation, first, on our part as individuals, and then on a systemic level as a profession. Our new multicultural theory should be applied to social issues so that it promotes human welfare. It should foster attitudinal changes not only within the profession but also in the larger society. Perhaps for counseling psychologists, it will mean that we go back to our historical roots when counseling played more of a preventive, educative, and developmental role, rather than a remedial role. As counseling

psychologists, we have at the very least paid more lip service to multicultural-ism than have other APA divisions. It is important that we continue to include family and community models in both theory and practice so that we will be able to define multiculturalism as truly a fourth force in counseling theory and practice. It is very encouraging that our awareness has been heightened by the several articles appearing in recent journals. It is also encouraging that we have begun to discuss the mental health needs of minority clients who, as Sue and Sue (1990) emphasize, have been harmed by traditional counseling theories. Again, it is encouraging that racial identity, the importance of the differences in worldview, developing of multicultural counseling competencies, and other issues continue to be addressed in the literature. These are very significant and laudable. What is needed is more action in terms of applying these theories and concepts in clinical practice. When this happens on a large scale, multicultural counseling and therapy will have the legitimacy that the first three forces had, and this will open the door for more informed research to move multicultural counseling from a position of a fourth dimension to one of a fourth force.

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