

Introduction

Through a utilization of the philosophical tenets of existential phenomenology, we are attempting to found psychology conceived as a human science. The collection of articles contained in this volume expresses this attempt. As even a quick perusal of their themes will indicate, the human scientific conception of psychology has not been defined a priori and does not suffer from either rigidity or reification. Rather, the opposite is true. Initially, there was only a vague sense of direction together with strong feelings of dissatisfaction with psychology's standard means of coping with the phenomena of human existence. Moreover, it was felt that many of psychology's problems could be understood as arising from its philosophical presuppositions and its theoretical formulations. Thus, we turned towards phenomenological philosophy as a means of formulating more faithfully as well as more precisely the psychological phenomena in which we were interested. Our experience with this newer meta-psychology has indicated to us, at least, that it is more fruitful.

Still, we do not see our task as complete. Major turning points in our approach might yet emerge. While our sense of direction is no longer vague, it remains general. Some clarification has occurred through praxis and the commission of errors, but the detailed working out of concrete problems could still alter and transform our approach. On the other hand, there is sufficient experience to show that, while it may not be the only approach, the human scientific manner of conceiving psychology based upon phenomenology is a viable one, eminently worth pursuing for those who are so inclined. We mention this because many of our colleagues see the effort of combining human values and scientific discipline as contradictory. Consequently, we hope that this collection of articles will demon-

strate both the possibility of psychology conceived as a human science and its fruitfulness.

Readers will also note that the following articles reflect a wide range of application of phenomenological thought. This exemplifies our feeling that phenomenological thought has relevancy for all aspects of psychology. Since the effort we have undertaken is basically a foundational one, there is no part of the field that remains untouched. It is true that it will take a long time to work out the detailed application of phenomenology for each area as well as for the inter-relationships among areas, but at this point we are more interested in demonstrating the feasibility of the project than in presenting irrevocable findings. The sense of time in science is a long one.

While in principle the application of phenomenology to psychology is very broad, due to the circumstances at Duquesne University we have primarily concentrated on systematic, clinical and social psychology. By systematic psychology we mean the basic processes of perception, learning, attention, motivation, etc., as well as the fundamental problems of research design and praxis. Readers familiar with traditional approaches to the area of systematic psychology will probably find the approaches of these articles somewhat foreign to their own. This is not so much because of an outright denial of traditional approaches as it is a deliberate attempt to create and implement new ones. The prime motivation for this attempt is to try to deal with reality within an explicitly human context. More specifically, the issue is to find means of studying perception, learning, etc. while at the same time being mindful of the human-ness of the subject and the social aspects of the situation. Thus, there is a deliberate attempt to break away from basically physicalistic expressions of the world and to move toward more experiential descriptions. That is why we felt that new ground had to be broken for the study of the basic processes.

As is the case with most other graduate programs in psychology, the majority of students who apply for admission to our department express a desire to be trained for clinical work. One might well ask, therefore, what does it mean to be trained for clinical work in a program that has already deliberately and rigorously adopted a phenomenologically grounded human science approach?

Transcending and yet pervading all those questions that illuminate the phenomena of therapy, pathology and assessment, is the problem of the being of man. Every theory of therapy, every conceptualization of pathology, and every procedure for utilizing some psychological assessment instrument or technique, already postulates and derives from a pre-conception of the essential nature of man. Thus, given the natural science predilections of contemporary psychology, patients or clients are typically

constituted as human organisms driven by an assortment of needs, drives, instincts, complexes, or other dehumanizing forces. Further, their observed behavior and their objectified experiences are conceptualized in terms of mechanisms, discrete and disjointed elements, struggles between irreconcilable forces, and a number of other non-human metaphors. Finally, most typical of traditional clinical psychology is the assumption that patients and clients are things-in-themselves, e.g., neurotics, psychotics, schizophrenics, etc. Needless to say, the professional psychologists who use these frames of reference rarely if ever conceive of themselves or their families in these terms.

As we have tried to emphasize again and again in this book, a phenomenologically grounded human scientific psychology seeks above all to be faithful to the phenomenon of man as a human being. This means that the underlying problem of the being of man cannot be solved by reducing him to a human organism, or to a cybernetic system, or to a second rate computer, or to a psychic steam engine, or to any other model that violates the everyday being of the human person. A phenomenologically grounded human scientific clinical psychology must be built upon an adequate portrayal of man the human being. It is our opinion that while this portrayal is still in the process of being realized, the existential phenomenological philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Gabriel Marcel and Martin Buber, to mention a few, have done much to articulate the sought after characterization. Thus, while we do not want to encourage our psychology students to masquerade as philosophers, we require them to familiarize themselves with the thought of these thinkers. We want them to raise to a thematic level the insights that these men have articulated.

One might still ask, however, but what does all that mean concretely? Do you still use Rorschachs? What about the analysis of resistance in therapy? Our answer to these and similar questions is that we *may* do everything that the traditional clinician does, including giving Rorschachs, but that the meaning of these practices, let alone their results, are understood in terms of an existential phenomenological portrayal of man.

Our orientation in existential phenomenology has led us to a reconceptualization of social psychology along the lines of an integrated and relational way of thinking. This involves viewing man as always *being-in-a-social-situation*, as actively engaged in a dialectic of personal and social meaning giving and discovering in each situation.

Existential phenomenological thinkers have given us a more adequate understanding of what it means to be human. In their tradition, men like A. Schütz, P. Berger, M. Natanson, E. Goffman and H. Garfinkel allow us to elaborate this thinking in the domain of social psychology. The key

problem areas are the mutual influence of the individual and society, the experience of the social world, the interpersonal interface, media as social influence, ideology and persuasion, and the ecology of social life.

We are only at the beginning of an integrated social science approach. The contribution of existential phenomenology will be crucial in this enterprise because it allows us to focus upon the concretely given, the real everyday life-situation of particular individuals as well as groups of individuals.

Concerning themselves with real people in real situations may well change the role of social psychologists; they may be drawn into value-engagements and concerns with the relevance of research. We are beginning to realize that as human beings, we cannot be without presuppositions and values; we are embedded in interest groups and we can rarely escape our social-communal loyalties even as social scientists. Nor should we. We are engaged in life, social life, and our researches and opinions matter, whether we like this or not. Just consider, for example, the 1954 Desegregation decision, the Manhattan project, or even the Adorno, Authoritarian Personality Studies. Really, there is no way to escape the contemporary, historical and political context. We are all subject to ideological persuasions of one kind or another. The only defense, if not to say remedy, against this state of affairs is a deliberate attempt to clarify one's presuppositions, the high art of phenomenology. Such a questioning of presuppositions has to become part of every research.

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