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Exploring Cultural Assumptions of Worldviews Using Movie Personae

Jerry A. Mobley and Pamela J. Davis

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Mobley, Jerry A., is a professor at Fort Valley State University (FVSU). He continues to seek the tacit issues assumed or "behind" the implicit issues involved in counseling. His book, *An Integrated Existential Approach to Counseling and Therapy* (2005), was a similar undertaking based on decades of counseling experience and graduate teaching.

Davis, Pamela J., is a school counselor at Eagle Springs Elementary School and the first graduate from the re-designed FVSU School Counselor Education program. She has written and presented on improving the recruitment and performance of African American students in Advanced Placement courses.

Abstract

To better understand assumptions in our culture, this article places four disparate movie characters from two movies, *The Dark Knight* and *Slumdog Millionaire*, in the counseling chair, presents the dialogue with the counselor, and discusses the results: the Joker, who defies all conventions; Harvey Dent, who is "two-faced" in more than one way; and Batman, who rigidly holds onto his values. The person and perspective that seems missing in this Western metropolis is supplied from the East in the characters of Jamal and Latika from *Slumdog Millionaire*. These characters and movies serve as particularly enlightening vehicles to help counselors understand the difficulties that inevitably arise when clients' cultural perspectives clash with counseling's traditionally Western approach. A four-quadrant, heuristic model is utilized to construe the interactions. Were the counselor to recognize the conflicting worldviews, more time could be spent attempting to understand the client's phenomenology and adapting to some of the underlying beliefs. Through first understanding the client's worldview, the counselor can at least explore the client's assumptions, and if the relationship develops enough, at some point possibly challenge some of the underlying beliefs.

Keywords: counseling, multicultural, worldview, assumptions, movies

Cultures' heroes and villains often reflect their societies, and many iconic archetypes in popular entertainment represent philosophical perspectives whose inevitable meeting produces cultural clashes of blockbuster proportions (Burke, 1998; Burke & Cavallari, 2000; Matthews, 2006). While modern culture does a particularly efficient job of pushing such icons to the forefront, characters found in the blockbuster hits, *The Dark Knight* (De La Noy & Nolan, 2008) and *Slumdog Millionaire* (Colson, Boyle, & Tandan, 2008) also serve as particularly enlightening vehicles to help counselors understand the difficulties that inevitably arise when a client's cultural perspective clashes with counseling's traditionally Western approach. Thus, in order to better understand assumptions in Western culture that affect counseling, this article will attempt to place five disparate movie characters—Batman, the Joker, Two-Faced Commissioner Harry Dent, and Jamal, the "slumdog millionaire" and his girlfriend, Latika—into the counseling chair.

The counseling profession recognizes both the strength inherent in the basic assumption of individual choice and predictable consequences (such as Alfred Adler in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1989; Frankl, 1971; Glasser, 2000; Maslow, 1968; Perls, 1992; or Rogers, 1951) and the inherent difficulties such assumptions can create as clients become more diverse (Gushue, Constantine, & Sciarra, 2008; Sue & Sue, 2003). Counseling's move to address the needs of individuals from different cultures has meant that counselors are constantly working to examine the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the profession and the degree to which those ideas may clash with an increasingly diverse clientele (Chong, 2005). The profession has recognized that many beliefs are based on a Judeo-Christian, White, European paradigm (Day-Vines et al., 2007; Sue & Sue, 2003) that can create an uncomfortable basis from which to reach out to diverse populations (Sue & Sue, 2003).

Counselors involved in the movement toward multicultural competence have attempted to close the gap between counselors and diverse populations by stressing the importance of understanding both context and culture inherent in counseling paradigms (Arrendondo, Tovar-Blank, & Parham, 2008; D'Andrea & Springer, 2007). However, recognition that counselors cannot successfully utilize prescriptive techniques for all clients has not always been accepted; Arrendondo et al. (2008) referred to such colleagues as those who seek comfort from familiar techniques based on the belief that "counseling is counseling," and it can be applied to any individual regardless of worldview (para. 1).

Assumptions

Assumptions about individuals and the world are embedded in cultures and personal orientations to life and impact counseling (Garrett & Herring, 2001). As has been discussed previously (Mobley, Hall, & Crowell, 2008), four heuristic perspectives can be utilized to discuss these assumptions and organize how people think about and respond to the events around them. Three of those perspectives are represented in the *Dark Knight* (De La Noy & Nolan, 2008). These very different characters could pose a challenge to the best counselors and have different perspectives of the world and people. The characters include the Joker, who defies all conventions; Harvey Dent, who is "two-faced" in several ways; and Batman, himself, who rigidly holds on to his values. The

person and perspective that seems missing in this Western metropolis is supplied from the East in *Slumdog Millionaire* (Colson et al., 2008). The hero, Jamal, seems happy enough after becoming a millionaire, getting the girl, and living a dream life, but now might be successful enough to need a counselor.

Suppose the four characters decided to come for counseling. Could it be that the underlying suppositions of the disparate cultures and the worldview assumptions of counseling would need to be addressed in the course of the counseling? Each encounter will be predicated on character development based on dialogue from the movies and the counseling responses of psychotherapy that might best apply to the issues that are presented. We begin with a brief overview of the heuristic model.

Heuristic Model of Perspectives

Any worldview would probably include assumptions about the physical world and the people who inhabit that world. Some look at the physical world and conclude that no patterns exist, while others see patterns that are repeated; some examine their experience as a human and conclude they have no choices, while others conclude that they do have choices (Mobley et al., 2008). These two respective assumptions about the world and humanity create a 2-by-2 matrix with four conflicting worldviews (see Table 1).

Table 1. Four worldviews based on two opposing assumptions about the human condition and about the world.

PEOPLE		The WORLD: *No Patterns*	The WORLD: *Patterns*
No Choice		**Quadrant 1** **Chaos**	**Quadrant 2** **Cycles**
Choice		**Quadrant 3** **Chance/ Luck**	**Quadrant 4** **Consequences**

The upper left quadrant (Quadrant 1) represents a perspective in which the physical world does not seem to have patterns, and individuals in that world do not seem to have the power to choose. Postmodernism (Frie & Orange, 2009) and chaos theory (Kiel & Elliott, 1997) seem to prefer this point of view. Stuff happens; the right materials were present when an electrical discharge occurred in the primordial soup and amino acids, proteins, and DNA appeared. People happen; given enough time and the right

things combining over that time period, humans were thrust onto the world stage as part of the larger rise and fall of various things as they became more adaptive or less adaptive. Patterns and personal choice are not prominent fixtures in this approach. In the Batman movie, *The Dark Knight* (De La Noy & Nolan, 2008), the Joker creates chaos and says he does not have a plan—no patterns and no real choice.

The upper right-hand quadrant (Quadrant 2) suggests that the physical world does have patterns but that people do not have choices. This view seems closer to an Eastern worldview that admires the patterns of seasons, cycles, and zodiac movements across the sky and places humans as a limited part of this larger story (Aung-Thwin, 2008; Hamilton, 1999). *Slumdog Millionaire* demonstrates how the person who seems to be favored with success is actually just answering the quiz show questions based on his life experience—he just lived certain events that were part of his pattern, and those events taught him the answers to the questions. Patterns happen; people are just part of the flotsam and jetsam of life.

In *The Dark Knight*, the District Attorney, Harvey Dent, represents the lower left-hand quadrant (Quadrant 3) and epitomizes a chance perspective; no patterns exist, but people seem to have choices. They choose, and if they are lucky, the choice works out. Events in the world continue to be chaotic or at least random, with certain probabilities of occurring; maybe choices work out, or maybe they do not. Dent flips a coin to decide whether or not to kill someone; he places his power of choice in the coin. The lower classes, the ones who have not been fortunate in their lives, buy lottery tickets at higher rates than any other class (Blalock, Just, & Simon, 2007) and seem to be choosing to try their luck at getting rich.

Career counseling theorist, John Krumboltz, seems to be in the third quadrant with his "happenstance theory" (2004) of career choice. Who among the readers of this article saw themselves doing what they are doing now at the age of 18? Events happened; they made choices. Over the years they became what they are, doing what they do. Quadrant 3 chance—happenstance. Maybe the person will be lucky or maybe they will not. The first three perspectives are different from the fourth.

Western society and counseling is typically represented by the lower right-hand quadrant (Quadrant 4). People can make choices, and those choices have patterns, called consequences. Seven of the basic counseling theories that are taught to counselors can arguably be said to assume that clients are endowed with certain inalienable characteristics, which include the power to choose (Mobley, 2005). Imagine Alfred Adler (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1989), Viktor Frankl (1971), Abraham Maslow (1968), Carl Rogers (1951), William Glasser (2000), or Fritz Perls (1992) trying to counsel without assuming that clients have the capacity to make choices—and those choices having significance.

Four Counseling Sessions

These four perspectives are meaningfully different and contrast with each other and the assumptions of counseling. Counselors and counseling approaches operating exclusively from a single quadrant may not be useful in assisting clients who have perspectives that represent other worldviews. Ponder the counseling complications in the

interactions that occur in this thought experiment beginning with Batman coming for assistance followed by the Joker, Dent, and the slumdog millionaire with his girlfriend.

When labeling what is occurring in the session, numerous descriptions of the techniques are possible, but for the sake of the overall presentation we will not elaborate. In particular, Rogerians will be offended with the use of many simplifications of what Carl Rogers did with labels that he opposed. Nonetheless, activities like active listening, using I-messages, and recognizing immediacy have come out of the post-Rogerian milieu (Mobley, 2005).

***The Dark Knight*—Batman**

The first client arrives early and awkwardly. You surmise that he does not trust because of the mask that obscures his identity. His flamboyant costume with practical items on his belt suggests a tension between fantasy and reality. He is clearly in pain; as a good existential, you are willing to walk with him on his journey and see where it goes.

Batman: Joker said something the other day that bothered me.
Counselor: Umm (*empathic grunt to indicate the impact of what he said*).
Batman: When we were fighting, he said, "You just couldn't let me go, could you . . . You won't kill me out of some misplaced sense of self-righteousness. And I won't kill you because you're just too much fun. I think you and I are destined to do this forever" (Scene 26).
C: You're really troubled by something about what he said . . . (*the beginning of an empathic statement that he runs with;* Rogers, 1951).
B: Yeah . . . I could have killed him . . . several times. I didn't. I wanted to. The things he has done deserve more than just death . . . but I am not the judge . . . the jury . . . the law. I am just a person. I do not have the right to kill someone—even if they deserve it. Do I?
C: Seems like you want me to make you feel better about your choice not to kill the Joker—and how you live your life, playing by the rules (a*ctive listening that is a bridge to the "What do you want?" issue of reality therapy*; Glasser, 2000; Rogers, 1951).
B: Yeah (*pause*). It's not fair. People call me the "Dark Knight" and accuse me of awful things, but I really just play be the rules. They should understand.
C: People hear the popular chatter and go with it, and they miss the real story of what happened and the painful choices you had to make (*active listening;* Rogers, 1951). Tell me again why they must understand? How would they know what you've been through? How would they know the details (*disputing his faulty assumption about others' experiences in a REBT style;* Ellis, 2002)?
B: Ok. I get to suffer in silence . . . that is not what I want.
C: You thought that when you did the right thing it would turn out better. People would understand; maybe even like you. But that didn't happen that way, did it (*continuing to empathize and dispute*)?
B: Not at all.
C: Is it making you wonder if this is the way you want to live (*redefine what his Total Quality World looks like;* Glasser, 2000)? You don't have to be Batman. You don't have to keep doing this gig. Maybe you could contribute a different way?
B: Why don't I just kill him and get it over with? The world would be a better place.

C: Rather than always playing by the rules, maybe sometimes you could bend the rules or do something different (*active listening;* Rogers, 1951).
B: Yeah . . . why can't I do something different?
C: It's a compelling question, but it would be major change for you (*active listening setting up a gestalt intervention*; Perls, 1992; Rogers, 1951).
B: What do you mean?
C: Can we try something that may make it clearer (*get permission before doing Gestalt work;* Perls, 1992)?
B: Ok.
C: Let me get this empty chair, and we'll say that this chair over here is you bending the rules or being more flexible. Where you are now is the way you've always done it—carefully observing the law and expectations on you. What do you need to say to the more flexible person you are considering becoming (*the empty chair technique from Gestalt therapy;* Perls, 1992)?
B: I don't even like you. I have always avoided you. It makes me sick to even think of giving in to you, but something is terribly wrong. I want people to think . . . no I don't . . . I don't know what I want.
C: Ok, change chairs (*moves him to the other chair, and he looks at the chair where he was sitting*). What does Batman need to know from your flexible point of view?
B: You work too hard. You get stuck in the details. Just make a decision and move on. What you do is hard enough without all of the angst you put on yourself. You are limiting yourself . . .
C: (*Suggesting a change in chairs*.) What do you need to tell your flexible side?
B: What if I get it wrong? You make it sound so easy—but it's not. If someone dies that I could have saved, I take that personally
C: (*Suggesting another change when the conversation stops*.) You need to be needed, but it's too much. Even you have limits; lower the bar. Adapt . . .
B: (*Changes chairs*.) I don't think it's about being needed—I have something I can do . . . and if I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it well . . . or die trying (*silence*).
C: You seem to have gotten some clarity (*trying to keep up with the client*). Could you thank that part of yourself that would like to more flexible (*affirm the process of considering previously unconsidered information*)?
B: Yeah. I was kinda afraid that you would sound like the Joker or something and want to destroy who I am. But this helped to see that I am what I am and am committed to doing the best I can, and I might feel bad. . .
C: Grieve . . . (*deep active listening that is probably an interpretation;* Rogers, 1951).
B: . . . yeah, grieve when I fall short. I can do that.
C: That is really who you are and what you are trying to do (*I-message without using "I";* Rogers, 1951).
B: Alfred said you might be able to help me. I think he was right.
C: Thanks. It was good to meet you.

Regardless of whether or not you agreed with the counseling, notice that the work conceptually remained in the lower right-hand quadrant. Both parties assumed that choices were possible and consequences would occur for those choices. No cultural collisions were immediately present: Batman chose not to kill the Joker; therefore, the Joker is still alive and causing problems. Batman chose to live by principles; therefore,

his personal opinions and comfort are secondary to the principles involved. And even the pain or grief that Batman experiences is chosen because of his choice to strive to get it right.

Most often counseling occurs in this lower right-hand quadrant, and the client and the counselor need to be in agreement about the nature of the world and the human condition when they begin. If they are not in agreement on their worldviews, counseling can become difficult as the next interactions demonstrate.

***The Dark Knight*—The Joker**

Counselors sometimes do not like a client; worse still, imagine a hideous psychopathic client that you find yourself liking a lot. The Joker is fascinating and deviously clever. He seems like he was truly interested in being in counseling, but his purposes for being there are obscure.

Joker: You went to Clemson University (*looking at diplomas on the wall*)—that's where the paw prints all began. Now all sorts of animals at all sorts of schools have left paw marks along roads through towns. But Clemson was the first. Pretty school.
Counselor: Yes, it is (*glad that he did not lick his lips*). What brings us together today (*getting down to business in case he was manipulating me with the school affirmation—it worked none-the-less*)?
Joker: (*Becoming business-like*) I have a problem. You know that. But if I wanted to be different, I don't know where to begin.
Counselor: You would like for me to help you get your head around the things you do, and maybe someday you might consider doing something different (*active listening;* Rogers, 1951; *trying not to overshoot what had been said*).
Joker: The usual thing I hear in my head is, "Why not?" I thought about surprising your receptionist and cutting her throat. And I thought, "Why not?" She has to die some time, and she might die through a long illness. This would save money and . . . (*to the counselor*) you do have good life insurance on her (*affirmation*)? . . . and her family would get some money. It could be a lot worse.
Counselor: (*Calls receptionist*) Just checking to see if you were there. Mayberry, you know.
(Receptionist over phone: Who was that unusual man who is with you?)
C: Why do you ask?
(R: He gave me a bouquet of flowers.)
C: Interesting . . . (*hangs up*).
Joker: I also have other impulses . . . and ask, "Why not?"
C: Can you tell which things are better for people and society and which things are worse?
J: Define "better" and "worse." Would she say a bouquet is better than having her neck slashed? Probably. But if she had nothing but bad things happen to her from now on—whatever "bad" is—then she might appreciate getting it over with.
C: You made a choice; you gave her flowers instead of harming her (*affirming choice*s).
J: No, I didn't. I was more interested in confusing your simplistic little system—and I seem to have done that well. See, I am a force of nature like a hurricane. The right conditions come along, and people like me get created. Just the exciting blend of

events and voila! "Why did that hurricane hit Galveston in the early 20th century?" someone might foolishly ask. The conditions were right, and it happened. Having pleased your receptionist on the way in, maybe I will cut her throat on the way out?
C: You can choose whether or not you will do so (*Working from choosing and Quadrant 4*; Glasser, 2000).
J: The hurricane does not choose where it goes; it just goes. I do likewise because I can: Why not (*client clearly rejects Quadrant 4 and affirms Quadrant 1*)?
C: Do you have any regrets? Any second thoughts about things you have done (s*eeking a pattern a consequence*; Glasser, 2000)?
J: I should have gotten more money for that last Batman movie—I didn't know it was going to be my last. (*Back to the question*) Not really. Does Katrina have second thoughts about the lives and destruction in New Orleans? None—they were spared many times before (*changing the topic back to the original question*). So what would you suggest for a guy like me, if I ever wanted to be different?
C: Seems like you need to reconsider the issue of personal responsibility. By being driven along by some sort of force and not being at choice, you don't have to be held accountable for what you do—and I think that could be a significant issue (*immediacy*; Rogers, 1951*; explaining the fourth quadrant*).
J: Thank you for your time (*he said as he rose to leave*).
C: Thank you (*as I overcompensated and joined the battle of niceness*) for your time. (*I was pleased the receptionist had heard the word "Mayberry" and gotten security to our office*.)

In the postmodern, multicultural world, the possibility occurs that nothing has meaning, and everything must be defined before anything can be accomplished in counseling. The Joker believes nothing and accepts nothing beyond his impulses.

Adapting to cultural definitions of certain words or behaviors adds spice to interactions but challenges the assumptions of counseling. The extreme level of deconstruction that is required to understand the personalized nature of communication peels the onion but appears to leave little behind. Counseling with someone who functions from this perspective will be difficult to frame using assumptions of personal choice and consequences for those choices; therefore, productive counseling may be limited.

***The Dark Knight*—Harvey Dent, Two-Faced**

"A normal person, how nice," you think when you see the well-dressed Mr. Dent. Then you catch the reflection of the skeleton side of his face in a mirror and brace yourself for another round of the bizarre.

Counselor: I appreciate you being on time. Have a seat, and we can get started (*affirming appropriate behavior and an overt statement of a willingness to help*).
Dent: If Batman and Joker are coming, and they told me they were, then, I wanted to know what they were up to. Besides I flipped a coin, and you won.
C: (*Trying not to wince and yet to look him in the eyes*) Are you looking for some sort of rehabilitation counseling support for the injury to your face? I have not done rehab counseling for many years (*establishing my credentials with an immediacy of the relationship statement, which was probably a rejection of him as a client;* Rogers, 1951).

D: No. I just need a few things to break in my favor, and I'll be OK.
C: Ok (*a little disappointed*), you are here because you think they came . . . if they came here . . . you wouldn't want them to get the upper hand on you . . . (*active listening-summarizing;* Rogers, 1951).
D: What did you tell them?
C: You know that I can't divulge confidential information—I'm not even affirming whether or not I saw them (*ethical boundaries; an immediacy I-message;* Rogers, 1951).
D: This is worthless. Heads, I shoot you; tails, I just leave (*with a gun in one hand, he starts to flip the coin with the other*).
C: Could I ask a question? You seem to have some sort of vision for your future? Maybe I could be supportive of what you are doing if I knew where you were going with this (*either Adlerian or reality therapy;* Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1989 and Glasser, 2000, respectively).
D: What for? Do you think that I planned on having this hideous face? That I wanted my girlfriend to die? That I wanted to come in and talk to you? You ask me about what I want, and none of what I've done is what I want (*not Quadrant 4*).
C: In life sometimes things work out, and sometimes they don't (*joining him in Quadrant 3*). You might catch a lucky break, or you might have a particularly bad streak. The best you can do is maybe beat the odds for while . . . (*active listening;* Rogers, 1951*; a cognitive summary*).
D: Pretty much (*about to flip the coin*).
C: . . . and . . . if I could do something that would give you an edge, you might prefer that?
D: (*Putting the coin down*) Keep talking.
C: Uhhhh . . . well . . . I might suggest an experiment (*either REBT dispute or Gestalt experiment;* Ellis, 2002; Perls, 1992).
D: Like I said, keep talking . . .
C: During the next week, when you come to a decision, do two things and keep a record of them: 1) ask yourself what do you really want to do, and write down your answer, if you have one or 2) flip your coin the way you usually do and see what it says to do. At the end of a week we could talk about the different directions you might go if you chose (*went into the fourth quadrant*) rather than going with the coin (*staying in the third quadrant and letting chance make the decision*). But you seem like a man on a mission, and we need to skip ahead. (*I am feeling pressure to do something to avoid getting shot*.)
Ok, the next part is on the odd days of the month, do something odd—go with your personal feelings and not your coin; on the even days of the month, do the coin. At the end of the day, rate from 1–10 how good the day was: one is not good, and 10 is great. Got that?
Dent: You talked like this to them (*no answer*)? Ok, let me see what this does. Even days, do the coin; odd days, do what I think. Rate the days. I think I've got it. When you're like this (*points to face*), every day is bad day. Anything else?
C: (*Trying to be honest and open*) It's been good meeting you; see you next week.
D: Heads it's been good; tails, it's not good—what day is it today? Shoot, odd day . . . yeah . . . next week . . . (*mumbles*). This is weird . . . (*leaves*).

The actual therapeutic aspects of this encounter followed something of a person-centered exploration of his phenomenology and REBT disputation of a faulty belief, which was never directly confronted as a faulty belief (Ellis, 2002; Rogers, 1951). The belief that the world is irregular and our power to choose is more about luck rather than our personal choices needed to be addressed before anything could be done in the counseling. The counseling is challenging his cultural view.

Goth subcultures present in a similar manner: "Life sucks, and then you die" is the bumper sticker that presents their sense of limited personal impact on the world and their lives. If someone makes some money, has a family, or anything reasonable in their lives, it just happened and was not the result of choice and effort. The image I have is of a group of bikers who crash in a curve with one motorcycle making it through the carnage: just dumb luck. Counseling with these individuals involves understanding their current way of seeing the world, and at the same time, beginning to challenge some of those assumptions. Any therapeutic efforts must be balanced with respect for them and their culture.

Slumdog Millionaire—Jamal and Latika

Helping international clients has many unpredictable aspects to it: are they the first generation in the West, or the children of the first generation? Will we be able to understand each other? How Western is their thinking regardless of how long they been in the United States?

The couple from *Slumdog Millionaire*, Jamal and Latika, come for counseling. It turns out that their English is good, thanks to the influence of the former British Empire, but Jamal is on the horns of a dilemma. As an Indian, he often has what his girlfriend describes as a "cavalier" attitude toward her; at the same time, they are definitely romantically (by Western standards) attracted to each other and enjoy their relationship very much.

> Latika: When we are around his family, he is particularly shameful. He ignores me and goes in the other room with the men until it is time to go home.
> Counselor: (*to Jamal*) Does that sound familiar (*circular questioning;* Boscolo, Cecchin, Hoffman, & Penn, 1987)?
> Jamal: That is what she always says. How am I supposed to act? My family expects me to behave like the child they raised me to be. Since my brother's suicide . . . my aunts and uncles and their children are the only family I have. I will always be their child, and now that we can have some good times together, I want that to happen. (*to Latika*) You did not seem to mind them before?
> Counselor: Before what (*not assuming what he was saying and seeking details*)?
> Jamal: Before we had money.
> Counselor: When a man enters his family's house, he should behave a certain way toward them, but you only started doing that lately—and that is confusing to Latika (*active listening both of them; trying to summarize what the important points are and keep the emphasis on cognitions to avoid emotional outbursts as suggested by Bowen, 1978*).
> Jamal: We did not see them. We were on the street trying to survive. Only now do we have time to see them. I can now treat them the way that they deserve.

Counselor: Your new wealth has allowed you to do what you wanted to do for your family in terms of respect as well as with money. You are probably pleased that you can honor them correctly (*empathy;* Satir's validation, 1972).
Latika: What you say is good, but I don't like the change. I like the way we use to be. Something is terribly wrong.
Jamal: Having money has turned you into someone I don't recognize anymore (e*mpathy toward the partner;* Satir's validation, 1972).
C: Latika, when you and Jamal were together on the street, you didn't believe you had any choices with regard to Jamal's family; your circumstances dictated the relationship you both had with them. Now, you have begun to think that you do have choices, and that is a complete change from the way things use to be.
Latika: Yes, I suppose my thinking is different.
C: Jamal, you want life and your relationship to be the same as it was. Life always just happened before (*firmly in Quadrant 2*)—even though it has recently happened for good for you. Now, Latika wants to change it and do things differently (*a move to Quadrant 4*). Her suggestion of change is difficult for you.
Jamal: Yes, it is; I want Latika to be just as she has always been.
C: (*to Latika*) His not changing—staying the same—as a result of your good fortune (*Quadrant 3*) is difficult for you (*active listening both sides and attempting to define underlying differences in perspective, which seem to have emerged from Latika's shift in quadrants; circular questioning;* Boscolo et al., 1987).
Jamal: I guess if you want to be so different now, then we aren't supposed to be together. (*Quadrant 3, cycles, with no choices).* My family will never approve of you with you acting like this, and I don't know that I want you like this.
Latika: I think . . . think . . . that I have lost my way. For a while I . . . forgot who I was. I am so sorry. I think I understand now. The money made me crazy, and I understand how important it is that you honor your family as a good son.
C: (*To Latika*) You are not as convinced that he is treating you badly as you were a minute ago (*struggling with her seeming to give in*; *she looks downward and nods her head*). (*To Jamal*) Can you accept what she is saying (c*ircular questioning;* Boscolo et al., 1987)?
Jamal: Yes.
C: You guys seem to have reached an understanding. Are both of you OK with this arrangement (a*llowing them to choose how they will live, even if I am uncomfortable; they affirm that they are*).

If this scenario is accurate, the most vital information is the cultural collision between the parties. The counselor can attempt to understand, foster personal awareness for the clients, and provide an insight into the other person in a non-blaming manner, but beyond these acts of facilitation, the difficulty is between the cultural and worldview assumptions that are occurring. The Milan model (Boscolo et al., 1987) of family therapy takes this multicultural approach to marriage and family work by making increased awareness among the members the goal of therapy. With the parties more aware of their personal assumptions and preferences, they can possibly make better decisions about what they want and are trying to create in their families and relationships, if they accept the power that is being offered them.

Conclusion

Counseling seems to work best when both parties are in agreement about the nature of the world and the human condition. In today's diverse experience, counselors might find it helpful to explore whether or not they and their clients are in the same quadrant. The diverse situations suggested here push the counselor to at least be multiculturally sensitive and reframe some cognitive dissonance as a conflict of worldviews. Understanding dissonant worldviews and adapting to create a compatible space in which counseling can occur is no small undertaking. If the contrary underlying assumptions do not change, counseling, because of its inherently Western premises, will probably have difficulty being productive.

The power of individual choice and the nature of consequences are inherent assumptions in counseling (Quadrant 4). Such underpinnings clash with worldviews such as those inherent in Quadrant 1, in which individuals assume no patterns exist in the world, and people do not have power and choices. Counseling's Quadrant 4 also clashes with Chance, represented in Quadrant 3, in which people have power to make choices, but the world is unpredictable, and consequences are based on luck. Finally, Quadrant 2's emphasis on cycles approaches the world with the premise that people have no real choice; instead, a cyclical pattern exists that explains the world.

When counselors and clients do not share the same underlying perspectives, counseling proceeds with difficulty. Were the counselor to recognize the conflicting worldviews, more time could be spent attempting to understand the client's phenomenology and adapting to the underlying beliefs.

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