Dialogue beyond polemics

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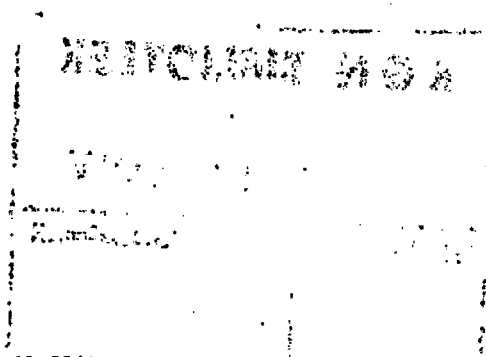
Dialogue beyond polemics

Rex van Vuuren



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This book is dedicated to Professor Dreyer Kruger as a token of appreciation of his inspired and dedicated contributions to psychology in South Africa in general, and, to phenomenological psychology in particular.

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INTRODUCTION

This book is about psychology as a human science. The human science approach looks quite different today from what it was even a few years ago. One encounters phenomenological psychology, hermeneutic psychology and critical psychology as some of the approaches. Today we may say that the protagonists and sympathisers of the human science approach have established in argument and practice the possibility - and even the necessity - of developing knowledge in the disciplines dealing with human "data" from outside the traditional view of science, as received from the natural sciences. The contributors to this work do more than deal with the meaning of psychology as a human science; what is more important is that the meaning of human science should emerge from its qualitative (i.e. descriptive and interpretive) practices, procedures and results.

Psychology as a human science needs to be differentiated from psychology as a behavioral science. But because of the historical development of academic inquiry, various national differences come into play. When we speak of *les sciences humaine* in French, *Geisteswissenschaften* in German and the "social/behavioral sciences" in an Anglo-American context, we are not talking about equivalent areas of inquiry. Differences in philosophy, epistemology, and methodology, as well as differing intellectual and cultural traditions, determine what the important questions will be for psychology. The contributors to this book reflect some of these different traditions.

The common complaint from empirical scientists about human science research is that it relies too heavily on the interpersonal involvement of the researcher and on what appear to be arbitrary interpretive judgments. The human science researcher who tries to respond to this criticism generally experiences considerable frustration, which stems from a sense that the empirical scientist has missed the whole point and purpose of qualitative research. Human scientists find themselves continually having to justify their positions theoretically against other positions. There seems to be no easy way out of this continual need to validate through argument. However, an alternative to legitimation through polemic argument is to obtain credibility by doing rather than by justifying - hence the title of this work: *Dialogue beyond polemics*.

This work is the result of a symposium on phenomenological psychology and related approaches held in Pretoria during 1989, and it reflects something of the "state of the art" of qualitative research in psychology in South Africa. A group of South African academic, research and therapeutic psychologists, who identify to a greater or lesser degree with the project of psychology as a human science, share with the reader their dialogue on the potential of a human science for elucidating contemporary theoretical, methodological and practi-

cal problems. Moving beyond the endless quest for legitimation and ritual critique of mainstream psychology, a vibrant human science applies its theoretical insights to different contexts of the lived world.

In the first chapter Rex van Vuuren expresses the frustration of the human scientist with colleagues who ignore important principles underlying the indivisibility of an approach with its method and content. Such misunderstanding results in an incorrect and inadequate characterization of phenomenological psychology. Poor scholarship, often bred at an undergraduate level, contributes to an aversive reaction resulting in what Van Vuuren classifies as reversible and irreversible misconceptions about phenomenology. When phenomenologists respond to a criticism of their approach by challenging their critics' epistomological foundations, a phobic response is often evoked. One of the implications of this chapter is that for psychology to be practised as a human science, a researcher must have a more than nodding acquaintance with formal epistemology and the philosophical issues underlying methodological debates.

In the second chapter the personologist Werner Meyer develops a conceptual system or metatheory based on the Aristotelian distinction between material, effective, formal and final causes, as a tool to help place personality theories. This system highlights the similarities and differences between personality theories and their implications for changing behavior. After a detailed exposition of the notion of causal explanations in personality psychology, Meyer briefly applies the system to the personality theories of Freud, Rogers and Frankl. This contribution emphasises the importance of understanding and acknowledging one's presuppositions about personhood as well as ideas about causality.

Human science research does not concern itself only with theoretical problems; it must also be applied to elucidating and solving contemporary human problems. Joha Louw-Potgieter argues that although there is a general norm against prejudice in the present changing South Africa, this does not mean that racism is disappearing. She describes the prevalence of the norm against racism in a variety of contexts and forcefully points out that the subtleties of racism still dominate and have many social implications - for the way in which social psychologists have traditionally studied racist attitudes as well. In order to overcome these difficulties Louw-Potgieter draws on Kelley's attribution theory and uses a qualitative method in which black students' experiences and accounts of racism are analysed. This chapter highlights the human science view that the researcher must develop a rationally defensible basis for a critical perspective on society.

Dave Edwards attempts to situate the phenomenological method developed by Amedeo Giorgi within the tradition of the case study research method. While developing this method Giorgi was a member of the department of psychology at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh. His descriptive and qualita-

tive method became widely known as the Duquesne Phenomenological Research Method (DPRM). Edwards views the DPRM as a special class of the case study research method, and avers that certain shortcomings of Giorgi's method can be resolved within the framework of this method. Identifying with the human science movement throughout, Edwards underlines the importance of the case study research method as an indispensable tool for qualitative research.

Boet Preller, a known scholar of Sullivan and phenomenological psychiatry, focuses on one of the most enigmatic existential phenomena: anxiety. Preller compares Sullivan's concept of anxiety, which is so fundamental to his theory of interpersonal relations, with the philosophical and existential-phenomenological viewpoints of Kierkegaard and Heidegger respectively. This is not an easy task because the difficulties of a "correct" translation and understanding of philosophical terms can blur both the similarities and differences between these two viewpoints. A careful reading of this chapter will reveal that Sullivan is not only closer to existential phenomenology than to the prevailing viewpoints of his time, but also that his notions correct the view of the isolated subject of existential philosophy. This comparison presents us with an opportunity of deepening our understanding of anxiety.

In the next chapter Roger Brooke illustrates the theoretical and epistemological convergence between phenomenology and Jungian analytical psychology, using a case study from his practice as a psychotherapist. The author weaves a moving text through the therapy, and concludes with his reflections on the search for a hermeneutic key to the story shared by his client-patient. The attempt to integrate phenomenology's concern with *presences* and analytical psychology's concern with *images* is a significant contribution. One of the implications of Brooke's contribution is the importance of systematic depth and breadth analyses of complex relationships that cross over disciplinary concerns - a very important role for the human science researcher.

Les Todres, also a psychotherapist, presents the reader with a case study of a phenomenological description of the *way* a therapeutic session flows. This case study is a lucid illustration of Todres' conviction that "the phenomenological tradition is eminently qualified to offer some interesting perspectives regarding the primacy of 'process' issues in psychotherapy." Here the psychotherapeutic situation not only becomes a place of struggle but is also informed by the faith of 'not knowing' - a place where insight is experientially grounded and indirectly gained as a consequence of the phenomenological process. The therapist is not a passive witness: rather, psychotherapy is co-constituted by the therapist and the client. Answers or solutions to the client's problems occur indirectly as multiple profiles of existence progressively unfold. Within this stance it is easy to sense and understand the aesthetic quality of psychotherapy as phenomenological process. This aesthetic sensitivity is a

quality which should perhaps be cultivated by the human science researcher, in order to invite and compel the reader's participation in the ongoing human conversation about meaning.

In the third last chapter we encounter Dreyer Kruger's thoughts on the importance of hermeneutics for both psychotherapy and phenomenological psychological research. In the light of the hermeneutic tradition in theology and philosophy, and considering Freud, Jung and Boss as hermeneutic theorists, one may wonder along with Kruger why psychology has not taken up the problem of interpretation. This question becomes even more surprising when Kruger shows from his own investigation that South African therapists do have certain styles of interpretation. The thrust of Kruger's contributionis to be found in his statement "that we should recognise that interpretation is as important in psychological research as it is in psychotherapy." He emphasises that problem-finding becomes as important to the human science researcher as problem-solving. The human science researcher interprets his results, not in terms of a search for certainty, but as an exploration of conflicts and discrepancies, as part of the project of an ongoing scholarly discourse.

In a strong contrast to the previous three chapters especially, Alexis Retief, in the ninth chapter, submits a critical analysis of psychotherapy as a place of struggle: a power struggle, an ideological struggle. With his contribution he wants to be intentionly controversial. Retief argues that the practice of psychotherapy is semiotic, in the sense that any practice is at once communicative and signifying. More specifically he develops the argument that the logic of the position of the psychotherapist as a semiotician makes the therapist "always, and in principle, (an) authoritarian semiotician", a fixer and controller of meaning, a power broker. But, the "little" knowledge of the therapist and the act of interpretation is not objective or impartial. Psychotherapy is discursive and the therapist generates authoritarian power. There is no discourse without power, no power without discourse. The intimate relationship between the practices of therapy and epistemology creates an unavoidable epistemological dilemma, especially if a client does not change direction according to the criteria for change postulated as desirable by a theory. Retief questions the "succesful and unsuccesful" ways out of, and the safeguards against this dilemma. Still, the "anxiety of influence" never abates.

In the tenth and final chapter Bernd Jager, a psychotherapist and prolific writer from Sonoma State University in California, leads us into a wide-ranging meditation on creative imagination, relating punctuation in language to a distinction between the private an public realms. The function of the period after a sentence (closure) is the same as that of walls around ancient cities, as Professor Jager argues in an exploration of Classical texts. Similarly, the gaps we have to pass through after the ending of a life phase, and the transitions we have to make toward a new beginning, cultivate our humanity. Punctuation is

not only a closure or the ordering of a text. On another level the punctuations of life are rites of passage, reminding us of our human limits. These passage rites instill in us "a sense of fallibility and mortality". The punctuations of life allow us to emerge from "the primordial slime and to stand over and against and with the natural world" as much as they both connect us to and separate us from the realm of the gods. For Jager an unpunctuated life cannot reach the realm of excellence because "all human greatness is greatness contained". And the public realm is the proper place for human excellence. Jager draws our attention to some of the implications of the changing meaning of public space and modern social space, or contemporary life's refusal of "punctuation". Transcendence, or true excellence, whether in word or deed, is only achieved, Jager believes, when limits are accepted: "Creative imagination, understood as the power to envision a liveable future, dawns upon only those who have received the period and accept the inevitability of closure".

I hope that after reading this book the reader will come to appreciate that empirical research as it is traditionally understood, is too narrow to capture the efforts of human-science psychologists to present results that are deemed a contribution to knowledge about human experience. This does not mean that the contributions made here should be categorized as provisional opinions. In a dialogue beyond polemics it makes more sense to speak in terms of defensible knowledge claims. And in this dialogue the final act of validation is the reader's.

Chapter 1

Phenomenologophobia? The aversive reaction to phenomenological psychology

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A case could be made for the view that traditional epistemological assumptions in psychology are institutionalized opinions and ideologies which have crystallized into 'facts', which have become dogmatic and authoritarian. A ruling orthodoxy is jealous of its power and is not likely to relinquish its hold on the institutions of psychological studies. It is understandable that one's interests must be protected against invasion. These systems of knowledge are afforded protection by the cultures which invent them because they legitimize the culture. (If) 'discourse is responsible for reality and not merely a reflection of it, then whose discourse prevails makes all the difference' (Tompkins, 1980, xxv).

The prevailing discourse in psychology at South African universities is clearly reflected by the choice of prescribed books. To undertake a study of the scope and nature of the prevailing discourse in psychology in SA would be a very revealing exercise.

That phenomenology is a minority point of view needs no debate. Recent undergraduate introductory textbooks on psychology, personality psychology and psychopathology that have become available to Afrikaans speaking students witness to this fact (du Toit, 1986; Moller, 1987; Meyer and Viljoen, 1989; Louw, 1989; Jordaan and Jordaan, 1989). In these texts phenomenogical psychology is mentioned cursorily or presented more extensively in one of the chapters. In most instances the material is organised according to the typical American treatment of phenomenological psychology as part of humanistic psychology or the Third Force. For example, the presentation of philosophical phenomenology such as de Vos's (in Moller, 1987) reading of Husserl is usually well written but when it comes to *doing* phenomenological psychology the writers get stuck because they do not know what to do or how to apply what they have read to psychological problems. At this point de Vos picks Carl Rogers as a representative of phenomenology and motivates his choice by saying that, as so many writers do, Rogers recognized the importance of the

"inner and subjective experience of the self". Further on I will return to the issue of Rogers as a "phenomenologist".

In recent years, there has been an ever-increasing interest in phenomenology and related approaches in psychology in the USA. I have been struck by the articles appearing in the official Journal of the APA, *The American Psychologist* (i.e. Packer, 1985; Faulconer & Williams, 1985; Gendlin, 1986; Jennings, 1986). This interest is also reflected in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (Rogers, 1985; Barrel et al, 1985; Allender, 1987). Whatever the reason for the present interest most psychologists have a very limited knowledge of phenomenology.

This growing interest does not motivate me to convert those members of our discipline who are more comfortable in and identify with other paradigms or discourses. Nor am I blind to the weaknesses and underdeveloped aspects of phenomenological psychology. I do not want to address the critiques of phenomenology such as Derrida's (1959/78) claim that phenomenology is barred from inquiring into the foundations of its own method. Rather, one of the greatest assets of phenomenological psychology, which attracted me is its flexibility and sensitiveness and to new values, techniques, insights and criticisms that emerge from inside and outside its own current domain. In SA the development of Kruger, Brooke, Todres (in this volume) and others is an attestation of phenomenology as effective and continued meaning-elucidation or meaning-clarification.

This implies that the whole spectrum of intellectual discourse in psychology (approach, method, content, theory and praxis) is marked by challenges and debates. But I do take issue with poor scholarship which is reflected in 1) inattention to important principles and detail and 2) the intensity of response which results in an incorrect and inadequate characterization of phenomenological psychology. The title of this chapter tries to catch something of this issue: the problem of complicated discourses and languages which contribute to the aversive reaction of both novices and critics of phenomenological psychology. This results in reversible and irreversible mistakes about phenomenology. I would like to deal with this issue on much the same basis as Armstrong (1979) described this issue for phenomenological sociology.

To metaphorize this issue as a form of pathology is not original. Ryan (1985) has written about the pathologies of epistemology in literary studies. In psychology Sigmund Koch (1981: 258-259) enumerated a sample of the "epistemopathic peregrinations of the inquiring impulse" (sic) to which any psychologist can fall victim. Amongst his sample of fourteen are:

1. Jargon and "word magic."
2. Single-principle imperialism.

3. The substitution of *program* for performance.
4. The tendency to make so restrictive a definition of the field of study as to render the study beside the point or, indeed, finished before begun.
7. The tendency to accept on authority or invent a sacred, inviolable "self-corrective" epistemology that renders all inquiry in the field a matter of application of rules which preguanrantee success.
10. Tendency to accept any "finding" conformable to some treasured methodology in preference to "traditional" wisdom or individual experience, no matter how pellucidly and frequently confirmed the nonscientific knowledge may be.
12. An exceedingly strong reluctance to reinspect one's deeper and/or substantive commitments. This, in effect, is the theory of truth by individual consistency over time.

Such cognitive pathologies lead to Koch's well-known distinction between meaningful and a-meaningful thinking (Koch, 1965). About a-meaningful thinking Koch (1981:264) says:

> The ultimate "meaning" of a meaning is indeed that it is a fear-driven species of cognitive constriction, a reduction of uncertainty by denial, by a form of phony certainty achieved by the covert annihilation of the problematic, the complex, and the subtle.

The answer to the question to what extent phenomenoligsts are guilty of a meaningful thinking will be left to others who are competent or to another occasion of self-examination. On this occasion my focus will be on the vast subject area of what Armstrong (1979: 64) calls "the incompetent and the competent-but-wrong" phobic responses to phenomenological psychology.

The vastness of the subject area can be appreciated if we take note of the fact that we can only detect this condition through two sources: 1) The quality of comments and criticism raised by students and colleagues and the observations and evaluations one can make about students during training. 2) The vast public domain of published comments and criticism. Phenomenologophobes are academically and professionally a heterogeneous population. To search for a prototype would be irresponsible and meaningless.

The rest of this chapter will be taken up, first, by a few comments on the aversive response at the level of direct contact with students and, secondly, by a catalogue of some of the available written deficient responses to phenomenology.

Teaching phenomenological psychology and the aversive response

Those of us who have had the experience of presenting a course to undergraduates on phenomenology know the varied reactions to this approach. I get comments like "It is too abstract", "I like it but the vocabulary is difficult and complicated", "If this is psychology I want nothing to do with it"; "It is an unpractical approach to human problems. I cannot see how you can help people successfully". To open up lifeworld(s) to students requires experience and wisdom (which I often wish I had more of). The opposite response has been directed to me just as often: "It makes so much sense to me", "It is the most challenging and stimulating part of this year's course", "Why is there so little of phenomenology in the undergraduate and postgraduate courses? "I understand what you say when you describe human phenomena in existential terms but it is very difficult for me to find and use the words to say what I want to say".

I have made peace with this love-hate relationship with phenomenology. It seems to be part of any attempt, at least at an undergraduate level, to communicate the approach, method and content of phenomenological psychology. At the University of Pretoria the tension between psychology and a more ideologically dressed phenomenological pedagogics has a long history. Consequently phenomenological psychology has been branded with the same ill-considered categories as phenomenological pedagogics. One observation I would like to make in this instance is that the attempts to convey the principled grounding of pedagogics has not led to students "seeing" the richness of the texture of the world of the child. The excessive use of "hyphenated-phrases" partly contributes to students' and my colleagues' negative reaction. Of this problem Keen (1975: 140) recognises that hyphenated phrases come directly from the German phenomenological literature, and that they usually confuse if not offend American readers (to which I can add: as well as many South African readers). Keen continues by saying:

> However, there is no escaping the fact that new thoughts and new ways of thinking require new terms that sometimes make distinctions formerly unmade and sometimes combine things formerly distinguished. In all these "being-in" terms, we are combining being and locus, object and subject, consciousness and thing, because in experience they in fact occur together. Their separateness in our language is the result of our having hypostasized these two aspects of a prior unity, the result of the Western tradition that has made these abstractions into separable realities, violating the unity of experience as it is experienced and thus forcing us to use hyphenated phrases in order to describe experience accurately.

Thus, jargon and "word magic" is confused with the legitimate use of existential-phenomenological concepts to guide reflection and the languaging of the "existential baseline" (Wertz, 1983). The negative response is fed by the prevailing notion that science has as it's goal the attainment of completely univocal meanings.

Many of us who are teaching and supervising students have seen how students grow in their understanding, not only of phenomenology as a human science, but especially of human phenomena. Some of the the successes and joys of our work, as teachers and researchers, are rooted in our human capacity for growth and desire for wisdom. The positive experiences in our work is made possible when the boundaries of the teaching situation are transcended (Churchill, 1988, p. 27). This happens, when a student overcomes the tendency toward methodological literalism (whereby a particular research method is taken as definitive of how to do research) and a student is able to extrapolate methods learned in doing research about one phenomenon, to other research interests, without becoming repetitive.

In supervising a phenomenological or qualitative research project or a thesis one notices how students often get stuck at the phenomenal level. As Churchill (1988, p. 24) puts it they are "at a loss to find a way of moving with the data ... " Doing qualitative research requires, amongst others, an engaged intimate personal reflection on the field of psychological phenomena. To be able to "see" the data, the student-researcher must appropriate guiding concepts. These concepts, the lenses through which we see, "need to be *taken up* and used *as a means* by which to see concrete phenomena before they can 'work' for the student" (Churchill, 1988, p. 26).

The failure of students to get in touch with their own perspective (the epoché) and to get in touch with the phenomenon (eidetic intuition) leads to serious shortcomings in research. For example, to see what one is looking for is a common error. The selection of a psychological topic is based on personal issues or motives which can limit the findings by the self-deceptive tendencies of the researcher.

Van den Berg's opinion (in Kruger, 1984, p xiv) that, compared to the past, the present generation of students at university are of a poorer quality because universities "do not insist upon a high standard of excellence" as an admission requirement has merit, but is only a partial explanation for the aversive reaction toward phenomenological psychology. Churchill (1988) holds the view that the manner in which phenomenology is taught is a central thesis in understanding this aversive reaction. To reach the level of teaching Churchill (1988) describes would be an extremely difficult achievement in the South African context because of the growing numbers of students at our universities. Unless this tide can reversed through, interalia, stricter admission requirements, I for one am compelled to accept that most students will appropriate a shallow and narrow

understanding of phenomenological psychology and related qualitative approaches to psychology.

From another point of view it is clear that this aversive response is not unique to phenomenological psychology but that it is a response to all the new approaches to the study of man in a new philosophy of science - what have become known as the phenomenological-hermeneutic or interpretive approaches. I am convinced that these approaches are extremely fruitful, meaningful and exciting views of the human world. But there can be no question that in the *real politic* of South African academic life, especially in psychology, positivism still holds the dominant position within the scholarly establishment. The main figures in the philosophical debate which forms the basis of the postpositivist science are largely unknown to most students and faculty members of psychology departments as well as members of our discipline who are in private practice or in the private sector.

The aversive reaction in scholarly quarters

A. Reversible mistakes

According to Armstrong (1979) the incorrect and inadequate portrayal of phenomenology shows a gradual intensity. Let us deal with this hierachy by starting at the lowest level.

1. The Polemic Level

I have not been able to find any polemic but trivial insights such as Armstrong (1979: 64) has found in sociology. He mentions for example that phenomenology is called an "abdication of intellectual inquiry of Alice-in-Wonderland proportions." Also that phenomenology is linked to a life-style which included astrology and LSD, leading up to Descartes' words to read, "Coitus, ergo sum."

2. The Dilettante level

This level of incompetence becomes apparent when one tries, especially at an undergraduate level, to provide "some understanding" rather than a "basic understanding" of phenomenogical psychology. It is then that critics complain about the "obscure thoughts and vague concepts."

At this level of intellectual myopia complicated issues are presented in a glib manner. After examining four "philosophical" psychologies - of Maine de Biran, Bergson, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty - Jean Piaget (1965) concludes mockingly:

> We have seen Sartre project his self into consciousness ... to discover there that it's 'causality' is magic, and we see Merleau-Ponty end by concluding that subjectivity is basically ambiguous. This is, then, what is given to us as knowledge of Man and which is opposed to the psychology of conduct, because the latter is intellectualist and only 'scientific.'

I mention one more example which speaks for itself. Edward B Titchener (cited by Giorgi, 1981) said: "I've read Husserl. There's nothing in him for psychology."

3. The level of Basic Errors

Ignorance of phenomenological psychology can lead to careless and imprudent generalizations. Examples are plentiful and the same mistakes are repeated by different authors. Jennings (1986: 1231) articulates the reason for this mistake as follows:

> Some psychologists use the term phenomenological in a distinctly pejorative sense, signifying the basic "unreliable" nature of subjective self-report data ... Such psychologists often regard consciousness as a will-o-the-wisp phenomenon that cannot be directly studied in a scientific manner.

The term *phenomenological* is typically used as an interchangeable word for *subjective.* Most psychologists conceive of phenomenology as the study of private subjective responses to a given situation. This might be one of the reasons why Rogers is classified as a phenomenologist. Kendler (1987: 440) is guilty of this mistake when he makes the statement that one of the the core ideas of Rogers' self theory is that the "phenomenological self" is the central concept in personality. A double error is made when the term *phenomenological* is used for *subjective*, as well as a lack of understanding of the term *phenomenal.*

At this point I want to add that although Rogers said himself that his "theory is basically phenomenological in character" (1951: 532) we cannot, in the light of the points of departure of Husserl or Heidegger, classify him as a phenomenologist. Rogers borrowed some of his ideas for his Self theory from Snygg and Combs who considered themselves to be phenomenologists. Smith (cited in Hall & Lindzey, 1957) came to the conclusion that "Rogers' self theory is based upon a naive type of phenomenology." At most we can say that Rogers is sympathetic toward phenomenology and that his self theory shows an affinity with phenomenology. This interpretation is borne out by Rogers'(1959: 251) own words:

> Is there some view, possibly developing out of an existentialist orientation, which might ... find more room for the existing subjective person ...? This is a highly speculative dream of an intangible goal.

Lastly, in one of his last papers (1985: 13) he says:

> Phenomenological studies ... are an excellent way of investigating certain issues, but phenomenological methods are not *the* best tool of research, but simply one tool appropriate to some kind of situations.

A last example of a basic error: Phenomenological philosophy and psychology is continually described as a school, current, trend or a tendency (See for example Jordaan and Jordaan, 1989: 33). Spiegelberg (1983) and Schumann (1983) has convincingly documented the case for the use of the phrase "movement".

Many of the basic errors grow and extend into the level of more serious errors.

4. The level of Serious Errors

At this level uncritical scholarly mistakes about phenomenology are made. These mistakes can in principle be rectified and put in a more correct perspective.

Giorgi (1983) accumulated ten misunderstandings of phenomenology within psychology. I will firstly enumerate them and secondly, briefly mention four of them without repeating in detail his arguments in correcting the errors.

a. Phenomenology is the same as introspection.
b. Phenomenology is merely subjective.
c. Phenomenology is merely experiential.
d. Phenomenology is merely ideographic.
e. Phenomenology is merely concerned with private, inner realities.
f. Phenomenology is anti-science.
g. Phenomenology is merely a prescientific phase or propadentic to science.
h. Phenomenology is speculative.
i. Phenomenology is necessarily anti-data.
j. Phenomenology is anti-traditional psychology.

(a) The most common error to be found in psychological writings is the identification of phenomenology with introspection. After citing a few examples Giorgi says that "the heart of the confusion is that both phenomenology

and introspection are descriptive in orientation and both are interested in the investigation of consciousness." Giorgi very carefully argues three main differences which relate to interpretive assumptions. On the basis of these three reasons it is clear that introspective reports and phenomenological descriptions "cannot be collapsed."

(b) The basic error of distorting subjective phenomena and phenomenology (see 3. above) is extended and gives rise to more serious errors where "subjective meaning" and "phenomenological" collapses in such a manner that other possibilities of the term "subjective" as phenomenoligsts would use it, is lost. "When phenomenoligsts stress subjectivity, it means the human subject as the necessary relational term for whatever is given as "objective" (Giorgi, 1983: 136).

(c) A parallel error to the one just mentioned is the wrong impression that phenomenology studies experience in and of itself to the exclusion of behaviour. For phenomenology, experience (consciousness), as well as behaviour, are intentional. Both experience and behaviour are defined by their relationships. They are not first defined in themselves and then related to other things as Brody and Oppenheim (1967: 330) imply when they write that psychologists are phenomenologists "if they take as the fundamental data (phenomena) for their investigations experiences themselves." Rather, behaviour relates functionally and experience presentationally to situations.

(d) In line with the subjective and experiential is the association of phenomenology as being concerned only with private, inner realities as opposed to public outer realities. Many writers such as Cronbach (1960\1949); Jourard (1971\1964); Kendler (1952); Lazarus (1969) and Rogers (1964) have spoken of phenomenological events as *only* private, "inner" events. Distinctions such as material and public (i.e. things of the world); nonmaterial and public (i.e. mathematical axioms); private and nonmaterial (i.e. as something was experienced by me) caution us against a simple identity between inner and private and outer and public.

(e) In line with the above association is the impression that phenomenology was exclusively ideographic and could not contribute to nomothetic concerns. This dichotomy and separation of the nomothetic and ideographic disciplines was originally proposed by Windelband. Dilthey and Spranger also advocated two psychologies. Gordon Allport (1937) took up the pros and cons of this dichotomy for the study of personality. From a phenomenological point of view it is an error to oppose the personal and concrete (ideographic) with the abstract and formal (nomothetic) and miss the opportunity of working *through* the individual to the general.

5. The Degenerative Level

Armstrong (1979) cites a few instances of a true perversion of scholarship where commentators saw hippies and find conservatives amongst phenomenologists. This misrepresentation of the political nature of phenomenology is only surpassed by the manner phenologophobes classify their intellectual adversaries. Phenomenology is seen as similiar to, amongst others: Exchange theory, Neo-Freudian analysis, Positivism, Skinnerian behaviourism and Symbolic interactionism (p. 67).

I have not found any such gross distortions in psychology. The most vicious attack on any approach I have encountered in psychology is Scharnberg's (1984) attack on psychodynamics. The target of his attack is Freud and, Harre and Secord. He accuses these "antiquantificationists" of being extremely dishonest "conservative counter-revolutionaries". At one point (p. 129) he says:

> One of the distinguishing features of psychoanalytic interpretations is their tendency to promote vulgar prejudices into scientific truths.

Further on (p. 140) he summarizes psychoanalysis as follows:

1. Freud did not discover any data of a new type.
2. Freud did not discover any data of an old type.
3. Freud did not discover any new configurations of data.
4. Freud did not produce any comprehensive collection of any kind of data.
5. Freud did not invent any new way of drawing inferences from data.
6. Whenever Freud makes any assertion that has some empirical reference, that is non-trivial, and that is to the least extent original, his assertion is flagrantly false.
7. Whenever Freud draws any inference and clearly informs the reader about what set of data it is based on, the inference is easily seen to be absurd.

Although Scharnberg spares phenomenology the rod, in Chapter 2 of his book he accuses Harre and Secord of being dishonest, full of pretensions, inconsistent, and ignorant. They have a very limited knowledge of important issues and have strange delusions about the nature of the physical sciences.

B. Irreversible mistakes.

The kind of mistake Armstrong (1979) would include under this heading takes on a new direction. For example, Husserl is constantly being accused of solipsism. Of this complaint Armstrong says:

> Ironically, the phenomenologophobes are dealing with the problem of solipsism in what appears to be a solipsistic manner. They do not explicate the philosophical arguments; rather, they evoke the word solipsism as a shibboleth. (p. 68)

The negative reaction toward phenomenology is characterized by the acceptance of the natural science model of psychology or at least the adoption of the terms ultimately derived from this model. Even if psychologists are aware that they have committed themselves in this way the difficulty in dealing with the negative reaction toward phenomenology is compounded when there is no attempt to discuss the question of this commitment and its role in assessing phenomenological psychology. Listen to what Turner (1967) has to say:

> Phenomenology cannot be of any help, methodologically or conceptually, to a psychology which wishes to explain and to predict on the basis of rules and manifest similarities.

The typical error is to disregard the differences between phenomenological and natural scientific conceptions of meaning and objectivity and proceed as if they were identical. (See for example Elkins et. al., 1988)

Conclusion

When psychologists are having their vacillating epistemological foundations challenged a phobic response is the result of the need to escape this challenge. Alternatively, every effort is made to place phenomenology in familiar categories resulting in a loss of the radical nature of phenomenology. Phenomenology cannot be fitted into any encompassing frame because it is constantly being formed.

Of course it is true that phenomenology is a challenge to the forced imposition of any dogmatic edifice on the study of man's psychological life. No one is excluded in principle from gaining access to knowledge of psychological life.

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Chapter 2

Analysing psychological theories in terms of causal constructs

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Psychological literature abounds with theories. An investigation of the many textbooks on personality theories alone reveals that there are more than thirty different theories which have their supporters and are studied world wide (Burger, 1986; Corsini, Marsella & contributors, 1983; du Toit, 1986; Engler, 1985; Feist, 1985; Hall, Lindzey, Loehlin & Manesovitz, 1985; Hjelle & Ziegler, 1981; Liebert & Spiegler, 1987; Maddi, 1989; Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1989; Möller, 1987; Monte, 1977; Pervin, 1984; Phares, 1984; Rychlak, 1981; Scroggs, 1985; Smith & Vetter, 1982). Although a similar situation prevails in many other specifically areas of psychology, this paper deals with personology.

This situation can be evaluated in various ways. On the one hand it is often said that the existence of so many theories is desirable, that each theory contains some truth about man, and that it would be an impoverishment if psychology were to reject and forget some of these theories. On the other hand, in a more critical sense, the existence of many theories is often regarded as undesirable because it is a sign of the immaturity of personology, and the opinion is expressed that comparative research and evaluation should be undertaken to weed out "bad" theories (Maddi, 1989).

Whether one wants to retain the diversity or to identify and retain only the "good" theories, an essential step is to thoroughly analyse and compare the existing theories. Several metatheoretical systems with this general purpose are in existence already, for example those of Maddi and Rychlak.

Maddi (1989) distinguishes three models on which personality theories are based. As two variants are recognized in each model, the following six categories of theories result:

- Theories based on an *intrapsychic conflict model* (exemplified by the theories of Otto Rank and Carl Jung)

- Theories based on a *psychosocial conflict model* (e.g. Sigmund Freud, Henry Murray and Erik Erikson)

- Theories based on the *actualization version of a fulfilment model* (e.g. Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow)

- Theories based on the *perfection version of a fulfilment model* (e.g. Gordon Allport, Erich Fromm and existential psychology)

- Theories based on the *cognitive dissonance version of a consistency model* (e.g. George Kelly and David McClelland)

- Theories based on the *activation version of a consistency model* (e.g. Salvatore Maddi and Donald Fiske).

Although this is a well considered metatheory which brings to light many important similarities and differences between theories, it has a few major shortcomings. One is that Maddi uses his system to pigeon hole theories, whereas many theories show characteristics of various models. In fact, several theories are very difficult to place (e.g. those of Freud, Jung, Erikson, Murray and Rogers). In some cases Maddi presents elaborate arguments to arrive at a specific classification of a theory. Another problem is that there is no clearly apparent connection between the category in which a theory is placed and the techniques for therapy and behavioural change associated with the theory.

Rychlak (1981), basing his views on the well known distinction between realistic and idealistic styles of thinking, distinguishes between what he calls Lockean, Kantian and mixed Kantian-Locean models of personality.

- The *Lockean model*, characterized by a realistic theory of knowledge and a tough-minded, empirical view of science, is exemplified by the theories of Harry Stack Sullivan, John Dollard and Neal Miller, Burrhus Skinner and Albert Bandura.

- The *Kantian model*, characterized by critical realism and a phenomenological outlook, is exemplified by the theories of Carl Rogers, Ludwig Binswanger, Medard Boss and George Kelly.

- The *mixed Kantian-Lockean model*, which is characterized by a dualistic view of mind and body and by psychic determinism, is exemplified by the theories of Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler and Carl Jung.

Once again it must be pointed out that Rychlak's categorization of personality theories is not suitable for the present purposes, mainly because his distinctions are too broad, and also because the implications for behaviour change are not readily apparent. However, it must be acknowledged that one of the conceptual tools he uses to decide to which model a theory belongs was an important impetus for the development of the analytical system proposed in this paper.

This tool is the Aristotelian distinction between material, effective, formal and final causes. One of the steps in Rychlak's analysis of a personality theory is to determine which of the Aristotelian causes are emphasized in the theory. Unfortunately Rychlak's analysis is not always easy to follow, particularly because he tends to confuse some of the causal constructs and does not employ the constructs consistently. Nevertheless the relationship between Aristotelian "causes" and Rychlak's "models" can be summarized as follows: Lockean models tend to explain behaviour in terms of material and effective causes, Kantian theories prefer an explanation in terms of formal and final causes, while mixed models use material-effective explanations for some aspects of behaviour and formal-final explanations for others.

This paper represents an attempt to develop a conceptual system or meta-theory for the following purposes:

- to draw a clear picture of the similarities and differences between personality theories (and possibly other psychological theories)

- to link the explanations of human functioning offered by a theory to the methods for psychotherapy or behaviour change suggested and/or used by proponents of the theory

- to provide a platform for a movement towards a more comprehensive theory of human functioning than contemporary personality theories.

1. Causal explanations of behaviour

The idea that behaviour is somehow connected to causes is usually not very popular with phenomenologists and this makes it important to emphasize that the word "cause" is used in a wide, Aristotelian sense in this paper.

The reason why many modern psychologists dislike the idea of causal explanations is that the concept is associated with the positivist, empiricist view of science of the nineteenth century which is so strongly rejected by interactionism, phenomenology and other more humanistically inclined approaches to the study of man. It is important to note that the positivistic use of the term

"cause" represents a restriction of the Aristotelian meaning. When Aristotle investigated the causes of an object, he asked questions about the *reasons* for its existence. He did not only try to find out which events preceded an event but rather any information that could help him to understand the phenomenon. Our usage in this paper is based on the Aristotelian conception, which can be explained in more detail by the following example:

> When we ask ourselves what caused the existence of a building, let us say a school, we can enumerate various causes, which help us to understand why the school exists. First of all we could say that the school exists as a result of the materials used in its construction - bricks, mortar, wood, iron and glass. This is what Aristotle would call the *material cause* of the school. Secondly, we could say that the school exists as a result of specific events in which energy was used to make something happen - men and machines "did things", for example they cut, carried, transported and put together the material used in the construction of the school. Aristotle called this the *effective cause*. Material and effective causes do not, however, provide a complete explanation. The materials were not simply put together haphazardly, but in an orderly fashion according to a preconceived plan. Architects and engineers worked out plans for the overall structure and for every detail, plans that agreed with the general structure of a school in making provision for offices, class rooms, halls and storage space. Aristotle called this the *formal cause* of the school. However, the plans for the school did not come about all by themselves, but because some person or persons had a goal, they wanted a school to be erected at a particular location. This intention, which led to the planning and construction of the school, Aristotle called the *final or teleological cause*. It is to be emphasized that Aristotle did not limit the number of causes used to explain the existence of an object, nor did he try to define one or more of the causes as more important or basic than the others. His idea was rather that our understanding of something improved with the number of causes we could distinguish (Ackril, 1987; Rychlak, 1981; Rychlak, 1988; Simon, 1982).

To recapitulate: the positivistic philosophy of science restricted causality to material and efficient causes, while the meaning attached to causality by Aristotle and in this paper is much wider. In the Aristotelian sense and in this paper a cause is anything that influences a phenomenon. In the context of psychology this refers to any factor that is regarded as influencing the behaviour and/or development of the individual. This view makes provision for circular causation as defined in the interactional approach (Mauer, 1989). It also implies that knowledge of "causes" can be used to change psychological phenomena.

In the context of psychology, and personology in particular, it is not only easy to extend the number of causes distinguished by Aristotle, but important

to do so. The basic enquiry of psychology can be stated in the form of the question "What causes or influences (this particular instance of) behaviour and/or development?" or "What should I know about behaviour and/or development to understand these processes?". (No attempt will be made to provide a precise definition of behaviour nor go into the complex distinction between behaviour and action [Manicas,1987; Simon, 1982]. For the present purposes it is sufficient to regard anything individuals "do" as "behaviour". This could include anything from growing toe nails to consciously chosen actions, regardless of distinctions such as observable versus unobservable, implicit versus explicit and automatic versus voluntrary - as long as it is perceived to be psychologically relevant. According to Maddi (1998), personology tries to explain "all behaviour".)

Most psychologists, with the exception of extreme behaviourists, would probably agree that behaviour can be understood in terms of internal factors (i.e. factors which are somehow localized within the individual, including physical and mental factors) and external or environmental factors, which immediately produces a duplication of Aristotle's four causes. These eight types of causal explanations are summarized in Table 1 and are described in the following paragraphs.

CASUAL CONSTRUCTS	INTERNAL [situated within the individual]	EXTERNAL [situated in the environment]
MATERIAL	organs and structures in the individual's body	physico-chemical aspects of the environment
EFFECTIVE [events with energy expenditure]	subjective events such as needs or drives	events occurring in the environment
FORMAL ["patterns" that produce "copies"]	intrapsychic patterns such as habits, traits and attitudes	environmental patterns such as social roles, rules and expectations
FINAL [goals]	the individual's goals or intentions	the goals of an external agent, such as God or an educator

Much has been written about the types of explanation psychology and other social sciences should employ or not employ (Bhaskar, 1979; Habermas, 1971; Harré & Secord, 1972; Manicas, 1987; Ryan, 1970; Secord, 1982; Secord,

Backman & Slavitt, 1976). It is not the purpose of this paper to determine whether any particular type of explanation is correct or acceptable, nor to comparatively evaluate the different kinds of explanation. The intention is simply to identify the various types of explanation that are employed in contemporary personology and to develop a conceptual system to deal with this variety.

In the following explanation each type of causal explanation is briefly linked to associated methods which could be used to influence behaviour and development.

1.1 Explanations in terms of internal material causes

This type of explanation refers to physical, constitutional factors within the person, such as heredity, the nervous system, the hormonal system, and the physical needs of the body. Such causal constructs are emphasized in constitutional theories such as those of Kretschmer and Sheldon, and in some learning theories (e.g. the concept of primary need). Internal material explanations also play an important role in Freud's theory, and it is therefore often said to be a biological theory. (This interpretation of Freud is debatable, however, because it does not take into account that Freud also emphasizes experienced drives and wishes, which are internal effective causes, and the idea that the sex drive in its various vicissitudes is said to cause various but recognizable forms of behaviour, which is an internal formal cause. See 1.3 and 1.5.)

An emphasis on internal material causes could be linked to a fatalistic view of education and therapy as it implies that behaviour and development can only be changed by changing relevant aspects of the constitution or biological functioning.

1.2 Explanations in terms of external material causes

These explanations use aspects of the physical environment to explain behaviour, for example drugs, climate and the weather. These material aspects of the environment are mostly seen as causes that affect the individual's body, resulting in particular mood states or behaviours. The underlying idea is that the environmental substance or condition causes a change in the physico-chemical structure or functioning of the body. There are not many personality theories that emphasize this type of explanation, but the learning theory conceptions of drive reduction and pain (material reward and punishment) seem to belong in this category. The idea is that the organism automatically learns behaviour that is followed by a material reward such as food because of the fulfilment of a physical need and the associated reduction in (physical) drive energy.

To the extent that a theorist believes in external material causes, he/she should hold the opinion that behaviour and development can be influenced by changing the physical environment or through medication.

1.3 Explanations in terms of internal effective causes

When theorists explain behaviour as the result of some event within the person, they are referring to internal effective causes. An example of such explanations is the idea that an experienced need or drive causes the individual to behave in a particular way. This kind of explanation often explicitly includes the idea that such an event is connected with some form of energy. Well known constructs in this category are Freud's instinct or drive theory (according to which a drive consists of physical energy that is transformed to psychic energy and gives rise to a wish), and the drive concept as defined by Clark L. Hull and used by later learning theorists such as Dollard and Miller. In fact, any conceptualization of primary, physical needs (i.e. a material conception of needs) seems to include a more abstract aspect in the sense that a form of drive energy is either explicitly defined or implied.

This category of explanation is somewhat problematic as it contains two distinct ideas - that of an event causing another event, and the idea of energy - and it is not clear whether the two are always connected. It may be necessary to distinguish two subcategories here.

An emphasis on internal effective causes implies that behaviour and development can be influenced by changing events and/or energy levels within the individual, for example by encouraging cathartis.

1.4 Explanations in terms of external effective causes

External effective causes refer to environmental forces or events that affect the individual's behaviour. The behaviourists' concept of a stimulus as used in the S-R and S-O-R formulae is a good example of this type of explanation. The idea is that an environmental force called a stimulus causes the organism to respond. In most cases where an internal effective cause is used to explain behaviour, it seems to be linked with an internal material cause explanation as in the case of moderate behaviouristic theories such as those of Hull, Spence and Dollard and Miller, where drive energy is regarded as linked to a primary, physical need. Skinner's concept of reinforcement, which is defined simply as an environmental stimulus that leads to an increase in the preceding behaviour, can however be regarded as a pure effective cause explanation because Skinner does not define reinforcement in terms of any material concept (such as physical need) nor in terms of an energy construct (such as tension reduction).

This type of causal construct is associated with learning and conditioning as means of behaviour change, as in deconditioning, systematic desensitization and other behaviour therapies.

1.5 Explanations in terms of internal formal causes

A formal cause in the Aristotelian sense is the plan or pattern of an object that precedes or underlies its actual existence. In our present context any conceptualization of behaviour in terms of some kind of pattern within the person which in some way produces replications of itself is regarded as an internal formal explanation. Examples of such explanations abound in psychology. The concept of a personality trait is a particularly clear example, the idea being that the trait is some kind of mould that repeatedly produces behaviour resembling this mould. It is in fact the similarity in the individual's behaviour that enables the psychologist to recognize a trait. Other examples of this type of explanation are habit, attitude, self-concept, "the person as he/she really is" (Rogers) and personality. Most personologists freely use this type of explanatory concept, and it can probably be regarded as the explanation that best characterizes traditional personality theory.

An emphasis on this type of causal construct implies that behaviour and development can be changed to the extent that broad intrapsychic patterns can be altered. This is frequently attempted by changing formal aspects of the environment, as in Rogerian therapy where the therapist creates an accepting environment in order to change intrapsychic structures such as the self concept.

1.6 Explanations in terms of external formal causes

While internal formal constructs are probably the most typical concepts of personology, external formal constructs can be regarded as the stronghold of social psychology. Here we think of explanations of behaviour in terms of social pressure, role prescriptions and expectations. Of course, this type of explanation is also frequently used by personologists. For example, Rogers' concept of conditional positive regard fits into this category perfectly: the parents ' expectations and conditions of worth are a pattern that causes the child to produce behaviour resembling this pattern and to form a self-concept which is in agreement with the parents' expectations.

The implications of external formal constructs for behaviour change are similar to those mentioned in 1.5 above.

1.7 Explanations in terms of internal final causes

Aristotle described a final cause as the goal the creator of an object or a plan had in mind. In the context of psychology this concept changes slightly. Final cause explanations of behaviour from the internal vantage point refer to

the goal the individual is trying to achieve with his or her behaviour. Intentions, goals, objectives and future plans belong in this category. Allport's idea of propriate striving is a good example of an internal final or teleological construct. The idea is that behaviour can be explained as the result of the individual's striving for goals which he has created and or chosen for himself.

An emphasis on internal final causes implies that behaviour can be changed by encouraging individuals to "change themselves by changing their goals", for example by reasoning with a client.

1.8 Explanations in terms of external final causes

Behaviour is explained in terms of external final causes when one says or implies that it is the result of the intention of an external force such as God or fate. Such explanations are usually regarded as belonging to the domain of theology rather than psychology. However, external final cause explanations used in the fields of education and psychotherapy can be regarded as psychological examples of this type of explanation, for example the idea that the behaviour of a pupil is the result of the teacher's educational intentions or that the changes in a client are the result of the therapist's goals.An emphasis on external final causes would imply that behaviour and development can be changed by changing the relevant external force, which could be linked to prayer as a means of changing people.

2. A brief analysis of Freud's, Rogers' and Frankl's theories: a demonstration of how this system works

The theories of Freud, Rogers and Frankl were selected for a brief illustration of how this system works.

2.1 Causal explanations in Sigmund Freud's theory

Internal material explanations: Freud uses various explanations referring to the organic basis of behaviour. The id, for example, is described as that structural part of personality which is in direct contact with the body, from whence it derives its energy. Freud also frequently refers to the physical basis or source of drives, particularly the sex and death (aggressive) drives.

External material explanations: This type of construct plays only a minor role in Freud's theory, if any. External material causes may be implied in the idea of drive objects (sex objects, food, etc.) which have a material existence, but a more important characteristic of such objects is that they conform with a particular pattern. They should therefore rather be regarded as external formal explanations.

Internal effective explanations: Both types of internal effective cause referred to in 1.3 above feature in Freud's theory. The internal event type of explanation is represented by the idea that (physical) drives are experienced as wishes or desires, and the energy type of explanation by concepts such as libido, psychic energy and the impetus aspect of drives.

External effective explanations: While Freud refers to external events (e.g. the parents' reward and punishment which help develop the superego) he does not seem to use external energy concepts to explain behaviour and/or development.

Internal formal explanations: Freud uses many explanations of this type, for example the pleasure, reality and moral principles; the ego and the superego; the various sex drives (oral, anal, phallic and genital); the developmental stages; the moral rules of the superego; defence mechanisms; and character types. All of these concepts refer to some kind of pattern within the individual which produces various behaviours in accordance with the pattern.

External formal explanations: According to Freud's conception patterns in the individual's environment play an important role in the formation of several of the above internal patterns. For example, the moral rules of the parents and society in general shape the individual's moral rules, while developmental stages and the character types resulting from fixations and regressions are linked to parental attitudes and behavioural patterns.

Internal final explanations: It might be argued that Freud uses this type of explanation in his description of the goal aspect of drives (they are said to have the goal of satisfaction), but these are of a short term nature. It can also be argued that these goals do not constitute final or teleological explanations at all as the goal of satisfaction is determined by the biological nature of man and is not chosen or created by the individual. (If this interpretation is accepted Freud's goal concept should be seen as an internal material or formal explanation.)

External final explanations: Freud uses no explanations in this category; although it could be argued that his therapy as a whole by implication constitutes an external final explanation (note e.g. the idea "where id was there shall ego be").

Conclusion: Freud emphasizes internal effective and formal causes. This conclusion is consistent with his therapeutic technique: he tries to help the client release repressed energy by "reliving" repressed events; he tries to strengthen the ego and the reality principle, and he generally encourages drive satisfaction in ways which conflict as little as possible with the moral rules of the superego (maximization of drive satisfaction and minimization of guilt feelings; Maddi, 1989), for example through sublimation. Note that psychoanalytic therapy is not directed at changing biological factors (e.g. through medication) or the rules of the family, social environment or society.

2.2 *Causal explanations in Carl Rogers' theory*

Internal material explanations: Although Rogers does not use any concepts which clearly belong in this category, internal material explanations may be implied by concepts such as genetic blueprint and the individual's potential, and also by the idea of an actualization tendency which is present in all forms of life. Rogers does seem to think in terms of a basic though abstract biological force.

External material, internal effective and external effective explanations: Rogers uses no concepts belonging to these types of explanations.

Internal formal explanations: Several of Rogers' most important concepts fall into this category, for example the idea of a genetic blueprint and that the individual has certain potential or inherent characteristics which can be actualized, the individual's phenomenal field of experience, the basic phenomenological idea that the individual's reality is his perception of reality, the self-concept, the ideas of congruence and incongruence (two internal patterns are involved here, namely the "individual as he/she really is" and the individual's self-concept). Finally, the processes called organismic evaluation and subception also involve internal formal explanations. The former involves a process of judging whether or not an experience is in agreement with certain needs and feelings of the organism, while in the latter the individual demonstrates his/her ability to detect at a subliminal level whether or not an experience agrees with the self-concept or not, and to distort the experience to bring it in line with this pattern or to repress it altogether.

External formal explanations: Although Rogers uses only a few concepts of this type, they play a very important role in his theory. The most important of these are the attitudes called conditional and unconditional positive regard. Conditional regard involves a readiness to accept another person only when that person acts in accordance with a particular set of rules (i.e. a pattern), while unconditional regard implies the readiness to accept in spite of disagreement.

Internal final explanations: There is a vague implication of teleological thinking in Rogers' idea that the individual strives for actualization. This is not a true final construct, however, because the general goal of "becoming all you can be" is inborn and common to all organisms, and the specific goals of the individual are determined by the genetic blueprint (i.e. an inborn pattern) in the case of the congruent person, and by conditions of worth (i.e. patterns defined by the rules of other persons) in the case of the incongruent person.

External final explanations: Rogers does not use this type of concept in his explanation of human behaviour in general, although it might be ar gued that he regards himself (i.e. the therapist) as having therapeutic intentions concerning the client.

Conclusion: In keeping with his Gestaltist and phenomenological approach, Rogers places the emphasizes squarely on internal and external formal causes. This is borne out by his person centred therapy, in which the therapist tries to change formal factors within the client (self-concept, congruence) by a specially patterned environment, namely by offering unconditional positive regard. This means that the therapist uses (external, environmental) pat terns to change the (internal) patterns of the client, or more precisely to enable the client's potential (i.e. an innate pattern) to develop fully. It should be noted that Rogers does not reason with the clients or try to convince them that they could or should do something to change their own lives, or that they should perceive things differently. Such therapeutic actions would imply more emphasis on internal final causes.

2.3 *Causal explanations in Viktor Frankl's theory*

Internal material explanations: Frankl, as a psychiatrist, acknowledges the existence of physical biological factors, but moves beyond the physical sphere in his logotherapeutic personality theory which he regards as his important contribution.

External material explanations: Again he acknowledges this type of factor (e.g. in his references to his own experience of physical hardship in concentration camps and to psychiatric medication), but de-emphasizes their importance in the spiritual sphere.

Internal effective explanations: Once more Frankl acknowledges the existence of intrapsychic drives (particularly by referring to Freud's views on the "will to pleasure" and Adler's views on the "will to power"), but de-emphasizes these in the spiritual sphere.

External effective explanations: Frankl does not refer to explanations of this type.

Internal formal explanations: Frankl acknowledges internal formal factors such as psychological needs, values and attitudes, but regards them as less important than spiritual "needs" and provides little detail. The one spiritual need he does emphasize is the "will to meaning". All of these concepts are used by Frankl in a formal as well as in a final sense. They are formal constructs in the sense that they are patterns which are linked to replications of themselves (e.g. in the form of lustful or aggressive behaviour and value judgments) and final in the sense that Frankl describes man as striving for goals which may be determined by various needs and values, depending on the sphere of functioning (physical, psychological or spiritual). These three spheres as such could possibly be regarded as internal formal constructs.

External formal explanations: Although Frankl doesnot explicitly refer to this type of explanation, he probably accepts the importance of social norms.

Internal final explanations: This type of explanation is very important in Frankl's theory, particularly in the most important spiritual sphere . On this level man has a "will to meaning", which means that man wants to lead a meaningful life, and does so when he/she has something to live for. However, it is questionable whether Frankl's explanation is teleological in the true sense of the word. Meaning, Frankl says, is not created or defined by the individual, but rather found because it is there in the world (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1989).

External final explanations: This type of explanation also plays an important part in Frankl's theory. His idea is that meaning is not created by the individual but found or discovered, which seems to imply the influence of a metaphysical power. ("Man opens up to what is good, beautiful and genuine." Meyer, Moore, & Viljoen, 1989, p. 430.)

Conclusion: Frankl emphasizes internal and external final causes. It should be kept in mind that he distinguishes between the physical, psychological and spiritual spheres, and that he concentrates on the latter, which he regards as more important and basic than the other, "lower" spheres. Frankl's approach to therapy also supports this conclusion. The essence of logotherapeutic therapy is an attempt to influence individuals to take their lives into their own hands, to see things differently, to *find* meaning in life. Frankl primarily tries to encourage his clients to change their goals rather than intrapsychic patterns.

3. Conclusion

The analysis in terms of causal constructs highlights some important differences between these three theories. While the analysis clearly shows that all three theories employ various kinds of causal explanations, it also demonstrates that Freud's theory is most closely linked to "low level" (material and effective) causal constructs, that Frankl's theory places most emphasis on "high level" (formal and especially final) constructs, and that Rogers' theory lies somewhere in between. As an emphasis on low level causes is generally linked to a deterministic standpoint and an emphasis on high level causes to non-determinism, this rank ordering corresponds to the varying emphasis the three psychologists place on human freedom and responsibility, although it may surprise some supporters of Rogers that his theory emphasizes (internal and external) formal constructs rather than final constructs.

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Chapter 3

Verbal accounts of the experience of racism analysed within the framework of Kelley's attribution theory*

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Expression of overt, crude racism has become more and more socially unacceptable. In fact, it has been argued that there is a general cultural norm against prejudice (Billig, 1988). This, however, does not mean that racism is disappearing. Private racist attitudes might conflict with this internalised norm and give rise to the denial of racism (Billig), or to increasingly subtle and sophisticated ways in which to express racism (see e.g. Carmichael & Hamilton, 1969, on institutionalised racism; Essed, 1988, on everyday racism; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986, on aversive racism; Kinder & Sears, 1981, and Sears, Hensler & Speer, 1979, on symbolic racism; and McConahay, 1986, on modern racism).

Billig explained the generality of this norm by pointing out that even ultra-right wing groups renowned for their racist stand (i.e. the National Front), showed awareness of it by not expressing their racism in an uninhibited manner, but resorting, for instance, to the strategy of simultaneous expression and denial of racism, or the expression of racism in liberal terms. Also, it has been indicated that the readiness to use language in a specific way is intimately related to a person's attitudes. Eiser (1975) found that people preferred labels which described their own positions in evaluatively positive terms, while using evaluatively negative terms for rejected, outgroup positions. It was even possible to change subjects' attitudes by inducing them to employ certain kinds of evaluative labels rather than others. It was pointed out that such semantic manipulationwas at the basis of most propagandistic strategies which aimed at attitude change.

It could be argued that South Africans too are aware of an anti-prejudice norm and that their choice of evaluative labels will reflect this norm. Maybe the most telling examples for this awareness can be found in the labels given to some of the most racist laws of that country: the "Bantu Education Act" of 1953

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which robbed black South Africans of a decent education; the "Extension of University Education Act" of 1959 which limited the higher education of black South Africans to 'black' facilities; the "Separate Representation of Voter's Act" of 1951 which disenfranchised the 'coloured' people of the Cape; etc., (see Wilson & Thompson, 1975, for more examples). Further support for the more subtle expression of racist sentiments in South Africa can be found in the way in which *apartheid* has been presented as 'separate development', 'separate freedoms', or 'self-determination', while the entrenchment of white supremacy has lately been labelled 'reform'.

If awareness of a norm against prejudice exists for the South African government, it could be predicted that this norm might be even more salient in anti-*apartheid* contexts in South Africa. In such contexts it could, therefore, be expected that racist individuals might exhibit a stronger denial and more sophisticated linguistic obfuscations of their own racism. One context in which these predictionsmight be tested, is the English-speaking universities. These institutions are renowned for their liberalism and are sometimes called 'open' universities, because admission is 'open' to students of all races. In the calendars of these universities it is stated that they are opposed to discrimination on grounds of race, colour, nationality, religion or sex and regard merit as the only acceptable criterion for determining student admissions and staff appointments.

However, it should be stressed again that although overt racism is frowned upon in these universities, it does not mean that racism is absent from these campuses. The alienation (see e.g. Cooper, 1985; Honikman, 1982; Leon & Lea, 1988; Mphahlele, 1982), oppression (see e.g. Alexander, 1985) and adjustment problems (see e.g. Vilakazi & Thema, 1985) black students experience on these mainly white campuses have been recurrent themes in contemporary education literature. As far as black students' perception or experience of racism on these campuses is concerned, Webster and his co-workers (1986) found that black communities outside the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, viewed that institution as racist, "in both overt and subtle ways" (p. 8). Indications of such racism were seen in the small number of black academic staff appointments and lack of representation of black students in decision-making. A document pertaining to another 'open' university, Rhodes University, in Grahamstown, clearlyindicated that although this institution might be regarded by some as "an 'island' in abnormal South Africa" (p. 21), black students there experienced àll kinds of discrimination ranging from blatant to very subtle (Bekker & Mqingwana, 1983). At the University of Cape Town, Leon and Lea (1988) reported that while white students perceived congruence between their own and the university's political views, black students were of the opinion that the university presented a non-racial public image while actually practising racism on campus. Indirect support for the

thesis of covert racism at 'open' universities might also lie in the founding of black student societies at these institutions. These societies came into existence, because black students felt dissatisfied with the manner in which their interests were represented by existing student representative councils.

The subtle manifestations of racism that have been discussed here, have implications for the traditional manner in which social psychologists have measured racist attitudes. Racist respondents might see easily through experimental manipulations and act in such a way as to preserve a non-racist self-concept and/or present a tolerant facade to the experimenter. An attitude questionnaire might yield only information regarding the denial of racism and be incapable of dealing with the linguistic subtleties in which racism is couched. Clearly, what is needed, is a differentand more refined measure to tap the true attitudes of 'closet racists'. The specific ways in which racists talk about black people have been studied in depth by Van Dijk (1987). In a wide-ranging study he focused on the content, surface and underlying structures, sources, effects, persuasive strategies and social contexts of such talk. Informal interviews were used as data and it was assumed that these resembled ordinary conversation closely. Other attempts to capture the complexity of language functions have focused on excuses and justifications offered in situations where normal conduct has been disrupted (see Potter & Wetherell, 1987, for details). These studies fall within the general category of the social psychology of accounts. Scott and Lyman (1972) defined an account as the statements people use when explaining unusual, unanticipated actions. Two methodological tendencies have been discerned in the research on accounts: their abstraction from written stories and their contextualisation in ordinary conversation (Potter & Wetherell). Antaki (1981) has been particularly active in exploring "ordinary explanations of social behaviour" (p. vii) and he echoed Eiser (see p. 1) in noting that such explanations not only tell us about the event being explained, but also about how the explainer sees the world. Two common themes unite the research mentioned here: firstly, qualitative data (e.g. informal interviews, written stories, ordinary conversations, etc.) have been used extensively, and secondly, these data reflect the perspective of the actor (e.g. the racist, the explainer of unusual or ordinary behaviour, etc.).

Both these themes are relevant for and interconnected in this study. In 1974 Harrison remarked that there was a bias in the social psychology of prejudice, because researchers were mainly focusing on the prejudiced, or at most, comparing the prejudiced with those who were being discriminated against. It has been suggested lately that an analysis of modern, subtle racism should shift from the underlying motivations or intentions of racist actors to the black person at the receiving end of racist acts. With this focus in mind, black persons' accounts of racism should become the object of study, thus giving due credit to the knowledge of racism displayed by those who deal with the problem on a

daily basis (Essed, 1988). Louw-Potgieter (1988) has recently elaborated on the status of self-knowledge as data and the acceptance of the intellectual integrity of respondents supplying such data. Rowan (1974), furthermore, pointed out that qualitative research done from this perspective " ... enables us to respect the praxis of our subjects - taking their own intentions seriously, rather than interpreting them in alien forms" (p. 96).

Drawing on these qualitative research principles and Kelley's (1967) attribution model (see argumentation category below), Essed (1988) proposed an ingeneous and elegant method for analysing verbal accounts of racism. According to her, such accounts constitute sets of statements made by a person to reconstruct unanticipatedbehaviour or unexpected, disruptive acts which cause difficulties. It could be hypothesised that these accounts contain the following construction categories and heuristics (see Essed for a detailed account);

(1) *Context:* This category gives information about the actors, the time, the place and social circumstances of the racist event and provides answers to *Who?/When?/Where?* questions.

(2) *Complication:* In answer to the question: "*Was the event or action acceptable or not?*", this category gives information about disruption of or deviance from 'normal', acceptable, or predictable events or acts. It is essentially a moral category which indicates whether an event is perceived as good or bad. The heuristic of comparison might be used to indicate how the event is interpreted in relation to other 'normal' events. While giving an account of the event, the extra information generated might provide the basis for deciding that the event not hitherto construed as racist, was actually racist.

(3) *Evaluation:* This explanatory reconstruction category deals with the question: "*Was this a form of racism or not?*" To provide an explanation, inferences might be made from beliefs, expectations and social representations regarding racism. Evaluations might be directly verbalised or indirectly implied.

(4) *Argumentation:* This category includes statements in support of particular evaluations and provides an answer to the basic question: "*Why do you think it was a form of racism?*" Inferences from beliefs, expectations and social representations about racism might be used as a heuristic device. The main heuristics for this category, however, derive from Kelley's (1967) attribution theory and are comparisons for consistency

(e.g. Have other blacks had the same experiences with the same white actor?, Have other white actors behaved in the same way towards me?, Has this specific white actor behaved like this to me at other times, in other situations?, etc.), comparisons for consensus (e.g. Would other blacks interpret this as racism?, If I confront the white actor with the unacceptability of his/her behaviour, would he/she admit that it was unacceptable?, etc.), and comparisons for inconsistency (e.g. Do whites experience this in a similar situation?, Do whites experience this with the same actor?, Do blacks experience this with black actors?, etc.).

(5) *Decision:* This category deals with plans, expectations, intentions and actions in reaction to the incident and answers the question: "*What did you do/do you intend doing?*"

Essed stressed that not all of these organising categories and heuristics might be included in a specific account. She indicated that this framework should be regarded as a hypothetical representation of reconstructions of racist experiences, and therefore, we assumed that these categories might not necessarily occur in this order in all accounts.

These categories and heuristics were used to analyse black students' accounts of racism on the Durban campus of Natal University, an 'open' university generally regarded as a liberal institution.

Method

Respondents

Thirty black, undergraduate students from the University of Natal, Durban campus, were interviewed by thirty fellow-students, black and white, who had to complete one interview as a course requirement for social psychology. Interviewees (friends, acquaintances, fellow-residents, fellow-classmates, friends of friends, etc.) were approached by mentioning this requirement. The interviewers reported no difficulty in finding interviewees who had experienced covert racism on campus. Although this sample cannot be regarded as representative of black students on campus, the ready availability of suitable respondents might be regarded as an indication that covert racism occurs on a regular basis in this context.

Procedure

Interviewers were asked to proceed in a non-directive manner and given the following instructions: "The interview should be the interviewee's construction of his/her experience of a racist event, therefore, the interviewer should

interrupt and distract as little as possible. It is suggested that the interview be started with the comment: 'Have you ever experienced racist discrimination here on campus? If so, please tell me about it in as much detail as possible.'" Each interview was tape-recorded and then transcribed verbatim.

Each account was analysed twice: first by the interviewer and then by the author. These analyses were compared and a small number of discrepancies were excluded from the results.

Results and discussion

Respondents appeared to have had no difficulty in recalling and describing a racist event. From the data, it was not possible to ascertain whether the event described in the account was the most recent or constituted a typical example of racism on campus. It was clearly not the only event in current memory, as the majority of respondents provided supporting evidence (i.e. comparisons for consistency) in their accounts and some spontaneously offered to describe other events after accounting the required event.

One interview (presented in Appendix A) proved to be unanalysable and was rejected from the sample. It is clear that this respondent was pressurised by the interviewer into giving an account of a racist event which he had never experienced. The quality of the language used by the interviewee (who had been in the predominantly English-speaking environment of Natal University for two full years by then) might be an indication of the stress and lack of rapport between these two actors. This account is an atypical example of the data obtained from this sample and highlights the danger of interviewee demand. The following results were obtained from the other twenty-nine accounts:

Awareness of racism on campus

One of the first impressions gained from the verbal accounts, was that black students were aware of racism on campus. The evidence of this awareness can be sub-divided into two strands: firstly, nine respondents indicated that in their experience, white people discriminated against black people, irrespective of setting or situation. Therefore, as racism generally ocurred in other situations, it could be expected on campus. This might be a reflection of Carmichael and Hamilton's (1968) idea of institutionalised racism - a subtle kind of racism produced by the normal functioning of a capitalist society. The following extracts from the verbal accounts were selected to illustrate this type of awareness:

> "If you are black, you must expect such hypocrisy. Thus, to me it was no surprise." (Respondent 1)

"At this university? Yes, often. It happens to other students as well - same story. In fact, black students have terrible problems here in this university." (Respondent 28)

"Oh, yeah, of course I have [experienced racism on campus], but I mean that's obvious, I didn't expect not to." (Respondent 29)

Secondly, five respondents reported surprise at experiencing racism on campus, because their perceptions of a university reflected that a place of higher learning should be free of such prejudiced acts. The following selected extracts illustrate this type of awareness:

"I really don't expect it here. Like maybe in town, you know, I experience this, like on the bus, but not on campus really ... I was shocked and didn't expect it." (Respondent 2)

" ... there's an absolute palpable difference when you are on campus and you go to some place like town. ... [O]n campus ... nobody troubles you. And you go to town and you walk in a shop and they [are] looking at you like you want to steal. ... [B]ut this is the first time anyone has been so rude to me on campus. I mean, in another situation you'd expect this kind of thing." (Respondent 26)

"Lots of students have been telling me that this happens at Natal and I kept saying, no, it didn't, and [not] until it happened to me and until I saw it happen to my friend, would I believe it. And once I knew this I started opening myself to the possibility that it may happen to me." (Respondent 13)

Tolerance and ability to discriminate between racist and non-racist behaviour

From the data it emerged that black students tended to test all other possibilities and hypotheses before judging an actor's behaviour as racist. This evidence stands in stark contradiction to the stereotype that black people are so 'obsessed' with racism that they will construe well-intentioned acts on the part of whites as racist. Clear proof of this tolerance was found in at least seventeen verbal accounts and the following extracts have been selected to illustrate that intolerant, snap judgements about racism did not form part of these accounts:

"To me not all whites are hypocrites; but I do not have confidence [i]n them, not until I have known them personally and they have proved themselves not be be hypocrites." (Respondent 1)

"I am not saying that this is totally representative - there are some white students who are nice and there are some black students who are complete racists." (Respondent 15)

"Ok, if English was my second language, if I stuttered, if I could not read, if I didn't want to participate, if I didn't turn up. Ok, I can understand those things, but I was there, I speak English. Ok, I quite admit, I'm not the best, but I can do it and I could read again. But in spite of all that, by her ignoring me, it only means to me ... that she ignored me because I was black." (Respondent 13)

It was also clear that respondents could discriminate between behaviour prompted by racist motivation and non-racist motivation. The following extracts were selected to illustrate that black students did not react in an 'oversensitive', intolerant manner by construing all unacceptable and disruptive behaviours as racist:

"[W]e didn't feel that it was just one incident, because, I mean, we know people can have their off days." (Respondent 24)

"[Y]ou make out the unfriendly ones. We don't just, you know, care about whether they are friendly or not. [But] this was ... very different." (Respondent 16)

Outcome of racist event and intentions regarding future events

A sense of profound powerlessness and resignation emanated from the majority (23) of the accounts. A variety of reasons for these feelings were advanced by the respondents; the main ones being the difficulty to confront covert racism directly, the belief that the expression of racism by whites and the experience of it by blacks are an inevitable (institutionalised) part of life in South Africa, and finally, a realistic fear of victimisation. The following extracts from the accounts reflect, respectively, each one of these reasons:

"I didn't show her that I was hurt, or shout at her, or anything like that ... [I] ... just left it at that. I mean, what else can you do?" (Respondent 6)

"I wanted to explain, but I realised that this kind of thing won't stop. It will always happen on campus." (Respondent 29)

" ... [Y]our life is controlled by this person. that is why it is even difficult to take such a case up ... because you are still begging to get a degree out of this person." (Respondent 13)

In view of this information, one could pose the following question: would black students experience these feelings of powerlessness and resignation about racism if they knew that specific channels for complaint and clear grievance procedures existed on campus and that the university authorities were unequivocally committed to the implementation of the ideal of a non-racial university?

Example of an analysed verbal account

Each respondent's verbal account was analysed according to the categories and heuristics suggested by Essed. (A detailed description including all verbal accounts and dealing with a variety of racist actors on campus is obtainable from the author (Louw-Potgieter & co-workers, 1988)). In order to illustrate this method, one analysed verbal account will be presented here. The interview on which this analysis was based, is presented in Appendix B. This account represents a typical example of the data. Forthe sake of coherent presentation, the analysis reflects the same order of construction categories originally employed by Essed. It should be clear from Appendix B and Essed's own cautions that this is not necessarily the order followed in the respondent's construction.

Respondent 7: A 21-year old, female student in her third year of study.

Context: The respondent entered a full lecture hall and sat in the nearest empty seat next to a white male student. He got up and went to sit somewhere else.

Complication: "To my surprise he moved. He just looked up and walked and ended up sitting somewhere else." The disruptive nature of the actor's behaviour was indicated by the respondent's suprise, because, implicitly, she did not perceive such behaviour to be the norm in this situation. She elaborated by saying that the actor looked at her " ... as if saying: 'What are you doing next to me?' ... He did not move out, but to another seat." The respondent implied that if the actor had got up in order to leave the room, his behaviour would have been acceptable. However, by staying in the room and taking another seat, his behaviour disrupted certain social expectations and norms.

Evaluation: The respondent did not state explicitly that she construed this behaviour as racist, but implied it by saying: "He didn't say anything, but I could see he was standing up because I, you know, sat next to him."

Argumentation: This evaluation was supported by a comparison for consensus, drawn from the behaviour of a black, female student who witnessed this: "There was another girl just in front of me who saw all this and we just looked at each other and you know, we didn't know what to say." Further support for

the evaluation came from an inference the respondent made from her social knowledge of racism: "You know when a person thinks you are inferior, racially inferior to him. The way he looked at me ... His whole attitude was just: 'No black woman next to me no matter what happens.'" More support came in the form of a comparison for inconsistency: " ... I have sat next to black guys before and they've never done that."

Decision: Clearly the respondent did not know what to do, as the behaviour was so unexpected. She reported that she and the other person who saw the incident " ... didn't know what to say."

Conclusion

In this paper it has been suggested that research regarding covert racism should focus on the self-knowledge of those who are subjected to it. A specific method which used the everyday explanations of black students on a white campus was illustrated. In which way can this focus and more specifically, this method, contribute to the study of racism in social psychology in South Africa?

It cannot be denied that there are progressive social scientists in South Africa who are aware of issues like "liberatory research", "action research", "empowering the community in which research is done", etc., (see e.g. the journal, *Psychology in Society).* However, this awareness is not always supported by a viable method and very often research focusing on oppressed South Africans remains on a descriptive level.

The method adopted in this paper may provide a better way to get to some answers to the question: "What are we *doing* in social science in South Africa that will liberate and empower all South Africans?" Firstly, the type of qualitative data used in this paper have allowed people to express the meaning and purpose of their actions in their own words. Secondly, by adopting an analysis based on attributional, logical and locutionary principles, this study has integrated the praxis of respondents with existing social psychological theory. In other words, instead of presenting the everyday experiences of the oppressed merely on a descriptive level, it has been attempted to seek a theoretical explanation for people's behaviour in terms of the meanings these people assign to the social situations they find themselves in (see e.g. Antaki & Fielding, 1981:54). This combination of subjective meaning construction and social psychological theorising still has to be used to its fullest extent in South Africa and might offer a fruitful explanatory device to social scientists who have become disillusioned in their attempts to express social injustices in quantitative terms.

On a more general level, this paper also addressed the issue of the status of self-knowledge as data. When language is used to express self-knowledge, it means that the user is trying to make the reader or listener view events from

the perspective he/she wishes them to be viewed. By talking about their everyday experiences of racism, black people are providing social scientists with an idea of what it is like to be at the receiving end of racism. The challenge to social scientists, whether in South Africa, America or Europe, is to accept these representations of self-knowledge as respectable data bases and formulate imaginative methods to analyse them. Or, we can simply continue to demand reliable, statistically analysable data which conform to the strictures of 'objective' experimentation. The choice is ours: to keep looking at the world from our own 'scientific' perspective, or to enter the exciting, rhetorical reality of our respondents.

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here ... I mean here even when I came here I didn't know I was supposed to use the [format]. I asked the tutor if I could follow the same format, 'cause I asked the tutor if I could use and he said: "No problem", 'cause it's relevant. Now ... uh ... I spoke to the tutor and ... uh ... at the extra tut and ... uh ... he told me that ... uh ... no thatthing is out. I mean ... uh ... that thing is not used really. The tutor ... uh ... organised by the [subject] told me it was alright ... uh ... the official tutor and the other one said that this thing is out ... is not more used ... is the one organised by Academic Support. There are two people doing tuts.

Now, ok, I mean, admitted it they told me right ... I mean I said, ok. Now, later, I mean, I forgot in ... uh ... I mean, there was a question that was asked in the tut considering the presentation of the financial statements and I referred to the [format]. You see, I mean ... I forgot ... I mean, he told me that, no, that statement is no more used now. In that case, I mean ... uh ... when I tried to refer to that, I mean ... eeh ... he told me in a way that I didn't like.

(The student was then prompted by the interviewer to recall the exact words of the tutor and basically repeated his earlier explanation. He ended the account, again stressing that he had not really experienced racial discrimination on campus).

S: In my case, really, I can't say that there is something that I have experienced that I can call racial discrimination really. But as I say, I don't say that sometimes it doesn't exist. I just haven't experienced it myself.

APPENDIX A

Transcript of interview with a 25-year old, male student in his third year of B Comm studies.

Interviewer: Could you describe to me, in as much detail as possible, an incident on campus during which you experienced some form of racial discrimination?

Student: No really, in fact I can't say really that I have experienced that problem ... really ... which I felt is a form of ... racism, but in fact ... what I have discovered is that really is because I came here in 1986 and the problem that I is facing is here ... is that I mean that it was my own problem in that ... I mean it was a problem of adjusting myself to the system. I mean to the pressure of work and all that thing. 'Cause in fact I was from another university and I came here last year. So, in fact I wasn't used to such a load of work as I was experiencing here. So that took me about six months to get used to this system, because the pace of the lectures and the way things were done and the type of projects which are given demand a lot and ... ah ... I wasn't used to that type of thing. So now that was the problem which I was facing.

I: So you haven't found that you have been in a situation where somebody has been discriminatory towards you?

S: No, really I did not experience such things. Not really. There are some things which I can't say are not some form of racial discrimination.

I: Could you describe to me a situation which you think could have been even if you are not sure?

S: No. No, in fact although I said that there are things that I didn't consider as ... uh ... the racial ... uh ... form of racial discrimination, but last year we ... uh ... I organised extra tuts with the Students' Academic Support about the extra tuts in [subject]. I mean ... uh ... there was a problem which I faced there. For instance, I was doing [subject] at the university where I was in 1985 and ... uh ... I didn't ... uh ... the way the lecturer emphasised some topics and ... uh ... in [subject] for me especially. I don't know whether you are ... I mean, I don't think you will be used to ... uh ... that is the schedule for and [specific format] that is a format ... uh ... for the income statements for payment. Now, I mean the lecturer at school he emphasised that the [format] is the most relevant one. You see, one's used to the convention of the income statement (unclear). I mean

APPENDIX B

Transcript of interview with a 21-year old, female student in her third year of BA studies.

Interviewer: Have you ever experienced an incident of racial discrimination on campus? If so, please tell me about it in as much detail as possible.

Student: I was attending a [subject] lecture and it's always full and I was ... I was amongst the last pupils to come into the hall because I had been attending another one. By the time I got there, it was almost full. I came there and just sat in the nearest seat and next to me there was this guy, you know, he looked the AWB type. I just looked at him and I just sat and thought it's alright. To my surprise he moved. He just looked up and walked and ended up sitting somewhere else. He didn't say anything, but I could see he was standing up because I, you know, sat next to him.

I: Really?

S: That really happened.

I: How did he look when he did that?

S: Well, I mean I came and sat. Right, first I didn'tjust notice him and then he looked at me, you know, saying ... as if saying: "What are you doing next to me?" Then he shook his head and took his books and went out. He did not move out, but to another seat.

I: Was this during the lecture?

S: Just before. Just before the lecture started.

I: Where did he move to?

S: To another place. Well, that row was full so he had to find another row and that's what he did. There was another girl just in front of me who saw all this and we just looked at each other and you know, we didn't know what to say.

I: Was this girl black?

S: Ja, but she is at [another university] now.

I: What was it about the incident that made you think it was racist?

S: I don't know actually. It's one of those things that cannot be expressed verbally. You know when a person thinks you are inferior, racially inferior to him. The way he looked at me. I mean, I've sat next to black guys before and they've never done that. His whole attitude wasjust "No black woman next to me no matter what happens". This really happened. Here on campus.

Chapter 4

Duquesne phenomenological research method as a special class of case study research method

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The rise to prominence of quantitative methodologies overshadowed the fundamental role of case study methodology in the human and social sciences. Although the methodology was worked out and extensively explored by social scientists in the 1930's, it is only in anthropology that it survived as a respected research method. In sociology, it went into eclipse in the 1950's (Mitchell, 1983). Although the key role of the case study has been long recognised in clinical and developmental psychology, the demand for accountability and demonstration of the effectiveness of clinical interventions led to its being regarded as 'prescientific' and incapable of yielding valid conclusions about the causes of outcome (Bolgar, 1965; Kazdin, 1981). This led to a serious imbalance in the way research methodology was conceptualised, with quantitative, statistical designs being presented as the *only* type of research yielding valid results (Hayes, 1981 p.194). It was forgotten that elaborate outcome research is the culmination of a multifaceted and incremental research process involving many studies using other methods.

A growing disenchantment with the quantitative approach has led, over the last ten years, to a re-examination of the research process as a whole, and a search for qualitative methodologies which would redress the balance. One important thrust in this area has been the Duquesne school's development of the phenomenological research method pioneered by Giorgi (1975a & b). Another has been a re-examination of the case study method in an attempt to re-establish its place as a fundamental tool in social science (Eckstein, 1975; Mitchell, 1983; Yin, 1984), and in psychology in particular (Bromley, 1986; Edwards, 1990; Kazdin, 1981; Kratochwill, Mott & Dodson, 1984). These two approaches will now be examined in some detail.

Principles of case study research method (CSRM)

In contrast to most quantitative methodologies, where large samples are usually required, in CSRM attention is focused on a single case which is examined in depth. Case studies are not only descriptive, but play a key role in theory development (Bromley, 1986; Mitchell 1983). The researcher aims to develop a conceptualisation to open up the essential qualities of the case being investigated, which includes a number of assumptions about the categories or constructs used to frame it, and the relationships between them. Assumptions or principles derived from one case are then tested against further case studies. The validity of findings is not established by statistical inference but by a logical process termed 'analytic generalisation' (Yin, 1984 p.39) or 'analytical induction' (Mitchell, 1983, p.200). The steps of this process aresummarised by Taylor & Bogdan (1984, p.127) as follows:[1]

1. Develop a rough definition of the phenomenon to be explained.

2. Formulate an hypothesis to explain that phenomenon.

3. Study one case to see the fit between the case and the hypothesis.

4. If the hypothesis does not explain the case, either reformulate the hypothesis or redefine the phenomenon.

5. Actively search for negative cases to disprove the hypothesis.

6. When negative cases are encountered, reformulate the hypothesis or redefine the phenomenon.

7. Proceed until one has adequately tested the hypothesis by examining a broad range of cases.

Bromley (1986) likens the process to the building up of case-law in jurisprudence. From the examination of a few cases of a particular type a basic theory is established which contains essential concepts, distinctions and principles, linked in a logical manner, which are of practical value when dealing

1 Eckstein [1975: 104] offers a similar account of the role of case studies in the development of theory in political science.

with such cases. As new cases are brought for examination some may be dealt with without altering the established case law. Others, however, require that it be refined, modified or extended. The case-law represents the product of a progressive conceptual refinement as knowledge from diverse cases is systematised. The paper by Salkovskis (1985) serves as an example of the rigorous application of this approach to a contemporary problem in clinical psychology (Edwards, 1990).

Duquesne phenomenological research method (DPRM)

Giorgi (1975b, p.83), whose work is the foundation of the development of DPRM, defines phenomenology as

> the study of the structure, and the variations of structure, of the consciousness to which any thing, event or person appears.

This means that phenomenological research takes as its starting point information about the direct experience of the subject and seeks to elucidate it descriptively. Tape-recorded interviews are usually used as the data. A carefully phrased question directs the subject to the type of experience the researcher is interested in. Further questions are generally asked, aimed at getting subjects to elaborate on particular aspects of their responses or to speak about aspects they omitted. Usually interviews with several subjects are conducted and some four to six are used for in-depth analysis. Interviews may be discarded when they do not constitute an aware and insightful description of the experience. However, since most respondents do not articulately represent all aspects of an experience, the study of a set of interviews provides the basis for a comprehensive account of the experience being investigated.

Formal procedures for analysing the interview protocols have been described by Giorgi (1975b, 1985b), Fischer & Wertz (1979), Wertz (1985) and Stones (1986 & 1988). The first published study using the method is that of Stevick (1971). Several others are published in the *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, as well as two in the *South African Journal of Psychology* (Todres, 1986; Cleaver, 1988). The major steps are as follows:

(1) *Overall perspective:* the researcher reads the material several times to obtain an intuitive, holistic grasp of the data.

(2) *Natural meaning units* are identified which reflect the central themes in the protocol.

(3) *Revelatory description:* repetitive material and natural meaning units not relevant to the phenomenon being investigated are discarded. Giorgi and Stones rewrite the material in neutral psychological language in the third person. Wertz writes it in the first person following the subject's language as closely as possible.

(4) *Situated structure:* the material is organised into a coherent account which reflects the structure of subjects' experience, situated in the specific life-context of the events described by them.

(5) *General structure:* the material is organised into a coherent general account of the structure of that type of experience independent of the specific context.

Where more than one respondent is used the following steps may be added

(6) *Extended description:* the central themes and processes from the situated structures are reviewed and integrated into a coherent and organised summary.

(7) *General structure:* the material from several subjects is used to derive a general account of the structure of the experience.

The major features which differentiate DPRM from other methods of collecting and analysing interview data are as follows (Giorgi, 1975b, p.99-101): Interest focuses on events of everyday life. Researchers strive for an accurate description which is faithful to the phenomenon as it is lived, and which represents the viewpoint of the subject. Key terms and concepts are derived from the material of the interview rather than from preconceived theories and formulations. The research goal is to explicate structure, that is, the inter-relationships between the various components of the experience. This is achieved by giving and seeking meaning through collaborative dialogue with subjects.

Interviewers for phenomenological research, like good clinicians, must be able to create a relationship of trust so that subjects will disclose personal information; to attune to the subject's world by empathic listening and skilful questioning; and to suspend personal judgements and preconceptions regarding what is described. Unlike some forms of content analysis, DPRM cannot be reduced to technical steps that can be mechanically carried out (Giorgi, 1985b p.14). Researchers need to possess 'a specific set', or a 'psychological attitude' (Giorgi, 1985b, p.11-12). This constitutes a fundamental quality of

insightfulness into the data, an articulate and differentiated understanding of human experience and command of the language in which it will be rendered.[2]

FROM DESCRIPTION TO THEORY TESTING: A CONTINUUM

Research using in-depth analysis of individual cases, whether in the CSRM or DPRM mould, is a complex process with many stages. These include the definition of an area of study, the articulation of the nature of key processes, the development of a differentiated conceptualisation and theory and the testing of specific propositions. Within this framework, any single case investigation may serve one of many different purposes. This continuum from description to rigorous theory testing is set out and elaborated below based on four categories. These are intended to represent points on the continuum rather than exclusive types.[3] Specific case studies may well have the characteristics of more than one category. Each category will first be explained in relation to its place within CSRM. It will then be shown that DPRM itself utilises (or in theory could utilise) the same four phases, since it too, despite ideological disclaimers to the contrary, is not, in fact, a purely descriptive exercise, but a tool for theory development.

(a) Exploratory-descriptive case studies

Here, the aim is to achieve a richly articulated description of an individual case that furnishes an in-depth understanding. Eckstein (1975) calls this type 'configurative-idiographic'. It is idiographic because the goal is not to generalise to other cases or to develop theory. It is configurative in that the researcher strives to achieve an organised and coherent presentation of the phenomenon.

No study can be completely atheoretical since the language used in the description implies theoretical assumptions. However, this stage particularly honours Husserl's dictum 'Back to the things themselves' (Kruger, 1988, p.28) and the aim is to limit interpretation and the drawing out of general principles. This type of case study is exploratory and serves to develop a differentiated account of a case which speaks for itself in a direct way and opens up an

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2 Although they make no reference to the Duquesne work, Taylor and Bogdan's [1984] phenomenological sociological method is founded on similar principles.

3 The exposition parallels that of Eckstein [1975] for political science and Mohanty's [cited by Giorgi, 1986a: 10] in psychology.

understanding of something that was previously only superficially known. A descriptive case synopsis, which furnishes an accessible working summary of interview material stripped of redundancy and coherently organised, is a good means of achieving this.[4]

Interestingly, this stage receives relatively little emphasis from the Duquesne school. Despite Giorgi's (1985a, 1986a, 1986b) pleas for a purely descriptive science, descriptive synopses are seldom seen in applications of the method he pioneered. In moving from the interview to the situated structure the material is usually stripped of much of its specific content.

The only published examples from the Duquesne tradition of case synopses which retain content and personal impact are from Fischer & Wertz' (1979) and Wertz' (1985) of the experience of being a victim of a criminal act such as assault or burglary. They applied 'some variation of Giorgi's method of analysis' (p.144) to generate synopses which

> 'provide readers with concrete examples that reverberate with their own lives, thus intimating the full structure of the phenomenon' (p.143).

This step is so atypical of DPRM that Thorpe (1989, pp.119-120) presents his case synopses almost apologetically, as a deviation from the usual phenomenological approach and as an excursion into case study methodology.

b) Descriptive-dialogic case studies

While emphasis is still on faithful portrayal of a phenomenon, the case is expected to embody general principles already articulated in the literature. The material is situated within existing theory, or used to debate conflicting points in existing theory. It can provide an informal test of the content of specific theories or test whether the conceptualisation is adequately differentiated. This represents an early phase in the process of theory construction. While there is an emphasis on description, there is an active search for a language or framework to make sense of the description or to articulate it adequately. Where current theory lacks rigour and differentiation, the researcher needs to develop this in order to furnish a well differentiated description. Eckstein's term 'disciplined-configurative' captures the dialogue between basic descriptive work and the exploratory articulation of a conceptualisation within the discipline of existing language and concepts. This stage may also include the

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4 For a good example of this see Taylor & Bogdan [1984, chapter 8] who provide an edited and organised first person account, based on the exact words of Ed, who had grown up classified as 'retarded'.

development of hypotheses for later examination and testing. Any conceptualisation or theory, of course, requires a set of propositions which underpin it. Some of these are implied, others specifically stated. These become available for more formal testing in the next phase of the research process.

In DPRM this phase occurs in two ways. The first is implicit: in the construction of the situated structures theory is appropriated by the language selected to render it in a psychologically revelatory fashion. Because the appropriation is implicit, there is not any overt dialogue, but an implied claim is made that the language does justice to the characteristics of the experience under investigation. This is not invariably the case. For example, (titelman's (1981, p.191) general structure of envy employs obscure and cumbersome language:

> The envied object is never a single objective or subjective dimension that the other possesses. Rather the envied object is being-in-the-other's-existential-position in the service of appropriating the being of ones desired-envisioned-self-world-relation.

The second form of dialogue is where the data, rendered as situated structure, or extended or general description, are discussed in relation to already developed theory that is not explicit in the psychological language into which the raw protocols are rendered. This involves the drawing of parallels between the psychological discourse of the processed protocols and another theoretical language and, sometimes, an examination of whether some other psychological discourse might be more suitable.

c) Theoretical-heuristic case studies

Because this is concerned with rigorously developing or testing existing theory, not all cases are suitable for this type of research. Those chosen must be anticipated to contribute to the process of theory building (Eckstein, 1975, p.106). DPRM heeds this principle when it rejects protocols that are not psychologically rich. Derivation of general structure in DPRM is an example of this, since it constitutes a claim that the experience being examined has essential features.

Thus Brooke (1985) presents a series of assertions constituting a general description of guilt derived from ten cases. Brooke's is in effect a multiple case study strategy in which the necessary and sufficient conditions of the experience of guilt are sought. These conditions can in theory be derived from any one case and tested against all the other cases. His general structure is essentially a theory of guilt which contains a number of testable propositions. New cases could, of course, be examined to test whether they confirmed Brooke's conclusions.

d) Crucial or test case-study

Here the process of rigorously validating theoretical constructs is taken a step further in that a case is selected which provides a crucial test of a particular theoretical proposition. This type of study can only occur once theory is well developed and operationalised. The case must be carefully selected so that the researcher can argue convincingly that the theory is falsified if the case fails to support it. Eckstein (1975, pp.114-5) provides an example from mechanics. Aristotle proposed that the heavier an object the faster it falls.Galileo argued that weight was irrelevant to rate of fall. When, in 1650, it was discovered how to create a vacuum with an air pump, the single dropping of a coin and a feather was sufficient to establish that Galileo was right. Bromley (1986) calls this a 'test case' while the term 'crucial case study' is Eckstein's.

A crucial case study of this sort could be envisaged in the application of DPRM. A researcher who believed that in certain circumstances one or more of Brooke's eleven propositions about guilt did not hold, could attempt to interview persons believed to represent the type of case envisaged and use the data to falsify one of the propositions. If successful the research would lead to the development of a more finely differentiated theory, in which were defined the conditions under which the original proposition held, and those under which it did not.[5]

DPRM as a type of CSRM

DPRM has many features in common with CSRM and can be understood as a special class of it. First, both methods take as their starting point a set of one or more cases of a sort predefined by the researcher. While the data base for the Duquesne method is always a first-hand account by subjects of their experience, in other types of psychological case study, information may be gathered from several sources including behavioural observation, psychometric testing, the scrutiny of documents or records and the interviewing of informants (Bromley, 1986).

Second, both procedures incorporate an idiographic and a nomothetic phase. Both recognise the importance both of providing carefully documented descriptions of individual cases, and, thereafter, of drawing out general principles or conclusions. In CSRM the goal is to develop a valid body of applicable theory,while in DPRM the nomothetic phase is the development of an extended

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5 See Greenwald, Pratkanis, Leippe & Baumgardner (1986) for a discussion of this strategy in quantitative, experimental research.

description and/or a general structure which captures the essential features of the experience being studied (Giorgi, 1975 p.97; Wertz, 1985 p.188).

Third, both approaches recognise the distinction between the context of discovery and the context of verification in science, and emphasise the importance of the discovery phase which conventional psychological research has tended to largely ignore. A recent paper is devoted to this distinction by Giorgi (1986a; also discussed briefly in Giorgi 1985, p.24). He points out that the first step in science is to get to know the phenomenon. Only then can theory be formally tested and verified. Psychology has focused to its detriment almost exclusively on the context of verification, and lost sight of the first step of the research process. Interestingly, this same point was noted some twenty years earlier by Bolgar (1965, p.31) in her discussion of case study method:

> experimentation is mainly concerned with proof and rarely leads to discovery, and ... in the rigid attention to hypothesis testing the researcher often overlooks unexpected outcomes which might be discoveries. On the other hand ... the case study method is the ideal way to generate hunches, hypotheses and important discoveries.

PROBLEMS WITH DPRM WHICH CSRM HELPS TO RESOLVE

A critical look at unpublished and published studies using DPRM shows that there are some problems with the manner in which it is conceptualised and practised. Most of these arise because researchers try to follow principles or research steps which are not appropriate for the particular application they require. Most can be resolved if DPRM is seen as a particular set of strategies within the framework of CSRM,

The concept of general structure

The first problem arises because researchers confuse DPRM with doing phenomenology and take the view that to be faithful to phenomenological principles, all the steps of the Duquesne procedure must be carried out. DPRM then comes to be used mechanically (just as quantitative techniques such as analysis of variance or factor analysis often are) and the results of the stages of analysis are presented without any understanding of how they are situated in the context of specific research goals or questions.

This problem is most clear when the derivation of the general structure of an experience is considered. Giorgi lays a great deal of emphasis on the achievement of a general structure. Its place in the research process is based on Husserl's idea of 'essences', which are idealised structures of experience. This idea is problematic and raises the familiar philosophical debates about

how concepts refer to cases and the relative merits of idealist and realist solutions to this dilemma. These will not be pursued here. Rather a purely pragmatic stance is recommended: The derivation of a Giorgi type general structure is a realistic research goal where a fairly circumscribed experience is being examined such as anger (Stevick, 1971), suspicion (de Koning, 1979), learning (Giorgi, 1975b), guilt (Brooke, 1985) or conscience (Parker, 1985). With the exception of Parker's, these general structures are each summarised in less than 200 words.

Where the experience is complex and involves a series of partially connected experiences over a period of time, this sort of general structure is, however, quite inappropriate. Examples of such complex experiences are: being an immigrant (Polyzoi, 1985), being in hiding from the police (Scheepers, 1988), having one's house petrol bombed (Cleaver, 1988), being a victim of a crime (Wertz, 1985), being premenstrual (Montgomery, 1982) and a therapist's processing a projective identification (Thorpe, 1989). Implicitly recognising this, Wertz (1985) expressed disappointment that his general structure of being victimised was very global and lacking in detail (p.191). Less insightfully, other researchers present, without comment, general structures that are cumbersome or barely comprehensible (e.g. Montgomery's (1982) for the premenstruum and Titelman's (1981) for envy), or, like Wertz', too abstract to be of much value (Scheepers, 1988). Instead of achieving an account of the essence of a phenomenon, the general structure is often no more than an unhelpful, lowest common denominator of a set of very different experiences.

The concept of general structure is also problematic in that structure is a static metaphor, whereas experiences occur as processes in time. Subjects describe physical symptoms, sensations, overt behaviours, thoughts, fantasies, attitudes, attributions, and emotions. Also implicit in their accounts are assumptions and beliefs that may not be directly articulated, and material relating to structural relationships with individuals, institutions and culture. The complex process of classification of such diverse phenomena and the conceptualisation of their interrelationships needs to take into account both dynamic factors (i.e. processes of movement and change) and structural factors (i.e. the relatively enduring frameworks within which these processes occur). The model of theory development based on CSRM described above provides a more flexible framework for making decisions about how to transform data and work with theory than does the concept of general structure.

Within this framework, analysis can remain at the descriptive-dialogic phase and describe the range of experiences to be related to each other, with some preliminary classification and organisation. The 'shared essential themes' offered by Todres (1986) to summarise the experience of finitude, and the extended description offered by Cleaver (1988) to represent the experience of having one's house petrol-bombed are good examples of this level of analysis.

Where the presentation includes illustrations from individual cases (as does Cleaver's), the reader is provided with a coherent and accessible insight into the type of experience being investigated. Much descriptive anthropological research is of this type (Mitchell, 1983). It is this level of analysis that tackles the sort of questions that Giorgi (1986b, p.165) describes as the appropriate targets of psychological enquiry:

> How many types of perception are there? What styles of memorising exist? How varied are neurotic patterns? How are the relations of love lived out in society? How many levels of knowing do humans utilise? How many kinds of depressive behaviours are there?

At the same time, it prepares the ground for defining the components of the experience and the relations between them, which is what a general structure is supposed to achieve.

Theory and explanation

A related problem raised by a phenomenological stance concerns the role of theory and explanation. The principles 'back to the things themselves' and 'science's task is to understand reality, not to dictate to it' (Giorgi, 1986b p.165) have engendered a view that once an idealised *verstehen* is achieved the search for further theory or explanation is pre-empted. Phenomenologists routine attacks on explanatory science (e.g. Giorgi, 1986a; Kruger, 1988, p.93) offer an appropriate and constructive critique when brought to bear on theory that was never based on careful observation, or has become disengaged from the data, speculative and untestable. Unfortunately the overgeneralisation of this approach has led to a de-emphasis of theory which is impractical, misleading and limiting.

It is impractical in an absolute sense, since any use of language already commits the researcher to theoretical assumptions. Stones' (1986) claim that DPRM researchers aspire to the *trascendental attitude* described by Husserl is absurd. Although they may succeed in bracketing some of the assumptions of the *natural attitude*, what is achieved in published research is the objectivity and neutrality towards the data which the natural scientist would also aspire to. In practice, some examples of the application of DPRM are deeply grounded in phenomenological theory and the language of phenomenologicalphilosophy (e.g. Hoek, 1990; Parker, 1985; Titelman, 1981; Todres, 1986). While the assumptions of this language differ from those of other discourses within psychology, it cannot be said to constitute a transcendental attitude in an absolute sense.

It is misleading in that it implies that one who knows nothing about the area being studied will make a better job of researching it than one who knows a great deal. This is simply not true. In practice the best research is done by those who have read about and examined theories about the phenomena they are investigating and deeply reflected on them. The resultant understanding of the nuances and complexities of the phenomenon serves to guide both the collection of good quality research protocols in the first place, and the articulate exposition of their implications. Parker's (1985) phenomenological investigation of ontic conscience, for example, could not even be approached without a thorough pre-existing conceptualisation of the phenomenon, grounded in Heidegger's philosophy.

The use of DPRM in theory development

Finally it is limiting in that good phenomenological research provides a well-grounded data base for developing and testing theory. It is in this area that there is need for integration with the case study method which adopts a less ideological, more pragmatic approach to theory. DPRM's thorough analytic procedures provide a transformation of interview data that is an excellent basis for the development or critical examination of theory.

The compatibility of the two approaches can be illustrated from the work of Taylor and Bogdan (1984), which is essentially a phenomenologically informed case study approach. Their presentation of the process of analytic induction, which is fundamental to theory development in CSRM, includes this example, from a 1950's social psychological study of embezzlers by Cressey, of an analysis of trust violation

> Trusted persons become trust violators when they conceive of themselves as having a financial problem that is non-sharable, are aware that this problem can be secretly resolved by violation of financial trust and are able to apply to their own conduct in that situation verbalisations which enable them to adjust their conceptions of themselves as trusted persons with their conceptions of themselves as users of the entrusted funds or property (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p.128)

This is a striking anticipation of a Giorgi style general description of structure. It also illustrates how a general structure is a step in theory development. It is also an example of a descriptive-dialogic case study, as a theoretical position is developed from the data.

Brooke's (1985, p.43) use of his general structure of guilt to critically examine some of Freud's conceptions is a good example of theoretical discussion at the theoretical-heuristic phase. Here DPRM is used to achieve one of the goals of phenomenological psychology which is to validate its critique of

theoretical constructions based on other metatheoretical positions. Might he perhaps have used his data as a crucial case study, by arguing that specific experiences of his subjects firmly contradicted what Freud had postulated? His published paper does not, however, pursue the argument in sufficient detail to do this.

Unfortunately, other researchers using DPRM are more tentative in the arena of theory so that the method often does not yield up its full potential. This is illustrated in Thorpe's (1989) otherwise outstanding study of projective identification, which has many of the characteristics of a theoretical-heuristic case study. He analysed eight interviews in which psychoanalytic psychotherapists described an experience of projective identification. He considered using the case study method, but selected the Duquesne method because of its clearly structured procedures (Thorpe, 1989 p.111). Within the perspective offered in this paper, an integrated strategy, conceptualised as a multiple case study, using DPRM principles for data collection and preliminary analysis could have provided the advantages of both approaches.

Thorpe's work abounds with features of the case study method. His review of the literature on countertransference and projective identification is used to develop a coherent account of existing case-law in the area. This provides a conceptual framework within which the data from the research interviews can be understood, and which identifies points of theoretical confusion or conflict which the research data might be expected to bear on. His frequent use of illustrative case material in this process ('... case illustrations are extensively used in this chapter.' (p.57)) is another typical feature of case study method (Mitchell, 1983).

In his analysis the situated structures are presented as descriptive case synopses. These are 'more expansive than usually found in this phase of phenomenological research' (p.119), and Thorpe refers to them as 'clinical situated structures' (p.120), and as 'case studies in projective identification' (p.120). Although he believed that he was able to do this because the subjects were clinicians who were used to providing background material, similar case descriptions were developed by Fischer and Wertz (1979) and the data of Cleaver (1988) and Scheepers (1988) would probably be amenable to this treatment.

Finally, he presents a coherent general account of projective identification derived from his cases which he discusses at what is essentially the descriptive-dialogic level. This is the stage where the traditions of DPRM let him down. The thorough presentation of case law and the detailed case synopses provide a basis for discussion at the theoretical-heuristic level. For example, the literature reviewed raised, among others, these two questions: 'Can the therapist's experience be accounted for in terms of countertransference?' and 'How does the therapist's processing of the projected material enable the client

to receive it back in a less toxic form?' His data contained a great deal of material relevant to these questions, and they could have been tackled more vigorously and the evidence for and against particular answers systematically evaluated.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF DPRM TO CSRM

Within the renaissance of case study methodology in psychology, DPRM makes important contributions at the technical, ethical and metatheoretical level. First, at the technical level, it offers a meticulously described set of practical steps which enable researchers to organise interview data in a rigorous and psychologically meaningful way. Second, its principles constitute an explicit ethic, reminding researchers to remain faithful to the experience of subjects, to respect subjects' integrity and capacity to work as co-researchers, and to contribute to the good of the wider society. It focuses the importance of ensuring that data collection and summary, and theory development reflect authentic experience, and provide beneficial feedback into processes within the individual and society. While much case study work does accord with these principles, it does not invariably do so. For example, Freud's development of psychoanalytic theory was based on a case study approach (Bolgar, 1965), but the method came to be quite severely abused in the psychoanalytic movement (Strupp, 1981 pp.217-8 - also quoted in Edwards 1990), and awareness of a phenomenological research ethic might have served as a powerful corrective.

Third, wittingly or unwittingly, any case study work is founded in a metatheoretical perspective, and any perspective has the effect of revealing some aspects of a phenomenon and concealing others (Romanyshyn, 1982). Phenomenological philosophy serves as a metatheoretical critique of existing models of psychological and social processes based on biologistic, mechanistic, dualistic or reductionistic principles (Kruger, 1988). Thus Boss (1962) provides a phenomenologically-informed critique of psychoanalytic theory, Merleau-Ponty (1967/1942) of biologically and behaviourally derived psychology, and Brooke (1989) of Jung's analytical psychology.

However, phenomenological metatheoretical critique need not be grounded in the formal procedures of DPRM. Nor do all applications of DPRM address, or need to address this level of analysis. For example, the work of Wertz (1985) and Cleaver (1988) on the experience of being a victim is mainly at the descriptive level and avoids use of theory that broaches major ideological conflicts. Thorpe's (1989) theoretical work remains comfortably within the language of contemporary debate in psychoanalysis.

Conclusions

CSRM, has a long history in psychology going back to the 1890's with the pioneering work of Freud and Breuer which drew on the tradition of medical case studies. The tradition of careful observation of individual children by developmental psychologists goes back to the same period (Bolgar, 1965). In contrast, DPRM is often presented as a radical new departure in psychological research which was made possible by adopting the philosophical orientation of Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, and which provides a constructive alternative to traditional research methods.

However, against the background of the history and theoretical principles of the case study method, the Duquesne work can be seen to be part of a broader and growing impetus within contemporary psychology to recover emphases that have been lost sight of, and to provide a more comprehensive framework for psychological investigation than that which is offered in traditional courses on research methodology. This is a historical movement which is redressing serious imbalances within research methodology to which writers on both DPRM and CSRM are contributing. To a large extent they share a common cause. However, because of the different historical and conceptual backgrounds that each is founded in, they have much to offer each other. If this paper encourages researchers to join and strengthen this historical process, and provides conceptual tools with which to do this more flexibly and creatively, its goal will have been achieved.

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Chapter 5

Comparison of the concept of anxiety in the psychiatry of Harry Stack Sullivan with that of existential phenomenology

A.C.N. Preller

Introduction

Of the various angles from which a comparison can be drawn between Harry Stack Sullivan's Psychiatry and Existential Phenomenological thought, I chose for this discussion the concept of Anxiety. This was done with the hope that, apart from an interesting comparison, a specific and enriching understanding of anxiety will be elucidated - an understanding of anxiety that has little in common with the 'anxiety' we dissolve with 'anxiolytic' medication. The anxiety I want to talk about is part of our lives, pervades our daily existence ... is perchance a friend, often a foe - a constant companion.

Our life is acted out around anxiety, acted out as if on a stage, with the predominant purpose of not encountering it. Man, the Great Actor, man the Great Escapist, acting in comedy, farce or tragedy ... until the curtain drops ...

Sullivan's basis

Sullivan's psychiatric thoughts are dominated by and are in fact built on the insight that interpersonal processes are of prime importance. So, before we talk about anxiety, it will be appropriate to quote Sullivan when he refers to the interpersonal.

> "Psychiatry ... is the study of processes that involve or go on between people. The field of psychiatry is the field of interpersonal relations, under any and all circumstances in which these relations exist" (Sullivan, 1955, p.10).

> "To the psychiatrist the fully human is always embodied and made manifest in an interpersonal situation, real or illusory, or a blend of both" (Sullivan, 1971, p.26).

"The situation (Sullivan means with the term 'situation' the interpersonal happening) is still the valid object of study, or rather that which we can observe". (Sullivan, 1955 p.51)

"One achieves mental health to the extent that one becomes aware of one's interpersonal relations ..." (Sullivan, 1955, p.207)

Sullivan's anxiety

Sullivan's concept of anxiety is one of the most fundamental notions of his theory of interpersonal relations. It permeates and touches the whole interpersonal field of investigation.

Although the experience of anxiety and of fear has much in common, the two differ fundamentally. In a given situation fear is usually clearly recognizable as such. Anxiety, on the other hand, is seldom - except perhaps for a fleeting moment - experienced as anxiety. It is more often experienced as complex emotions such as humiliation, embarrassment, shame, guilt, grief, touchiness, irritability and rage. In the normal peace-time way of life, fear does not occur very often; anxiety (usually unrecognized) occurs very often. The effects of fear can be postponed, can be suppressed until a more convenient time, but one has no control over anxiety. Fear manifests itself in clearly expressed ways which are not concealed and is more or less the same for all people, whilst the circumstances leading to anxiety are obscure, unclear and vary infinitely amongst people. Anxiety is not influenced by habituation; unlike fear, one does not get used to anxiety. Fear has the effect of increasing alertness so as to counteract its source. In the case of anxiety the opposite is true; anxiety impedes effective vigilance which hampers any action to alleviate its effect.

According to Sullivan, anxiety is always interpersonal in nature, even when this is not self-evident. It is precisely the interpersonal basis of all manifestations of anxiety which constitutes its most unique characteristic. Anxiety determines to a large extent the way two persons relate to each other; how they integrate an interpersonal situation, to use Sullivan's terminology. Interpersonally, anxiety is a disruptive force, "... *the* great disjunctive force in interpersonal relations is anxiety" (Sullivan, 1971, p.244). When the relationship between two people has more or less stabilized, each person had formed for the other a specific identity, relative to the nature of the integrated interpersonal situation. Sullivan calls this an "eidetic personification". A fictitious you-identity, corresponding to the I-identity has formed, and the way the transformations had taken place, is greatly determined by anxiety.

Anxiety is the converse of self-respect. The experience of rage, hatred or resentment usually does not result from a real threat to one's existence, but from the fact that your self-respect or prestige is at stake. Anxiety, arising out

of a threat to self-respect, is usually not experienced as such but as irritation or rage.

Where does anxiety, as an interpersonal concept, stem from; what is its ultimate origin? Being interpersonal, it cannot be innate. The manifestations of anxiety can, on theother hand, even be observed in infancy in the form of sleep and feeding disruption. According to Sullivan the structure or pattern of anxiety is laid down in that very early, primitive relationship of infant and mother, the mother's anxiety being empathically transferred to the infant (empathy, or "emotional contagion", should here be understood as a very primitive and unconscious transfer of emotional tone). This primitive form of anxiety, lacking or very poor in content, reappears in later life in the form of what Sullivan called "uncanny emotion". Uncanny emotion has a weird and creepy type of atmosphere: it is experienced as if the world is far away. Sullivan describes this sometimes with the word "awe" and explains that awe is the type of emotion often experienced when you for the first time hear an organ playing or look at the Grand Canyon. He describes other forms of uncanny emotion as "dread", "horror" and "loathing". All these terms result from an attempt to understand what the infant in anxiety must be experiencing.

The notion of uncanny emotion as an extreme form of anxiety, stemming from the very early and primitive experience of anxiety by the infant in his relationship with the so called "evil (bad) mother personification" of the mother, develops into a very important concept in Sullivan's psychiatry. Note that this type of anxiety is not only paralyzing, but is also lacking content or is poor in content. The counterpart of the evil mother personification is a self-personification called the Not-me. Sullivan calls the Not-Me "shadowy but dreadful" (Sullivan, 1971, p.249). A re-experience of the uncanny emotion type of anxiety of the Not-Me in later life brings about a confrontation with one of the most paralyzing, unlivable situations thinkable, that being a confrontation with the nothingness.

Sullivan says the following:

> "Reactivations of anxiety experiences in early childhood would bring up personifications of other only somewhat less bizarre 'powers and principalities' of good and evil, including a nightmarish personification, Not-Me, linked in coincidence with the person's early sojourns in the realm of intolerable anxiety - and ever thenceforth growing along with 'the rest of one', across the threshold of nightmare and schizophrenic psychosis ..." (Sullivan, 1971, p.309).

The following points concerning Sullivan's concept of anxiety can once again be highlighted by way of summary:

a) Anxiety is a total experience;
b) It is a disjunctive force in any interpersonal situation, making real contact with the other person difficult, complicated or impossible;
c) It originates from the first interpersonal contact between infant and caring person, being conveyed empathically;
d) There is no consensually validated object for anxiety: anxiety is not anxiety for something; it is without content;
e) Experiencing severe anxiety can be described as "uncanny";
f) Anxiety shrinks in the boundaries of awareness and of the self;
g) Anxiety deprives the person of his own self-image (which after all was granted him through the appraisals of other people);
h) "... unlike fear, that which is fled from is not some environmental situation or object. Rather, in anxiety the individual flees from his own experience, he flees from himself" (Fischer 1970, p 34).

Anxiety from a philosophical and phenomenological viewpoint

I think it has already become clear that there is a distinct difference between Sullivan's concept of anxiety and the emotional experience one refers to when one says that one is "feeling anxious". This difference is even more pronounced when we consider the existential concept of anxiety. Perhaps the term anxiety is, in the latter context, not completely satisfactory. Anxiety is the term used in the English translation of Heidegger's Angst. Anxiety, however, suggests too much day-to-day feelings of anxiety of ordinary life rather that the subtle meaning that the existentialists wish to designate by the word Angst. In a footnote (Being and Time, p.227) Heidegger's translators remark that, although Angst has generally been translated as anxiety in post-Freudian psychological literature, uneasiness or malaise would in some ways be more appropriate translations. John Macquarrie (1972) prefers anxiety as a translation of Angst to either dread (as found in English translations of Kierkegaard) or anguish (as Satre's term *angoisse* is often translated). Dread, he says, suggests something very much like fear, and anguish carries the connotation of acute pain.

The word anxiety certainly does not have precisely the same meaning in every existential writer who uses it, but a close kinship does exist. What I am trying to show is that this kinship exists also between the Existential and Sullivanian concepts.

Before Freud and depth-psychology the concept of anxiety was in the hands of very prominent philosophers. The most important in this respect was Sören Kierkegaard (1813-1855), father of existentialism. He was a sombre, mysterious person. His restless work showed him to have been haunted by questions

concerning his relationship to God. He was against any kind of systematization in theology and philosophy which he thought could only lead to a superficialization and impoverishment of thought about reality. For him true reality could only be found in strict individuality. Unique, individual subjectivity is the only true existence.

You will remember that, prior to Kierkegaard's time, philosophers devoted themselves to the search for general, objective, eternal truths about man and universe, grasped through reason. Kierkegaard initiated the revolt against these conceptions of man and world by insisting that the key to man's existence is to be found in the *individual's* thoughts and feelings.

According to Kierkegaard, systematization would therefore mean to vanish into the masses, into the Indefinite Other; it means a loss of the "I" and of being free. Being free and anxiety are close to each other. The possibility of freedom awakes anxiety. Anxiety is the situation in which a person is confronted with his freedom. "Die Angst is der Schwindel der Freiheit." Anxiety is the dizziness of freedom. Freedom means possibility and to stand on the edge of possibility is like standing on the edge of a precipice. Man must choose to take the risk of confronting himself with his strictly individual freedom or otherwise lose himself in the Indefinite Other.

Kierkegaard draws a sharp distinction between fear and anxiety. Fear has a definite object, what does anxiety have? Kierkegaard answers: The Nothing. "Fragen wir nun näher, welches der Gegenstand der Angst ist, so ist hier allewege zu antworten: Dieser ist Nichts. Die Angst und Nichts entsprechen einander beständig". Also: "... das Verhältnis der Angst zu ihrem Gegenstände, zu etwas das Nichts ist ..." (Kierkegaard, 1971, p.221).

Kierkegaard's thoughts on Anxiety and Nothingness caused a revolution in philosophy and influenced especially Gabriel Marcel, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre. On the topic of anxiety Heidegger's philosophy is of special importance.

Heidegger describes two ways of being: authentic and inauthentic. The inauthentic is the ordinary day to day way of being in which man (Dasein) is constantly escaping from his authentic being. Man evades his authenticity by "falling into" (Verfallen) the inauthenticity of the Indefinite Other (das Man) and of a "caręd for" (die Sorge) 'world'. The falling into can thus be understood as a flight from his authentic, true self.

What is the basic state-of-mind or fundamental mood (grondgestemdheid, Grundbefindlichkeit) of authentic being? It is anxiety. In that situation, in the attunement of anxiety when there is no longer a being-fallen to inauthentic life, Dasein is thrown back onto himself. Inauthentic 'world' has nothing more to offer. Even Mitdasein (the being-with with other people) has fallen away. In the fundamental state-of-mind of anxiety all inauthentic, inner-worldly structures have lost their meaning. Anxiety has no inner-worldly object. Its object is

the Nothingness (Das Nichts). Anxiety has disclosed the Nothing. Anxiety brings man back from his inauthentic ensnaredness, his being absorbed in the Indefinite Other and confronts him with, and opens up and reveals to him the fundamental possibilities of authentic and inauthentic being.

For more detailed discussion of Heidegger's thoughts on anxiety and nothingness, we will use his paper "What is Metaphysics?" written originally in 1929 and published in English in a collection of his basic writings (1978).

Heidegger's first question concerns the concept of the Nothing (das Nichts). What is the Nothing like and why do we concern ourselves with it? The nothing is after all rejected by science which deals only with beings (Seiendes, syndes, things). Science wishes to know nothing of the Nothing.

What is nothing? What is the nothing like? Whenever the question is put in this way, the term, nothing, is used as if Nothing is a thing, a being. But that is exactly what it is distinguished from. Nothing is not something. It differs radically from beings. It is diametrically the opposite. Nothing is the negation of the totality of beings. It is the absolute Not-Being.

Negation is a specific action of the intellect. Does the Nothing then exist solely through negation? Is the Nothing given only because the "not" i.e., negation, is given? Or is it the other way round? Are negation and the Not only made possible by the grace of the Nothing? Is negation given only because of the Nothing?

So, let us put forward this assertion: the Nothing is more basic and more original than negation. If this thesis is valid, then negation as an action of the intellect, and therefore the intellect itself, is in some way dependent upon the Nothing.

Now, if we want to investigate the Nothing, how are we to approach it? How and where can we look for it? We must be able to encounter it. In order to find something, we must certainly know in general that it is there.

One thing seems clear: we should avoid intellectual thoughts about the Nothing. We should stop thinking about it. We should not allow our intellects to intervene. Only a fundamental, direct experience of the Nothing will confront us with its reality.

We continually attach ourselves to some thing or being. In this way the Nothing, for which we are now looking, is hidden from us. The question is whether there really is a state-of-mind (Befindlichkeit, Stimmung), an attunement or mood in which we are confronted with the Nothing. Such an event is possible and does indeed happen, albeit rarely and only for fleeting moments, namely in the fundamental mood of anxiety (In der Grundbefindlichkeit der Angst).

Anxiety is indeed anxiety for ..., but not for something in particular. Anxiety is anxiety in the face of ..., but not in the face of this or that thing. Anxiety for ... is always anxiety about ..., but not about a particular thing.

The indeterminateness about which and for which anxiety is experienced does not simply mean the factual lacking of determination: definiteness is excluded in principle.

In the face of anxiety, all things, even ourselves, recede away as of no concern. "All things and we ourselves sink into indifference" (*Op. cit.* p.103). No grip or hold remains. "In the slipping away of beings only this 'no hold on things' comes over us".

Indeed, anxiety opens up to us the nothing. "Anxiety reveals the nothing" (*Op. cit.*, p.103).

We "hover" in anxiety. Or better: anxiety leaves us hanging by removing the totality of things. Even we, ourselves, slip away from ourselves. Only the being-there (pure Dasein) is left.

We said anxiety is rarely experienced. This would mean that the Nothing is continuously hidden from us, is camouflaged. How?

Through losing ourselves completely in things. The more we lose ourselves in things (beings) in our daily encounter with beings, the more we are absorbed in beings, the more the Nothing is hidden from us and the more are we caught in our superficial public existence. Indeed, Man binds himself to the things of the inauthentic daily existence in order to escape from anxiety and the Nothing. Original anxiety is constantly repressed. Only in rare (too rare?) moments are we carried away by anxiety to drift freely in the Nothing. But anxiety is there. Heidegger says: "It is only sleeping. Its breath quivers perpetually through Dasein, only slightly in those who are jittery ... and most assuredly in those who are basically daring" (p. 108).

So far Heidegger's "What is Metaphysics?".

Yalom (1980: 164) describes a psychotherapeutic method, suggested to him by James Bugental. He calls it a structured "disidentification" exercise and often used it with groups of critically ill cancer patients. He describes it as follows:

> I choose a quiet peaceful setting and ask the participants to list, on separate cards, eight important answers to the question "who am I?" I then ask them to review their eight answers and to arrange their cards in order of importance and centricity: the answers closest to their core at bottom, the more peripheral responses at the top. Then I ask them to study their top card and meditate on what it would be like to give up that attribute. After approximately two to three minutes I ask them ... to go on to the next card and so on until they have divested themself of all eight attributes. Following that, it is advisable to help the participants integrate by going through the procedure in reverse.

This simple but powerful exercise demonstrates our dependence on those "wordly" things which make up our "identity" and the anxiety which confronts us if we have to do without it. Does this bring us closer to an understanding of the anxiety Heidegger it talking about?

Sullivan, existential phenomenology and anxiety

To compare philosophical reflection with psychiatric theory certainly is a hazardous undertaking. One can, on the other hand, not escape from the fact that the phenomenological approach to anxiety is steeped in philosophical thought. Only a comparison of the essential cores of both is possible.

a) Anxiety is a phenomenon of life

It is of significance that both Sullivan and the existential phenomenologists treat anxiety as part of life, as an essential characteristic of human existence, and not as a psychopathological phenomenon as Freud was wont to do.

b) Anxiety isolates and lacks content

It is especially in the disclosure of anxiety as isolating and being objectless and therefore lacking in content - or at least being poor in content - that Sullivan's and Heidegger's notions of anxiety seem to come very close to each other. Let us take Sullivan first.

As founder of interpersonal psychiatry, Sullivan emphasized the role of anxiety in interpersonal situations: his concept of anxiety is essentially an interpersonal affair. Anxiety finds its origin through empathy, operates in the situation of contact between people, it determines the nature of the interpersonal situation, sets limits to awareness, widens the distance between people, isolates.

Sullivan distinguishes between mild, manageable anxiety and severe, sudden, paralyzing anxiety. The young child is able to use manageable anxiety in his process of culturalization; through fine discrimination of increasing and decreasing anxiety, he manages his relationships in such a way as to obey the rules of his culture. By discriminating between increasing and decreasing anxiety - the "anxiety gradient" - the child learns to chart his interpersonal course: he learns to behvave as one should in his society.

But the effect of intense anxiety is totally different. It contributes no information. Severe anxiety is like a blow to the head: it wipes out all sensible experience. Anxiety in its most severe form "... has an ... effect of producing useless confusion, and a useless disturbance of the factors of sentience which immediately preceded its onset, a phenomenon which is so striking that in later life the great problem of psychotherapy is very often centered on this very

matter of getting the patient to see just when anxiety intervened, because that area is disturbed in such a way that it is almost as if it had not been" (Sullivan, 1953, p.152).

During severe anxiety contact with reality is broken, a gap is created in experience, a section of everyday experience falls away as if it never happened. Anxiety has wiped it all out.

The infant is exposed to three types of interpersonal collaboration: reward, the anxiety gradient, and obliterative, sudden, severe anxiety. Three types of corresponding (to all three) self-personifications arise out of this: Good-Me, Bad-Me and Not-Me.

Let us look at the Not-Me. The Not-Me is a negation of Me. There is no direct access to the Not-Me; we only know about it via indirect conclusions. The Not-Me as such is only occasionally encountered in dreams or during an acute schizophrenic episode.

But the Not-Me never disappears and often manifests itself in adult life "... in peculiar absences of phenomena where there should be phenomena ..." (Sullivan, 1953, pp.162-3) and also in dissociated behaviour. The Not-Me is always rather primitive in nature and acts in the parataxic way. Sullivan calls the emotional nature of Not-Me "uncanny emotion": "which ... cannot be clearly connected with cause and effect - cannot be dealt with in all the impressive ways by which we explain our referential processes later - they persist throughout life as relatively primitive, unelaborated, parataxic symbols" (op. cit. p.163). It boils down to the fact that the Not-Me lies wholly outside any possibility of syntaxic, communicative, consensually validated living. "Not-Me is part of the very 'private mode' of living" (op. cit. p.164).

The Not-Me, product of severe, isolating and paralyzing anxiety is nearly totally inaccessible, is strange, is "not of this world".

Although interpersonal matters are not of prime importance from the existential-phenomenological viewpoint, the notion of the isolating effect of anxiety is clearly present. In the presence of anxiety, confronted with authentic being, says Heidegger, the inauthentic 'world', together with its people, recedes into insignificance. "Die 'Welt' vermag nichts mehr zu bieten, ebensowenig das Mitdasein Anderer" (This 'world' is no longer able to offer anything, neither is the being-with with others) (Heidegger, 1967, p.187).

Anxiety has destroyed the dictatorship of the Indefinite - they which belongs to inauthentic being. In the face of anxiety the fellow-man has become of no consequence - but not only our fellow man, also all things, all beings, even our own inauthentic selves. All that is left is the "no", the "none", the "nothing" - only our being-there as such (Heidegger, 1970).

Bollnow (1969) puts it as follows: *Es ist ... so, dass das Verhältnis des Menschen zur Welt im ganzen in der Angst erschüttert wird. Die ihn sonst so warm*

und vertraut umgebende ... Welt ist plötzlich wie ferngerückt. ... Was ihn sonst freute und wofür er sich einsetzte, ist wie von einem grauen Nebel der Gleichgültigkeit verschlungen (p.67).

The similarity of the essentials of the two approaches is striking. Although viewed from totally different angles, the conclusions are the same: in anxiety man is flung back onto himself; in anxiety man is isolated and the distance between man and man, and man and world is exceedingly increased.

The big difference

A big difference is evident in the different approaches to anxiety by Sullivan and the existential phenomenologists. For Sullivan anxiety is always negative in nature. For existential philosophy the opposite is true. For the latter an heroic acceptance of being confronted with anxiety is positive and essential for breaking away from the inauthentic fallen existence. Only through anxiety can one become free to turn toward an authentic life.

This difference is to be expected. Bollnow (1969) indeed pointed out the fact that if the fallen, caring (inauthentic) existence is understood as the healthy norm, anxiety would of consequence be understood as a disturbance. That is exactly what Sullivan does. Being fallen, being absorbed in the things around one, being absorbed in one's activity and one's dealings with things and with people is the norm for modern Western culture. For Western psychiatry any disruption of this state of affairs would mean psychopathology.

Another very important difference lies in the fact that, whilst existential thinking, especially of the earlier writers (vide Kierkegaard, above) placed the emphasis strictly on the individual, Sullivan's anxiety lies completely in the interpersonal sphere. In Sullivan's field of investigation human interaction is of prime importance. As a matter of fact, Sullivan's greatest contribution to psychiatry lies in his breaking away from the intrapsychic and dualistic approach of his predecessors. Patrick Mullahy (1967: 16) puts it as follows: "We have to drag this inner psyche out-of-doors and give it an airing." Viewed in this way, Sullivan did for psychiatry what phenomenology did for existentialism.

In this paper it was endeavoured, through comparing Existential and Sullivanian viewpoints, to demonstrate a concept of anxiety which can never be equated with the anxiety of clinical psychopathology or with the "Anxiety Disorders", contained in the DSM-III. It is a concept profoundly deeper, yet of absolute human significance. It is a concept which could provide a deeper understanding of Man, the Actor, confronted with his Final Freedom. It is about Life at the Limits.

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Chapter 6

Hermeneutic keys to the therapeutic moment - a Jungian phenomenological perspective

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Over the last few years there has been a growing spirit of reconciliation between phenomenology and analytical psychology. It is being recognised that Jung's thinking cannot easily be dumped into the same Cartesian - positivist refuse bag as Freud's topographical metapsychology. It is not denied that Jung's theorising usually contained an implicit ontology and epistemology that remained stuck in the Cartesian and positivist[1] heritage of nineteenth century natural man. To this extent the early critiques by Boss (1957, 1963), for example, are still relevant. But several phenomenologists, such as Casey, Romanyshyn, Sardello, de Koning and Charles Scott, have been inspired by Jung's psychological insights, and in their turn a few analytical psychologists, such as Abenheimer, Charlton, Hillman, Hobson, Holt and Schenk have been touched by phenomenology. For both fields the association between Hillman and Romanyshyn at the University of Dallas in the early 1980's was particularly fortunate, and will continue to bear fruit.

There has been some formal critical and integrative work (e.g. Avens 1982, 1984; Brooke 1991; Scott 1977), but almost no empirical or clinical "data" either to ground or to illustrate the integration that has slowly been occurring. The significant work by Avens (op.cit.) is basically limited to Hillman and Heidegger, and thus bypasses the body of Jungian psychology. This paper will present a case from my clinical practice, with several goals in mind: to illustrate the theoretical and epistemological convergence that is taking place, to highlight some of the main contributions of phenomenology and analytical psychology to an integrated phenomenological analytical psychology, and to demonstrate the significance of all this for therapeutic practice. This is a rather tall order

1 I am, of course aware that positivism as a philosphical movement developed only in the 1920's and died after a few years. But the movement articulated most clearly views that had been developing and implicit for a long time.

for a short paper, but it can be contained by focusing on the question of the hermeneutic key to the therapeutic moment. By the term moment I have in mind more than its temporal meaning; a moment is also a "factor" and a measure of leverage. Thus a moment is that factor which gives access to, and moves, the therapeutic space and the patient.

Before proceeding I would like to thank most sincerely the patient who allowed me to share her very private experiences with you. Her name and some identifying details have, of course, been changed. What follows is not a complete case study, but highlights of a theme that was central to our therapeutic work and her existence.

Celia was a very damaged 25 year-old post-graduate student, whose presenting complaints revolved around diffuse feelings of disintegration, a fear of madness, and the most terrible, continuous psychic pain I have ever encountered. Almost her whole existence was attuned vigilantly to keeping her bodily self intact. She sometimes felt the coldness of death creeping up her legs and back, or she felt her limbs threaten to fall off her body. Her sexuality was a call for existential affirmation more than interpersonal communication or pleasure. Tears and her regular periods afforded her some relief. Her menstrual blood reassured her in some not- yet understood way that she was a woman, and it brought her manic, centrifugal existence back to the density and reality of a living body. Many of her dreams were compensatory attempts to heal this nightmarish existence, but one dream which captured it was as follows: she was standing alone on a hill overlooking a winter landscape in which, as far as the eye could see, low white clouds were blowing overhead, moving very fast like in a high speed movie. Then she realised that the clouds were actually the feathers of millions of smashed birds, and she woke up.[2] Celia's mother had described her pregnancy with her as the worst time in her life. Almost all her childhood memories were terrifying. She had hallucinatory experiences of being persecuted by spirits or "presences"; she would get out of bed at night and walk around the room to prove she was alive; she dreamed repeatedly of waking up and not being able to switch on the light, then she would wake up and look outside fearing the sun would not come up; she panicked at the sight of her mother's breasts; she thought she was going to be cut into pieces and eaten when her mother moved to cut her birthday cake, and so on.

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2 Psychotherapists may note that Celia's capacity to experience and hold psychic pain was her greatest strength, and it suggested an interiority and integrity which her clinical presentation tends to obscure. Although she lived on the edge of madness for much of the time, she was a reliable and good friend to people she cared about, she missed those who were far away, she remembered events and feelings, and in our three years of therapy I never once felt manipulated by her.

Her initial dream was that a helpful and pleasant young man was helping her find her autobiography in a library. The man opened a book which was actually his diary. It was filled with photographs of carved meat, dismembered bodies, and blood. Celia realised he was going to kill her, but after a terrifying chase she managed to escape.

She told me she could not tolerate seeing me more than once-a-week, and she told me not to say how she was feeling because, if I was right, my words cut like knives into her body and she could feel dismembered. However, interpretations of her paranoid anxieties and other boundary issues in relation to me - interpreting the transference reference in the above dream, for instance - afforded her some relief. Mostly, I simply tried to share and hold her psychic pain. Over the following eighteen months she came to feel less caught up in an oscillating bodyhood: either staccato and machine-like or rampantly lustful. Her bodily self felt somewhat more stably situated, with interior feelings of aliveness and greater continuity. She dreamed my "wife" (not my actual wife) gave her a baby which had never spoken before, but when she held it in her arms to her astonishment it started to speak in clear English. Earlier paranoid fears of her mother had begun to ease, and she was no longer frightened of actual matricide when she visited her mother's home.

After about eighteen months she went for a gynaecological examination, which reconstituted her fears of being tortured and her fantasies of murderous retribution. Her body felt to be in pieces, and before I said anything she intimated tearfully that she could not bear me to mention the way her therapy was also like an internal examination. She then said there was a "deep thing" inside her which she had never brought to therapy. She herself did not truly know what it was, except that it was very primitive. She was afraid I would see it, yet also wanted me to. I sensed a deep, dark movement in Celia's existence. In peer supervision a couple of colleagues thought, like me, that she may become psychotic. She agreed to come twice a week, and I told her that if she needed me I wanted her to phone, any time of day or night. Two weeks later she dreamed of a man and a woman leading her through dark tunnels in an underground railway system. They were on a platform littered with garbage, and the man invited her to cross the railway line with him to get to another platform. She was very frightened of the live electric rail, and was anxiously wondering what to do when she woke up. Talking about the dream, it became clear to her that she could not go back and we could not stay as we were either. What then happened was extraordinary.

She left that session with an undeclared decision to let me become a more concretely personal presence for her, and so she had a sexual fantasy about me. The following night she had a dream.

She was her twenty-five year old self sitting in the flat of her childhood, when she decided to look inside herself. She took off her right leg and part of her side and put it in front of her. She was surprised to discover that it was not painful, but when the leg began to bleed she decided to put it back in place. At this moment she realised she was actually whole sitting as she was, and that this leg was not in fact herself but something alien she had had inside her all these years. Looking at it more closely she saw that it was an enormous phallus, which she had used as a third leg on which to stand and walk. Even in the dream she realised why, despite her lack of sexual inhibition, she had never been able to open herself as a woman to anyone, and she had almost never had an orgasm during penetration. This third leg had always been in the way. She woke astonished and greatly relieved, feeling at last she could let me in.

Three sessions later she brought me some pictures she had drawn as a child of six or seven years, pictures she had intuitively felt inclined to keep. For her age she could draw well.

The first is of a woman holding up a another figure. It does not have a body but a long neck, two legs, and a very large head. There are two other women, drawn smaller, who are looking on admiringly. What Celia pointed out to me was that the woman and the figure together have only three legs, not four, that the neck, which is as long as the woman's leg, seems to grow out of the side of her, and that, in the light of the dream, the neck and the head are like a large phallus. Celia said the picture was a child's portrait of herself as an adult. She is a three-legged woman with a big head, reflecting her academic strivings which she had always regarded as "masculine".

The second picture is of a woman on a beach. She is looking up at a happy young girl who is on top of a tower that people can climb if they are stranded by the incoming tide. It is thus a picture of a woman looking at a girl who has climbed to the top of a tower, where she is safe from the incoming see.

As a child Celia knew that to save herself from being engulfed by the maternal sea she had to climb to the top of a tower. The girl up the tower and the head on top of the "third leg" were unmistakably the same to both of us.

In the weeks and months that followed we slowly worked with a number of issues that came to light in these few sessions, but I shall discuss only two.

Firstly, for the first time in her life Celia's body felt properly a woman's body, and it reassured her from day to day. She felt happier than she could ever remember; her paranoid anxieties had disappeared. She had a satisfying sense of having survived and become the woman she had hoped to be. Now she did not need to affirm she was a woman because she was not living the unconscious fantasy that she was a man.

Secondly, her parental images changed. Celia's father had left home when she was three, after which she rarely saw him. But she did have fond memories of him, and she believed he had had to leave in order to save himself from the

monstrous destructiveness of her mother. She adored him and forgave him with a child's loyalty. But now she saw the situation differently. The fact was that her father never replied to her letters, acknowledged her birthdays or did anything to sustain contact, and it was her hated and feared mother who had always stood by her. Her relationship with her mother improved dramatically, and she had dreams and memories of her mother's affectionate support. She felt free to allow her mother's friendly overtures and to visit her mother after a dream in which she was in her mother's flat but had her own room and could close its door. But her father's abandonment was seen for what it was; the idealisation disappeared, and for a long time she was very angry with him.

I think it should be said that therapy was very far from over, and the earlier fragmentary states reoccured, but this is a suitable place to stop for reflection.

Reflections

The hermeneutic key to Celia's existence and to this psychotherapy is easier to see than to say, to understand imaginally than to formulate theoretically. Terms such as gender identity confusion, Oedipus complex, introjective identification with the part-object father-phallus, are only partly accurate, but worse, such terms are both too general and too limited: too general because they are blanket theoretical terms which ignore the differentiated particularity of Celia's life and therapy, and too limited because they lock our understanding into a reified metatheory which breaks the hermeneutic dialectic of question and answer and fixes meanings into those fantasies that the empiricist calls concepts. That is, instead of returning our understanding again and again to the imaginal structure of the patient's existence, psychoanalytic concepts break that hermeneutic circle. They limit us to one particular interpretation or set of interpretations and reify the lived reality to which these concepts point. Instead of revealing vital, imaginal existence, psychoanalytic concepts present us with a system of "forces", "representations" and "objects" inside a mental apparatus. The historical, multifaceted, vital reality of existence is reduced to a single profile, reified and taken out of the world. The hermeneutic key to Celia's story is not a theoretical concept but an image or, perhaps more precisely, a cluster of structurally related images. These are, in particular, the three-legged woman, the removal of the phallus from her body, and the girl in a tower safe from the engulfing sea.

It is true that these images would not have been constituted if the contingencies of Celia's life had been different, particularly if her father had continued to be a supportive presence in her life, and their constitution and resolution also reflected my emerging phallic presence within the therapeutic frame. But the images are not reducible to an empirical analysis of her early relationships or her relationship with me. If it is conceded that these relation-

ships facilitated the existential incarnation of the images, it is equally true that these relationships achieve their structural coherence and significance in Celia's life only in terms of the images. The images remain the hermeneutic key, and it is to these images that our reflections and interpretations must return if our psychotherapy is to remain within the hermeneutic circle bound by the patient's existence. Secondly, the primacy of the images is not only hermeneutic but existential. Celia did not have a existence outside of, or prior to, its imaginal constitution. The images are not "elaborations" or "illustrations" of Celia's personal identity, but the imaginal structures through which her identity is constituted. If I think now of Celia I think of a student with a brilliant, enlightened mind, a three-legged woman, a determined seductress, a dismembered body, a child terrified of her mother's breasts, an absent father, and a safety tower next to the encroaching sea. It is the interplay of these images that constitutes her identity and affords it its (precarious) integrity.

Historically, phenomenology is fundamentally concerned with *presences* (Giorgi 1987) and analytical psychology is concerned with *images*.[3] But, as the story of Celia shows, existential presence is imaginally structured, and there is no psychologically operative image that is not a certain mode of presence within incarnate existence. Thus an integrated phenomenological analytical psychology is fundamentally concerned with imaginal presences, as these are incarnated and personalised within ontic existence.

This integration of image and presence has a number of theoretical and therapeutic implications, which, unfortunately, can be discussed only very briefly.

Firstly, the body-mind dualism of Descartes falls away. Phenomenology's sustained ontological critique of this dualism is so well known that it need not be repeated here. It can simply be recalled that the human body is existentially not the body of anatomy but, to use Merleau-Ponty's (1960) enigmatic phrase, "the natural face of mind" (p. 229). Similarly, there is no mental constitution that is not somehow embodied. Body is psyche's incarnation, the embodiment of psychological life.

Secondly, imaginal presence is an existential structure that is neither properly conscious nor unconscious, as these terms are traditionally understood. In fact for Jung the terms conscious and unconscious are rightly and thoroughly ambiguous, although this is not generally recognised, largely because of his occasional attempts to link his concepts to Freud's (e.g. Jung

3 As Hillman (1978) said of Jung: " His theory of images announced a poetic basis of mind, and active imagination put it into practice, even while Jung went on using scientific and theological language for his explanations" (p. 162).

1934/54, p. 3). But "The unconscious mind of man sees correctly", says Jung (1952, p. 386), "even when conscious reason is blind and impotent". Or again:

> "If the facts do not deceive us the unconscious processes are far from being unintelligent. The character of automatism and mechanism is lacking to them, even to a striking degree. They are not in the least inferior to the conscious processes in subtlety; on the contrary, they often far surpass our conscious insights" (Jung 1926, p. 334).

This ambiguity was expressed existentially by Merleau-Ponty as a tension between the lived and the known. Both dimensions are intentional. The pre-reflectively lived as well as the reflectively and deliberately known are modes of presence which are world-disclosive. It is clear that Celia's reflective life, fragile and inconsistent as it was, was far less significant in her life's constitution than the arcane, operative and imaginal intentionality of her lived body. The imaginal life of her bodily self was not known in the full light of reflective consciousness, but neither was it a set of "representations" situated in the sedimentary layers of her "mind". Celia's imaginal life was an incarnated presence,precariously and ambivalently lived perhaps, but nevertheless given within the immediacy of her interpersonal relationships. For example, although I did not know the precise structure of Celia's existence or the extent of my significance as a phallic presence, the appearance of the images brought to light several qualities of our relationship that I had lived without properly understanding. I had always felt that her diffusion, boundlessness and paranoid anxieties required me to be consistent, reliable, unafraid, and rooted to the spot. This was only partly being a maternal container, or alchemical vessel; I had a fantasy of also being like a tree, or a pole to which she could tie herself while she felt so at sea. And it did occur to me, of course, that that is what a less absent father might have been for her. The unconscious, therefore, is not a topographical mental location but an incarnated and imaginal, prepersonal *latency* (Merleau-Ponty 1960a, p. 71, cf. Brooke 1986) that is given within the intentional structure of existence itself. As such, it is world- disclosive, and others are thus disclosed prereflectively.

The term "prepersonal" has slipped in and requires comment. This is our third point. Imaginal presence founds personal identity. Personal identity is not an egoic creation, something one contrives, but, if it is to be vital and real, it is something one discovers in the unfolding structures of existence itself. Authenticity can never be concocted; it always means being true to what is given. Imaginal presence, therefore, is the ground of personal identity, its vital matrix. As Jung put it, the unconscious precedes consciousness, and the self is the matrix, or "prefiguration of the ego" (Jung, 1940/54, p. 259).

Fourthly, it is here that Jung's notion of the archetypes becomes relevant. Jung has been seriously criticised for this notion, particularly as it seems to confuse psychology and anatomy, reify meaning, and assert the empirical validity of the unprovable. (Jung likened the archetypes to Kant's *noumenata* even as he tried to speak about them in scientific terms.) But Jung's theory of archetypes is an attempt to speak of fundamental, impersonal necessities and tendencies in human life, an attempt to say that human existence is not infinitely malleable, and that the matrices of experience are structured more securely than the structures of language and culture imply. At base, psychological life is densely, almost inertly, given, and the prepersonal anonymity of the body-subject is a network of specifically human engagements with the world, complexes which are not reducible to passing historical contingencies. The hermeneutic key to Celia's existence is a case in point. Celia in her primitive wisdom understood that her very existence was threatened by the withdrawal of her father. She knew that to be an autonomous individual with a separate identity she needed a father. He would invite her into a world beyond mother and create a boundary between her mother and her self. If her actual father was absent, then she would imagine one, a strong, kind, supportive one, for whom she could long and with whom she could identify. In her inarticulate way, Celia knew that a child needs a father, someone to carry that power we call phallic: a power to save her from the anonymity of the maternal sea.[4] And if no one else would carry the phallus for her she would do so herself. It was only in psychotherapy, when after eighteen months she allowed herself to have a sexual fantasy about me, that she could remove the third leg from her dreaming body. For in that fantasy she admitted into her consciousness a relationship that had slowly been evolving: I had become that phallic power for her, as I had established boundaries between her and her mother (and between her and me insofar as our relationship was a maternal one), and I had made it less necessary to idealise an absent, abandoning father. The hermaphroditic union of her self could differentiate into male and female, and she could become the woman she longed to be. Before leaving this, perhaps I should say that the same therapeutic process may have occurred had the therapist been a woman (although the phallic "transference" would probably have been less concretely imaged). Moreover, had Celia's mother been personally more bounded - had a symbolic

4 As Eva Seligman (1982) writes: "It is the father (nevertheless) who plays a specific and central role as mediator of the difficult transition from the womb to the world. Without the father's emotional support, it seems to me that it becomes almost insurmountably difficult for a child to be properly born and confirmed in his own identity... The 'absent father' syndrome encounters a mutually collusive 'embrace' with the mother ... from which the developing child cannot extricate himself, leaving him neither in nor out, of the womb, but wedged, so to speak, half-way, half-alive,half-born" (p. 10).

husband - then Celia's psyche may well have been less archaically structured. The issue concerns meanings and functional relationships, not literal bodies.

Themes and images of an archetypal nature included her paranoid fears of being eaten and of her mother's breasts, her need for a father as well as a mother, and the imaginal solution to her problems. Claiming these to be archetypal does not negate the formative influence of familial and cultural life, but it does imply that these influences are structured within the primitive imaginality of the child and that this imaginality is ontologically irreducible. The archetypes, therefore, are existential necessities, impersonally founded yet personally constituted in the complexities of incarnate, historical life.

Finally, a few comments on psychotherapy.

Psychotherapy is a process that is situated within a shared imaginal reality. The fact that there are two people present, each with his or her own psychological make-up, is true enough, but this traditional view belies the deeper sense in which the therapeutic frame constitutes a psychic space that surrounds and forms the two people inside it (cf. Samuels 1985). It was only in transient micro-psychotic episodes that the ordinary reality of there being two personal identities in the room was forgotten (or denied). But equiprimordially with that everyday sense was the archaic drama of Celia's existence in which I played a part. This was an imaginal drama in which we were participant figures (Romanyshyn 1988), not primary agents, for the drama was not of our own personal making. However self- reflectively aware we became we were both more like actors, directors, or audience than playwrights. Even the dream of being invited by a man to cross the railway line is not reducible to the relationship between us as two persons. After all, she did not dream of me, Roger, but of an underworld guide, and I took my cue from that figure just as she responded to his call. This point does not underestimate the importance of the "transference" or other significant relationships. Certainly the images need to be held by particular people, and part of a therapist's skill is his or her ability to situate the drama timeously in the immediacy of the therapeutic relationship. But the therapist is fundamentally the incarnation of an image (Hillman 1983, p. 65; Plaut 1956) of which neither the therapist nor the patient is truly the author.

It follows that the authentic attitudinal stance within the psychic world of the therapeutic frame is one of hospitality. As Jung knew, in a way that Heidegger would have appreciated, it is only in the respectful attitude of letting be that the imaginal presences which constitute human existence can show themselves in their fullness, mystery, depth, body, context, and divinity (cf. Giegerich 1984; Heidegger 1949/61).

A phenomenological analytical psychotherapy that bears witness to imaginal presence remembers the human body for the body is the incarnated place of of psychological life. It is true that the body remembers what we would

otherwise forget (Lyons 1983), and that what we would forget are often primitive, early modes of world-engagement. But remembering the body is not to lock our hermeneutics into the archaic language which psychoanalysis speaks so well. The extent to which psychological development is authentically embodied is the extent to which the body itself is transformed into maturer and subtler world-relations (Merleau-Ponty 1942, p. 181). Finally, a phenomenological analytical psychology is open to the religious dimensions of human existence. But it needs to be borne in mind that spirituality is not a self-contained "part" of existence, along with other "parts". It is often said that Freud emphasised sexuality whereas Jung emphasised spirituality. But just as Freud showed - despite what he said[5] - that human sexuality is *not* an instinct but a dimension that pervades existence even in its outer reaches, so Jung shows that the gods are to be found anywhere, even in those traditional profanities we call our personal relationships, needs, and symptoms. When Jung (1929) says "the gods have become diseases" (p. 113), he is not only speaking of the desacralisation of our cultural world. He is also implying that the authentic appropriation of the religious dimension does not take one out of the vital engagements of fallen life - it is not a schizoid asceticism. Although the divine may be thematised, imagined and related to on its own terms, authentic spirituality is a capacity to be present to the divine even in those places from which we would recoil in fear or moral indignation. I would like to claim that there was a religious dimension to my work with Celia, even though that dimension was almost never thematised I certainly feel that without that capacity for radical openness we call faith I would have found it intolerably difficult to enter her hellish world.

5 Freud began with the concept of instinct yet showed repeatedly that the "components" of the sexual instinct, its source, aim, impetus and object, vary indefinitely. Thus, as Merleau-Ponty (1960b) said of Freud: " (H)is works overturn the concept of instinct and break down the criteria by which men had previously thought they could circumscribe it " (p. 227). as a particular content (God, church, etc.).

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Chapter 7

The primacy of phenomenological process and sequence in psychotherapy: a case study

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There is an increasing emphasis in psychotherapeutic literature on the *ways* in which insights and interpretations occur rather than the *content* of these insights and interpretations (cf. Kruger, 1988; Teyber, 1988; Mindell, 1985). Thus, for example, in the psychoanalytic tradition (cf. Langs, 1982), sensitivity to the 'context' of the interpretation is considered of crucial importance, i.e. how the insight relates to the current meaningful experience of the client in relation to the therapist. Similarly, in cognitive therapy (cf. Edwards, 1989), a person's experiencing of imagery, meaningfully contextualizes the client's insights about his/her 'outmoded beliefs'.

As it is grounded in a philosophical heritage which centres on how we come to know ourselves and the world, the phenomenological tradition is eminently qualified to offer some interesting perspectives regarding the primacy of 'process' issues in psychotherapy.

An example of a psychotherapy session is presented in order to illustrate the movement of phenomenological process and sequence in psychotherapy. Such a sense of phenomenological process refers to an aesthetic quality which guides the therapist's interventions. It is a vision in which priority is given to the *way* the session happens as a whole. Thus, like music, it becomes artificial to isolate particular therapeutic moments or insights that can be understood as if separate from the total experience of the session. Although certain meaningful themes may be highlighted at various points during the session, such *content* derives its therapeutic power not from itself, but from *living* through the session.

In the past, insight-oriented approaches have over emphasized what becomes *known* between client and therapist. This can obscure a description of the rhythm and interplay of the lived and the known. The emphasis on psychotherapy as *process* reflects how the situation becomes both lived and known.

Precedents for this emphasis occur in psychoanalytic literature where terms such as 'corrective emotional experience' and Winnicott's term 'holding 'environment' have become more prominent.

This article tries to communicate the quality of phenomenological process through the literary description of a psychotherapy session. It hopes to show that the valuing of such a holistic quality gets away from emphasizing specific therapeutic factors in themselves as being primary. Thus, feeling-in-itself, insightful cognition-in-itself, encounter-in-itself and other abstracted therapeutic factors are de-emphasized and balanced by their interrelated flow, sequence and context.

In Part 1, I describe the therapeutic session in such a way that attempts to capture the 'taste' and flow of the session.

I wish to show how a number of different images, thoughts, feelings and interactions occur in sequence in a co-constituted situation. I do not attempt to make such a sequence appear particularly logical. The way that I have described the session has been confirmed by the client as essentially consistent with his experience as well. In Part 2, I reflect on this quality and propose four explicit themes that go to make up an appreciation of phenomenological movement in psychotherapy. I am aware that the session poses more questions than I have been able to answer in the reflective phase. This is consistent with the hermeneutic endeavour, where other readers may have different questions and concerns.

Part 1: A description of a psychotherapy session[1]

Person

Len lived some important dimensions of his existence within obsessive-compulsive constraints. He was cautious and vigilant, condemned to care. He took a lot of responsibility for interpersonal situations, measuring his responses with integrity and thoughtfulness. Other people usually found him a sincere friend. Yet, in many ways, Len was a reluctant hero. He felt anguish at the compartmentalization of his life, where things always asked to be put in their proper places. He felt resentment about this and was tired of being the one who was vigilant. Yet Len was afraid that if he withdrew his vigilant care from the world around him, he would become horribly schizoid or narcissistic. At times, depression, tiredness, or sickness made him withdraw, but this constituted for him a failure of interpersonal life. He was deeply engaged with the question of

1 I thank the client concerned for permission to utilize this session. Identifying details have been omitted or disguised.

how he could be less effortful in intimate situations and he was fearful that such naturalness would not be enough to sustain self and other.

The psychotherapy session I will describe is one where Len remembered the joy of being 'in his own world', something he had sometimes defended against as a betrayal of relational possibilities. In this session, I did not focus on the everyday, interpersonal context of 'being in his own world' as I had done on some previous occasions. For example, I did not interpret that there was no-one to hold him when he wanders off, far away, all on his own (a perspective informed by Winnicott). Nor did I interpret any fear of 'destroying' others by 'leaving them' as a Kleinian perspective may have encouraged. Rather, an image of 'going far away' possessed us both and we became fascinated. We thus listened to the *reluctance* of the hero more, and took the reluctance further. We withdrew and went far away, to see what was there. 'Far away' was back in time and into dream and had a quality that brought life.

Near and Far

The session began in a way that was 'near' to his immediate, everyday concerns. Len had recently said goodbye to a close friend who had left town. Once again he was reminded of his loneliness. He talked stoically, and then longingly, and stoically again. The mood of stoicism was an old strength in which he reminds himself, like a limiting father, that his interpersonal expectations are excessive. A nobility to such 'bracing of himself' also comes through: contemplating adjustment to more aloneness in his life opens up an image of greater self-sufficiency with much less anxiety. Yet this image is immediately juxtaposed by memories of intimacy in a past valued relationship and he speaks in the mood of longing. Although this relationship was fraught with conflict and anguish, what is most remembered at this time were moments of intense togetherness in which he cared devotedly for the vulnerability of the other and where the other filled up his vision. Yet the relationship ended in an unsatisfactory manner. Len spoke again with insightful stoicism. By this time it felt like there was a thick atmosphere in the consulting room. Needing and not needing. Needing and not needing. Not only this but the intensity of it.

We explored both of these images further. There was joy and pain in both positions. In the aloneness of 'not needing', he experienced the relief of being 'natural', not burdened by obligation and the necessity to be a healer. But the wound of loneliness called out into empty space. In the phase of intimate interdependence, he experienced the quenching of loneliness, not preoccupied with the 'outsider's' long wait. But the anxiety of sustaining intimacy would strangle the 'natural' man, who felt he could breathe more easily on his own. I don't know whether the exclusivity and power of these two images accurately reflected the details of Len's life, but at the time we were both struck by the felt validity of these themes.

There was not only pain and joy in both positions, but another pain as well; the anguish of lack where Len seemed to be condemned to oscillate between the two positions, the absence of a space where both self and other could be.

Both Len and I dwelt with the mood of despair. The intimate relationship he had talked of earlier came into focus again. It literally confirmed his sense that he was condemned to oscillate, that moving towards someone meant moving away from his 'natural' self. This previous relationship demonstrated to him, by means of a number of details, how he was vigilant in intimacy. We were struck dumb by the nearness of the concrete situation. 'In life, having your own world is an abandonment of the other; moving away is not allowed if you want others there'. For some reason I said: "Moving away is not allowed if you want others there". Between the situation saying it and myself saying it, something important had already occurred. In the midst of the oppression of Len's literal past relationship, I became child-like, seeking refuge in the playful world of metaphor. Len did not know this at the time and it only gradually dawned upon me that this was the case.

I became more literal and less literal and said: "This image of going towards someone or away from someone is very different from the world of the dream where you could conceivably go towards someone by going away from them". I did not say whether I meant this literally or metaphorically. Both possibilities can occur in dreams.

This world of the dream began to catch our imagination. He took this up (I didn't know where we were going), and remembered incidents when, as a child, he went through phases of being intensely 'magical'. He remembered himself closing his eyes and wishing for a bicycle, even imagining the corner of the room where the bicycle would appear. He remembered how disappointed he was when he opened his eyes and how this constituted part of his disillusionment with prayer and the world of religion. I noted that 'magic' must have really been in the air for him before his disillusionment. He said yes, and remembered the 'sacred' attitude he felt when watching his father making things out of wood. In many ways Len was ashamed of the kind of fathering he had received, but now he revealed for the first time that he saw something admirable in the way his father approached wood with respect. He remembered visiting the garage on his own where his father kept odds and ends from which he would make things. I started feeling that Len had gone far away from his attitude of realistic stoicism. In describing the garage, he said that it almost had a temple- like quality to it. The important thing about it was that it was a very private place. Hardly anybody went into it apart from him and his father and then seldom together. Certainly no friends. Here we found a place where he had found a form of privacy that was not only free of anxiety but which did not remind him of loneliness. He went on to describe the garage as being a place that seemed

pregnant with possibility. He felt both at home there and a little excited. We were silent with this for quite a while.

Then it felt like I woke up and he woke up. This experience of 'waking up' made me think that the memory had been like a dream. For some reason I became interested in exploring the experience with an interpersonal perspective in mind. He noted that his experience 'in the garage' did not feel like a denial or rejection of others. It did not feel like he was spoiling the potential for interpersonal relationships by being withdrawn and what he had sometimes called 'schizoid'. Rather, it was just another way of being, not competing with an interpersonal way of being. He even felt that going to that place could enrich his interpersonal way of being but in a secret, private kind of way. I do not know how Len's struggle to find permission from himself and others to be himself with others, will go.However, I do believe that this session constituted one initiation into the possibility that his private world could enrich interpersonal existence.

Part 2: A Reflection on how the psychotherapy session was informed by a sense of phenomenological process and sequence

1. A sense of phenomenological process values the faith of 'not knowing' as being fundamentally conducive to the free emergence of the client's ways of being

Both client and therapist allow themselves to be compelled by the unfolding depth of experience as it is progressively described. In this phase, we get 'swept along' in the experience and become present to a movement that feels larger than us. This sense of 'being compelled' was described in Part 1 as: 'an image of going far away possessed us both and we became fascinated'.

Within a phenomenological perspective, we thus allow things to become present in the ways they want to show themselves. In this process we do not necessarily prefer phenomena that are based on consensus reality or concrete events, or make judgements about their logic from a 'reasonable' point of view (cf. Boss, 1985). Thus, if an image of 'going far away' presents itself, we do not immediately try to link it to the continuous life events of the 'subject'. In this process, the subject is not primary; nor necessarily, is our relationship of therapist and client. The phenomenon at that moment is primary and we subject ourselves to the manner in which it wishes to speak. As therapist, I am not in relation to the client as one who is receiving information from another, an ear to a mouth. Rather, our subject-object separation recedes into the background. We are then both turned towards the presencing of the phenomenon whether it be image, feeling or other object of concern. In

becoming 'fascinated' we are called beyond ourselves to movements and 'beings' that are trying to happen.

I am reminded here of Ricoer's distinction between the hermeneutics of faith and the hermeneutics of suspicion. To over-simplify, in a hermeneutics of suspicion, one listens to a phenomenon with an interest in what it is deceptively hiding. Thus for example, within a Freudian framework, one is suspicious that an umbrella may more significantly stand for a penis. In the hermeneutics of faith, the rich appearance of a phenomenon conveys rather than hides its meaning. Thus an umbrella is usually more involved in the power to protect than the power to penetrate.

In valuing the 'faith of not knowing', one is suspending, as much as possible, ones preconceived notions. to look again within each new context what an 'umbrella' means. This involves what others have called the engagement in local knowledge over the primacy of specialized knowledge.

The phenomenological dictum to allow things to show themselves in the ways they show themselves is asking the therapist to have faith in dwelling with the richness and vitality of expressions as they appear.

In the case I refer to, this principle translated ontically into a sense of being compelled, swept along, and fascinated; and when respected, allowed apparently authentic client issues to be revealed in a way that neither client nor therapist anticipated. In this sense I would say that this faith of not knowing was conducive to the free emergence of the client's ways of being beyond planning, willing and conscious control.

2. The occurrence of client insight is an indirect rather than a direct consequence of phenomenological process

A psychotherapist who values the aesthetic quality of phenomenological process does not vigorously and directly pursue the facilitation of self- insight. Rather, she directly pursues a process which progressively heightens the client's contact with his world. Such a therapist thus understands that an insight that does not emerge from a phase of 'closeness' or submersion in an experience, is an insight that may be true, but lacks experiential credibility. The facilitation of such 'closeness' to experience is thus valued as primary and indirectly facilitates insight.

There are potentially many 'higher order', integrating insights that can occur in the process of psychotherapy. For example, in this case, the client may say that he realized that taking care of others would be more authentic for him when done from a position where he was allowed to withdraw if he wished. As psychotherapists we may want to facilitate such an insight and become excessively guided by such 'content'. However, such an 'agenda' may obscure an

experiential process that could empower the insight in a personally relevant way. In Len's case, he needed to experience the nourishment of withdrawal in image and memory, and then see whether the experiencing of this possibility could actually enhance interpersonal life. This would constitute real confidence regarding the insight. Without this experience we would probably call the insight 'ungrounded' and needing to be propped up by excessive 'self-talk'. A true insight that is experientially grounded thus tends to reduce the necessity for conscious remembrance or continual affirmation.

In following a client's therapeutic movement in a phenomenological way, we begin by suspending our notion of what is important in 'content' and thereby attend to the present experiencing of what is of concern to the client. In this perspective psychotherapy proceeds most meaningfully from a centre of concern (cf. Mahrer, 1983) that is 'asking for attention'. Sensitivity by both therapist and client to this phenomenon involves a mutual interest in 'what is there', be it boredom, anxiety, apathy, loss, a pressure to get something off one's chest or a fear that they wont be able to proceed. 'What is there' is thus best guided by a description of, or sensitivity to, the 'feeling qualities' that are brought to the session. What these feeling qualities are 'about' (i.e. the content) may be considered very trivial from a psychotherapeutically greedy point of view. For example, the client may be truly upset about the lack of cutlery in his/her house. Although the therapist may not know what this has to do with anything, he/she begins with the felt meaningfulness of this experience in the moment. Care for such experiencing by the client and therapist may result in the unfolding of related or unrelated experiences in content. However, the subsequent events of the session are considered to be related in process. That is, attention to the sense of 'being upset about the cutlery' initiates a mutual process of 'being there'. The medium is the message. Such a process of 'being there' for 'what is' gives more permission to encounter other or related meaningful areas of concern. Such 'process relatedness' in a client constitutes a manner of being present characterized by ways of knowing that are not following a logical sequence when one adopts an external point of view. The art of interpretation in psychotherapy too often serves to interrupt this 'process relatedness' by prematurely attempting to make content-sense out of the phenomena that are occurring. This is best done in retrospect in which a kind of content-logic does appear. However, experiential sequence is related in a less linear way. As facilitators of experiential sequence, our theoretical understanding may sometimes help us, but more crucially our capacity to be decriptively present to the emerging phenomena can serve the process better.

In the case I presented, the client began with a sense of loss of a friend and ended with a sense of hope that he would not drive people away if he was simply himself. It would not be difficult to construct a logical relationship between the content of these experiences. However, the path from the beginning to the end

of the session was certainly a surprise to me. I did not know whether or how he would experience the 'joy of being in his own world', nor did I know how important this experience was as a process-related issue to the outcome of the session.

Such a recognition of 'process-relatedness' pays tribute to Husserl's notion of the 'life-world' as the preconceptually specific , vital matrix or flow of happenings which any conceptual system refers to.

In this way Husserl wished to ground our reflections. With reference to psychotherapy, we thus become concerned with assisting the client to become more faithful to her experience - to speak from this sense of being- in-a-situation. This involves a degree of 'closeness' to experience in which insights emerge from such a process. I am not excluding the importance of insight here, as it is an essential ingredient of our encounter with our world. However, I wish to contextualize insight as part of a larger rhythm of distance and closeness to our lived situation.

Client-insights are thus a class of phenomena that cannot be willed; only facilitative context can be more or less given.

3. The total phenomenological process in psychotherapy is best conceptualized as taking place in the shared world that is progressively forged between therapist and client.

If the therapist embodies a phenomenological presence to phenomena, he is not just a listening or non-participant observer. He allows himself to be affected. Such participation is far more holistic than theoretical understanding. It includes bodily sensation, sharing of images and emotional receptivity to the phenomena encountered. The therapist appears to be required to 'heal' or 'move' the experience in him/herself if he/she is not merely to be rendered helpless or overwhelmed by the phenomenon. Psychotherapy in the phenomenological tradition is thus ultimately shamanistic in that the therapist draws on healing powers within and without. In the psychotherapy session a reference was made to how 'both Len and I dwelt with the mood of despair' when co-jointly present to 'an absence of a space where both self and other could be'.

In this case, something first moved for me in that I called on the gifts of childhood. Then something moved for Len in that he remembered experiences of enchantment. My access to what I call the 'gifts of childhood' i.e. playfulness and even a magical, non-logical conception of things, helped Len to find more of his own resources which were, in a sense, already there.

So it would seem that a psychotherapist within this perspective is not merely 'passive' as an experiencer and witness of the client's phenomena. One is

receptive, even bodily and emotionally but may become active at times, supported by one's level of empathy. One's activities as a therapist are thus not merely theoretically informed but are grounded in a felt participation in the emerging experience. One's 'healing power' does not just reside in one's ability to reflect understanding but more truly in one's contribution to the joint encounter with that which appears. Such a collaboration at least reduces isolation and at best facilitates new and supportive experiential processes.

It would thus seem that the use of the self (cf. Satir, 1987) is not merely a source of interpersonal learning for the client where the boundaries of an I-thou relationship may be progressively negotiated. Rather, a psychotherapist who values phenomenological process is not primarily centred on the vicissitudes of transference and encounter, but often transcends issues of self and other. In this mode of collaborative presence, the client's experience becomes shared and thus moves from the 'smaller space' of isolation into the more 'confirmed space' of the 'between'.

The psychotherapy situation, in this conception is considered to be a joint venture in which neither the power of the therapist nor the power of the client are primary. In such a joint venture, neither therapist nor client is exclusively the source of the emerging reality. Both change in the process and the work is done together. In some way, not only is the client called upon to account for the phenomena of depression, pain, finitude, confusion etc. but the therapist in each new situation is called upon to account for these phenomena as well. Although the contexts of these phenomena may be unique to the client, these phenomena involve structures of human existence that are not merely subjective. We participate uniquely in the modifications of human existence and such general themes are both larger than us as well as uniquely and intimately experienced by us.

4. A psychotherapy that is fundamentally informed by the value of phenomenological process does not often seek direct answers or solutions to client's problems. Rather, answers or solutions occur indirectly as a result of an experience of growing complexity

Van den Berg (1974) has lucidly elaborated on the psychological implications of living in contemporary complex society. Even since Freud's time, authoritative and traditional structures have broken down. Thus psychotherapy in the modern idiom has to deal with multiple problems of self, society and desire. In this context, the Freudian problems of psychological repression are often overshadowed by the more dizzy problems of meaning and lack of given foundations.

In modern times, mental health indeed seems to require more flexibility than previously. Psychotherapy would thus require something more than the appropriate expression of feelings or the attainment of rational thinking.

Phenomenological process facilitates openness to multiple profiles of existence. It speaks of Heidegger's notion of 'letting-be-ness' where we are called to be open for the ambiguities of life without too much reductionism according to our ego-oriented concerns.

In his book, *The New Gnosis,* Avens (1984) notes how both Heidegger and the archetypal psychologist, James Hillman demonstrate a phenomenological perspective to the multiple qualities of Being. Hillman explicates a polytheistic vision in which 'many gods' live in us and in the world. Each one is to be honoured in its realm and allowed to speak without being reduced to another. In a less imaginary language, Heidegger pays tribute to the pre-socratic Greek world-view where Man/Woman is called upon to become open for the multiple profiles of existence beyond category.

Their implicit criticism about the way we often attempt to solve our problems is that we prematurely accept our narrow range of resources. In Hillman's terms, we could say that we do not have access to a fuller range of 'gods' or powers. He indicates, for example that the power of Hercules proved impotent in the 'underworld' where the power of Hermes was more appropriate. Their suggestion is that we should rather focus on increasing our capacity for openness to a greater 'pantheon' of resources and support before feeling compelled to attack the 'dragon' with a water-pistol.

The implications for psychotherapeutic practice are that we are more likely to value the facilitation of multiple experiences in the client as contributing to the 'widening' of the client's openness to existence, and are less likely to over-value the content of particular insights and conclusions. Such relativizing of the content of insights acknowledges that something which is true in one context may not be true in another. This vision involves a 'process conception' of mental health where harmonious co-existence of multiple ways of being crucially informs the content of the client's overall experience. Psychotherapy then essentially increases the repertoire and flexibility of the client's ways of being and such multiplicity acts as more of a resource than more linear attempts to solve life's existential problems.

As an example of the facilitation of multiple experiences in the client and the widening of the client's openness to existence, I refer to the atmosphere of thickness in the consulting room. In this process, the client experienced the ambiguities of a number of different moments of experience. At one moment, he felt independent, the next, dependent, at one moment he felt stoical, the next magically imaginative. Psychotherapy that respects such multiplicity does not seek to make the client prematurely commit himself to one of these ways of being as a solution to his existence. Rather it seeks to help the client

differentiate the complexity of psychological life in such a way as to find a valid place for all of them. Such differentiation promotes existential living i.e. a living that is always more complex than any essential rules and regulations would prescribe.

If I wish to remain faithful to the experience of the session, I have to say that therapeutic movement had more to do with the movement of this thick quality than any specific insights that occurred.

The client's experience of growing complexity may thus provide a larger-context within which questions and concerns often change before being directly answered.

The 'thickness' in the session was a feeling-description of the juxtaposition of images trying to find place and form. Thickness occurs with mixing, where 'substance' changes through fraternizing. Thickness was the announcement of the 'between' and the intercourse of images. The therapeutic work progressed through even more thickening; of near and far, here and then, sleep and wakefulness.

> Mirrors shift. Valleys echo. The ten thousand things, confused for a moment, pause ...
>
> towards memory towards dream.

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Chapter 8

Hermeneutics on the interface between psychotherapy and psychological research

Dreyer Kruger

1. Hermeneutics from F. Schleiermacher to M. Heidegger and H-G. Gadamer.

In the first place, hermeneutics as the science or art of interpretation is something that psychology has not really systematically embraced and the word hermeneutics or even interpretation does not, generally speaking, appear in introductory textbooks on psychology. In fact, very few psychology texts mention interpretation anywhere except insofar as it concerns itself with psychoanalysis.

We will have to look at the hermeneutic tradition. It is an intriguing thought that, although it can be traced back to the Greeks and the name to Hermes, messenger of the Gods, the first beginnings of modern hermeneutics was after the beginning of the reformation. The reformation undermined the traditional power of the Pope to state with unquestionable authority how the Bible had to be understood (Valle and Halling, 1989:5). In our time in which natural science has largely been superseded by technology, there is again a crisis of belief and understanding. In the 19th century, many thinking people believed that eventually natural science would provide all the answers worth having. Very few thoughtful people believe it nowadays, and one of the alternatives to a technological way of looking at the world is the hermeneutic one. These ways of looking at life need not be in competition!

Modern hermeneutics started, after the reformation, as we have already seen, as a theological enterprise namely to explicate and interpret biblical texts. From theology, it found an application also to philology but in the late 18th and the early 19th century, the theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher started systematizing the diverse fields of hermeneutics into one comprehensive hermeneutical philosophy (Palmer, 1969). For Schleiermacher and for us, hermeneutics is the science or art of interpretation. However, it is not psychologists or psychiatrists or even psychoanalysts who have contributed to building up this science or art, but rather philosophers of whom the best known one is probably Wilhelm Dilthey. Psychoanalysis did not address the problem of

interpretation as such (not even of psychology) but limited itself to problems of psychopathology. Dilthey made a close study of Schleiermacher's work and tried to apply a hermeneutics in which his interest was mainly in history and psychology. An interesting comparison can be made here. Schleiermacher started out by first of all, trying to understand historically. Later on, he tried to understand psychologically and he has since been accused of psychologism. Dilthey, in trying to understand psychologically, went so far as to say that psychology would become the basic science for all the human sciences. He became gradually disenchanted with this dream and towards the end of his life he arrived at the place where Schleiermacher started, namely, historical understanding.

Perhaps it is important for psychologists to realise that Dilthey was not interested in developing a metaphysical basis for hermeneutics but rather to study the act of understanding as such. He wanted to find an approach adequate to the phenomena of the human world - he saw the problem in epistemological rather than metaphysical terms. We cannot reach understanding through introspection but rather through recovering a sense of our historicality. Life experience should not be seen in terms of the operation of forces but in complex individual moments of meaning, of direct experience of life and in a loving grasp of the particular.

As we shall see later the whole thrust of my approach is epistemological rather than metaphysical. Elsewhere (Kruger, 1989) I have tried to show that the way we generate knowledge in psychotherapy and psychology is epistemologically different from the rational-empirical model, that has been so successful in the natural sciences. It is my contention that interpretation is a necessary component of all meaningful psychological research.

By suspending or bracketing our scientific and prescientific prejudices we allow the phenomena to show themselves and to unfold. Thus they can be explicated and such an explication is *true*. However, it is quite clear that such an explication must be based on understanding and thus will also be hermeneutic or interpretative except in the case of that which is self-evident.

Thus we can see that interpretation is not only understanding but also revelatory. Interpretation can and must go beyond what our original unreflective understanding showed us, i.e. it must go beyond that which is self-evident. Thus although all interpretation is understanding not all understanding is interpretation. But, and this is very important for psychologists and psychotherapists, it must go beyond the subject's reports (Packer, 1985: 1089). It must also "attempt to explain why agent and observer (and I would like to add, therapist and client) initially failed to grasp certain aspects of what occurred" (ibid). We can see here that Dilthey's idea that hermeneutics must be a dialogical science has been vindicated. Thus we have to return to the

phenomenon being inquired into or interrogated again and again to see whether our understanding and thus our interpretation can be improved.

Having become disillusioned with psychology, Dilthey became convinced that hermeneutics had to become the foundational discipline for the human studies. This means that Dilthey envisaged interpretation as focusing on an "object" which had a fixed, enduring objective status. Thus human studies could envisage the possibility of objectivity valid knowledge since the object was relatively unchanging in itself. However, life could only be understood through reference to life itself in its historicality and temporality. From this we can see that Dilthey did not fully succeed in extricating himself from the scientism and objectivism of the historical school.

Nonetheless, psychology is deeply indebted to Dilthey in that he stressed the need for understanding rather than explaining in Psychology and his emphasis on the dialogical nature of understanding. Dilthey uncompromisingly opposed the idea that the human being can be understood as an object.

Dilthey's project was taken up in a very modified form by Martin Heidegger. For Heidegger, phenomenology was hermeneutic rather than merely descriptive. Heideggerian phenomenology does use description but cannot stay with it and these descriptions have to be hermeneutically opened up. His project in *Sein und Zeit* is a hermeneutic of *Dasein*. For Heidegger (1972) then, the phenomenology of human existence *is* hermeneutics. The meaning of description becomes interpretation. Moreover, for Heidegger, hermeneutics had a deeper meaning in that understanding is simply not something that the human being can *have* in the form of insightful knowledge of himself and others but understanding is also something that he actually *is*. Understanding, therefore, has an ontologically fundamental and prior status in his philosophy. We should also see this in terms of Heidegger's turn to language. Furthermore, his views on interpretation also had relevance to his conception for truth which has, in addition, important implications for psychology. This relevance stems from the fact that interpretation is revelatory.

A contemplation of human existence in such a way that the phenomena of our psychological life allow themselves to be seen for what they are, is synonymous with truth as revealing, the essence of which is seen by Martin Heidegger as being freedom. Here, however, freedom is to be understood as the letting be (*Seinlassen*) of that which is, in other words, letting the phenomena unfold without interference. Heidegger (1949:5) states:

> Die so verstandene Freiheit als das Sein-lassen des Seienden erfüllt und vollzieht das Wesen der Wahrheit im Sinne der Entbergung von Seienden...durch die eine Offenheit west. In ihr Offenes ist alles menschliche Verhalten und seine Haltung ausgesetzt. Deshalb ist der Mensch in der Weise der Eksistenz.

The human being as existing is already with the phenomena that he observes; these are, in any case, already open and accessible. By not imposing our preconceptions and scientific prejudices such explication/interpretation is possible and *true*.

The implication for psychology is that the human being is so constituted that he is by definition a creature that tries to understand himself. It also follows then that self-understanding is not just come impersonal objective activity that we can grasp like Newton's theories. It means that understanding and, by the same token hermeneutics, always comes from within a certain tradition and from a personal perspective. The point of view that interpretation can never be an indifferent, totally objective process, but is always embedded in what is "already there" for us, is strongly represented by H-G. Gadamer. We certainly must have dialogued with our predecessors and their visions and suspended our prejudices, but coming from a tradition is not a purely negative matter, because it means that we already have some sort of pre-understanding *(Vorverständnis)* of what we are investigating and hence it is on this pre-understanding that our more refined understandings are based. From the tradition we derive more than only prejudices and stereotypes. The interpreter needs to differentiate between the colloquial use of the word prejudice and the way Gadamer used it.

An important point made by Gadamer is that method as such does not lead us to the truth (Palmer, 1969). On the other hand, it is difficult for human scientists to see how we can do research in psychology or psychotherapy *without* a method. The phenomenological approach in research certainly implies a certain method or methods but it seems to me that truth cannot be achieved by method as such but rather by *insight*. It is not the validity of our method which leads us to a new understanding but rather insight as such. In the search for truth in the human sciences, it is important that we should understand that understanding as such can lead us to insight and hence to the truth. We may simply need the method in order to make sure that we have taken everything into account - Giorgi once told me personally that one of the advantages of his empirical- phenomenological method was simply that it forced you to slow down and look at everything.

2. Freud, Jung and Boss as Hermeneutic Theorists.

2.1 Freud

One of Freud's mentors at the University of Vienna was the great Ernst Brücke, a neurologist and a member of the Helmotz School of Medicine for whom materialistic reductionism was not merely an assumption given by a definite philosophy of science (i.e. positivism) but in fact an article of faith. Freud never ceased attempting to demonstrate that his metapsychology, based

on psychoanalysis was a science like any other, was based on observation and was looking for the causes of behaviour. In fact, however, Freud was a hermeneutic theorist, and his metapsychology may be called (with Habermas, 1968) the self-misunderstanding of psychoanalysis. Freud, however, may be called a hermeneuticist of suspicion (Steele, 1982) which does bring him closer to reductionism than Jung. Freud did not write causal accounts but he did write causal narratives which are totally different. His case studies read like brief novels rather than scientific treatises. He has been described as a genius in reading the confused noises of a life. These causal narratives consisted of interpretations of the client's history and at the end of this, the final interpretation would indicate the point of origin. Freud would then turn around and say that this was the cause. Similarly, in the interpretation of dreams, Freud would always find a wish somewhere and then see this as the cause. However, there is a vast difference between psychoanalysis as it is actually practised and the practice of natural science. Freud did not claim that psychoanalysis was a predictive science but only a post-dictive one.

2.2 *Jung*

Jung, on the other hand, was much more consciously a hermeneutic theorist although there are natural scientific, i.e. logical positivistic elements in his writings. Occasionally he did succumb to the temptation to say that psychology is a natural science. We have already seen that Jung was not as reductionistic as Freud. For Freud the symbol mostly pointed downwards and backwards, looking only towards the past and he was very conscious of the tricks that consciousness plays on us. For Jung, however, the symbol did not necessarily point towards the wishful, the materialistic and the selfish, but was also prospective, individuating and collective. Thus, Freud believed that behind Aknathon's creation of monotheistic religion there lay a hatred of his father. Jung, on the other hand, believed that Aknathon was a profoundly creative man and that a great religion could not be founded on father hatred.

2.3 *Medard Boss*

The Daseinsanalytic school started by Boss has always *been opposed to interpretation*. Essentially *the interpretation they have in mind* is the sort of interpretation of which Freud made ample use and which Boss describes as a *Deutung* which is often turned into an *Umdeutung*. In other words, Boss is saying that as a result of his development of a metapsychology and a list of so-called fixed symbols, Freud's interpretations were sometimes made on the basis of his theories rather than on the basis of the actual encounter that took place in psychotherapy. Thus Boss sees no justification for the various ways in which Freud sees the censor as disguising the dream, e.g. turning an idea into its opposite, condensation, etc. Like Jung before him, Boss said that the meaning

was not to be sought behind the dream (like Freud) but in the dream itself. However, he radically disagreed with Jung's method of amplification which often consisted of mythical material brought in by the analyst himself. Boss wanted to understand the dream or the data of the therapeutic encounter purely in terms of the manifest content and its context. As far as interpretation is concerned, I cannot but point out that Boss' Daseinsanalysis is a hermeneutic enterprise. It is not that he sees and then interprets the facts to have certain meanings. For him, the meaning *is* the fact. Thus, when one dreams of one's mother who is already dead (but alive in the dream) then we must not look upon this as some sort of given which opposes the real facts, rather one should see first of all that the meaning present in the dream is the fact of the dream, and the meaning of this dream about one's mother is at very least, that in spite of her being dead, she is still present in one's life.

However, understanding does not happen automatically. Condrau (1984: 164) points out that we are not, in Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, on which Daseinsanalysis is based, concerned only with what is experienced through the senses but also with getting a grasp on the essentials of the self-revealing which is for the most part concealed and which has to be hermeneutically disclosed. In the same way, the other basic traits of human Dasein are also revealed: for example, the original spatiality and temporality, the being- with-others in a shared world, the attunement, bodiliness and mortalness of Dasein and its existential guilt, anguish and care.

3. Ordinary interpretation by South African Therapists

In an investigation (Kruger, 1988) carried out among South African therapists in 1986, it transpired that most therapists made their interpretations in narrative rather than amplificatory form. Thus the importance of the historical dimension for therapists were confirmed. More narrowly speaking, when looking at case histories, many therapists interpreted repetition and re-enactment thus confirming the continuing importance of one of Freud's basic discoveries.

It was also found that interpretation was not a mere cognitive process, but that therapists see therapy as a process in which one is involved at a bodily level as well. I prefer the term bodily attunement and some therapists made use of it in arriving at an interpretation. It was also found that therapists' anxiety and other moods can be used in interpretation. (Please note that the therapists who took part were nearly all, as far as I could ascertain, of dialogical and insight orientation). Therapists also highlight the dialectic between being determined and being free which is characteristic of human life.

The research also clearly shows that the hermeneutic circle can be seen to be a key matter in interpretation. Thus interpretation is not a linear affair where

one conclusion is built upon the other: one enters the circle of understanding at some point and then considers the parts, then again the whole, and go round to see if the interpretation is sufficiently refined.

There are also certain styles of interpretation which may be summarized as follows:

(a) Intrapsychic interpretations are rare but interpersonal ones are general.
(b) Data are selectively used but are never *determined* by the data nor by the point of departure.
(c) Certain interpretations seem to exclude others. There is a dialectic of revealing and obscuring.
(d) Interpretation is a thoroughly qualitative process.
(e) Interpretations go beyond the intentions of the client or patient.
(f) Interpretations give expression to meanings and there is a lack of literal mindedness. Ample use is made of metaphor, social discourse and technical language.
(g) Interpretation as it took place in this project, is consistent with the view that psychotherapy involves a leaping ahead concern for the client.

Recently Thorpe (1989) completed an investigation into the phenomenon of "projective identification". Using the empirical- phenomenological method, he asked a number of psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapists to explicate their experience of experiencing, during the course of psychotherapy with a specific patient, any thoughts, feelings, fantasies or manner of relating which took him/her some time to come to terms with (p.113). It transpired that therapists manifested a variety of phenomena such as feeling there is something wrong with him/her, feeling hurt or betrayed, feeling supportive, feeling that one has a bad memory, etc.

Most psychoanalysts conceptualise projective identification as a process (or mechanism) by which unconscious content is projected from the patient or client into the therapist who then comes to possess or embody part of the patient's self or of his/her internal object. At the same time the patient still remains in touch with what he has now projected.

In phenomenological terms the therapist (op.cit: 204) "finds himself coerced to embody an incongruent, unfamiliar, confusing and inauthentic state of being which is consonant with the patient's perception of him". In trying to understand and clarify what is happening the therapist typically first tries to find out what is wrong with his own existence and then realises that what he experiences, is co-determined by the patient. Eventually she/he comes to

understand that it is an interactional phenomenon or, to speak phenomenologically, it is part of the being-together of therapist and client in the shared common world or space of the therapeutic encounter. Once the therapist succeeds in distantiating her/himself from the unsound feelings, she/he feels lighter, is able to let the client experience him/her in his/her "own way" while simultaneously remaining open to his/her own authentic reality" (*op.cit.*: 205).

This is a very brief, incomplete illustration of phenomenological research in psychotherapy and is clear that Thorpe did not simply obtain descriptions which included the self-understanding and self- interpretations of therapists, but rather understood these experiences in such a way that he was able to hermeneutically disclose the essences.

4. The continuity of phenomenological research and psychotherapy

Giorgi (1984:30-33) shows that, unlike the difference between the usual scientific research in psychology and the insight therapy practised by Freud, Jung, Adler, Boss and their followers, there is a continuity of approach between the phenomenological research situation and the psychotherapy situation.

First of all, it can be seen that a descriptive approach is utilized in both situations. One asks one's client or one's research subject to describe experiences. However, the client has more freedom to choose than the research subject because the researcher is interested in a specific phenomenon. In the second place, both situations are dialogal and perhaps even dialectic in the sense of mutual transformation. Thirdly, both activities assume a qualitative perspective. It is meaning that phenomenological psychologists and psychotherapists are seeking, not measurement. In the fourth place, phenomenological psychologists use both situations as co-constituted by both parties, but since in one case the relationship is therapist/ client, and the other is researcher/ research subject, there are also differences in the meaning of how the situations are constituted. In the last place, both therapist and researcher have a disciplined presence to what they deal with. Both must put their prejudices and knowledge in brackets and remain fully open for the experience that the research subject or the client can share with them.

5. The importance of hermeneutics in both psychotherapy and phenomenological psychological research

As regards this, Giorgi (1984:30) says

> in both cases one begins with description in order to find out what the facts are, and then one moves to the meaning of the facts in a psychologi-

cally relevant way. In therapy, the therapist interprets these meanings to the client and then the latter must try to make sense of the interpretations for himself. In research, the specific meanings can be used as discoveries about the lived process of the various phenomena such as learning.

I find it interesting that Giorgi points to the search for meaning as characteristic of psychotherapy and psychological research, but does not use the word "interpretation", in reference to psychological research. For me, both psychotherapy and psychological research involves understanding which has to be refined and articulated and this means that both are hermeneutic enterprises. The initial step of psychological research is descriptive and that is to remain true to what the client says and not impose any of one's own constructions on it. Of course, the same goes for psychotherapy. However, when one has to make a situated structure or even more when one has to make essential descriptions, the meaning of this description will not emerge unless one has insight. For insight, one needs understanding that goes beyound the descriptive level (or as Giorgi himself puts it,"One must go beyond the intentions of the author"). For me this means that we should recognise that interpretation is as important in psychological research as it is in psychotherapy.

In order to support and flesh out the statement made above, I would like to take two examples, the first of which comes from De Koning's research on "Suspicion" (1979). De Koning went through the usual steps in doing phenomenological research. First of all, he obtained descriptive data from three people, divided the descriptions into natural meaning units and extracted a central theme for each with respect to the phenomenon of suspicion, and then synthesized and integrated the insights into a description in each case into a situated structure of suspicion. This general structure of situated suspicion reads as follows (De Koning, 1979:130).

> Suspicion is the state of uncertainty which a subject experiences when he finds himself in a pronounced or unusual situation in which he anticipates, either hopefully or fearfully, something which is of an unequivocal nature. This anticipation is not met and the subject considers the possibility to be present that another person or persons have intentions or opinions other than the overtly communicated ones. The subject knows this alternative possibility to be a real one, either through past experience or through the social context to which he belongs. It is in the realm of ambivalence between overt and assumed covert intentions that the subject experiences doubt and uncomfortable feelings. The suspicion of unequivocality is strengthened by the physiognomy of the situation and the subject feels restrained from verification either because of a motivation to do so or through a "reversal of initiative" which takes place. The experience carries on as long as the situation is constructed in the same fundamental fashion, but disappears when definite verification in a wider

social context has taken place and when the concrete encounter with the other(s) has come to an end.

In the first case, a woman and her boyfriend were involved with a married couple who where friends of the boyfriend but not of hers. She was thus the outsider. The married couple related very well with each other and with the friend. She was a newcomer and she was quite anxious to be accepted by them. She actually felt that her "whole performance" was being judged. She especially remembered what had been said about the previous girlfriend and was afraid of being found lacking.

However, during the course of the evening, she developed a feeling that something had been said about her by the wife to her husband, but could not be sure. She felt that her ability to communicate well was being observed (the whole of protocol is entered in the Appendix).

I want to draw your attention to the words "unequivocal nature", "ambivalence" and "reversal of initiative". Please note that these words were not used by the subject under discussion, but a reading of the protocol doesn't leave much doubt that she, having anticipated something unequivocal, found that this expectation was not met. She was unable to decide whether the married woman had said anything critical about her or not. In the end, she actually asked them directly. It transpired that nothing had been said and she felt very embarrassed as a result. Secondly, she was ambivalent in that she could initially not decide whether to challenge them about it and thus risk her exposing her insecurity and perhaps having to apologise for having been nasty. The reversal of initiative is not shown very clearly in the protocol from which extracts have just been cited but the words "whole performance" which she used and the whole context shows that she intended to actively influence the married pair but found they were influencing her state of mind instead.

The second subject is a young man who described going to Bangkok on his own and become suspicious when arriving. On landing at the airport he remembers being advised by colleagues to be careful about being deceived but then he is asked by a friendly, smiling taxi driver whether he would like to be taken somewhere, but this taxi driver already has his luggage in his hands. In this case, the reversal of initiative seems to be quite a clear understanding of what was going on. Again, the second subject did not use the term "reversal of initiative" either.

In these examples, it is thus clear that de Koning goes beyond the intentions of the author of the description, shows an insightful understanding by describing the uncertainty in terms of lack of unequivocality, ambivalence and "reversal of initiative".

Another example of interpretation is to be found in Fischer's research on "Self-Deception" (Fischer, 1985:138-154). He obtained thirteen descriptions of

persons who had tried to deceive themselves and each was analysed according to a method which was very close to Giorgi's empirical phenomenological method. From these descriptions, he eventually derived a general psychological description of being self-deceptive which reads as follows (p.139-14):

> The possibility of deceiving oneself arises when the three interrelated conditions are co-present: (1) When one is already committed to a particular understanding of some phenomenon of one's world, (2) when certain emerging significations of that phenomenon render this understanding ambiguously uncertain and (3) when one anxiously lives this ambiguous uncertainty, threatening not only one's commitment to that particular understanding, but also, albeit horizontally, one's commitments to related understandings of other phenomena.

For self-deception to actually take place it is necessary that one denies or refuses the signifying nature of one's anxiousness before that ambiguous uncertainty. It means that should the person, when being self-deceptive, ask himself *why* he is anxious, he will probably come to understand that he is deceiving himself. However, the subject typically turns away from anxiety rather than confronting it and therefore the anxiety does not inform him that his self-understanding is wrong, but instead, he insists that he really is the way he understands himself which means that he rigidly reaffirms his current self-understanding.

I will now try to give you a flavour of how Fischer reached the above conclusion. An example of one of the descriptions on which he based his conclusion is as follows:

> A young man was seeking to arouse the sexual interest of a young woman. Having already convinced himself that he was "God's gift to women", that because of his "sexy, smooth style, he was irresistible", he was sure that "she would fall for him", that "she would jump at the chance to make it with him" (p.141).

This is the subject"s current self-understanding. We see that Fischer did not present the personal protocol, but described the content thereof in his own words. One may infer that a certain amount of interpretation had already taken place. The protocol then goes on to show that when the young man made his approach to the young woman, she did not respond in the way that he expected, but rather with a mixture of laughter and wary, even disdainful looks. Here Fisher's interpretation is that the young man's self-understanding is being challenged. Perhaps this young woman is not going to be one of his examples of women falling for him and it may have dawned on him that perhaps in this case, he is not God's gift to women.

His reaction to this was that he suddenly felt confused, became aware of somatic indications such as unsettled stomach and pounding heart. In other words, whether he wanted to know it or not, he was "anxiously affected by the significations of her actions; they contradicted his already posited understanding and thereby rendered it ambiguously uncertain". In the last section, Fischer indicates that although the young man came to feel that the young woman would not respond as he had expected, he did not suspend his understanding of himself. In other words, he kept on hanging on to his idea of himself as God's gift to women. He did not look at or explore the signification of his anxiousness in the face of her responses to him and the ambiguous uncertainty that they had introduced. Instead he tried to dismiss the manifestations of his anxiety and to minimise the significance of her disdainful look. He said to himself that she was probably just a shy girl and if he pushed her too hard she would get scared.

This last section too, clearly shows that Fischer did not merely describe experiences of self-deception but interpreted the descriptions i.e. he did not merely repeat the meanings of the experiences as the subject saw them but moved from a first understanding towards an insightful explication, i.e. to interpretation.

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Chapter 9

Semiotics, psychotherapy and power

Alexis Retief

Introduction

David Sless, in his book *In search of semiotics*, raises the very valid point that most of our forms of scholarship do not require the scholar to account for his or her own position. Setting the requirement that a scholar should account for his position, relative to the object of inquiry, also sets an epistemological requirement [and has possible epistemological advantages]. This requirement is the investigation of the status of the scholar's knowledge as it pertains to the object [or subject] of study, obviously as influenced by the theory that the scholar uses as well.

Sless advances this point after analysing the logical untenability of the standard relativist position. He concludes:

> With a properly developed logic of positions it is possible to map out the position which a theorist occupies relative to the subject matter of the theory. In other words it is possible to ask, "where am I standing relative to the object I am investigating?" Relativity is tenable, relativism is not.

The dialectics of interpretation: A logic of positions

It is nowadays generally accepted and acknowledged in many fields of endeavour, from philosophy and the philosophy of science, to the physical and social sciences as well as art, that relativity forms part and parcel of any form of enquiry. Rather than asking now relativity can be avoided, the question becomes how to account for it, with regard to the specific discipline and problem concerned. It is an unavoidable *epistemological* problem which, in the social sciences particularly, can also entail that the investigator becomes involved in a set of intricate power relationships with his subject(s) - as Foucault (1961; 1980) has shown in a number of works.

This also has implications for the act of interpretation. With respect to semioticians, Sless portrays Umberto Eco's (1965) application of semiotics to television programmes as a defence of a *privileged reading*. Eco advances a theory for reading television that is based on the belief that what the researcher

sees on the video screen is not what the common viewer sees - a standard move adopted by semioticians, and possibly the central assumption on which all semiotics are based. Eco, admittedly, was as careful as he was bold in making this move. He allowed for other perspectives on the same "text", such as foreigners, future generations, different cultural traditions and (even?) different intellectual traditions. This is only to be expected: any scholar should make these kinds of qualifications.

Sless, however, points out that all the criteria for placing these "projected readers" within a category (he avoids Eco's problematic concept of "aberrant readers") are *relative to Eco's position as a reader*. The categories of foreigner, future generation and different cultural or intellectual tradition are defined in terms of Eco's *position* - Sless points out. Automatically (and, epistemologically) this implies that there is something privileged about the position occupied by Eco - but: here I would like to add to Sless's analysis. It is an epistemological necessity that I, in advancing any given interpretation or explanation, should occupy a "position of privilege". Any explanation of necessity has to situate alternative interpretations relative to the own position, because other positions cannot be evaluated in any other way except in terms of an own perspective.

Yet - and here I return to Sless - when Eco *reinforces* the sense of privilege by asserting that there is something special about this kind of reading, the door is opened for power, masked as knowledge. It is implied that the semiotician is in some way able to research the *actual structure* of the message and this is, however cleverly disguised, a claim of objectivity. In this way, the problem of the own position in the spectrum of (possible) readers is sidestepped. Sless also points out how even radical, critical readings by Marxist or culture critical researchers do not properly investigate - or question - the authority of the semiotician himself, who remains in privileged position.

Stuart Hall (1977) has developed a taxonomy of projected readers (or positions). It is quite clear that, according to Hall's perspective, in any society, an ideological struggle always exists. Texts, of whatever kind, are used as a site for ideological struggle, and in this regard three positions can be distinguished. A way of reading which accepts the dominant ideology or system is referred to as a *preferred reading*. Texts - ranging from children's books to television and literature - are read uncritically and the status quo is accepted as natural and not subject to contention. In the second category, a *negotiated reading* can be conducted, where the dominant group's definition of the status quo is accepted, but where the right is reserved to negotiate more equitable rights within the existing order - also by interpreting texts in certain ways. The third and radical alternative is the *oppositional reading*. In Hall's specifically Marxist framework such a reading arises out of the class struggle and is class conscious, expressing the interest of the exploited classes. However, it can also more broadly (and more accurately and usefully) be seen as an avowedly *critical* reading, with a

questioning of the status quo as its dominant characteristic. It can also, for example, be employed for feminist aims.

The most important aspect of this process is that the use of texts as a site for ideological struggle has as its object the *control of meaning* (Sless, 110). If control of this meaning can be seized by any given group, this changed meaning can be used to bring about a *change in perceptions* of reality, which can influence peoples' actions, and ultimately change the society that they live in. As Sless remarks: "At the centre of that battle is semiosis because the fight is over what stands for what" *(Op cit.)*.

Fixing and controlling meaning

> Much stands in the way of developing new ways of reading texts. Meanings are carefully guarded in a host of ways that we only dimly realize ... yet it may well be that, in an information society, the struggle for power over meanings will intensify. The ways in which meanings are fixed within any society become especially important when a large part of the environment is suffused with texts. As Orwell clearly envisioned, the infrastructure of understanding is not just a social resource but an instrument for social control (Sless, 112).

These are the basics of Sless's logic of positions. The following elements should by, now, be clear:

- It is a logic that is unavoidable. By virtue of the act of adopting a semiotic standpoint, and theory, the interpreter moves into this logic, and is situated in the field defined by Sless.

- The question of *authority* assumes a crucial importance. This becomes especially salient in any semiotic system which purports to discover a hidden or true message in the text. This authority can be explicit, as in the case of Eco, or implicit, in the very act of interpretation. The issue of the *imposition* of this authority (on the text and on other readers) can be more or less problematic, depending on whether some form of objectivity is claimed. The important point is that, even if lip service is paid to the ideal of relativity, the way in which a semiotic position is presented can still imply a claim of objectivity, and thus an imposition of authority.

- This results in a struggle for the control of meaning. Formally, this process is the same in terms of the struggle to control meanings: by different classes in a society or a culture, by the semiotic researcher and the ordinary viewer of television programmes, between the author and the reviewer, and, I

would venture to suggest, between the psychotherapist and the client. Each of these instances can be analysed as a case study where, formally, the same logic of positions and the same questions of power and knowledge are at issue, and relevant. For present purposes, I shall confine my attention to the psychotherapeutic relationship.

I shall conduct an oppositional, critical reading (I thus make my own position clear), using the framework of the logic of positions, and portray the psychologist or psychotherapist as a "fixer" of meaning. To be fair, I shall also examine possible exits from the epistemological impasse that results. However, as it will turn out, the problem is inescapable. And this epistemological trap has pertinent implications for the power brokerage involved in reading and interpreting texts, and basing therapeutic interventions on such readings.

The psychotherapist as fixer

I have a cartoon on the wall of my office, where a shady character with a spy coat and a hat drawn low over his eyes stands next to a meek little man with glasses. They are standing on a street corner, with an alley dimly visible behind them, to reinforce the sense of mystery suggested by the shady figure. The artist is unknown to me, and I cannot decipher the signature.

The shady figure says to the meek little man, either in response to a question, or by way of general introduction: "I deal in dangerous things. Drugs, guns, a little knowledge." He's a fixer.

By way of slightly unfair analogy - perhaps - this is what the psychologist communicates to the client in their first and subsequent encounters. He has a little knowledge about the client and his or her problems. More than a little knowledge, even: he is in fact a trained professional, specializing in how to help people solve their personal and interpersonal problems.

This training has exposed him to a whole range of theories dealing with various aspects of behaviour, and he uses these theories either singly or in combination to "read" the client's behaviour, exactly like the semiotician uses his semiotic frameworks to read television. The psychologist is a reader of behavioural texts, and he uses his interpretations of these texts to actively influence the client's behaviour. Moreover, he is doubly in a position of authority, and therefore in the most problematic position possible in terms of the logic of positions. Not only does he claim authority over the text, but he is also in a position of power in the relationship: the client comes to him for help.

It is quite clear that a distinct possibility exists that the psychologist is an authoritarian semiotician, who has vested interests in controlling the negotiation of meanings in the psychotherapeutic process. He has a given theoretical

framework prescribing how therapeutic change should take place. The therapist, covertly or explicitly, puts pressure on the client to change in accordance with the meanings prescribed by a theory. If the client does not change in accordance with the expectations prescribed by that theoretical framework, a very good possibility exists that (after some private agonizing by the psychologist) the therapy will be regarded as a failure. Also, because therapists are human and need their rationalizations as much as anyone else, the failure is likely to be attributed to the client rather than the therapist himself.

Now I would be the first to admit that, as in semiotics, there are more and less authoritarian theories. One psychological theory, for example, that absolutely refuses to budge is psychoanalysis. The final criterion for successful therapy is explicit: the client is only cured if his or her interpretations ultimately agree with those of the therapist. If he does not agree (read: submit) he is simply not cured yet. (Admittedly, psychoanalysts did not invent paradoxes. But they did take them one step closer to perfection.)

This paradox, furthermore, is inherent in *any* psychotherapeutic theory. Even the approaches that are often referred to as "humanistic" - the client-centered and phenomenological approaches, for example - have the same *epistemological* problem. No matter what the content of the theory is, if the client does not change in the *direction* postulated as desirable by the theory, the client will, however subtly, be pressured to change in the direction that the therapist and the theory deems proper, and beneficial.

A possible way out of this dead-end is to argue that the client himself defines what desirable change is, because he or she eventually starts to feel better, and the need for a therapist disappears. But let us for a moment assume the most radical definition of therapy as: "Therapy is when a client feels better, no matter what change has taken place and no matter what the therapist has done." But this definition is not an answer to the problem that has been posed, because *no explanation is given of why the change took place.* And surely, in order to be systematic (note: I do not use the term "scientific") some such explanation must be given, which entails concomitant systematic interventions or inputs from the therapist to help solve the problem. The point is that, *in the very act or moment of explaining*, or interpreting, this logic of positions becomes relevant, and cannot be avoided.

Now, if the reader is willing to accept that it cannot be avoided, should he also accept that therapists are always, and in principle, authoritarian semioticians?

The answer is yes.

Answering "Yes," to this question, however, engenders a certain amount of anxiety. Let us first, and in order to be fair, see if there are not, perhaps, some ways out of this epistemological problem. Let us for the moment and for the sake of discussion attempt to separate the epistemological problem from the context of application of the psychotherapeutic input, in order to see if the way in which a theory is implemented can, perhaps, attenuate the epistemological authority of the therapist. It is, after all, only fair to test the strategy of oppositional reading itself at some stage, by exercising the principle of charity and applying some empathy for the victim.

It may then be useful to distinguish between psychological (or psychotherapeutic) *theories* and their *application*. It is theoretically possible - for example - that a semiotically authoritarian theory such as psychoanalysis can be very democratically applied by a therapist who had some Rogerian exposure. (We disregard the problem of how good or bad a psychoanalyst this makes him for a moment.) The problem, however, remains that any psychotherapeutic theory contains postulates about the desired *direction* or *form* of change; some idea, however implicit, of what "good" adaptation consists of. Psychotherapeutic theories are theories of change: the central question in any psychotherapeutic theory is the kind of intervention that would be effective in facilitating adaptation in various contexts.

It seems to me unavoidable that, if a client does not change according to these criteria specified by the theory, there are only the following ways out of this dilemma:

- The therapist can revise his theory;
- The therapist can reject his theory;
- The therapist can rationalise that the client has changed anyway;
- The client can be seen as unwilling or unable to change;
- The therapist can see himself as a poor therapist;
- The therapist can see himself as an unsuitable therapist for the client in question, and refer the client.

No matter which alternative is adopted, the important point is that there is no way out of the *epistemological* dilemma. The fact that the psychologist "reads" the client's behaviour in terms of a certain framework entails that, epistemologically, the client's problem is reformulated in terms of the psychologist's theory - in effect, reinterpreted. The meaning of the client's behaviour is brought under control. Certainly in the case of psychotherapeutic

theories, this control is epistemological as well as social. And, no matter how subtly the psychologist implements his interventions, these interventions always and in effect communicate to the client that the psychologist knows more about the problem (he must if he is in a position to make suggestions). This, again, poses the dual problem that not only epistemological authority is exercised, but also power in terms of interpersonal influence. And, as is obvious from regular instances of professional misconduct in all countries where psychology is practised, this power is used for purposes other than the therapeutic.

When in this way investigating the possibly redeeming effect of different strategies of theory application or implementation, it is also necessary to bear the following crucial aspects in mind.

The first is that psychotherapeutic theories belong to a particular type of social theory which - like Marxism? - attempts to change things in the social world. It seems logical that any social theory that sets out to change an existing state of affairs - and this brings us to the second aspect - must necessarily be value-laden and, more specifically, more value-laden than certain other types of social theory (such as, for example, theories which attempt to only describe or explain certain states of affairs). This is so by virtue of the fact that certain states of affairs are not only described or explained (dysfunctional behaviours, for example). Any psychotherapeutic theory also contains postulates (or assumptions) about the kinds of behaviours that are functional or adaptive, thus prescribing certain types of interventions aimed at making the client's behaviour more adaptive. It is clear that such a theory must be value-laden, because of a designation of some behaviours as maladaptive (or less adaptive). This creates a basis for seeing other behaviours as more adaptive, which implies a certain *direction* in which behaviour should be altered. Such a theory clearly makes judgements.

Now if these value judgements are unavoidable in the case of psychotherapeutic theory, and if the implications of the value judgements place the therapist in a position of power over the client, the only way to avoid an authoritarian exercise of power is to incorporate some *safeguards for the application* of such a theory. I shall call these safeguards democratic safeguards, because the concept of democracy refers to the idea of social equality, and thus also (in theory, at least) implies the idea of power sharing, or the concept of checks and balances in the distribution of power in order to avoid the concentration of power in the hands of any particular individual or group. (The implications of using such a political concept also become interesting, because political theory is concerned with power and the distribution and use of power. One finds oneself resorting to these metaphors when explaining certain aspects of the therapeutic relationship, which means, of course, that therapy is also politics - as all human relationships are.)

These democratic safeguards, in the therapeutic context, can be many and I shall avoid dealing with them in detail. It seems to me that such measures can consist of only three basic kinds, however. They are:

- Measures aimed at monitoring the therapist during the process;
- Measures aimed at monitoring the therapist after therapy has been completed;
- Self-monitoring.

A brief example of the first monitoring process is some form of direct supervision; of the second some form of supervision in a feedback format or after-the-fact review by an ethics committee in the case of malpractice, and the third is the standard self-monitoring activity engaged in by any therapist. It is clear that each of these methods are flawed, but for different reasons (the first, for example, by virtue of the fact that supervisors normally share the same theoretical framework with the therapist, and inculcate the power brokerage involved in the process), and that in normal practice the last method is most often resorted to. This means, in effect, that if a therapist conduct his therapy in a "democratic" way, his conduct must in the last analysis be determined by his own conception of what democratic behaviour is, in combination with the therapeutic model or theory that he or she espouses. He is his or her own checks and balances.

This, however, leads me to a quick and two-pronged demolition of any case in favour of the possibility of truly democratic, non-authoritarian application of psychotherapeutic theories.

The first problem is that, if the therapist is his or her own checks and balances, this self-monitoring process is not only subject to all the social-psychological vagaries of the process that are known to exist, but that the framework within which this self-monitoring takes place is subject to the therapist's own conception of what "democratic behaviour" is. This again implies, and leads to, a theoretical-epistemological dilemma, namely the therapist's understanding of the concept, idea or practice of democracy, as applied to a therapeutic relationship. There is no way of ascertaining that the therapist's understanding and translation of this understanding into actual therapeutic practice is perfect. The important point is more than just observing that such a process is bound to be subject to error, as everyone knows it is bound to be. It is emphasizing that, again, practice - which may be a redeeming feature - is *subject* to epistemology, or theory. The problem is quite simple, and inescapable. The therapist's theory (and practice) *determines* therapeutic practice, to the extent that practical application *cannot* be a redeeming feature.

Whereas the first prong of the attack is seriously problematic, the combination of this problem with the second is deadly. The dilemma is not only that practical application cannot be held up as a redeeming feature in terms of the authoritarian power brokerage involved. This second part of the attack undercuts the value of invoking the concept of democracy or democratic application itself. The reason for this is that the very idea of democracy in therapeutic settings is overridden by the epistemological authoritarianism of psychotherapeutic theory, which demands that the client be selectively influenced to change in a certain direction. This possible way out of the dilemma only arrives at the basic theoretical - or epistemological - problem again. Theory determines practice, and psychotherapeutic *theories* are authoritarian. They are authoritarian as much by their content as by the logic of positions in which they situate the therapist epistemologically. The implication, therefore, is that democratic application is *in principle* impossible.

The conclusions arrived at by the analysis of the epistemological dilemma still hold, and are in fact strengthened: the therapist cannot be anything but an authoritarian semiotician, by virtue of the logic of positions in which he finds himself and the kind of social theory that he practises.

The therapist cannot do anything but reinterpret the client's behaviour in terms of the psychotherapeutic theories that he has learned. The next step is that, at the moment that this reinterpretation is undertaken, the therapist is caught in the logic of positions pointed out by Sless, not just in terms of interpretation but also in terms of social influence. The theory prescribing the therapist's interpretations also demands social action of him, notably, the selective influencing of the client in order to make the client's behaviour, according to certain criteria, more adaptive.

A brief distinction is almost not necessary, but it is given to clear any possible misunderstanding. This distinction is also an answer to the kind of reaction that: So what, when we've known all along that psychotherapy entails the exercise of authority? The point is that the process is *authoritarian,* and *in principle epistemologically as well as practically authoritarian.* It brooks no real dissent whatsoever. The therapist and the client are locked into either a relationship of one-way social and epistemological influence, or - if this influence is challenged - opposition, however subtly negotiated. The implication of this logic of positions is that, if the client wants to escape the therapist's influence - and the metaphor of escape is appropriate - an oppositional reading *must* be conducted on the part of the client. It has been shown that there is no other way out of the epistemological dilemma. In terms of any other kind of reading, with the blessing of Stuart Hall and David Sless assumed, the therapist essentially retains his authority. Only effective epistemological opposition can break this deadlock.

Accepting the inevitable: the anxiety of influence

The critical reading has arrived at its conclusion, which is that the inevitable has to be accepted. Psychologists are authoritarian semioticians.

However, it is possible that a solution - of sorts - lies in this acceptance. Harold Bloom's tetralogy *The anxiety of influence* (1973), *A map of misreading* (1975), *Kabbalah and criticism* (1975) and *Poetry and repression* (1976) consists of an analysis of the complex relationship between a poet - or, for that matter, critic or reader - and his tradition. Bloom points out that all literary history consists of a rereading and re-interpretation of previous texts, and that this process of rereading is inevitable. It is inevitable because the poet or reader is born into an existing tradition and, in order to find and then establish his own voice a poet must get involved in a struggle with his forerunners, and defeat them. This process is referred to as the anxiety of influence, and the psychological analogies in the titles of the tetralogy are of course intentional.

I want to re-submit - as Freud and the psychoanalysts did and Bloom himself partly does - that the same process takes place in psychotherapy. In this sense, the principle inherent in freudianism and psychoanalysis holds for all psychotherapies, no matter what their content is. However, the psychoanalysts and their literary child did not add the epistemological sting. And this epistemological sting is necessary to cause the upsets that predispose one to arrive at an epistemological - and practical - solution, of sorts. If one doesn't worry, they say, one is not motivated to seek or change.

In combination with the key concepts of the analysis so far, the psychotherapeutic process, as recombined with Bloom, is as follows. The client enters therapy with a therapist, who reads his or her behaviour in terms of a given theory, situating them in the unavoidable logic of positions. The therapist is then in a position of power and control, and he must overpower and control the client - however benevolently - in order to effect therapeutic change. He *must* overpower the client in order to effect change, because there is no other way out of the authoritarian deadlock. If the client must challenge the therapist in order to escape, this also means that the therapist must overpower or influence the client in order to change his or her behaviour. Now if the client is in this way influenced, socially and epistemologically, by the therapist applying his theories, this also involves the client in a struggle for power as well as a negotiation for the control of meaning in this process - if the client is to break free of the therapist's influence. Bloom says that the younger poet sometimes starts to speak in a voice or words which can be confused with that of the established author (thus himself echoing and revising Freud), and in this sense the client's reading of his own behaviour may also coincide with the therapist's. The experience where the client, in practically any therapy, "takes over" the

therapist's words or definition of the problem, and presents it as his or her own, is very familiar to all psychotherapists.

But at the same time, Bloom observes, a *map of misreading* is traced, which is inevitable. In order to find his own voice, or an own interpretation, the poet (or client) rereads the therapist's reading selectively; skips certain parts, and concentrates on and distorts other parts. Bloom summarizes the need as follows:

> In order for a reading (misreading) to be itself productive of other texts, such a reading is compelled to assert its uniqueness, its totality, its truth.

In a similar fashion the client, by reading selectively, conquers (and must conquer) the therapist's reading in order to become autonomous and in charge of his own change and, in this sense, successful therapy consists of the collapse of the hold that the therapist has over the client. I concentrate selectively on Bloom's formulation above (all puns intended): "In order for such a reading to be itself *productive* of other texts ...". The important psychotherapeutic point is that, if the client cannot start with the autonomous production of an own "life text" he or she remains dependent on the therapist's reading, and thus locked into submission.

I would be willing to postulate that, if the client is unable to conquer the therapist, it is questionable that real change has taken place. In such a case the therapist still has control, and remains the father figure who will always be returned to, with a mixture of regret, feelings of failure and inadequacy, and rebelliousness, on the part of the client. For successful therapy to take place, the therapist must be vanquished: he or she must disappear. The paradox of successful therapy therefore consists of the failure of the therapist. This is the only solution to the paradoxes inherent in the logic of positions.

This evokes a further metaphor from the literary domain, which dovetails with the image of the therapist as reader. The reading that the therapist conducts of the client's behavioural text furnishes the raw material that the therapist uses in order to become the *author of the client's change.* His creative input in the form of interventions, based on psychotherapeutic theory, combined with this reading, makes him the author of a disappearing script, which is bound to end if the client starts to take control, as the client must, if therapy is to be successful. When the client has conquered the role of sole author with respect to the therapeutic relationship, he or she takes control of this script away from the therapist with a *successful misreading* (contradictions intended), and thus takes charge of an own reading. In this case, an own reading is an own writing. The client become his or her own author, and the therapist must disappear. However, by becoming redundant the therapist also achieves success, and takes the only *epistemological and social* exit available in terms of the

logic of positions - otherwise he will remain locked in this power logic of the relationship for the duration of an unsuccessful therapy where the client, with stops and starts, returns.

There is, in other words, no democratic solution.

There is only fundamentally authoritarian influence, which creates the anxiety of influence. And this anxiety must, as in all relationships between unequals, be conquered. The strategy for achieving victory is as clear as the authoritarian structure and dynamics of the therapeutic relationship: it is oppositional reading. Oppositional reading is misreading; a misreading that vanquishes the therapist. And this is why psychotherapy, while it is inescapably authoritarian, is also selfless. It requires the willingness to be vanquished, repeatedly, anew for each client.

There is, in any event, no other escape.

Afterword - from transference, to epistemology, to ideology

Freud's observations on the therapeutic transference are well known and they will not be discussed here. Obviously, some of what has been said here moves within the ambit of the tensions of the transference. In this sense, nothing is added to what Freud said, and Bloom's adaptation of Freud has also been incorporated as the only possible exit out of the tensions proscribed, delimited, by the dynamics of the transference. The tensions of power inherent in the therapeutic relationship, as a relationship of potentiality as well as resistance, have certain formal dynamics. The formal dynamics of this kind of relationship were contextualized by Bloom with respect to writing, reading and the literary tradition. There is a necessary circularity in this contextualization because the dynamics of the relationship are the same, as an essentially therapeutic relationship, where resistance to and misreading of text leads to the autonomy which is engendered by, and leads to, personal potential.

However, it has also been shown that the transference is a symptom of more fundamental therapeutic difficulties. And there have been two stings in this tail: the epistemological, and the ideological. The first sting has been fully discussed, and only brief mention was made of the second. It is time to discuss the second. Again, this issue is intimately related to epistemology, reading, texts, and - ultimately - the unavoidability of resistance.

It is pleasant to think that an intellectual analysis - especially one's own - has produced truths. I shall therefore hold up a few of these truths that have emerged from the discussion so far, as a platform from which the leap to culture, reading and ideology can be made.

- Bloom showed how all (creative) activity is bound by, as well as resistant to, tradition. The psychological dynamics of this process was summarized by the metaphor of the anxiety of influence, which leads to misreading as resistance, which leads to autonomy and the production of distinctive texts.

- Hall showed how the position of the reader, in a cultural (traditional) context, can determine his reading of texts. He also pointed out the ideological implications of reading texts, which are always embedded in a culture. Texts were portrayed as, inevitably and perhaps especially in modern societies, a *site for ideological struggle.* This is because modern technologically and organizationally complex societies use texts, in various forms, as the most convenient and effective way to influence the opinions of people. This leads to the possibility of three kinds of readings: confirmatory (of the existing order), revisionist, and critical. A corollary observation is that culture critical theory, as a critical reading of the dominant complexes of meanings in technological, capitalist societies, did not acquire that label for arbitrary reasons.

- Psychotherapy always takes place in a cultural context. This means that the values of a culture must also be transmitted to therapists in their training, as well as the values related to power brokerage in interpersonal and especially therapeutic relationships. As far as I know, there are no courses in psychotherapy that attend to the way in which the therapeutic context can be affected by broader- cultural values and norms related to authority brokerage between persons. There are no investigations into psychotherapy as a culturally determined or influenced power brokerage process. This means that there is a good likelihood that these power values are uncritically adopted by trainers, and formally and informally transmitted to students. The trainers (read: the authority figures; the established poets; the reviewers) are *conduits of authority and power brokerage,* as they must be. They also (unwittingly?) pull their students into the same circle of obedience incalculation which produces resistance, which is propagated into the therapeutic relationships of the students and their clients - as must happen.

- However, if the formal dynamics of the authority brokerage involved in this process cannot change, there is something that can be changed. This is the awareness of broader, societal power brokerage between groups - normally in the form of ideology, and ideological blinds, and the way in which these blinds influence the relationship between therapists and clients from majority and minority groups in a society.

The closing argument is short (if not sweet). If psychotherapy is situated in a cultural context, and if cultures are politically organized in terms of various majority and minority groups as prescribed by ideologies, therapists are required to do therapy with members from various groups. If the therapist belongs to the majority group, he *must* have some personal reading of the dominant complex of meanings in the society - be it critical, revisionist or confirmatory; implicit and unconscious or explicit and conscious. The client from the minority group enters therapy with, quite possibly, a different reading. Not only does this affect the relationship between the therapist and the client in the sense that existing societal inequalities may be mirrored, but more importantly in the sense that the therapist may be *unaware* that these inequalities are being transmitted.

In terms of the foregoing, the therapist from a majority group, doing therapy with a member of a minority group, runs the risk of *compounding the basic authoritarianism* involved in the therapeutic relationship. This risk is the propagation of broader (and authoritarian) social inequalities in the therapeutic relationship, in addition to the therapist's fundamental authority. This risk is especially high if the therapist is unaware of these dynamics, if the therapist adopts a confirmatory readingof the current forms of social organization, and if the therapist is unaware of the possibility or content of various kinds of critical readings. The risk is even substantial in the case where the therapist adopts a revisionist reading, but it also has to be granted that this would depend on the exact nature of the revisionist reading and its interpretation of unequal relationships between groups.

An oppositional reading, in this context, becomes a conscience.

Only an oppositional reading has the resources, and the position, to test the assumptions - personal as well as social - behind the power brokerage practices that govern relationships between people and groups. Only an oppositional reading can test these aspects of the therapeutic relationship to their limits, in order to create the sensitivity and the resistance necessary for awareness: it can comment, in a useful way, on the paradox.

Only an oppositional reading can create an awareness of the restrictions imposed by the epistemological impasse of the therapeutic relationship - even if it cannot break through this hermeneutic border.

Awareness, at least, can attenuate the anxiety of influence.

Notes

** There are very interesting parallels to this process in the industry of literary reviewing. It is striking how a reviewer attempts to gain control over the text being reviewed; how it is attempted to comment **upon** the text. This process is essentially authoritarian. The reviewer has complete control over the text if he is able to be superior about it, to dismiss it, to classify it or to refer to it as, in some sense, "lacking". The further interesting analogy is that this is an essentially therapeutic stance, because improvements are implicitly or explicitly recommended: the text should, in effect, change. (The obvious paradox is that this comment is given after the fact of the text's existence in a certain form.) It is just as apparent how, when a reviewer is "impressed" by a literary work (read text, if you will), the text wins the reviewer over. It says more than the reviewer can say: the text, in effect, robs the reviewer of speech; of the ability to comment upon, and, by speaking thus strongly (in terms of the frame of reference of the reviewer), wins an autonomy. Power is one of the rewards of this process of negotiation: the text, or work, gains authority. The metaphors often used by reviewers are in this regard revealing: it is observed that the author "speaks with an authoritative voice"; that "Mr. Doctorow has created an American romance ... Breath-taking ... Stunning accomplishment ..."; that "this author surely ranks above everybody else ..." - and so on. (It is not necessary to cite sources for these quotes. They are representative of a certain general type.)

It is, furthermore, a hugely interesting social practice to reward texts succeeding in achieving this kind of consensus among reviewers (in power in a literary system) with literary prizes. Briefly, the semiotics (oppositionally read) of this kind of cultural practice is that the text which robs the articulate of speech is canonized in terms of existing cultural-aesthetic criteria (however poorly, or properly, articulated). This must be seen as much as an act of canonization as of submission. The powerful work or text is rewarded and supplicated with gifts: reward as well as supplication is due to the powerful in any human social system. The respect enjoyed by canonized authors is very obvious, and it often requires courage to dissent from the pressure (read power) exerted by the received view of whom the "great authors" would be. In fact, it requires more than courage. It also requires an oppositional reading - thus again confirming the inequality which is fundamentally part and parcel of the process.

A final note: it is just as interesting that the essentially authoritarian practice of conferring awards on texts (essentially authoritarian because the structure of authoritarian relationships also entails authoritarian submission) maintains a very uneasy tension with the essentially anti-authoritarian and relativist theoretical tradition which upholds the use of terms such as "text". It is surely one of the larger ironies of literary life that these terms - and by implication the tradition de-centering the subject, and meaning (Barthes, Kristeva, Derrida; and probably in that order) - are invoked to confer status on, and reward and canonize, "great" literary works.

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Chapter 10

On the distinction between the public and the private: A meditation on punctuation

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Psychoanalytic practice, with its emphasis on free association, places its practitioners in a unique position to observe the slow emergence of meaningful and coherent sentences out of the seamless flux of the patient's own, seemingly random, associations.

In the course of analysis, the therapist responds by pointing to cracks and fissures in the patient's wall of words so as to suggest the possible dimensions of a discourse. This therapeutic suggestion of dimensions and limits within the analysand's own verbalizations constitutes the most fundamental level of psychoanalytic interpretation.

Creative imagination and punctuation

The process whereby the acceptance of limits gives birth to meaning and opens a coherent public domain of discourse, becomes clarified when we seek to differentiate a truly imaginative exploration - one which gives lively details and informs our understanding - from a merely aimless daydreaming, devoid of a beginning, a middle and an end.

Daydreaming relates to a truly creative imagination the way something formless and anarchic relates to something that is ordered and that has a contained form. As an example of such a relationship let us imagine a letter addressed to us by a lawyer friend, that begins as follows:

> "Dear Bernd, it was good to have news from you." (period) (So far so good! Harry likes the letter I sent and is still quite well disposed towards me.)

But let us remove the period from the end of the sentence and substitute a comma and add something new to it:

> "Dear Bernd, it was good to have news from you, (comma) but I was quite irritated by your gratuitous remark about lawyers".

(The meaning if the letter has now changed and it appears that my friend took what I thought to be such a funny story about lawyers, as a personal offence. He seems to have taken a dislike to me).

Let us again remove the period from the end of the sentence and substitute a comma and add:

> "Dear Bernd, it was good to have news from you, (comma) but I was quite irritated by your gratuitous remark about lawyers, although I know you well enough to realize that you did not mean it as a personal insult."

Again the meaning of the sentence has shifted considerably by the mere addition of a clause. Theoretically it would be possible to keep on adding clauses ad infinitum and thereby postpone a final meaning of the letter indefinitely. We are thus justified in concluding that it is impossible to decide with confidence what a sentence means, unless it has reached closure and is marked by a period.

The concept of a period comes to us from classic antiquity. The word "period" contains a contraction of two Greek words, namely, *peri meaning "around, about, enclosing" think here - "perimeter" - and of hodos* for "path or way". The Greek verb *periodeuo* means "to go around, to patrol, to systematically go through something, to study carefully". It also means "to place periods in a text".

A period is thus, first of all, "a way around" something that enables us to study it from all sides. A "period" opens something from all sides to full view and thereby makes it possible for us to reach stable conclusions about something. As long as a sentence, a way of feeling, a judgement, lacks a period, we are prevented from observing it from different angles and it remains withdrawn from public inspection. Both narcissism and the open, unpunctuated sentence speak covertly of a fearful withholding from others. Only what has been punctuated, what has been given over to be looked at from all sides, can be said to have truly entered the public realm.

This way of thinking about open-ended and completed sentences also applies to our thinking about a human life. It is clearly impossible to judge a life that has not come full circle, from beginning, through the middle to the end. To an ongoing life can be added new clauses; it can continue to take on new directions and as such it escapes ultimate public judgement.

It is this constant open character of human life that makes possible "repentance" and "conversion", understood here as fresh actions, changed directions, that, like added clauses to a sentence, change the meaning of earlier deeds or words.

Within the Greek sphere of thought, human life remained always open to sudden and unexpected reversals of fortune (*peripeteia*) and the Stoics wisely counselled against "calling any man lucky prior to the day of his death".

The most telling difference between a creative imagination and mere daydreaming can be attributed to the inner, personal acceptance or refusal of the inevitable period, understood as closure of meaning and finality of human life.

Daydreaming offers an endless space of consolation, in which nothing offends, nothing limits and where everything remains possible. Such a narcissistic world remains necessarily parasitic upon a creative imagination in which limits do have a place. It is thus creative imagination that builds inhabitable structures, narrative wholes, places and spaces that open their perimeters to inspection and that invite our walking around (*periodeia*).

We find ourselves here confronted by the curious and revealing fact that the gesture placing the period at the end of a story is, at the same time, the very gesture severing it from the narrator and placing it in a public realm where it is presented to the listeners, viewers and readers. This act of severance, this placing of a period at the end of a novel, or of a signature on a completed painting, closes off an intimate personal space of creation while consigning it at the same time to a public space, where the work can be appraoched from all sides and it can be judged and enjoyed by others.

The path leading from the intimate, personal realm, from the incommunicable interior of the author, to a public place, passes through the *aporia* of a period; this period is a point beyond which the author may not go, where he takes leave of his work and where he offers it up to the public domain. This domain is first and foremost a place of collective memory that keeps alive for present and future generations "the great deeds and the great words" of our past.[1]

In placing a period at the end of his work, the individual creator lets go of the vain illusions of personal immortality. In punctuating, he himself is punctuated and accepts the limits of a private life. And while he lets go of the vain hopes for personal immortality he discovers and fastens his hope on a transcendent public realm.

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1 Homer, Iliad ix, 433; see also: Arendt, Hannah. 1958. The human condition [chapter 2]. University of Chicago Press.

Creative imagination and the public realm

All human works of merit come into existence in dialogue with a public domain and it is the quality of this domain, the selectiveness of its collective memory, the soundness of its judgement, that determines the fate of creative life within a human community.

Only a truly discerning, transcendent public realm can inspire mankind's best efforts. In the absence of such a discerning public realm, talent cannot bear fruit; the creative imagination withers and nothing of lasting value can be produced. Only the mad manage to speak in the absence of a receptive audience.

We find this thesis developed in Plato's *Symposium*,[2] beginning at the place where Diotima addresses the following question to Socrates:

"What is it that brings about love and desire?"

From that point on the argument, unfolds based on the premise "that human nature is mortal (*thneetee physis*) and that it tries as best it can to be immortal (*athanatoos*)".

And we learn that it is inscribed in our nature that nothing in the human world can by itself persist in time, that whatever belongs to the human sphere endures only at the price of constant effort; nothing remains of the works of human hands, of the human soul or mind, without the constant labour of restoration, without the continuous, inspired recreation and the loving remembrance of a true public realm.

When speaking about mortality, Diotima does not forget about animal nature. Immediately following the question about love and desire, she mentions "the awful state of upheaval wild animals get in when they are in heat and want to reproduce themselves." This animal response to mortality is governed by nature, controlled by what we now call natural instincts.

Diotima intimates that the urge to reproduce is of like kind in the human species. The same question of mortality and the same answer of sexual excitement and reproduction rules the lives of animals and humans, where it leads to similar results. In animals it gives rise to the formation of a herd, a pack, a flock, a drove, and in humans it leads to the natural formations of private life, those of the clan, and the family or the village. As such, these responses to our mortal nature in terms of sexual excitement and reproduction keep us within the bounds of nature and restrict our life to what is private and domestic. This

2 Plato Symposium, 2078

natural dialogue between natural death and natural reproduction can by itself not lead to the to the formation of a true city. For that to occur mankind must transcend animal life and the domestic and private sphere in order to create a distinctly public place for the celebration of "great deeds and great words". It is in such a place that deeds and words can be truly judged, and where these become for the first time fully human.

If we look for the elusive origins of the classical public realm, understood as theatre and storehouse of great words and deeds, as the heart and the mind of a city, we are ultimately led back to ancient battlefields and to the bards who held in public memory the events that had transpired there. Our thought concerning ancient battlefields should not be unduly influenced by conceptions of modern warfare in which personal drama and individual heroism play such a diminished role. Rather we should allow ourselves to be guided by Homer's descriptons of the battlefield as a theatre for the dramatic, memorable individual action, where human courage, strength and skill, with the attendant human flaws, together with the further complications of divine intervention, could all be observed as nowhere else on earth. We see there how, within this setting, men would willingly forfeit what was left to live of their private mortal existence in exchange for some memorable heroic deed that would live on within the public realm.

It is striking how words, so closely associated with the Greek public realm, words such as *aretee*, for "excellence", "goodness", "valor", "dignity", were at an earlier time also associated with the battlefield. At the time of Homer the same word referred to "prowess", "manhood", "valor".

Related words, such as *aristeia* for "great and valorous deed" and *aristos* for "the best of its kind", "the most excellent", all derive from the name of the martial go Ares, the son of Jupiter and Juno, the god of war and destruction, the spirit of strife, as well as of the plague and famine.

A similar association can be observed in Latin, between an earlier willingness to risk one's life on the battlefield and a later public excellence, in such words as *vir* for "man" and "soldier", or *virtus* for "manliness", "bravery", "courage", or *virtus* for "deeds of bravery".

This persistent association between the concept of warfare and that of excellence becomes understandable when we approach the ancient battlefield, not merely in modern terms as a savage place of methodic carnage and destruction, but as it might have appeared to ancient warriors, as a stage cleared for a supreme *agon* and as a testing ground for superhuman skill and strength. Such a battlefield, conceived as theatre and testing ground, stood radically apart from the world of the homestead, the shop, or the farm with its emphasis on coping and surviving. Where daily life of farm or village promoted human actions that stood in the service of communal life and that served to sustain and prolong corporeal existence, the values of the ancient battlefield reversed this

order by placing corporeal life in the service of human action. Corporeal life could thus be sacrificed in the interest of memorable and magnificent deeds, performed in the service of the city. And that which was most desirable in life could, under the aegis of these new values, no longer be obtained by means of practical ingenuity, hard work or steadiness of purpose, but was something that could be won through generosity and courage. This price of remembrance of one's deeds came at the bidding of a great heart, one that refused to beat merely to prolong a private creaturely existence but one that stood instead in the service of the human soul and mind.

An understanding of the ancient battlefield as a public place for performing and witnessing what is excellent informs us that even the act of witnessing great deeds does not come free of charge and that it is originally granted only those with the courage to put their own life at risk. Such an ancient understanding of courage as part of the price of admission for witnessing what is truly transforming and excellent, goes far in helping us to understand why it is that even the best dramatic works are so diminished and even reduced to triviality when they make their appearance on our television screen.

Let us inquire a bit more closely into the historic relationship between the public and the private such as these were lived when the foundations of our Western traditions were being formed. For those who bequeathed to us a heritage of democratic practices, the public realm stood in a relationship of opposition to the private realm of the home (*oikia*) and the family. These two Greek organizing principles of human life complemented each other in ways not so very different from the way the cultural and artificial appear to us to complement the natural, or the way the life of the mind and soul appears to complement the biological life of the body.

To the Greek mind, to be denied access to the public realm meant therefore to be bereft of something akin to the soul or the mind and therefore to be bereft of full humanity.

Within the Greek frame of mind the household was one of private associations and its essential purpose was to preserve our embodied, biological existence. The activities of the household were meant to create a safehaven in the midst of inhospitable nature: the work of the household created a place where the hungry could be fed, where those who were tired could rest and where the fragile lives of the young, the old, the sick, could be shielded from the extremes of nature. These activities of the private realm, although essential to the maintenance of human life, were considered to be of an a-political or pre-political nature and to lie as such entirely outside the public realm proper. Private life required steadiness of purpose and a strong body to overcome the resistance inherent in nature and, as such, it was entirely ruled by necessity. Even under the very best of circumstances labour within the private realm could secure for mankind nothing more substantial than a well-fed creaturely exist-

ence. A life lived entirely as private life, and thus entirely consumed in the daily struggle with the vicissitudes of nature, was seen as something less than human. This judgement understood all work performed within the private sphere as ultimately destined to be reclaimed by nature. Such work, inspired by necessity and thus devoid of true greatness, could hold nothing of value by which to remember the passage on earth of a human life, no matter how well fed and cared for, and no matter how cleverty or how long it might have evaded the inevitable end. It was part and parcel of this judgement that human life, truly lived, should rise above the level of mere creaturely existence, that it should transcend the private realm of the homestead in order to participate in the performing and witnessing of "great deeds and the great words" within the public realm.

Moreover, the social organization of private life, of the clan, family, and village was not determined by existing political ideals of freedom and equality, but was dictated by necessity in a struggle against and with natural forces. Social life within the village, the clan and family or, indeed, anywhere outside the relatively narrow sphere of democratic public life, remained hierachical to the extent that it tolerated slavery as a natural institution.

Hannah Arendt, in her decisive and authoritative work on this aspect of Greek civilization, characterizes the difference between private and public life as follows:

> "The *polis*, the city, was distinguished from the household in that it knew only "equals", whereas the household was the centre of the strictest inequality. To be free meant both not to be subject to the necessity of life or to the command of another and not to be in command oneself. It meant neither to rule or to be ruled." [3]

Within the Greek understanding we thus differentiate, on the one hand, a private life, governed by necessity, ruled by unequal social relations and filled with unending tasks that leave no trace to posterity worthy of remembrance, and on the other a public life, freed by the private sector from the struggle with nature, from necessity and characterized by democracy and an equality of relations. The reason for existence of this powerful Greek public realm, from which derive our democratic institutions, cannot be found in utilitarian notions and should not be attributed to practical considerations. The sole reason for being appears to have been that of complementing, of crowning, a merely creaturely and workaday life of homestead and village with a realm devoted to

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3 Arendt, Hannah. Op. cit. p. 32.

the life of soul and mind. This life took the form of a political assembly of equals, devoted to the cultivation and the memory of "great words and great deeds".

The public display of excellence in word and deed was intended to lift its participants above and beyond private natural life into a realm of greatness, of first-rateness, such as would add lustre and bring honour to the human sphere. It was thought that only such transport to excellence could ultimately reconcile human beings to their mortal condition.

Creative imagination as entrance into the city

If we move farther back in time to the very earliest sources of Western institutions in Sumeria, Akkad and Assyria we find there too a cultural design that opposes a public and a private sphere, and moreover one that in certain important respects bears a decidedly modern flavour. I am referring to the ancient Epic of Gilgamesh and to a division between, on the one hand, a private realm of un-punctuated, omnipotent daydreaming, of wild adventures in the boundless, uncharted wilderness beyond the city and, on the other, a distinctly public realm that demands the acceptance of limits, a living under the law and subordination of one's private pleasures and pains to the public good of the city.

It is possible to understand the epic as a composite of two major intertwining themes or strands: that of mortality and punctuation on the one hand and that of admission to the creative public life of the city, on the other. These themes are exquisitely elaborated in a word of immense psychological subtlety and wisdom that can proudly bear to stand besides the works of Homer, Dante and Shakespeare.

Let me limit myself here to a mere summary of this great poem which can do no true justice to the work, but which can serve to illustrate what otherwise would remain merely abstract propositions.

The story line of the epic poem is exquisitely simple: the young and overly energetic King Gilgamesh oppresses his people with his excessive demands. Unable to confront their king directly, the citizens of Uruk pray to their gods to help them in setting some limits to their ruler. They pray for a man who would be equal in strength to Gilgamesh and who could serve as his friend and companion and restrain some of the king's reckless energy.

The answer to the people's prayer is called Enkidu. He becomes the young king's confidant, friend and helper and together they embark on a number of wild adventures. They fight the terrifying demon of the cedar forest and even slay "the bull of heaven". It seems that together they can surmount all obstacles, defy all limits, cross all thresholds at will.

The Goddess of Love, Ianna, takes a liking to Gilgamesh and asks him to be her husband. He refuses her love, rebukes all her advances and eventually puts her to shame with an immense insult. In her revengeful fury the goddess addresses to the Council of Gods a plea that Gilgamesh be put to death for his offence to the goddess. The Council decides that it is not Gilgamesh but Enkidu who must die an untimely death.

When Enkidu falls ill and dies shortly thereafter, Gilgamesh at first remains completely uncomprehending before the fact of death and then is utterly beside himself with grief. As the fateful nature of mortality dawns on him, he grasps its implications for himself and his grief becomes tinged with fear. Once the madness of his grief subsides he goes off in search of a cure for human death. He travels literally to the very end of the world, where he meets Utnapishtim, the Babylonian Noah, and his wife, who were both blessed with immortality after having survived the great flood in which all the rest of humanity had perished.

Utnapishtim asks the young king to stay awake for six days and seven nights so as to demonstrate his desire for eternal life. But the hero, exhausted from his long journey, falls almost immediately into a deep sleep from which he does not awaken until the end of the week.

After this abysmal failure to secure for himself eternal life, the king decides to return to his city. When he takes his leave from the immortal couple he receives as a gift from Noah's wife a small fragrant magic herb capable of restoring youth to the aged. Yet, even this small hope of evading death eludes the king when shortly thereafter a snake makes off with it while he is bathing in the river. From that point on only the snake will guard the secret of rejuvenation while humanity remains unalterably committed to a trajectory that leads from youth to aging on to death.

Gilgamesh returns to his city to live his life within the walls of the city and within the limits sets by death. It was only after he has awakened from the confusing daydream of a literal immortality, from a fantasy life in the absence of all limits, that his heart and mind can finally open up full-wide to his city and that he can recognize in her a work of creative imagination that, as such, constitutes an inspiring response to the question of human mortality. The poem closes with Gilgamesh proudly inspecting the walls of the city:

When they arrived in Uruk, the enclosure,
Gilgamesh said to him, to Urshanabi, the boatman:
Urshanabi climb upon the wall of Uruk and walk about,
Inspect the foundation terrace and examine the brickwork,
and see if the bricks are not made of burned clay
And if the seven wise men did not lay its foundation![4]

The city of Uruk is a paradigmatic work of the imagination in so far as it is punctuated by a wall that sets her apart from an endlessly meandering wilderness beyond her gates. And the epic itself is no less a work of the imagination with an equally clear beginning, a middle and an end. It becomes clear that we may enter the poem and the city only if we first come to terms with the limits that surround human life and are willing to accept birth and death, beginning, middle and end.

We see here that what is achieved in the public realm and the city by means of walls and borders, is achieved in the poem and the sentence by means of punctuation.

We may think of the birth of a great poem out of idle daydreams as repeating the birth of a walled city growing out of the endless neolithic tribal wanderings that preceded its founding and the beginning of settled life. The city itself can be seen as embodying a kind of punctuation mark that ends the wandering life of one sentence, or of one particular cultural composition, and that opens up to an entirely new era of settled cultural life.

A plausible reading of the epic would have us approach it in terms of the difficult struggle of a headstrong young king to enter the human city, to feel at home there, to take his place in the public life of the polis as a defender of its heart and soul. He can do so, however, only after having overcome his excessive self-preoccupation an after having outlived his ancient and infantile dreams of omnipotence and literal immortality.

Entrance into the public realm of the city means, in Aristotelian terms, to live up to the description of humankind as *zoon politikon,* that is, as a living creature destined to play an active, constructive part in the public life of the city. At one time this heart and mind of public life could be found on the battlefield, where the fate of the city stood in the balance. Later, this public life of performing and witnessing to human excellence was expanded to include all aspects of the political life of the city.

In terms of the Gilgamesh epic, full entrance into the city is granted only on condition of a full acceptance of its internal and external limits, symbolized by the city walls and expressed by its laws. This acceptance in its fullest sense

4 Heidel, A. 1963. The Gilgamesh Epic, p.93. University of Chicago Press.

implies a coming to terms with limits such that these are themselves transformed into vivid markers outlining a field of creative possibilities. This entrance and this acceptance of limits performs, as it were, a human miracle whereby what at first appears to be a prison or a trap, is transformed into a promising place for human inhabitation. We might actually speak here of a kind of transubstantiation or, indeed, of a quintessential metaphorizing, by which an imagination, at first apprehensive and frozen before what seems inhospitable and confining, gradually awakens, takes on wings and discovers a garden of delights where it makes itself at home. It is at such a moment that mere creatureliness surpasses itself on the way to a full humanity.

Creative imagination is here understood as a metaphoric and transcendent movement, leading us from the oppressive tyranny of limits to their incorporation into a selfless work of art. This process of the transvaluation of all values has been represented in both Greek and older Mesopotamic sources as entrance into a public realm at the heart of the city. And this heart of the city is represented as utterly beyond mere creaturely calculation, beyond the greed for mere biological life, or private gain. It is also beyond even everyday efficiency or functionality, in so far as these are not made to serve the ends of soulful inhabitation.

This heart of the city should be imagined as, on first impression, an inhospitable and confining place, a blank page, a gessoed canvas, a piece of stone, an empty lot between two buildings, that is only subsequently transformed, in an act of metaphoric bliss, to become a welcome haven for a lifetime of impressions, memories and thoughts.

Without this artful and truthful public place, without this soul and heart of a city or a nation, there can be no great and eloquent deeds and words, and there can be no homecoming to our own humanity.

Writes Arendt:[5]

> Neither education, nor ingenuity, nor talent can replace the constituent elements of this public realm which makes it the proper place for human excellence.

To reach this realm of excellence we must first travel past the clamour of our natural needs and leave behind us all childish dreams of a life un-punctuated, of a bliss imagined all at once, as seamless, endless and virginal. All human greatness is greatness contained, all painting begins in accepting the dimensions of the canvas or the wall, all sculpture starts with dreaming within the

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5 Arendt, Hanah. Op cit. p. 49.

dimensions of a particular piece of marble or the wood, all great architecture places itself within the limits of an existing site. All human inhabitation begins by performing the miracle of bread and wine when it transubstantiates or metaphorizes merely natural opposition and confinement into a responsive material embrace through which we gain a true access to our world.

Modern social space and the refusal of punctuation

When we look at contemporary western life we cannot help but notice the near total absence of a public realm, understood as some vital part of the city that remains truly hospitable to excellence without linking it immediately to usefulness and monetary rewards.

What we have come to think of as our public or social realm refers to an eminently practical realm that has its centre in the manufacture and the distribution of goods and services. It is designed to prolong and make more agreeably our creaturely existence. What we are in the habit of calling "excellent" or "magnificent" is mostly something magnificintly useful, or magnificently luxurious, or excellently to our taste. Our daily experience of what we call "excellent" lacks the dimension of transcendence because it will not remind us of our mortality, and therefore cannot reconcile us to it by pointing to a common public heritage at the heart of the city. Our "public life" no longer stands in a relation of opposition to the creaturely life of household and commercial market. We oppose to the public world of commerce and of politics, to the world of the homestead writ large, nothing more substantial than a private and often confused world of subjectivity, of bodily functions and intimate relations. It is this latter private world that we represent in psychology and the human sciences as the last remnant and refuge of what is transcendent and soulful about the human condition.

Of the classic public realm, understood as a place set aside for fearless performance and truthful witnessing of "great words and great deeds" only very little remains. We still find some reflection of this realm in our sports arenas, in concert halls and rarely in our theatres or art exhibits; we find it here and there in privately financed institutions such as the Dallas Institute where thoughtful people still congregate, motivated by nothing more practical or tangible than the pleasure of thought and conversation.

Our universities have become almost completely incorporated into the public social sphere and their functions have become reduced to household duties. The modern university's reason for being is that of increasing the efficiency of agriculture, of finding cures for physical ailments, of improving the search for raw material, of finding better ways to manage the economy.

Academic life is now dedicated to the improvement of creaturely comforts and to increasing the span of our creaturely life. This utilitarian principle

pervades academic life on all levels. Most every interchange among university scholars, from mere office chats to departmental meetings, from regional to international professional meetings and from office memo to professional journal, obeys this utilitarian principle and serves some personal or institutional housekeeping purpose. The faculties of our universities have effectively become inhabitants of a gigantic bureaucratic household that, like all households and all bureaucracies, demands conformity and mundane practicality.

The demands for such conformity do not issue from stern patriarchs - the facile and false targets of so much academic rhetoric - but from an invasive, boundless and tyrannical bureaucratic housekeeping spirit that ceaselessly counts, compares and levels. This counting and comparing, followed by the inevitable levelling, is in fact but a strategy by which this spirit removes the obstacles to its own progress. In last instance this bureaucratic spirit is itself no more than a disguised hostility to the thresholds that mark the differences between what is sacred and profane, between what is human and what belongs to the world of animals, between what are our cultural monuments and what are dime-novels or office memos, between what belongs to the realm of politics and what transcends our vigilant preoccupation with housekeeping matters.

This aggressive bureaucratic attempt at levelling, this hatred of all cultural boundaries is also, at the same time, a natural despair over the ambiguous nature of language and the ultimate uncertainty of our grip on truth and reality. This modern bureaucratic spirit would smash stories, grammars, cultural conventions, not in order to write better stories, or to design more revealing grammars or to build more capacious, more hospitable, more lovingly encircling boundaries, but rather to vent its impotent anger on the fragile human condition, on human mortality, on the ambiguities of language and the necessity of punctuation.

This tendency of the modern social sphere to expand indefinitely and this aggressive attempt to enfold all of reality within one gigantic and deadly embrace, stands in stark contrast to the clearly circumscribed Greek regions of the private household and the public *agora*. Where our contemporary social realm begins to resemble an endless and unpunctuated sentence, there we might compare the mutually exclusive Greek realms of the public and the private to two sentences, duly punctuated. We become aware of two radically different cultural designs, one of which is based exclusively on the principle of unity and takes the single sentence as its ultimate model. The dominant value of this unitary design is that of equality, in the pursuit of which it will seek to level all differences, erase all thresholds, invalidate all standards. The contrasting type of cultural design bases itself on the model of a succession of sentences; it emphatically includes the acceptance of differences, and it understands the work of culture as one of making distinctions, of cultivating differences and thresholds, of performing judicious punctuations. Where the first cultural

design refuses to accept closure and covertly denies mortality, the second design never strays far from the problems of succession and the mysteries of metaphor that link all ends to new beginnings.

In stressing the metaphoric aspects of language, we approach it as a further irreducible link between two incommensurate entities or realms. Language is what makes it possible for two realities to appear at once; it is that which enabled the first human being to emerge from the primordial slime and to stand over and against and with a natural world, so that there could be both man and world. In reading and writing we move from one sentence, or from one incommensurate realm, to the next, just as in speaking we come to the end of one breath and pause to take another. In passing from one sentence to the next we cross a no-man's-land - devoid of markers, opaque to meaning, oblivious to our pleas for guidance - which we must cross on our way to an always miraculous, always unexpected new beginning.

As long as we focus exclusively on what is present within a text and move without further thought past the gaps from word to word and from sentence to sentence, we remain linguistic realists, putting our trust in un-problematic and natural relations between word and thing and between word and thought. Within this materialistic and realistic attitude the word appears as the natural extension of the thing; it forms the public aspect of the thing to which it somehow would respond as to a name.

But once we become aware of the "no-man's-land" between two sentences, we surrender our conviction of language as a natural and infallible connection between ourselves and what is real. We begin to question the notion that speech externalizes preexisting thoughts or that sense and thought reflect the preexisting real. In crossing the dizzying, unmarked space between the sentences, we make the discovery that language is more than a passive imprint of the real. We begin to think of language as itself the very place where thought and reality become possible for the first time, where both emerge and come into their own, where both are realized, and outside of which they have no other discernible location.

We have seen how we might represent the succession of the generations as so many successive sentences, interpreted by lacunae that indicate the mysteries of birth and death. We observe then that a cultural heritage needs to make its way past uncharted territory that separates one generation from the other. We also become aware that in the absence of a period there can be no heritage to transmit, since there remains of culture nothing more coherent than a chaotic stream of perpetually fluctuating meanings. The transmission of culture requires passage past an abyss between two successive and incommensurate generations; this movement is not of a realistic, but of a linguistic order and it obeys the laws of metaphor.

We may think in a similar way of the primordial gap that separates and connects mankind and the gods. We see that same mysterious space that divides and connects two successive sentences, re-emerge. And here too we invoke the power of metaphor as the power that crosses the no-man's-land between the two while binding the one to the other. Moreover, we might think of the ancient altar as marking the place of division and the point of reconciliation between humanity and deity, in the manner that a border marker announces the end of one realm and the beginning of another or a period closes one sentence and opens the way for another.

The strangely empty linguistic space that is punctuated by an altar and that stretches the distance between what is human and what is divine, makes its appearance here as the death of what is literal, as the end of all concrete, material, traceable connections and the birth of metaphor. Mankind is *zoon logon ekhoon,* a being capable of speech, gifted with language, preordained to think, to read and write and thereby perhaps also destined to set aside, in a world cluttered with household tasks and preoccupied with material and literal relations, a small and sovereign public realm, hospitable to metaphor, to memory and to thought, in order to bear witness there to "great words and deeds" and thereby to be reminded again of the height and depth to which we may humanly aspire within the sight of death.

On the rite of passage in the light of punctuation

In moving from a positivist and materialist perspective on reading and writing, in which attention remains focused on what is concrete and literal, to a perspective that takes cognizance of the abyss between the sentences, we become involved in a painful rite of passage analogous to that of moving from a position of childish innocence to one of tragic, adult knowledge.

We have already seen how our experience of meaning depends on the acceptance of punctuation, and we related that acceptance to the acknowledgment of mortality. Meaning and closure, mortality and punctuation, metaphor and transcendence - all form an interlocking part of countless ancient and modern narratives that relate or enact the story of our humanization. We saw this pattern in the history of the Greek public realm and we traced it through the Epic of Gilgamesh in the story of the coming of age of a great king.

We now seek to trace this cultural patterns to neolithic rites of passage such as these may have survived in traditional tribal contexts and such as we find these described in the accounts of contemporary anthropologists. From these accounts it would appear that pre-literate societies divide the whole of a human life into so many parts or sentences and that at the end of each sentence a tribal ritual must assure safe passage past the uncharted terrain that marks the end of one kind of life and that must lead to the acceptance of another. The times

of such transitions are felt to be fraught with dangers for those making the transition and the entire tribal community is mobilized to secure safe passage.

Remnants of these ancient rites survive in western life in the form of celebrations in connection with birth, puberty (graduation, bar mitzvah) the wedding and the funeral. Our best source on these ritual celebrations is van Gennep's classic treatise on that subject.[6]

In a previous paper I have examined the very difficult transition that leads the child from the familiar home environment to the public realm of the school and attempted to understand the close and almost uninterrupted association, over a period spanning nearly five thousand years, between child beating and pedagogy.[7]

I concluded there that this cruel practice should be seen as an unconscious remnant of a much earlier ritual practice of neolithic rites of initiation. I made mention of the fact that the remnant of these rites as these are still practised today by stone age people, include painful trials and instructions upon the bodies of the young initiates, which serve the purpose of a dramatic enactment of their own death as children and their subsequent rebirth as transfigured young adults.

Van Gennep provides us with detailed descriptions of these trials and intrusions. These include the cutting of the foreskin of the penis, the pulling or filing of teeth, the cutting of the little finger above the last joint, the perforation or removal of earlobes, the perforation of the hymen, the sectioning of the perineum, the excision of the clitoris, the scarifying or tattooing of the face or any other part of the body.[8]

Within the context of these enacted narratives, mortality is announced in the loss and the pain of deliberate wounding, and rebirth is announced in the healing of the wounds and in the appearance of a distinctive tribal mark that assigns the person an unambiguous place within the cultural order.

We should note here in passing that the difference between literate and pre-literate cultures should not be made to depend on a supposed ability or inability to make or to read signs or inscriptions. This difference can be found rather in the choice of the initial and proper object for inscription. Literate cultures pride themselves on their ability to leave a mark upon a surrounding world, on their facility in inscribing and thereby transforming it. Within the older, so-called pre-literate cultures, the proper object for inscription appears to be, first of all, the human body and after that, one's personal belongings,

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6 Van Gennep. 1969. The rites of passage. University of Chicago Press.
7 Jager, B. Fall, 1991. A row of renches. In Journal of Phenomenological Psychology.
8 Van Gennep. Op cit, 71-72.

one's tools, one's house, one's garden. The emphasis is here first and foremost on a "being inscribed" and "being transformed" rather than on an active inscribing and transforming.

Within an actively inscribing culture, where the un-inscribed body of the scribe remains hidden in the shadow of his activity, punctuation is something to be done to a worldly reality, to a clay tablet, a parchment, to two adjoining properties, to an orchard being cultivated and planted. Within a neolithic, pre-literate society, punctuation brings the defenceless human body out into the open, makes it suffer and bleed, draws it out into the truth of its vulnerability and mortality.

It would seem probable that this latter manner of punctuating and of being inscribed would be the older form, out of which the more outwardly directed manner of writing and punctuating later developed. Both writing and punctuating would at first have been a painful and personal ordeal, before becoming a manner of imposing one's will upon an environment. But where the connection between mortality and punctuation is directly experienced on the body of the pre-literature initiate, there it is hidden in the externalized writing and reading of literature cultures. Yet, these two aspects of writing, that of inscribing and describing a world and that of being inscribed and marked for death, together form an inseparable whole. If we but pay scant attention to what is meant by "punctuation" we are wont to ascribe to it a manner of ordering a text or a world. But if we look more closely at the words we use to describe this ordering and consider the realm of activity from which these were drawn, we see emerge the hidden, other side of writing, understood as suffering inscription and as being marked for death.

Our "point" for a dot or a mark, derives from the Latin *punctum* for "that which is pricked or punctured" and the verb "to punctuate" translates in Latin as *interpungere,* where *pungere* means "to penetrate, pierce, vex, sting, annoy". The Greek verb "to punctuate", *stidzoo,* also carries the meaning "to prick, to puncture, to brand and tattoo (for slaves and cattle)". Our word "sigma" refers back to the same root.

Our word "comma" reads in Greek, "that which has been cut off, struck off or marked". The relevant verb *kopto* means "to strike, smile, cut, cut off, chop off, hammer, and to forge". Our word "capon" for "castrated rooster" derives from the same root and is directly borrowed from the Greek *kapoon* with the same meaning.

We may thus understand "punctuation" both as an ordering of a text, as the domestication of an unruly sentence, and as the chastening of a would-be writer, as an action designed to instill a person with a sense of fallibility and mortality.

This violence associated with ancient and perhaps prehistoric concepts of "writing" and "punctuation" may at one time have formed a vital aspect of a rite

of passage, where it may have served the purpose of reminding the young initiates of human limits, the acceptance of which forms a precondition for inhabiting a truly human world.

Neither poet nor reader can gain access to a poem without submitting to the pain of punctuation; neither builder nor inhabitant finds access to the liveable city without the discipline imposed by walls, by laws and limits. Creative imagination, understood as the power to envision a liveable future, dawns upon only those who have received the period and accept the inevitability of closure.